

**TIKRIT UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR WOMEN**  
**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

**LECTURES IN DRAMA SUBMITTED BY**  
**Asst. Prof. TAHA KHALAF SALIM. Ph. D.**

**LECTURE (1)**

**English Drama: from the Beginnings to the Renaissance**

The rise of English drama from its origin in the liturgical plays to its golden age can be explained in the following headings:

**The Beginnings: Miracle and Mystery Plays**

As in other Catholic countries of Europe, drama raised in England as a result of the attempts of the clergy to tutor the unlettered masses the dogmas of their religion, Christianity, by dramatizing the service of the Church during Christmas and Easter. The plays were in Latin. The actors were the priests and the language employed was of liturgy. Church was the place in which drama should have been reborn because the following reasons:

1. The life of people at that time was completely dominated by Christianity and

that is why any aspect of culture was obliged to be affected by it.

2. The Christian festivals and rituals include dramatic material.

3. Many events of the religious history were suitable for drama.

The plays told religious stories and were acted inside the Church itself and then in the churchyard. This form of drama was known as the Miracle or Mystery play. The material for Mystery plays was drawn from the Bible. Miracles consisted of the stories of saints.

**Morality Plays**

By the reign of Henry VI, Mystery and Miracle plays were gradually replaced by a new type of drama named Morality play. The Morality play focused on the moral problems that faced mankind and its centre was always occupied by a male character. The plot and the characters in this type of drama were used as a means to explain an abstract moral lesson. *Everyman*, perhaps the most famous of the Morality plays, was a story of the end of Everyman's life in which God taught death to inform the hero that he should be taken from this world. Everyman looked for a friend to attend him, but no one would do so except Good Deeds. The moral lesson of this play was that everyone would die and he had to be careful preparing for his death.

### **The Interlude**

A short play flourished during the sixteenth century, introducing real characters of humble rank such as citizens and friars, and the allegorical figures were absent. The Interlude was frequently corresponding in length to the one act play, and was often acted in the halls of great houses as a part of amusement presented at a dinner in honour of the guests. Occasionally it was used as a comic discussion between the serious parts of a sacred play. The aim was to relax the tension of the audience, or was as a part in vaudeville of necromancy. During the period of religious struggles, it was used as a means of propaganda. The groups of actors, at the time of flourishing of the Interludes, became professionals.

### **The Masque**

Another dramatic form was developed in England called the Masque. It included poetic drama, dance, and song, in addition to the music. Its structure was always simple. The plot and the actions were slight. As usual the plot included mythological and allegorical elements, and sometimes, there was a sort of discussion. The prologue of the Masque introduced a group of masked actors

who were known to the audience. They entered in disguise or perhaps in some kind of decorated vehicle. Ben Jonson, with the help of the architect Inigo Jones, perfected the genre by producing some of the most celebrated Masques during the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but the best known Masque was Milton's *Comus*, acted at Ludlow Castle in 1634.

### **The Appearance of Regular Drama**

The direct influence of the revival of learning played the role of a key element that led English comedy and tragedy together to pass out this primary step of development towards their artistic forms. Many plays began to appear which indicated a great development. In spite of that they were not very good, but these early experiments in play-writing are of great importance historically, because they provided a kind of 'Dame School' for English dramatic genius, and did much to prepare the way for the regular drama. The plays became longer and they were classified into tragedies and comedies, in addition to a new type which was named chronicle. The comedies did not generally appear very amusing to a modern audience. The tragedies were copies of Roman models or bloodthirsty plays. The chronicles or the history plays were no more than a series of unlinked scenes to the point that they were difficult to follow. A few years later, Shakespeare used the same style of clarification in writing his plays.

The first regular English tragedy was *Gorboduc*. It was also called *Ferrex* and *Porrex*, written by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton. It was acted in 1562 at the Christmas revels of the Inner Temple. *Gorboduc* was remarkable not only as the first tragedy, but as a first play which was written in blank verse. Its story was about a British King who divided the kingdom in his life between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex. A conflict arose between them. Ferrex, who was the mother's favourite, was slain. The mother carried her revenge out and killed the

murderer, her other son. The enraged people revolted and killed both the father and the mother.

The first true English comedy of a regular plot, divided into acts and scenes, was the comedy of ***Ralph Royster Doyster***. It was written by Nicholas Udall, the head master of Eton, and later Westminster school, and was first performed by his schoolboys before 1556. The play was greatly indebted to Plautus and Terence.

The histories, the chronicle plays, arose as a healthier native breed of historical plays. Consisting of both tragic and comic elements, these plays represented dramatized form of the early chronicles. They were predecessors of Shakespeare's history plays.

### **Elizabethan Drama**

The reign of Queen Elizabeth I was one of the great periods of English history, perhaps the greatest one. It was known as the Elizabethan Age. In this age, England became a unified nation that was able to be firm and stable against the states like Spain which was planning to attack England. It was an age of great and famous men, of explorations and discoveries, of poetry and music, of revival of learning, and above all of mature drama. English drama reached its climax, a height which has never been surpassed. The chief literary glory of the great Elizabethan age was its drama.

After the appearance of the regular plays, the English drama developed through the works of young men who were scholars fostered by Oxford and Cambridge universities. They represented the pre-Shakespearean dramatists and they were known as the University Wits. The most important member of the University Wits was Christopher Marlowe. Others were George Peele, Robert Greene, Thomas Lodge, and Thomas Kyd. Peele wrote ***David and Bsathsheba*** and the ***Arraignement of pario***. Greene's best play was ***Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay***.

His fame came as a result of a small book he wrote, *Groatsworthof Wit*. In this pamphlet, he expressed his spite for Shakespeare. Lodge wrote in various plays with the sole exception of *The Looking Glass of London*, in coordination with Greene. Shakespeare himself borrowed from Lodge's novel *Rosalynde* for his comic play *As You Like It*. Though it is not certain that Thomas Kyd was a student in a university, he wrote along with the University Wits. The distinguished play *Hieronymo* and its sequel *The Spanish Tragedy* were his main works. There is no doubt that the best among this group was Christopher Marlowe. The main plays he wrote were *The Jew of Malta*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Tamburlaine*, and *Edward II*. His greatest achievement was the use of the blank verse which Shakespeare later perfected. Marlowe's problem was the lack of humour and artistic proportion. His plays were written within five years (1587-1592). He had no tendency to write comedies. All of his plays were tragedies, even the comic scenes within some of them might have been written by someone else but not by Marlowe himself.

Admittedly Shakespeare occupied the top position among the playwrights of his time. He was not associated with any university. It is said that he received only secondary education. His plays reflected an outstanding genius to the point that many people suspected that someone of high education was the writer, but not Shakespeare. Thirty-eight plays were written by Shakespeare. They were divided into comedies, tragedies, and histories. Shakespearean drama was a whole new method of speaking about the human. It showed human beings in their different roles and business. Each role presented a specific aspect of what was meant by being a greedy merchant, a brave Prince or a jealous lover. Shakespeare explored human weakness creating more mature characters better than ever shown before on the English stage. His exploration of human ambition, greed, lust, and madness was without parallel in English literature at all. Shakespeare founded specific frames of entity and behaviour for women.

Characters such as Volumnia in *Coriolanus*, the Countess in *All's Well That Ends Well*, and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* represent unconventional women in that they are not the dependent, weak women of Elizabethan drama. In many cases they pushed men into works out of their plans. Shakespeare's comedies depended on themes of love, friendship, and mistaken identities as well as some very rude language and comic situations.

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**LECTURE (2)**

**Feminism**

Feminism is a term used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement that aims to found equal rights and legal protection for women. It is the advocacy of women rights on the basis of sex's equality. Men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. It means that feminism, in its core, is about equality of men and women in getting rights but it does not mean sameness. Men and women are not the same and it is impossible to be so because of the biological and the physiological characteristics that define women and men and that is what is called **Sex**; a term refers to one's biological anatomy. It is how a person is born and as a result it is something that the person cannot change. To differentiate between a female and a male is to mention the physical features of each body.

Before going on explaining more ideas about feminism, it is important to differentiate between **Sex** and another term called **Gender** which is something that the person is not born with. **Gender** includes all the standards of accepted behaviour that a society sets for the aim of separating female from male. For example; Women are expected to learn cooking and growing up kids, while men have to go work for earning money. **Genders**, which are categorized using **Masculine** and **Feminine**, differ from one country to another relying on culture and religion. **Gender Criticism** is an approach that examines the influence of gender on the way literature is written and read. It interprets how gender of the writer affects his or her writings. It can also reflect the author's beliefs about the masculinity and feminism or how the author feels towards the opposite gender.

It is a fact that men and women have many different physical abilities, but is it possible to believe that these differences make equality impossible? Is it fair to believe that men and women are not the same and as a result they cannot be equal? It is, of course, a misguided view. It is not fair to adopt like this idea for the reason that if my classroom includes two young students, girls or boys, one of them is weaker than the other, I mean the physical feature, is it fair to differentiate between them accordingly? Is it just to prevent the weak one from

having the same rights, to get books, to use computer.....etc. I am sure that the answer will be it is not just.

Actually, superiority of men has its roots in the history of the ancient Greeks. They declared men to be superior and women to be inferior. Century by century, men voices continue to articulate and determine the social and cultural roles of women.

According to many scholars, the spark of this movement, feminism, started in the 14<sup>th</sup> century when **Christine de Pisan** protested against the corrupt view point stated towards the nature of woman in a poem called ***Roman De La Rose*** (Romance of the Rose) It is a medieval French poem styled as an allegorical dream vision. Including 21000 lines, it is a notable instance of courtly love. The rose of the title is seen as the name of the lady, and as a symbol of female sexuality in general.

The first major published work that adopted women struggle for equal rights was a book called ***A Vindication of the Rights of Women***. It is written in 1792 by the British philosopher and journalist **Mary Wollstonecraft** who was greatly influenced by the French revolution and the believing that women should have voice in the public arena.

### **The history of feminism movement is divided into three waves:**

1. The first wave refers to the activities this movement during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United Kingdom and the United States. This wave focused on women's right to vote (suffrage)
2. The second wave refers to the period of activity in the early 1960s to the late 1980s. This movement concerned with the ideas and the actions that associated with women's liberation along with their legal and social rights.
3. The third wave began in the early 1990s to be a reaction to the failures of the second wave.

### **The Main types Feminism**

1. Liberal Feminism: it is a form that argues that equality for women can be achieved through legal means and social reform.



2. Radical Feminism: a movement that believes that a type of technology should be found to allow babies to be grown outside of a woman body and that is what will enable to avoid missing works for maternity.

## **Feminist Criticism**

Feminist criticism is a very significant area of literary study and discussion. It represents an attempt to analyse women's experiences as depicted in different types of literature. It attacks the idea of patriarchal society and the corrupted assumption about women made by male writers.

A great landmark in the development of feminist criticism was the British scholar **Virginia Woolf** who is considered as the founder of present-day feminist criticism. She wrote an extended essay called **A Room of One's Own** as well as many other essays to show the cultural, economic, and educational disabilities of women within the patriarchal society that dominated by men. This essay is considered as a key work of feminist criticism. It included **Woolf's** famous argument that woman should have money along with a room if she wants to write fiction.

Another important landmark in the development of feminist criticism was the French writer **Simone Beauvoir** who used her novels as well as her monographs (pamphlets) on political and social issues to express her opposition against the French patriarchal society.

### **A Feminist Analysis of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House***

Before moving to analyse this play in accordance with the feminist approach, it is important to mention that its writer himself denied being feminist as he said in the festival of **the Norwegian Women's Rights League** in 1898, he claimed, "I am not a member of the women's rights league... To me it has seemed a problem of humanity in general." I believe that **Ibsen** wants to say that one does not need to be a member in a feminist league in order to defend women's rights. He is in need to be human and that is why to say that **Ibsen** was not interested in advocating women's rights will be a mistake..

**A Doll's House** is Ibsen's most feminist play. It focuses on the way that women are seen and treated especially in context of marriage and motherhood. It is believed that the main role of women is to be good wife and good mother. **Nora**, the heroine of the play, is portrayed as irrational, naive, and childish. Her contact with the outside world is limited to shopping and visiting neighbours.

She is called child by her husband, **Torvald**, several times, he even mention that she becomes, “both wife and child to him.”(A. 3) Nora’s absence from the public sphere makes her completely depend on her husband. As a man, **Torvald** not only controls the public affairs, but also the private ones. He chides his wife for spending money on the Christmas gifts. When he is at home, **Torvald** is usually working in his study. He rarely spends time or makes an interaction with **Nora** and the kids. In Act One, when the children come back home from a walk, the father remarks saying, “the place will only be bearable for a mother.”

In a situation when **Nora** asks her husband to have a look on what she has bought, he answers her, “Do not disturb me.” After a while, he goes outside and that is what reflects the fact that his responsibility as a man is to make money.

In Act 3, when **Nora** explains that she expected **Torvald** to take the blame for her crime, he answers; “no man would sacrifice his honour for the one he loves.” It means that his fame is more important than his wife.

**Torvald** sees his wife or women in general as inferior when he informs her why he does not like to borrow and spend money. He uses himself as an example asking her how she would repay the borrowed money if he had an accident.

**Ibsen** claims that **A Doll’s House** is not a feminist play, but it is a humanist play. His attitude does not change the effect of the play, as a feminist play, on the readers. It is a woman’s problem with which the play deals; it is the disillusionment of a wife that is the subject of the play; it is the relentless step taken by the wife with which the play ends.

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**LECTURE (3)**

**Miller's *Death of a Salesman*: the Tragedy of a Low man**

Given us by the Greeks, tragedy is an ancient literary term. For being the first to characterize tragedy, distil its quintessence, and grant it a state of high magnificence, all debates to explain the nature of this term start with Aristotle's perception of tragedy stated in his *Poetics* more than twenty centuries earlier. Aristotle maintained that catharsis, a type of feeling brought as a result of provoking pity and fear in the audience, is the aim of tragedy which should be written using grand language to fit the seriousness of the events that deal with what is critical in human life. The ancient Greek tragedy is centred on the character of the tragic hero who always excited sympathy of the audience. The tragic hero should be sublime person with a tragic flaw within his personality for causing reverse of fortune from happiness to misery and then his downfall towards a sorrowful conclusion. The hero of each tragic play eventually gains a moment of insight, called self-knowledge, at which he becomes aware of the mistakes that he has done but he has no time for correction.

Centred on a common man who dreams to be well-liked and successful, *Death of a Salesman* is Miller's most admired play. Although it is widely regarded as one of the most prominent plays of the twentieth century American drama, there have been some critical discussions over Miller's confirmation that the play is a modern tragedy. Depending on Aristotle's principles, some critics denied that *Death of a Salesman* is truly a tragedy for being a small person of grievous soul, Willy Loman, who does not belong to a deep-rooted family, has neither a high social status to fall from, nor a fortune to be reversed and that is why he cannot be a tragic hero. Others assert that Willy obtains tragic dimension from his

strong passion to excel his reality limitation. Among those who attacked this play was Eric Bentley, a British-born American critic, who states, “the theme of this social drama is *the little man as victim*. The theme arouses pity but no terror. Man is here too little and too passive to play the tragic hero. More important even than this, the tragedy and the social drama actually conflict.” In her book *Student Companion to Arthur Miller*, Susan C. W. Abbotson disproves Bentley’s opinion explaining that Miller’s eminent sense of moral and social commitment runs throughout his *Death of a Salesman* to achieve two aims.

First, Miller wanted to write a social drama confronting the problems of an ordinary man in a conscienceless, capitalistic social system. Second, he wanted that same play to be a modern tragedy which adapted older, tragic theories to allow for a common man as ill-fated protagonist. Willy’s apparent ordinariness should not blind us to his tragic stature.

*Death of a Salesman* is not the first work to be composed far from Aristotelian view, the last years of the nineteenth century witnessed revolutionary changes of tragic form and subject. Presented by the two Scandinavian dramatists, Henric Ibsen and M. W. Steinberg, some works in the tragic mode such as Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* (1879) and *Brand* (1885) as well as Steinberg’s *The Father* (1887) and *Miss Julie* (1889) exposed new tragic vision that “revealed a society that was diseased; spiritually and morally corrupt and decadent.”

In the twentieth century, a considerable number of dramatists, including J. M. Synge, Eugene O’Neill, T. S. Eliot, Clifford Odets, Arthur Miller, and others started to break away from the Greek canons. They challenged many qualities of the classical tragedy trying new type of serious plays which were tragic in tone and intention and that are what stabilized the modern conception of tragedy. Recent tragic writers start to vary their concentration from one model to another rather than to follow a defined standard and that is what keeps pace

with a statement said by Clifford Leech, “tragedy is today a conception that we deduce from the contemplation of a heap of tragedies.”

The alteration that took place in both society and human being, affected the twentieth century theatre. For displaying realism of the age, modern stage cannot go on representing melodrama or classical theatre. In his study, “Arthur Miller and the Idea of Tragedy,” Steinberg places Miller’s play and the modern part of tragedy within F. L. Lucas’ perspective that serious play “is a serious representation by speech and action of some phase of human life... If there is an unhappy ending, we may call it tragedy; but if the play is a serious attempt to represent life it makes no great differences whether or not good fortune intervenes in the last scene” Similar to Arthur Miller, Steinberg believes that modern context should be used to bring the classical tragic archetype. Modern drama should be responsible to present the common man and to compare it to the tragic characters of the past. In *Death of a salesman*, Miller’s great deed includes the elaboration of the character that assembles the feelings and anguish of the classical tragic hero located in a contemporary setting. He is real to the point that it is difficult to separate him from the real world.

In his study “the Anatomy of criticism,” Northrop Frye maintains, “the typical tragic hero is somewhere between the divine and the all too human.” Frye implies that the common man, who does not have a sublime rank nor he is of the nobility, can be a tragic hero as well.

The Spanish novelist, poet, dramatist, and philosopher Miguel de Unamuno does not characterize tragedy as a genre of literature. He believes that it is intricate harvest of stances and notions as well as feelings created because of the constant struggle between man’s nature and the reality of the society in which he lives. Scientific and technological developments are reflected in human mind and that those developments exhibit themselves in consciousness. Unamuno

adds that consciousness relies on memory which represents the viaduct that links the past with present and then with the future. "Memory brings forth what has been lost equally as much as what might be possible." It is not necessary that one's memories should be blissful or gladdening for there is no evidence that delightfulness is among man's qualities that he born with. Unamuno strongly deems that tragedy is an inevitable attendant to the man and his dignity. He states, " man, because he is man, because he possesses consciousness, is already, in comparison to the jackass or the crab, a sick animal. Consciousness is a disease."

In his essay "Tragedy and the Common Man" which was published in the New York Times week after *Death of a Salesman* opened in 1949, Miller, who tried to offer the reasons of composing the play, expressed his own attitude towards tragedy and its principles in addition to the social position of the protagonist. He defied the customary convention of tragedy as in Shakespeare's great tragedies that can be regarded as the paragon of this type of drama. He believes the "inevitable conclusion is, of course, that the tragic mode is archaic, fit only for the very highly placed... the common man is as apt a subject for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were." Miller maintains that if tragedy is written to be about people of high ranks using language of high level only known by them, it is difficult to be understood by the common mankind. According to this idea, using a middle class worker to play the role of the hero is to present a character to whom the spectator will relate.

Miller believes that tragic flaw "is really nothing-and need be nothing" and the tragic hero is "a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to secure one thing-his sense of personal dignity." His endeavour is to modify the old notion of tragedy and its protagonist in a contemporary sitting.

Finally, one has to conclude that *Death of a Salesman* is not an example of traditional tragedy of a great person who falls because of a tragic flaw, yet it is the story of a tragic struggle that examines the ability to reach prosperity of an ordinary man who belongs to a humble family from Brooklyn. Willy is destroyed by forces outside of himself and his wrong ideas as well. He stands for every common man in America for the reason that Miller has packed his play with matters that most of the Americans have to discuss during a period of time in which the great depression that comes as a result of the two world wars represents one of its main features. Miller “has looked with compassion into the hearts of some ordinary Americans and quietly transferred their hope and anguish to the theatre.”

It is not fair that *Death of a Salesman* should be judged by the criteria of the ancient Greeks for two reasons; the first is that more than two thousand years passed since Aristotle lived, things are changeable during time; the second cause is that a sorrowful situation of an ordinary man can be tragic similar to that of a noble man. Willy’s belongingness to a middle class family should not be a hindrance not to observe his tragic value. Human dignity should go over social status. The protagonist of Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* is heroic for endeavouring to maintain his dignity and to make his life meaningful.

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**LECTURE (4)**

***Death of a Salesman: the Actuality of Willy Loman's Psyche***

More than being a social drama, *Death of a Salesman* or as it was firstly titled *The Inside of His Head*, is a psychological play though its author may not have intended this play to be psychological. Its plot rests upon a psychological problem that causes Willy Loman to be off the track. It is Willy's journey into himself. Many of its events are sifted through his mind while trying to assess the significance and the nature of the world in which he is living. Although *Death of a Salesman* begins and ends in the present, it is a montage of old memories, dreams, confrontation, and discussions all of which participate in creating the last two days of Willy's life. Its events include a considerable portion of the past. Miller is able to join the two dimensions of his play events, the dream world of prosperity as seen in the past and the real world of Willy's small house surrounded by high building, and to exhibit them together at the same time. Juxtaposition of the past with the present is wonderfully used to shed light on the link between Willy's past and the present. Many parts of his prior life are revealed and linked with the events that take place in the present. Simultaneity equilibrates the interior of Willy's mind with his external world. Willy succeeds to interact with characters around him in the present and, at the same time, he is able to inform the audience important information about his previous life by dealing with other characters and situations from the past and that is what is called the Willy's recollections of the past or dream sequences.

Willy's recollections of the past are of high importance for understanding his character. He carefully chooses memories of reliving events from the past so as to devise situations in which he was prosperous or to account his current



shortage of success. It is through the recollections of the past the momentous events of Willy's life are revealed: Biff's sporting skill; Ben's adventure and the riches he gained; the scandal of Boston and its consequences; the departure of Willy's father to the west; Willy's contemplated suicide that was discussed with Ben. Willy recreates such events to justify his inability to cope with the fact that he is no more than a mediocre salesman. Such behaviour matches a psychological process of shunning painful reality. It is called defence mechanism, "a coping technique that reduces anxiety arising from unacceptable or potentially harmful impulses. [ It is ] unconscious and [ is ] not to be confused with conscious coping strategies."

The events clearly reflect that Willy is strongly gripped by his appetite of being successful and that is why he continuously drifts to the past to remember his eldest brother's story of prosperity. Ben, a mysterious character who appears only in Willy's dream-sequences, left early when he was of seventeenth years old to work for himself exploring the African jungle and emerged as a legendary young rich man after four years.

As the play advances its protagonist becomes more and more irrational. Willy is a debtor who is not to go on working as a travelling salesman for being "tired to the death." He finds out that his eldest son is unsuccessful and that the younger one, though prosperous in business, is ethically degenerated. When he is finally fired from his post, Willy has forfeited all even his self-esteem. He has nothing else to lose excluding his own life. Willy's mind begins to be cracked and unbidden memories subsequently come back to him to be acted for the audience. He is thrown into a state of mental disorder. His dips into the past become longer than before and the reason is that he wants to deny his tough present. He tries to restore order of his mind by creating substitute reality despite the price that he has to live alone in the past. When he is fired by his boss, Willy immediately escapes from his psychological tension recreating the

situation where Ben offered him a job in Alaska. Willy divulges, “Ben, nothing’s working out. I don’t know what to do.”(p. 66) He uses his memory as a means to pick him up from the actuality of forfeiting his job.

When *Death of a Salesman* was revived on Broadway fifty years after its celebrated debut, the director, who aims to add some details to make the play fit the contemporary audience, asks two psychiatrists to diagnose Willy’s state of mind. Their diagnosis was that Willy’s behaviour reflected signs of manic-depressive with hallucinatory aspects. Miller protested against this diagnosis claiming that Willy was fallen down by life, he was not depressive. “There are social reasons for why he is where he is.” Willy was and must persist, a victim of circumstances but not of illness.

During the events of the play, Willy’s behaviour proves that Miller’s defence is unaccepted. Willy cannot act regularly. Through his delusion greatness, hallucinations, and bipolar incidents, he presents numerous indications of a mental malady called psychosis. It is a serious mental disorder which is characterized by “an abnormal condition of the mind described as involving a loss of contact with reality ... people experiencing psychosis may exhibit some personality changes and thought disorder. Depending on its severity, this may be accompanied by unusual or bizarre behaviour, as well as difficulty with social interaction and impairment in carrying out daily life activities.” According to the Medical Encyclopaedia, the psychotic person may “have false beliefs about what is taking place, or who one is (delusions). See or hear things that are not there (hallucinations).”

One of the first signs of Willy’s psychosis is in the form of bipolar incidents. It occurs in the very beginning of the play when he tells Linda about how Biff is too late to find himself “at the age of thirty four ... the trouble is he’s lazy, goddammit! Biff is a lazy bum!” (p. 11) A moment later, Willy changes his

mind saying, “there’s one thing about Biff- he’s not lazy.” (p. 11) In one moment he blames his son describing him as sluggish. In the next moment Willy says extremely false things that indicate Biff’s greatness and that is what represents one of the main characteristics of this malady. Another situation that indicates bipolar incidents is displayed during the following conversation between Willy and Linda:

Willy: ... I’ll go to Hartford.

I’m very well liked in Hartford.

You know, the trouble is, Linda, people don’t seem to take to me.

Linda: Oh, don’t be foolish.

Willy: I know it when I walk in. They seem to laugh at me. (P. 28)

Representing important sign of the bipolar incidents, it is obvious that discrepancy between Willy’s utopian version of life and actuality is clearly revealed. The sole principle consistent about Willy’s behaviour is his inconsistencies which mix up the audience at the beginning of the events. However, soon they turn into identification mark of his character. Willy’s contradiction is a reflection of his inability to accept reality.

Willy’s delusion defaces reality as he rejects to admit that he is unsuccessful. Willy beholds himself prosperous in spite of the fact that he constantly borrows money from Charley who tries to aid him, “I am offering you a job.” Willy immediately answers, “I don’t want your goddam job.” (P. 76) When Willy tells Charley, “... I was just fired.” (P. 76) He refuses to take this job again because he does not like to confront the truth that he is abortive and that his entire career is fruitless.

In Howard’s office where he was asking for non-travelling post in New York, it is clear that he is sunk in the past. He starts talking about the year of 1928 when he had a big year of success. He states, “in 1928 I had a big year. I averaged a

hundred and seventy dollars a week in commissions ... And your father came to me or rather, I was in the office here ... He put his hand on my shoulder- (P. 64) Willy keeps talking about the past till Howard interrupts him saying, "I gotta see some people." (P. 64) Willy always recalls events from the past as a bid to live in denial, the rejection to accept actuality, which represents a defence mechanism used to help him to avoid dealing with disturbing episodes that may be brought by reality. He is unable to face reality, he flees to the past to dismiss the severity of the present. "He cannot bear reality, and since he can't do much to change it, he keeps changing his idea of it."

Willy's delusion of greatness guides him to express hyperbole of him and that is what is embodied in the situation where he informs Biff about his fame as a well-liked salesman, "go to Filene's, go to the Hub, go to Slattery's, Boston. Call out the name Willy Loman and see what happens! Big shot!" (P. 48)

One of the most remarkable signs of Willy's psychosis occurs at the end when he keeps talking to Ben about his intention to commit suicide. When he is fired from his post at the age of sixty three, Willy reaches the conclusion that he is abortive and is disappointed. He has no idea about what he has to do anymore especially that it is impossible to go on borrowing money from his neighbour and pretending that it is his pay. Willy obliges himself to bear the physical anguish of suicide. The sole way to achieve prosperity, for him, is to put an end to his life. Although it is a bad idea and "it's called cowardly thing," (P. 100) Willy is satisfied that success means making money. He intends that his family will get twenty thousand dollars, his life insurance money, as compensation as he is not able to aid his family during his life time.

According to Sigmund Freud's structural model of personality, the components of one's psyche include id, ego, and super-ego.

They are the three theoretical constructs in terms of whose activity and interaction our mental life is described. According to this model of the psyche, the id is the set of uncoordinated instinctual trends; the super-ego plays the critical and moralizing role; and the ego is the organized, realistic part that mediates between the desires of the id and the super-ego [which] can stop one from doing certain things that one's id may want to do.

One of Freud's crucial theories of psychology and human mental evolution is the pleasure principle, also known as the pleasure-pain principle, "the instinctual seeking of pleasure and avoiding of pain in order to satisfy biological and psychological needs." It is the steering authority of the id. Freud contends that at the time of normal human development, the activities of looking for pleasure principle progressively convert into what is called reality principle, the parallel of pleasure principle. In conformity with Freud, the reality principle "refers to the awareness of the real environment or reality by a person and the need to accommodate choices and actions to it in order to live and operate within society." As much as a person becomes mature, he starts to adopt the guideline issued by the ego and to neglect those of the id step by step. It is a replacement of fantasized wish-fulfilment with more suitable reality-adaptive behaviour.

Depending on Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality to deal with Willy's problem, Willy is the best example of an individual who is badly influenced by repressing his reality principle. In Boston where Biff goes looking for his father's help to pass math term and discovers that there is a woman with his father in the hotel. Willy tries to avoid this problem claiming that she is a customer and she has come to take a shower because her room is recently painted. The psychoanalytic of this situation is that Willy looks for pleasure that takes him far from his problems at home. He does not prefer to deal with problems face to face. He determines to avoid them all. It is Boston scene that causes Biff decision not to go to the school again, "I am not going there." (p.

95) Biff dislikes to achieve what his father wants him to achieve. This scene is crucial for the reason that henceforth Willy loses his son's esteem for him as well as his ability of exporting Biff the American Dream. Biff becomes aware that both of the father and his dream are phoney. Willy is psychologically ruined. It is possible that the author employs Willy Loman as an illustration to teach the Americans a lesson that business based on American Dream participated in Willy's psychological degeneration.

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**LECTURE (5)**

***Death of a Salesman: Willy's Psychological Degeneration***

Although Willy Loman is shown as a social failure for his inability to be successful in making enough money that enables him to live comfortably with his family, concentration should be made to determine whether Willy's failure comes as a result of his own insufficiency or for reasons which are not of his creation such as the unrealistic prosperity criteria of the society. A key thematic issue in *Death of a Salesman* is the idea of the elusive American Dream of prosperity, the promise that America had pledged its natives that one's perseverance enables him to enjoy successfulness. It is originated in the second sentence of the United States Declaration of Independent, "...all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The term American Dream, sometimes in the "phrase chasing the American Dream," was firstly expressed in 1931 by James Truslow Adams, an American writer and historian who helped to popularize the latest scholarship of the American history. He states, "life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement" regardless of status and birth circumstances. The great depression of the 1930s faded the American Dream. However, it was of a powerful grip on the national psyche of the majority of the American people and that is what makes it linger controlling the American discussions to assess failure and success of individuals.

The American Dream is one of the main factors that cause Willy's psychological degeneration. Lives of many people, including Willy Loman, become envenomed by their inclination to achieve prosperity. American Dream,

to Willy who wholeheartedly believes in this myth, is the ability to be successful by mere charisma. Willy believes that a well-liked man in business will be successful and as a result will be able to enjoy all pleasures of modern American life. The most important thing for Willy is to have attractive personality. He is satisfied that charming individuality is the key to reach successfulness but not the hard work and activity. Willy's life from the beginning till the end is a trouble saga that centred on Willy's attempts to achieve prosperity or at least to be blissful. He never accomplishes it nor do his sons. Willy constantly endeavours for his version of the American Dream. Instead of confessing that he is not a well-liked, he escapes to imagine specific memories and situations.

Having become acquainted with the story of Dave Singleman, a salesman of eighty four years who has the ability to do his business while sitting in his hotel room although his old age, Willy reaches the conclusion that selling is "the greatest career a man could want." (P. 63) He exposes that his knowledge of this highly regarded paragon of salesmanship convinces him to be a salesman rather than to join Ben in Alaska. He is not able to forget the situation in the Parker House where he met Dave Singleman who calls "the buyers, and without ever leaving his room, at the age of eighty-four, he made his living." (P. 63) Willy always dreams that he will be famous, successful, and well-liked by people as well as buyers similar to this old man. He becomes misled by the idea that his post as a salesman will elevate him to the summit without facing obstacles even in his old age. Moreover, Willy always knits brilliant dreams regarding Biff's future, "he's been doing very big things in the West. But he decided to establish himself here." (P. 72) In fact he is not able to help him to get high school certificate. Willy renders his job his first priority. As a result, his extensive travels leaves no enough time for him to take care of his sons and even to love them like a father should.



Another essential factor responsible of Willy's decline is the economic system of the society of which he is a member. Willy is a victim of such system which does not take care of old persons. *Death of a Salesman* tells us that Willy's travelling job requires strength and vitality because he has to travel from one city to another driving his car hundreds of miles in order to sell the production of Wagner's company. When the play starts, Willy is presented as an old man who comes back home from a cancelled road trip. He realizes the truth that he does not have the endurance of the past and he cannot even focus on while driving. "He stops at a green light and then it turns red and he goes." (P. 14)

In the second day, Willy goes to his manager asking him for a comfortable job in central office of the company inside New York City with a reduced salary of no more than forty dollars a week. He entreats Howard that he is not able to go on working as a travelling salesman. He states, "I'm just a little tired." (P. 62) As a capitalist business man who put no moral obligation in his consideration, Howard, who is more attracted in playing a tape-recorder than in Willy's request, fires Willy from his post instead of appreciating his efforts, "he works for [this] company thirty-six years." (P. 44) Willy, according to Howard, is commercially as useless as the peels of orange. Willy who had treated very well by the old owner is deprived of his post for his inability to work as in the past because of his old age. Willy's humiliating interview with the unsympathetic manager represents one of the most crucial situations in the play for making much more concentration on the cruelty of the economic system of the society. Howard is cruel in treating Willy to the point that he compares him to a stone. He says, "I can't take blood from a stone." (P. 64) Howard is a representative of the materialistic world which rejects to accommodate Willy's incompetence to continue travelling anymore. The company that Willy had helped to build fires him for being less productive.

Narcissism, “the pursuit of gratification from vanity or egotistic admiration of one’s own attributes,” is another important factor that leads Willy Loman to be ruined psychologically. As a narcissist man who is in love with and idealizes himself, Willy is not able to admit his faults. During the events of *Death of a Salesman*, many situations reflect that he brags about his fame and prosperity as a salesman in spite of the fact that he is not connected and is a debtor. One of the most obvious examples of Willy’s narcissism occurs when he comments on Charley’s business as it is reflected in the following conversation:

Willy: Don’t say? Tell you a secret, boys. Don’t breath it  
to a soul. Someday I’ll have my own business, and I’ll never  
have to leave home any more.

Happy: Like Uncle Charley, heh?

Willy: Bigger than Uncle Charley! Because Charley is not liked,  
He’s liked, but he’s not-well liked. (P. 23)

Another situation that sheds light on Willy’s character as a narcissistic one occurs when he starts to boast informing his sons,

Willy: I’ll show you all the towns.  
America is full of beautiful towns and fine, upstanding  
People. And they know me, boys, know me up and  
down New England. The finest people. And when I bring  
you fellas up, there I’ll be open sesame for all of us,’ cause  
one thing, boys: I have friends. I can park my car in any  
street in New England, and the cops protect it like their own.(P. 24)

Occupying the centre of his belief of prosperity, Willy’s fixation of being well-liked obviously indicates that narcissism is an important characteristic of his personality.

Willy is a lucky man for marrying a faithful woman who dedicated her life to adore him and to take care of him in such a way that no one else can. More than expressing her admiration to her husband, “he is the dearest man in the world to

me,” (P. 43) Linda is the one who always supports Willy and defends his situation in front of his sons who turn their back to him as reflected in the following conversation:

Linda: Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog ... You called him crazy.

Biff: I didn't mean.

Linda: A small man can be just as exhausted as a great man. (P. 44)

Linda represents a significant factor of wrecking Willy for the reason that she has believed Willy's false grandness and his dream of successfulness. In the situation where she tries to prevent Willy to join Ben in Alaska to work in Ben's timberland, Linda says, “you're doing well enough, Willy.” (P. 67)

Willy's life draws a chart from one case of abandonment to another leaving him in a state of tremendous desperation each once. Willy's father is a successful flute maker who departed roaming the west to sell his own production. Although he was inventive and was able to achieve something, he broke up his family for making money. He deserted a wife and two young sons looking for prosperity in Alaska and was never heard any information about him again. Neglecting family responsibilities Ben tracks his father's vestige seeking success for himself when Willy was no more than “three years and eleven months.” (p. 37) Willy is left alone to be lost in the corrupted idea of the American Dream. Willy, who becomes fatherless, should stand alone amid the cruelty of life and that is why Willy is his father's victim.

The bad consequences of Boston scandal impose great psychological influence on Will's personality. Prior to the scandal, Biff, more than anyone else, trusts his father too much and believes in his greatness and prosperity in the business world. Discovered by Biff, the situation of Willy's infidelity in Boston causes a

course of a rocky relationship between Biff and his father. When Biff fails his math class, he goes to Boston to inform his father who is in business trip. At the moment that Willy opens the door of his hotel room and finds Biff with his school bag, a woman walks outside the bath into the room showing Willy the new stockings given by him. Biff is shocked. He immediately turns against his father. He starts shouting and through tears he protests saying, “you gave her Mama’s stockings! ... Don’t touch me, you-liar! ... You fake! You phony little fake! You fake!” (P. 95) Willy is no longer a respected father in Biff’s eyes and that is what leads his mother to lecture him. She says, Biff, dear, if you don’t have any feeling for him, then you can’t have any feeling for me. (P. 43) the most important ramification of Willy’s infidelity to Linda is that Biff decides not to go to his school again and that is what makes Willy feel guilty for being responsible of Biff’s failure.

Finally, it becomes extremely apparent that the main reasons behind Willy’s psychological decline are essentially social. Consolidated by a key flaw within Willy’s character, narcissism, together they greatly influence Willy’s mind to be destabilize and to become out of control step by step. As a result Willy does not know how to act any more. He begins to grow tired of his life which becomes miserable. His psychological degeneration reaches its highest point at the moment when he decides to kill himself for making money.

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**LECTURE (6)**

**J. M. Synge and the Irish Literary Movement**

It is a fact that the manifestation of drama in Ireland came too late. Before the end of the nineteenth century there was nothing to be called Irish drama. Although the availability of local talents and some other contributory factors, it was due to the influential endeavours of William Butler Yeats as well as that of his friends, the general revival of Irish drama emerged into entity. Some prominent literary figures shared the zeal to found the national theatre of Ireland that would enable them to express what they regarded as discriminative about the Irish imagination. Supported by the aid of a team of writers such as Lady Augusta Gregory, John Millington Synge, Edward Martyn, James Joyce, and others, Yeats' sincere exertion yielded the Irish literary theatre on 16 January, 1899. Several years later, in 1903, the same team met and established the Irish national theatre society. Then, in 1904, the bountiful assistance of Miss. Annie Horniman, a rich English Lady who equipped the wanted money for rehabilitating and enlarging a small Dublin playhouse to be the lasting home of the Abbey Theatre, facilitated the establishment of this theatre. This foundation helped to put Ireland on the track of the prime stream of drama in the west. For being interested in creating what is called folk-play, employing amateurish actors who were not drilled as well as literary figures rather than experienced dramatists, the Abbey Theatre stood out as a landmark in the Irish national theatre movement which was "an integral part of that broader cultural nationalism... which sought to create for a long-colonised Ireland its own national identity."

As a result of the elongated suppression of Ireland by British colonization, the Irish literary movement had to deal with two important cases; the first was selecting the materials that should be taken from Irish history, folklore, and legends for the aim of keeping pace with the aspiration of the national movement, and the second was the choice of language that should be used in the view of the fact that Gaels, the traditional language of Ireland, was overflowed by the English language which was widely used by the educated masses in addition to the pioneers of the movement themselves. The decision was that the plays “should be national in the choice of themes, and the language should be Anglo-Irish.”

J. M. Synge is one of the most prominent Irish playwrights and one of the most outstanding dramatists appeared in the scene of the Abbey Theatre. Of all the dramatists who were associated with the Irish literary movement, Synge was the most linked one with the process of promoting modern Irish drama for making important contribution that played a key role in pushing Irish drama development forward. He came to fulfil the deficit of plays that be able to attract the audience and that is what aided to sustain the dramatic movement in Ireland to occupy significant rank in the twentieth century drama. Synge’s fame leaned on his last seven years crop when he wrote six plays. Although all of them are memorable, his *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Riders to the Sea*, in particular, are the most important plays for bringing out the distinctive properties of the intense lyric speech taken from the Ireland mother tongue and dialects. Drawn from the lips of living men, the language of Synge’s plays represented the perfection of the Anglo-Irish. He took his language “from herds and fishermen, from beggars and ballad singers near Dublin, and from servant girls in the kitchen...”

It was in Paris when W. B. Yeats met Synge advising him to leave to the Aran Islands for the aim of dramatising the peasants’ lives there. Inspired by Yeats’

advice, Synge reached the remote rocky islands to dwell among people many years paying great attention to everything collecting raw materials for feeding his plays. By doing so, He successfully recognized the substantial part of nature elements, the cruel sea and the strong storms as well as the disagreeable days of raining, in creating inhabitants' ways of life. Before his untimely death, Synge, who used eyes of an accurate observer, was able to show what the peasantry had to endure. He employed his six plays for perpetuating the cruelty of life in the desolate landscape of Ireland in significant details. He was a man of great ability of observation for having the power to see well and to register what he had seen perfectly. There was no Irish dramatist "had the powers of observation or recorded the life of the peasantry with as much delight and objectivity as John Millington Synge."

It becomes extremely apparent that Synge's fame as an eminent writer is immensely relied on the discoveries he had made on the isolated islands. If Synge had not dwelt among the fishermen there, he would never be able to exhibit the Irish identity by shedding light on the peasant identity and as a result he would not be as he was.

Synge wrote his plays in a critical time when the Irish nation was bidding to rid Ireland out of the British colonization. Some writers such as Arthur Griffith and James Connolly believed that national drama should be politically exploited to be the catalyst of progressing the sense of the public against dependence and then to revolt opposite it. "The party line was never [Synge's] line," he deemed that drama is a scene drawn directly from the real life by one who aimed to show reality as it is. Focusing on the countryside and its provincials, Synge used his plays to represent the peasants' real way of living he had observed in the Aran community paying no attention to his fellow nationalists who attacked him claiming that Synge added nothing to fortify the propagandistic literature. For being "the major realist of the Irish movement," Synge was not interested in

politics. W. B. Yeats himself stated, "Synge seemed by nature unfitted to think a political thought... I cannot remember that he spoke of politics." Synge was concerned with socialism rather than Irish nationalism. His fascination with the details of peasants' lives in the Aran Islands formed the trend of his drama. His interest was in writing plays displaying the Islanders' everyday strife. As carefully as he can, Synge tried to render real scenes, situations, and characters. He created nothing and changed nothing; he "translated the personal lives of individuals for a national vision of revived expression ...". Most of Synge's plays were based on his frequent travels to the remote islands. His opinion was that to define a poor Irish family dwelt on an isolated island was to define Ireland itself. By drawing lively picture of the islanders, he used to challenge the stereotypical representation of the Irish countryman. Thus, life in the villages Connomera and Wicklow represented the wanted materials for Synge's drama which, with no doubt, revealed everything about rustic areas of Ireland.

The Abbey Theatre established a great popular prosperity for possessing writers of radiant fame. Its popularity was badly affected because of a civil chaos, called the Playboy Riots, which broke out after showing Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*. Indicating adultery, Synge's use of the word shift was interpreted as an affront directed to all women in Ireland. As a result the Abbey shaken management decided not to stage Synge's plays again for avoiding the bad consequences. Actually, the violent reaction towards his plays can be seen as a common incident that arose from the overheated emotions that go along with the birth of any patriotic rebellion. The Abbey was lucky for having such a playwright who was deemed as one of the foremost writers of the age. Although the fact that some of Synge's plays brought rise of much strain among the Irish audience of that time, his peasant drama grew as a pivotal section of the Irish literary revival.



The discussions that followed the Playboy Riots were an occasion to establish fame for the Abbey as a safe refuge for the independence of the Irish dramatists. Lady Gregory stated, "I feel we are beginning the fight of our lives, and we must make no mistakes." Yeats arranged a disputation to deal with the consequences of the riots. He started his opening speech saying, "the struggle of last week has been long a necessity." Both of them, Yeats and Gregory, believed that this chance was essential to render the Abbey's mission as a national theatre as well as a landmark of art and independence of the Irish literary circles.

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**LECTURE (7)**

***Riders to the Sea: the Tragedy of an Old Peasant Woman***

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many dramatists including J. M. Synge smashed the principles of Greek and Elizabethan tragedy bidding new forms of tragic plays in which they diverted their emphasis from adopting a demarcated type stated by Aristotle more than twenty centuries ago. Aristotle maintained that catharsis, purifying soul of feelings, is the goal of tragedy which should be written using poetic language in order to fit the seriousness of its events. Aristotelian tragedy was centred on a sublime person with a tragic flaw within his personality for changing fortune from happiness to misery leading towards a sorrowful end. Relying on this perception, Synge's *Riders to the Sea* is not an example of traditional tragedy written according to the criteria of the ancient Greeks to show the calamity of a great man that comes as a result of customary struggle of human wills. It is a play of impersonal and hopeless conflict of the Irish fishermen against the relentless cruelty of the sea. The "struggle for existence of those who had to survive in the barest of rocky environments" held Synge's imagination to be the motive of writing his wonderful one-act play *Riders to the Sea*. It tells the saga of an exceptional tragic defeat of common men who belong to a destitute family which settled on the Aran Islands by the undefeated nature. Although they have no tragic flaws that lead them to commit fatal mistakes, Maurya, the only major character of the play, and the male members of her family were forced to face a storm of predicaments for the reason that they have no other choice but to deal with the deadly sea disregarding the likelihood of death. They are not in conflict with individuals, but it is their life to be in the grip of the heartless sea.

The title of this play signifies a crucial role of the sea in shaping lifestyle of the Aran islanders as a result of its correlation with both life and death at the same time. The sea, which represents the pivotal source of sustenance for almost all the inhabitants, may turn out to stand for calamities maker. So many people, including Maurya's men, have prematurely lost their lives for being in a situation where they have to ride the sea for keeping their entity. They were pushed to be between the hammer of hungry and the anvil of the cruel tide of the sea, which, sometimes, acts as a ravenous demon preying anyone to be found on its way and that is what makes its unseen attendance occupy the minds of characters as well as that of the audience.

Some critics mistakenly incline to describe the sea as Maurya's life villain for giving birth of endless tragedies. As it did to all other people, the sea furnished Maurya's family with everything; daily bread, weeds to be used as a fuel, and the only way to reach the commercial centres of the main islands where they can buy and sell things. The fact is that the old woman and the men of her family were fated to undergo at the cruel and ruthless hand of the most powerful force of nature which is used by Synge as an agency of fate to control all the events of his *Riders to the Sea*.

The sorrowful conclusion of the common islanders should be seen as tragic as that of people who belong to deep rooted families. Maurya's family affiliation to the proletarian class represents no pretext not to pay attention to its suffering. Maurya has outstanding recollections of blissful life in the past when she was living with her six sons as well as their father and grandfather. The sea gulped all of them to leave Maurya alone with her two daughters amid cruelty of life. Her total reverse of fortune from happiness to misery is preordained. She was born for suffering. Tragic elements occupied her story from the very beginning till end and that is what makes the real heroic feature of Maurya's character is due to her distinguished ability of endurance. The aged peasant woman is able to

occupy her position as the tragic heroine of *Riders to the Sea* because of her strong will to go on in spite of the calamities she has faced.

Maurya, who is primarily an old woman living in a specific locality during a specific period of time; stand to be typical of the enduring characteristics of her kind. She represents not only the whole community of the islanders but also all humanity. “She is an image of humanity facing a hostile universe, and through her Synge hints... that life is essentially tragic and the final reality is death...”

Synge was able alter the old peasant woman to a universal mother. Maurya was introduced to occupy tragic glory situation rather than to be a victim of the oppressive strength.

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**LECTURE (8)**

**J. M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea*: the Stoical Characters**

Maintaining the idea that one's life should go on keeping pace with nature and the stoic should be calm and brave in facing calamities, stoicism is clearly reflected in *Riders to the Sea*. J. M. Synge succeeds to employ the female characters, especially Maurya, to show the audience the positive role of the stoic philosophy in shaping one's personality. Maurya is used to stand for an example of the stoic who is able to create powerful individuality and to continue strong apart from the negative influence of one's emotions while dealing with suffering. Using Maurya's character, Synge enables the audience to have a deep glance into the vigour of human spirit which spiritually helps one to overcome misfortunes.

At the time that the action of the play concerns what has come about the family men, Synge thrives to make much concentration on the consequences that the stoical characters, the brave mother and her daughters, should confront. Maurya, the tragic heroine of *Riders to the Sea*, is a poor peasant old woman dwelling on the Aran Islands with her two daughters, Cathleen and Nora, as well as her sole residual son Bartley. In the very opening, the unlucky mother who has forfeited her husband and father in law in addition to four sons, is now anticipating to find the corpse of the fifth son, Michael, who has been lost nine days earlier. Actually, Michael's decease is asserted by the clothes sent by the young priest and recognized by Michael's sisters who prefer not to inform their mother at that moment because of her pitiable state and her fear for missing the last son.

Being a “cruel man [who] won’t hear a word from an old woman,” Bartley ignores his mother’s entreaty to remain. He wants to sail to Connemara for the aim of selling a couple of horses at the cattle fair. He thinks that it is his responsibility to take care of his family because, “it’s hard set we’ll be from this day with no one in it but one man to work.” (*Riders*. P. 22) As a bid for stopping him, the desperate mother who has rejected to accept the idea of Michael’s death, is forced to acknowledge it so as to be used as an excuse to delay Bartley. She says, “if Michael is washed up ... for it’s a deep grave we’ll make him...” (*Riders*. p. 21) While she tries to present a reason to justify her dissenting opinion by emphasising the importance of Bartley’s attendance for arranging his brother’s funeral, Bartley confirms his intention to navigate addressing Nora that he has “half an hour to go down...” (*Riders*. p. 22)

When no pretexts are adequate, the woman who entirely devoted her life to take care of her sons frankly asks her adamant son not to ruin his mother’s heart by doing unnecessary action that will cause his death. She says, “what way will I live and the girls with me, and I an old woman looking for the grave?” (*Riders*. p. 22) Her efforts are in vain. As Bartley departs on a voyage, Maurya, who is very much aware of the real vigour of the sea, predicts Bartley’s tragic end saying, “I’ll have no son left me in world.” (*Riders*. p. 22) He is drowned and his dead body is fetched home.

Bartley’s death represents no unexpected event for the mother who has got the mortifying expertness of beholding her dear men successively swallowed one by one by the fury of the sea. She received the indication of Bartley’s doom while on her way to the sea shore to reach Bartley for granting him food and benedictions. Maurya has “seen the fearfulest thing.” (*Riders*. p. 26) She sees the apparition of her missing son, Michael, riding on the grey horse behind Bartley on his red mare. The interpretation of this vision, for their mother, is that Bartley will be ruined. Maurya informs Cathleen and Nora about the vision

telling them that it is more dreadful than what is told in the Irish myth about Bride Dara who had “seen the dead man with the child in his arms.” (*Riders*. p. 26) This vision becomes a fact immediately as Bartley is brought home dead.

Maurya’s elementary reaction towards her last son’s death apparently indicates her sublimity and intrepidity to sustain irreparable casualties and that is what represents an important stoical defiance against her emotions. Maurya is scared as long as her remaining son is alive. She did her best to keep him away from dangers, but she cannot because it is “the life of a young man to be going on the sea...” (*Riders*. p. 22)

At the moment that Bartley’s corpse is brought by some villagers, Maurya’s fear is vanished. She grows into a woman who fears her enemy no more. The sea, which has wiped out all of Maurya’s sons, cannot hurt her henceforth. Although it seems that she has lost the confrontation with the sea which appears as a triumphant, she is the real victorious. She is aged, but, at the same time, Maurya is a combatant mother who has the fighter-spirit, and so do her two daughters. “She may be beaten, but she is unbowed.” Maurya does not mourn or lament. She does not meditate to leap into the sea. She becomes in peace with herself for the reason that, as she mentions, “they’re all gone now, and there isn’t anything more the sea can do to me...” (*Riders*. p. 29) The sea did its worst injury and there is nothing greater to be done.

The situation of Bartley’s death represents a turning point for being the climactic moment of the events, Bartley exhibits inability to live in accordance with nature. It appears as if the writer wants to shed much light on Maurya as a stoical character. He compares Bartley’s unreasonable conduct to Maurya’s stoicism and the aim is to glorify her ability of fortitude. To shun impasse is to be prudent. Men of the islands are usually careful in dealing with the moods of the natural power which dominates their lives. Sometimes they use to delay their

voyage for avoiding critical situations. The stoics confirm that in case the alternatives for doing an action are available, one has to be judicious. Incorrect decision should be avoided. Bartley's life could be rescued if he had paid attention to his mother's admonition. His death occurred because of his irrational behaviour. He is no more than a foolish who disregards the cautions of an experienced and rational woman who has tried strongly to convince him not to go to the sea, but "who would listen to an old woman..." (*Riders*. p. 22) The tragic conclusion comes as a consequence of Bartley's stupidity rather than the inescapable destiny.

As a stoic, Maurya offers her silly son the rational reasons that he needs to cancel his voyage. She reminds Bartley about the "wind is raising the sea," and the bad omen, "there was a star up against the moon." (*Riders*. p. 21) Bartley, either because of his unreasonable zeal or being a young man who is not able to take the lesson and put in his consideration the tragic ends of his relatives, cannot read the situation correctly and that is why he has to suffer the bad consequences and the miserable mother should endure Bartley's unnecessary death.

Maurya has suffered so much distresses and that is what creates a type of impregnability against agony starting to behave as if nothing unhappy has occurred. The death of her sons appears as it is something normal when she tries to find consolation saying, "Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that?" (*Riders*. p. 30)

Lary Wallace states that stoicism is "a philosophy of grim endurance, of carrying on rather than getting over, of tolerating rather than transcending life's agonies and adversities." Relying on Wallace's opinion, Maurya should be



regarded as an ideal stoical character. The whole play is a story of her sadness. During her life, disasters have heaped up one over another. But Maurya's mourning does not crack her individuality. As a true stoic, she is of outstanding courage in dealing with the worst catastrophes that a mother may withstand. It is Maurya's stamina that enables her to stand stout bearing shocks one after the other. This stamina originates from her perception of the reality that no one at all "can be living for ever, and that we must be satisfied." (*Riders*. p. 30) She attempts to come across solace in the truth that she needs not to watch the sea moods and shed tears or pray for anyone and that is what represents a type of long rest for her.

Cathleen and Nora can be regarded as stoical characters for the reason that they share their mother all the accidents and calamities brought on by the forces of nature. They experience abreast of Maurya their brothers' painful deaths along with that of their father and grandfather. Similar to Maurya, the young girls are of great ability of endurance. In the situation where they receive a bundle of clothes for making sure that it belongs to Michael, they express exceptional fortitude when they hide a huge secret for the aim of keeping the old woman, who is about to sleep after long duration of staying awake, away from new suffering.

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**LECTURE (9)**

**Macbeth: the Inner Flaw and the Great Exterior Defiance**

The interaction between Macbeth and the witches is of vital role in designing Macbeth's thinking about his own life before and after Duncan's murder. The witches enumerate three prophecies to Macbeth:

First Witch: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

Second Witch: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

Third Witch: All hail, Macbeth that shall be king hereafter! (I.iii.48-51)

These prophecies become a powerful force in directing the events of the play. At the moment that Duncan's messenger joins Macbeth to tell the order of appointing him Thane of Cawdor, Macbeth comments saying, "Two truths are told. As happy prologues to the swelling act, Of the imperial theme." (I.iii.128-30) This situation represents a turning point in the events for giving the witches a sort of vigour of prophecy.

The witches, who have no authority to force their will upon others, can appeal to an already existing drift to direct one's desire towards an exact event. They make their appeal to Macbeth's and Banquo's desires aiming to direct their own future. Banquo, on the one hand, is powerfully enticed by them but "his reaction to the prophecies of the witches is very different to Macbeth's." He puts in his consciousness the fact that he has to protect his honour and his social position. Banquo is able to keep his moral caution away from his desire. For being vulnerable, Macbeth, on the other hand, cannot act in accordance with this awareness. He seizes upon the idea that he has just been made Thane of

Cawdor. He uses this news as an excuse to satisfy himself about what he wants to believe that the witches tell him the truth. He says:

Macbeth: This supernatural soliciting

Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill,

Why hath it given me earnest of success?

Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor. (I.iii.131-34)

The witches appeal to what Macbeth wants to believe. They do nothing to make him accept what they have said. They do not tell him a plan in order to achieve their prophecies. They give no tip about Duncan's murder. In his book, *Macbeth*, John Harvey confirms that "they never tell Macbeth any lies; they only allow him to deceive himself. External evil takes advantage of internal weakness." As a result, the witches cannot be the origin of the idea of the crime. They suggest to such idea, but they do not create it. The witches offer no specific recommendations about the immediate action that Macbeth must do, but they influence him by addressing secret desires within himself leading him to behave in accordance with their suggestion.

It is true that Macbeth is responsible for making his final decision, but the play would be largely different if Macbeth is fortified against the prophecies. The idea is put in his mind with the help of the witches and that is why he begins to think about the killing of the king. Although the witches have influenced Macbeth, they are not responsible for Macbeth's behavior. They are responsible for introducing the idea which fires his illegitimate ambition and leads to an unnecessary chain of events.

As Duncan's chief champion, Macbeth's career has been ruled by loyalty. As soon as the idea of being the king arises in his mind, he is corrupted and is no longer trustworthy because his mind is filled up with evil and deceit. A fact that cannot be denied is that with Macbeth's help the king has overcome all his



consequences which will be disastrous. Moreover, he is intelligent enough to appreciate the public result of killing Duncan. Macbeth knows even before he does the deed that the cost will be expensive. But he cannot stop his desire.

To act on one's desire to usurp the throne is to commit fatal mistake and no one knows that better than Macbeth. When this awareness controls his mind, he determines not to carry out the murder; he tends to enjoy his high social honours that he has won. But the vision of getting the crown occupies his thinking. It is a dream which does not leave him alone and that is why even before committing the crime, Macbeth is controlled by a state of hallucination. He says, "Is this a dagger which I see before me. The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee." (II.i.33-35) Macbeth's decision to achieve the deed is marked by a curious indecision. He is never satisfied about what he really wants to do. When he goes to accomplish the crime, he starts hallucinating the sight of a dagger leading him towards the deed. He is filled with the sense of horror and that is what reflects the fact that Macbeth is in the grip of his imagination.

Macbeth has freely chosen to embrace evil in his imagination. That is why; to say that Macbeth is vulnerable towards the thought of getting the kingdom is quite correct. But one cannot describe him as a weak man as A. N. Jeffares does. He says:

Fundamentally Macbeth is a weak man; after vacillating and deciding to abandon the idea of killing the king, he is finally forced into Murdering Duncan by his wife.

No one can deny the great influence of Macbeth's wife. "Her eyes are fixed upon the crown and the means to it." She is of strong desire to get the throne, "but not for herself for her husband." She continually encourages Macbeth to carry out the murder. Stephen Siddall, who believes that women can be influenced by evil easier than men, compares Lady Macbeth to Eve. He state,

“when Satan, disguised as a spirit, first tempted Eve, who then tempted Adam.” But Macbeth is not weak to the point that he is forced by his wife to kill the king. Macbeth is, "a wanton murderer, and his offence is aggravated, not diminished, by his own realization of its significances." Macbeth is well known as a fearless warrior and champion in the battle field. The king himself willingly honours him as brave and trusted, he calls him "valiant cousin" and "worthy gentleman." (I.ii.24)

Macbeth's good nature is soon defeated by his diseased ambition when the king makes Malcolm, his son, the prince of Cumberland. Macbeth kills his guest, Duncan, while he is staying at his castle. Macbeth, who has overcome by evil, is able to gain the kingship. But he feels bad. He wishes that he had not killed the King. He says:

Macbeth: Had I but died an hour before this chance,  
I had liv'd a blessed time; for, from this instant,  
There's nothing serious in mortality—  
All is but toys; renown and grace is dead;  
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees  
Is left this vault to brag of. (II.iii.91-96)

Macbeth reaches the conclusion that the assassination is imperfect and as a result he has to deal with many potential personal conflicts. He feels unsafe believing that Banquo will work to influence the minds of the people against him as reflected in the following speech, “But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo.” (III.i.47)

Macbeth thinks that Duncan's death is not enough to secure the crown for him. It is only by further crime that he can maintain what he has obtained by the first one. As a method to rid himself out of Banquo and to ensure his position on the throne, Macbeth decides to kill Banquo and his only son, Fleance, for the reason

that Fleance was predicted to be the king of Scotland. He uses others to carry out his plans. Later, Macbeth receives bad news. Banquo is killed, but Fleance is able to escape. This event represents the climax of the play after which the forces against Macbeth become more and more powerful. Banquo's ghost arouses terror within Macbeth. This terror is not so much a trace of moral compunction. It is a result of his knowledge that his crimes are not a part of the past. The appearance of the ghost indicates the failure of Macbeth's strategy of committing murders. But he goes in sinking to his destructive bestiality.

Macbeth thinks that he is invincible depending on the second apparition which tells him that no man of woman born can defeat him:

Macbeth: What's the boy Malcolm?  
Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know  
All mortal consequences have pronounc'd me thus:  
'Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of woman  
Shall e'er have power upon thee'. (V.iii.3-7)

This means that Macbeth is completely cheated or greatly influenced by the supernatural forces. He does not recognize that the witches do not work to help him, but to achieve their devilish needs.

Near the end of the play, Macbeth hires killers to kill Macduff's family, a Scotland nobleman, while he is outside his castle and that is why he decides to avenge this murder. Macduff and Malcolm join forces to fight against Macbeth. Made by the branches of trees, the camouflage of their soldiers deceives Macbeth who believes that it is Birnam Wood mentioned in the third apparition which maintains:

Apparition: Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until

Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane Hill

Shall come against him. (IV.i.91-93)

So, Macbeth realizes that he is no longer safe. Macduff fights him face to face in the final scene as a criminal who is fighting for keeping his life but not as in the past, a patriotic champion who is fighting for the sake of his country. Macbeth is killed, Malcolm occupies his position. During the fighting Macduff tells Macbeth that he is no more than a butt, a joke has been played upon him by the witches in telling him that no man of woman born can kill Macbeth:

Macduff:                      Despair thy charm;

And let the angel whom thou still hast serv'd

Tell thee Macduff was from his mother's womb

Untimely ripp'd. (V.viii.13-16)



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**LECTURE (10)**

**Revenge Tragedy**

No discussion of revenge tragedy will be satisfactory without giving an idea of what revenge is. It is an old term used to describe the harmful action emanated from someone who has been trespassed. It is directed against the aggressor as a reaction to oppression. During the Elizabethan age, the Church and the state did not accept revenge. Committing private bloody revenge was illegal; the original criminal and the revenger should face the same punishment for the reason that justice, with no doubt, was among the heavy responsibilities of the government. Moreover, revenge murder was regarded as the worst of all kinds of murders for being forbidden. The Christian ethics condemned revenge considering "it a right that only God has-Vengeance is mine saith the Lord." In accordance with a profoundly rooted tradition, the wronged person believes that it is right to carry his revenge out so as to restore family standing. The revenger acts far from religion and law thinking that justice should be achieved even if aside from valid laws. "Always the motive is revenge, a motive often conceived in the Senecan spirit, not a wild kind of justice, but as a solemn duty which may not be neglected."

Revenge tragedy was given us by the Greeks. It had its roots in Sophocle's and Euripide's tragedies. As its name signifies, revenge tragedy is "a tragic play in which the tragedy results from the revenge that is taken, for some wrong or wrongs, either by the person wronged himself or by someone else on his behalf."

Depending on Greek tragedy, Seneca was the one who laid down the ground work and the pattern to be followed for all the Renaissance tragedians. T.S. Eliot states, "no author exercised a wider or deeper influence upon the Elizabethan mind, upon the Elizabethan form of tragedy than did Seneca." He was the greatest classical tragedy author whose writings the Elizabethans had read. Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedians were gripped by Seneca's model. Although he wrote many types of tragedies, they were attracted to Senecan revenge tragedies and in particular *Medea*, *Thyestes*, and *Agamemnon*.

The genre of English revenge tragedy started from the mid- 1580s to the early 1640s, that was from the Elizabethan to the Caroline period. Almost in all revenge tragedies, a crime should occur and the criminal is able to get off punishment for different causes. In most cases the crime is sexual, violent or both. It is always committed against one of the close relatives of the main character whose soliloquies and asides enable him to establish good relationship with the audience. A ghost appears to urge the main character to seek revenge. Henceforth the plan for revenge is put in operation; the revenger starts to behave outside religious and lawful orders. Sometimes, the revenger pretends madness in order to cover his intention. Madness offers an excellent protection system because the mad man is avoided by others and is irresponsible even in front of the laws. Pretending madness enables the revenger to avoid the responsibility of any wrong behaviour and as a result the powerful enemy to go on in his vengeful plan. Delay or hesitation occurs to prolong the events of the play. These are attended by conspiracies and sometimes a play within the play. The theme of revenge undoubtedly is the main idea around which all the events of the play are centered.

Most of the great dramatists of Elizabethan and Jacobean periods participated in developing this type of tragedy including William Shakespeare, Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlowe, John Webster, John Marston, John Ford and others. It is

to be noted that the mentioned dramatists were not working in accordance with a restricted blueprint of what revenge tragedy must be. They dealt with revenge tragedy as a concept that one can vary concentration from one instance to another rather than to follow defined standards. As one critic states, "tragedy is today a concept that we deduce from the contemplation of a heap of tragedies." It is true that Seneca's impact on Elizabethan tragic writers was very clear, but one cannot deny the fact that during the time between Kyd and Webster many other elements came across their route into Elizabethan and Jacobean revenge tragedies.

Elizabethan tragedians grew more capable with the form of revenge tragedy for being more sophisticated in treating characters, themes, and motifs. It was Kyd who founded the genre of revenge tragedy in England by 1586 when he wrote *The Spanish Tragedy*, a play which contained many of the basic characteristics of the genre. Although critics agree that Kyd was the innovator of English revenge tragedy, they marked that his plays were coarse and even unrefined in exploring the theme of revenge. Shakespeare's first attempt to write revenge tragedy was his *Titus Andronicus* (1594). It was greatly influenced by *The Spanish Tragedy* and was one of the frightful plays. Revenge tragedies of the late Elizabethan period, the Jacobean period, were characterized by grim and cynical statements directed to criticize the moral and spiritual disorder created because of decay and moral disintegration of the society. After *The Spanish Tragedy*, this kind of drama can be traced in some tragic plays such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Tourneur's *The Revenger's Tragedy*, Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* and *Malcontent*, and Webster's *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*.