

Fourth semester Minor

Macbeth

The character of Lady Macbeth

Lady Macbeth is one of Shakespeare's most famous and frightening female characters. When we first see her, she is already plotting Duncan's murder, and she is stronger, more ruthless, and more ambitious than her husband. She seems fully aware of this and knows that she will have to push Macbeth into committing murder. At one point, she wishes that she were not a woman so that she could do it herself.

This theme of the relationship between gender and power is key to Lady Macbeth's character: her husband implies that she is a masculine soul inhabiting a female body, which seems to link masculinity to ambition and violence. Shakespeare, however, seems to use her, and the witches, to undercut Macbeth's idea that "undaunted mettle should compose / Nothing but males" (1.7.73–74). These crafty women use *female* methods of achieving power—that is, manipulation—to further their supposedly male ambitions. Women, the play implies, can be as ambitious and cruel as men, yet social constraints deny them the means to pursue these ambitions on their own.

Lady Macbeth manipulates her husband with remarkable effectiveness, overriding all his objections; when he hesitates to murder, she repeatedly questions his manhood until he feels that he must commit murder to prove himself. Lady Macbeth's remarkable strength of will persists through the murder of the king—it is she who steadies her husband's nerves immediately after the crime has been perpetrated.

Afterward, however, Lady Macbeth begins a slow slide into madness—just as ambition affects her more strongly than Macbeth before the crime, so does guilt plague her more strongly afterward. By the close of the play, she has been reduced to sleepwalking through the castle, desperately trying to wash away an invisible bloodstain. Once the sense of guilt comes home to roost, Lady Macbeth's sensitivity becomes a weakness, and she is unable to cope. Significantly, she (apparently) kills herself, signaling her total inability to deal with the legacy of their crimes.

The sleepwalking scene

Act 5, Scene 1, better known as the **sleepwalking scene**, is a critically celebrated scene from William Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth* (1606). It deals with the guilt and madness experienced by Lady Macbeth, one of the main themes of the play.

Carrying a taper (candlestick), Lady Macbeth enters sleepwalking. The Doctor and the Gentlewoman stand aside to observe. The Doctor asks how Lady Macbeth came to have the light. The Gentlewoman replies she has ordered a light be beside her at all times (she is now afraid of the dark, having

committed her crimes under its cover). Lady Macbeth rubs her hands in a washing motion. With anguish, she recalls the deaths of King Duncan, Lady Macduff, and Banquo, then leaves. The Gentlewoman and the bewildered Doctor exeunt, realizing these are the symptoms of a guilt-ridden mind. The Doctor feels Lady Macbeth is beyond his help, saying she has more need of "the divine than the physician". He orders the Gentlewoman to remove from Lady Macbeth the "means of all annoyance", anticipating she might commit suicide. Despite his warning, the audience is informed in Act 5, Scene 5, that Lady Macbeth has managed to commit suicide off-stage.

Summary of Macbeth

Act I

On a bleak Scottish moorland, Macbeth and Banquo, two of King Duncan's generals, discover three strange women (witches). The witches prophesy that Macbeth will be promoted twice: to Thane of Cawdor (a rank of the aristocracy bestowed by grateful kings) and King of Scotland. Banquo's descendants will be kings, but Banquo isn't promised any kingdom himself. The generals want to hear more, but the "weird sisters" disappear.

Soon afterwards, King Duncan names Macbeth Thane of Cawdor as a reward for his success in the recent battles. The promotion seems to support the prophecy. The King then proposes to make a brief visit that night to Macbeth's castle at Inverness. Lady Macbeth receives news from her husband about the prophecy and his new title. She vows to help him become king by whatever means are necessary (*ominous music*).

Is this a dagger which I see before me?

— **MACBETH, ACT 2 SCENE 1**

Macbeth with Henry Irving Programme, 1889

Act II

Macbeth returns to his castle, followed almost immediately by King Duncan. The Macbeths plot together to kill Duncan and wait until everyone is asleep. At the appointed time, Lady Macbeth gives the guards drugged wine so Macbeth can enter and kill the King. He regrets this almost immediately, but his wife reassures him. She leaves the bloody daggers by the dead king just before Macduff, a nobleman, arrives. When Macduff discovers the murder, Macbeth kills the drunken guards in a show of rage and retribution. Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, flee, fearing for their own lives; but they are, nevertheless, blamed for the murder.

Act III

Macbeth becomes King of Scotland but is plagued by feelings of insecurity. He remembers the prophecy that Banquo's descendants will inherit the throne and arranges for Banquo and his son Fleance to be killed. In the darkness, Banquo is murdered, but his son escapes the assassins. At his state banquet that night, Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo and worries the courtiers with his mad response. Lady Macbeth dismisses the court and unsuccessfully tries to calm her husband.

Act IV

Macbeth seeks out the witches who say that he will be safe until a local wood, Birnam Wood, marches into battle against him. He also need not fear anyone born of woman (that sounds secure, no loopholes here). They also prophesy that the Scottish succession will still come from Banquo's son. Macbeth embarks on a reign of terror, slaughtering many, including Macduff's family. Macduff had gone to seek Malcolm (one of Duncan's sons who fled) at the court of the English king. Malcolm is young and unsure of himself, but Macduff, pained with grief, persuades him to lead an army against Macbeth.

By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes

— **MACBETH, ACT 4 SCENE 1**

Royal Shakespeare Company, 1967

Act V

Macbeth feels safe in his remote castle at Dunsinane until he is told that Birnam Wood is moving towards him. Malcolm's army is carrying branches from the forest as camouflage for their assault on Macbeth's stronghold. Meanwhile, an overwrought and conscience-ridden Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep and tells her secrets to her doctor. She commits suicide. As the final battle commences, Macbeth hears of Lady Macbeth's suicide and mourns.

Out, damned spot!

— **MACBETH, ACT 5 SCENE 1**

George Skellan as Macbeth, 1920

In the midst of a losing battle, Macduff challenges Macbeth. Macbeth learns Macduff is the child of a caesarean birth (loophole!), realises he is doomed, and submits to his enemy. Macduff triumphs and brings the head of the traitor Macbeth to Malcolm. Malcolm declares peace and goes to Scone to be crowned king.

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Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow

— **MACBETH, ACT 5 SCENE 5**

MACBETH AS A REVENGE PLAY

1. Introduction

As Macbeth and his spouse become power hungry, Macbeth creates plans to murder King Duncan. Lady Macbeth soon forces him to kill the king, and this ultimately leads to Macbeth's despair. At this point, the resentment and hatred between characters creates an even more profound feeling with many different aspects including the need for revenge and secret longings. evaluate Lady Macbeth in accordance with her husband's controversy and demonstrate Macbeth's overall suffering in the story. Macbeth schemes to murder the king in his bed and begins to reveal his murderous wishes through hallucinations and nightmares. Macbeth seems to imply that his bitterness and unspeakable desires are only justified by his wife's angry exchange. Of course, the witches spurred this discourse against her, but the act of trying on the crown and circuit, which gave Lady Macbeth her only joy, ultimately consumes the lives and ambitions of Macbeth and his spouse. The despair and guilt experienced at the beginning of the account now become intense.

1.1. Background of Macbeth

William Shakespeare's Macbeth was written in about 1606. Shakespeare was writing at a time when revenge plays were first being introduced to the stage (performance houses) in England. It is a dark, brooding, violent play that some audiences have found very convincing. Macbeth explores why people make such evil decisions, what leads them to them, and how difficult it is to escape them. The play concerns evil, revenge, betrayal, and power, which are essentially related to one another. The play's power-laden society, that is, kings, noblemen, and so on, is full of fear and suspicion, and leaves the characters, including Macbeth, feeling either threatened or threatening others. The only recognized method allowed for personal advancement and vengeance is through the violence of a duel. The play speaks of a disorder, a breaking down of social norms and values that had become unchallenged for many years. One response was to write laws that gave quick and rough justice, but the most enduring social actions are left to an unemotional, abstract, and seemingly uncaring principle of justice, under which making beastly decisions had already been taken. The concepts of revenge provide the motive for the activity of Macbeth, thereby producing a powerful effect on all characters in the play.

2. Understanding Revenge in Macbeth

Revenge is often seen as a wild, uncontrollable emotion. It is seen as bringing widely felt destruction to so many involved in the action. Because of these overwhelming issues, people often wonder what would cause

one individual to act in such a way. Revenge is an emotion of giving back tit for tat. William Shakespeare's tragedy "Macbeth" is a tale of a man who can barely resist his temptation for evil and is eventually driven to his destruction by such desire and want for power. Throughout the play, the characters' revenge is seen taking a role in their lives. Understanding this is the stepping stone in trying to understand why these characters are an unavoidable force in many lives. It is seen as a force with enough supernatural power to destroy reason in those who feel it and power enough to cause a mob of people to justify and carry out a violent act to help right the wrong. It is thought that in Macbeth's times, letting a serious wrong go unpunished was never thought of as an option. A vengeful eye for an eye style feeling was always felt towards solving very bad problems. As one can see, there were many forms of it on several different levels. It was one for crime, for payment due on a loan, for rescuing someone, for keeping a lifelong oath, for surviving after a public attack, and many more minor problems could all result in revenge being enacted. People were also seen as feeling the need to help others repay a wrong after seeing that a horrible crime was committed against them. There would have been many reasons as to why revenge was enforced with such a heavy hand. Revenge was seen as a way to help settle the score, and in the end, it would help clear a person's mind. In Macbeth, viewers can see that some of the characters live their entire lives for the revenge of others.

2.1. Definition and Forms of Revenge

Revenge, which is defined as a harmful action against a person or group in response to a real or perceived grievance, is also a basic underlying motif in the drama of early periods. The Greeks called the ensuing conflict between the two characters "Dramaticon," which later became the arena of Tragedy. It was also one of the leading genres of Romanticism in the 19th century and recreated kind of revenge in modern society. Especially a literary text can be a suitable platform for an individual's self-expression about revenge. Revenge may occur on account of several reasons such as gaining a higher position, breaking the class hierarchy, love, and circumstance. Avenging oneself from others is a way of gaining control at a given time. It can be an easily tempted action to control the circumstances. In specifying oneself, an individual needs someone to measure oneself against in deeds, to feel superior, which makes revenge a favorable action for individuals in society. This might also be defined as gaining higher positions and breaking class hierarchy. Different social rank's characters can represent the reduplicative role. Thus, leaving someone by arranging the events or performing a provocative behavior loses the meaning of the reduplicative role for the absolute redress helper. However, one of the most relevant reasons for revenge is the perception of unfairness. Before self-interest, the unfair action evokes the desire for revenge in everyone, according to area determination by Festinger in the foundation of 1954. After establishing why it is essential to speak, it is time to move to the purpose of our interest.

3. Revenge as a Motive in Macbeth

Revenge takes on a constant and dynamic role throughout the play Macbeth. It's a fascinating motive for the murderers we are first introduced to, as they try to shift from stoicism to stoicism which represents the constant recurrence of violence and revenge in the following acts. In Macbeth, the witches plant the first of

these seeds in his head. As Banquo listens in on what the three old hags are saying, he asks them about his own coming fortune. This causes Macbeth to feel that since they spoke of Banquo's offspring as "kings," or at least being so to Banquo, yet Banquo expressed some doubt in the witches' words, perhaps Banquo would stand in Macbeth's way. Macbeth had convinced himself that he would be succeeded by his descendants, yet after pushing Banquo to the side and ridding himself of any rival - he attempted to annihilate Banquo even after death, as he thanked his murderers by asking that they go after Fleance as well. On the other hand, is the revenge of Lady Macbeth. The witches speaking to Macbeth about Banquo's offspring are her source of revenge, as the witches were completely responsible for all of Lady Macbeth's misfortune. Lady Macbeth becomes power-hungry and yet, at the same time, she sets out to win that power through Macbeth. But consider that, even before the appearance of the witches, Lady Macbeth had made plans of some sort to take the throne. After Macbeth arrives in Scotland in Act I, for instance, Lady Macbeth begins in earnest to skew Macbeth's decisions about killing the king towards a definite and suitable end. So, some measure of motive lies in Lady Macbeth's intense hounding of Macbeth in the first three acts. Lady Macbeth is thus not so much about what someone would do with power as she is about what someone would do to gain that power in the first place. Lady Macbeth's evocation of revenge is an opportunistic one.

3.1. Macbeth's Motivation for Revenge

Human response to loss, and in particular the message that revenge leads to ruin, not only for the avenger but even for the innocent, is one of the most enduring themes in literature. It is treated masterfully by Shakespeare in one of his most famous works, *Macbeth*. Macbeth is a figure who undergoes a transformation from a military hero to a murderer. His myth of greatness then descends into terror and torment. Nevertheless, in modern society, there remains admiration for the man who stands up for his rights and, if necessary, avenges himself. This potential for greatness in a character also brings with it an offering of freedom from anguish. In his original state, Macbeth is a true hero. The evidence of this transformation is seen in his correspondence with his wife. Only after his relative success on the battlefield, being judged fit to become Thane of Cawdor, does his wife's letter arrive. The style of her letter assumes a certain pre-eminence attached to her and an intimate knowledge of her husband. Only a figure demonstrating various strengths could condescend to these too. Furthermore, the original Macbeth describes the witches as one of the fantastical objects adorning his future wife's thoughts and actions, revealing his understanding of his wife. This understanding is reciprocated by forward gleanings of his life and by a commentary that implies the lack of guile in her husband.

4. Consequences of Revenge in Macbeth

Macbeth's decision to kill Macduff's family is supported by his claim, "But I will also cause that to be most wretched upon your lineage. That is how I'll achieve peace and quiet from my hate." This description simply means that he wishes one of Banquo's descendants to be more miserable and wretched than he is himself. Yet he himself has already murdered Banquo and given orders for the murders of Lady Macduff and her children, as though their miseries are not to be compared to his own feelings. The well-being of almost all the play's characters is destroyed as a result of the revenge that all of them take. Macduff, like Macbeth,

wails and mourns over the bodies of his wife and child, and seems anxious and willing to express with his limited vocabulary and means his whole soul and the depth of his pain. Every single character has some harm come to them. Malcolm becomes "king and calls the dead to come to life so that they can be unhappy." If these are the results of revenge, it is not worth taking. The description is interesting from a dramatic point of view, but it is painful and has a depressing effect on the audience. The consequences of revenge provide a profoundly anti-revenge statement. The consequences of pursuing it are not only negative (the word "insane" is the only way we can think of to describe Macbeth), but rootless and irrational.

4.1. Tragic Endings

It's difficult to know how to feel about Macbeth, although he is responsible for so many terrible things. The Witches predicted that Macbeth would first become Thane of Cawdor and then become King, but then his lineage would end under Banquo's kids. Macbeth probably thinks that he's doing the right thing for his lineage by taking out Banquo and his sons, despite the fact that he's already king by this point. But, is he really in it for his kids, or is Macbeth in his own fight for power up to his eyes? Macbeth also decides to kill Macduff's family, even though Macduff has great things to say about Malcolm's rule of Scotland. If Macbeth would have just let things be, he might have even been a Thane again instead of being killed, but that's not what happened. Macduff wants to kill Macbeth in a non-vengeful but heroic way to avenge his family, while Macbeth believes he can't be killed. In the end, Macbeth gets what's coming to him at the hands of Macduff, and Malcolm is restored to the throne. And, in Scotland, all is right again. The vengeful killings helped the good people win – this time. Other times, rage and revenge lead the good people to do the very wrong things.

5. Conclusion

To an extent, it can be said that revenge is a pivotal theme of the play, as the actions of Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, and other central characters only occur significantly, or indeed at all, as a consequence of acts of revenge or the desire to revenge. Revenge suggests the need for retaliation due to the damage or offense inflicted, often without much thought about the consequences of their actions. On another level, one of the reasons why revenge plays such a major role in the play and the action of the characters is because they mainly consist of flawed and fearful personalities. For instance, Macbeth acts to revenge his own insecurity and personal worthlessness, driven to extreme measures to apparently protect himself from existence and maintain his power. However, for all Macbeth's apparent determination and Lady Macbeth's manipulative skills, fear and guilt eventually overcome them both, leading to their downfall and tragedies, underpinning the pervasive theme of revenge within William Shakespeare's Macbeth. Therefore, the limits to the importance of the theme of revenge must be remembered. Macbeth's reign of tyranny is stopped with the avenging force of Macduff's army and Malcolm's revenge for his family's deaths, but there has been widespread suffering of many others. The last line of the play remains enigmatically appropriate, as it is strikingly unjust for the many families sucked up in Macbeth's downfall.

Notes from **Justice** by Galsworthy:

Q. Justify the significance of the title 'Justice'.

Ans: John Galsworthy deliberately chose the title Justice in order to satirize the contemporary social and legal systems of the country, which in the name of 'justice' forced the helpless individuals like Falder and Ruth to suffer and perish finally in the most inhuman way in a 'civilised' society.

Q. Justify the sub-title of the drama 'A tragedy'. Or, Do you think Justice a social tragedy?

Ans: Justice is different from the other tragedies written in Aristotelian formula. There is no conventional hero-villain conflict in the play. The central protagonist Falder is not at all a heroic figure; rather he is of a weak-willed and nervous personality. Again, the place of the villain has been taken by the inhuman social and legal systems, to which the hero becomes a victim.

Character of Falder/Falder as a tragic hero.

Ans: In Galsworthy's Justice the central protagonist, Falder is a weak-willed and nervous person with a good intention of providing relief to a suffering woman. In so doing he commits a crime which leads him to prison and to death. Thus he becomes a pathetic figure rather than a tragic one.

Q. Character of Ruth Honeywill :

Ans: Ruth is a poor, unimpressive woman married to a brutish drunkard. Her suffering makes her love Falder sincerely. Again, she does all this more for her children than for herself. Like Ruth in the Old Testament she is sad and gloomy figure. All her hopes, however, get shattered at the death of Falder.

Q. Who is James How? How and what does he declare about Falder?

Ans: James How is the embodiment of the cruel, inhuman social and legal system. It is not, of course, that he is the villain of the piece. He judges and acts on the prevalent conventional morality that makes him blind to the serious flaws in the systems. He is the owner of the firm in which Falder is a junior clerk. When he comes to know of the crime, he decides to send him to jail.

Who is Walter How? What does he decide about Falder?

Ans: Walter How, the son of James How, stands as a foil to his father. Owing to generosity and clear view of events, he judges everything on the human ground and tries his best to dissuade his father from sending Falder to prison. While his father represents conventional morality, Walter How represents the kind of morality Galsworthy wants the social and the legal institutions to go by. When Walter comes to know of the crime committed by Falder, he decides not to send him to jail as it is his first crime.

Q.The character of Cokeson .

Ans: In Galsworthy's Justice Cokeson, the head clerk of How's firm, is a good-natured person, but he has his limitations as a member of the lower middleclass. He understands Falder and feels for him, but he cannot go against his employer. Finally, he answers all fittingly at the end when Falder dies.

Q.“It is a matter of life and death”.Who says this and to whom and why?

Ans: Tortured by her drunkard husband almost to death, Ruth Honeywell comes to meet Falder for being rescued from him. But in the office, Cokeson tells her that such personal affairs are not entertained. This forces Ruth to entreat him with these words.

Q.“Justice is a machine.” Who says this and why?

Ans: Falder's defence counsel, Mr. Frome introduces the metaphor of machine in order to convey the sense that the legal system operates in such an inhuman way that it makes mockery of the concept of 'justice' and destroys the individual completely. The end of the drama, the end of Falder's life proves his words.

Q.“Law is what it is, a majestic edifice sheltering all f us” Who says this, when and why?

Ans: In the course of sentencing Falder to imprisonment, the judge as a protector and agent of the existing legal system asserts that the institution of law is a noble one. It seeks to protect the good citizens from the bad ones, to protect the society. The judge is the spokesman of the conventional concept of 'justice' in the contemporary judicial system. Naturally, his opinions and views do not go by human norms.

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It must have been temptation of the moment” ...A man does not succumb like this.” Who says this? Why does he say so? What do you think of his character from the speech?

Ans: After the detection of Falder’s forgery and his confession, James How decides upon prosecuting Falder. Walter How, his son, pleads for Falder’s case. He opines that Falder, a gentleman, must have been tempted to do this. His words indicate that he is a good-natured youth, who judges everything on the human ground.

Q.“The quality of mercy is not strained...” Where does the speaker quote the line from? Why does he do so?

Ans: The speaker, Walter How, quotes the famous line from Portia’s speech in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, where she appeals to Shylock for Antonio’s case. Walter How wants to convey that mercy is a greater virtue and, therefore, greater justice, which makes everyone happy. He tries to convey his father that they should pardon on this virtue.

Significance of the Mute Scene in *Justice*.

Ans: The Mute Scene (Act III, scene iii) is very important from the theatrical point of view since through this Galsworthy presents the deep agony of a helpless man, Falder in the solitary confinement. The scene arouses not only our pity and fear, but also our hatred for the system.

Q.Significance of the Trial Scene in *Justice*.

Ans: The Trial Scene in *Justice* sets the play in motion. The title of the play is directly related to the Trial Scene which concretises the conflict between two abstract forces of antagonism—law versus humanity.

Q. Would you consider *Justice* a problem play? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans: Yes, *Justice* can be considered a problem play because it highlights a social issue, the flaws in the legal system, and the conflict between the law and justice. Galsworthy exposes the limitations of the justice system in providing true justice for all, especially for the underprivileged. He uses the play to question the fairness of the legal system and advocates for reforms.

Who stood for Falder’s defence in the court? Comment upon his character.

Ans. William Falder's defense lawyer in John Galsworthy's "*Justice*" is Mr. Frome. He is a kind-hearted and compassionate man who takes a genuine interest in Falder's welfare. Despite the odds against him, Mr. Frome fights valiantly to secure a just verdict for his client, displaying an unwavering commitment to his duty as a lawyer.

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Q. How does the play *Justice* present women's problem in the contemporary England? Comment upon the character of the Governor of the prison.

Ans. The play "*Justice*" by John Galsworthy highlights the challenges faced by women in contemporary England, particularly those who are marginalized and without resources. Here is Ruth Honeywell and her plights at getting divorce. The character of the Governor of the prison is portrayed as bureaucratic and unsympathetic towards the plight of the prisoners, which further exacerbates their suffering.

Q. How does Galsworthy present the prison as a torturing machine?

Ans. In "*Justice*," Galsworthy presents the prison as a torturing machine through the character of Falder, who suffers both physically and mentally during his imprisonment. The prison is depicted as a dehumanizing place, where inmates are treated as numbers rather than individuals and subjected to harsh punishments and oppressive routines. Galsworthy portrays the prison system as a failed institution that fails to rehabilitate or reform its inmates

The Rising of the Moon

Q. Is the title *The Rising of the Moon* justified?

Ans:

The title "*The Rising of the Moon*" is justified because it holds both literal and symbolic meanings related to the play's content and context. Literally, the play unfolds overnight as the sergeant watches the moon rise, symbolically, the "rising" signifies the resurgence of Irish nationalism and political resistance. Hence, the title aptly captures the setting, themes, and larger political implications of the play.

The "moon" in the title of Lady Gregory's play has both literal and symbolic meaning and thus is an important element of the title. Furthermore, the idea of "rising" is related to the specific action that occurs within the play and the broader concept of "uprising" as political resistance. Therefore, both

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elements of the title are very appropriate to the play's content and the larger context in which they author wrote it.

On the literal level, the action occurs overnight. The sergeant watches the moon rise, and while he does so, he comes into contact with the ragged man. The physical setting and interaction between the men soon connects thematically with the idea of Irish nationalism. The feelings that resurface in the sergeant and the larger question of political resistance are both embodied in the "rising" metaphor.

In "The Rising of the Moon," who does the singer reveal himself as?

answer:

In "The Rising of the Moon," the singer initially introduces himself as "Jimmy Walsh," a ballad seller. However, as the narrative unfolds, he reveals his true identity as an Irish rebel sought by the English government. Interestingly, he spends most of the story in conversation with a Sergeant involved in the manhunt, who doesn't recognize him. By the end, the Sergeant discovers his hidden Irish sympathies and allows the rebel to escape.

The singer, a man in ragged clothing, first identifies himself as "Jimmy Walsh", a ballad singer who only wants to sell some songs to sailors landing at the wharf. By the end of the story, he reveals himself to be an escaped political criminal, an Irish rebel .

Sketch the character of the Sergeant in "The Rising of The Moon ".

The sergeant is the leader of the company of police officers, and he is in charge of the effort to recapture the prisoners. During the play, we learn of his past and life and that he is something of an Irish patriot, but the path of his life led him to follow safety and security, so he agreed to be a patrolmen with the British and has now found himself the sergeant of this company of police officers. He becomes somewhat fond of the prisoner.

Sketch the character of the Ragged man in the play:

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The ragged man in the play is having heroic qualities as he is smart and a passionate lover of his country. He introduces himself as a ballad singer and also touches the heart of the police officer by singing love and patriotic ballads. He is so perfect in making-up his identity that the policeman (sergeant) cannot suspect him until he reveals his identity. He intelligently brings out stories from the sergeant which proves his wittiness.

He succeeds in bringing out the feelings of patriotism from the sergeant, turns himself into a friend of the sergeant and escapes safely from being imprisoned again. But before escaping, he expresses gratitude to the sergeant with a note of optimism. He promises him to pay back his good turn. He is optimistic and tells that a day will surely come that Ireland will be free from the British rules.

Give the setting of The play:

The play "The Rising of the Moon " by Lady Augusta Gregory is set on a moonlit night on the side of a quay in an unnamed Irish seaport town. The setting is important for a few reasons:

The time of night and the moonlight create a tense and mysterious atmosphere. The rising moon symbolizes the awakening of Irish nationalism and the struggle for independence from British rule. It also represents the transformation of the sergeant's loyalties and sense of duty.

The setting is important to the plot of the play.

Give the symbolic significance of the play:

The title "The Rising of the Moon" is symbolic of the play's themes of political awakening, independence, and the Irish resistance movement. The rising moon symbolizes the political awakening of the Irish people and the rise of their political independence.

The rising moon represents the gradual but inevitable rise of Irish resistance to British rule.

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The play explores the Irish people's desire to assert their national identity and sovereignty. The title encapsulates the play's themes of transformation and the personal journey of its characters.

Study Material

Minor

Topic: Arms and the Man by George Bernard Shaw

1. Introduction to George Bernard Shaw

Life and Career

George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) was an Irish playwright, critic, polemicist, and political activist. A leading figure in modern British drama, Shaw combined wit with social critique.

Philosophy and Themes

Shaw was influenced by Fabian socialism. His plays interrogate issues like class, war, marriage, and gender roles, aiming to provoke audiences into questioning societal conventions.

2. Publication and Performance History of Arms and the Man

Written in 1894 and first performed on 21 April 1894 at the Avenue Theatre, London.

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The title derives from the opening line of Virgil's Aeneid ("Arma virumque cano"), but Shaw subverts the heroic tone by mocking romanticised notions of war.

3. Plot Overview

Act

I

Raina Petkoff romanticises her fiancé, Major Sergius. Captain Bluntschli, a Swiss mercenary, escapes into Raina's bedroom. Raina hides him.

Act

II

Sergius returns, disillusioned. Bluntschli visits to return a coat, revealing his identity.

Act

III

Raina recognises her admiration for Bluntschli's honesty. The play ends with their engagement.

4. Major Characters

Raina Petkoff: Romantic but matures into a realist.

Captain Bluntschli: Pragmatic Swiss mercenary.

Major Sergius Saranoff: Brave but vain and romantic.

Catherine & Major Petkoff: Raina's parents, comical figures.

Louka & Nicola: Servants symbolising class mobility.

5. Themes

Anti-Romanticism and Realism

Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* is well known for its sharp contrast between romantic idealism and the realistic outlook on life, war, and love. Throughout the play, Shaw challenges the false ideas promoted by romantic literature and society, replacing them with a more practical and truthful view of

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human affairs. Anti-romanticism and realism appear in the depiction of war, the treatment of love and marriage, and the exposure of social pretensions.

The portrayal of war in *Arms and the Man* strongly criticises the romantic glorification of military heroism. At the start of the play, Raina and her mother proudly admire Sergius's cavalry charge, believing it to be a noble and heroic act. However, Captain Bluntschli, the professional soldier, quickly shatters this illusion. Bluntschli speaks honestly about the actual conditions of warfare. He explains how cavalry charges are foolish and that soldiers prefer to carry chocolates instead of cartridges to survive. His statement, "Nine soldiers out of ten are born fools," directly attacks the myth of war as a noble adventure. Bluntschli's calm, practical attitude towards war stands in contrast to the exaggerated patriotism and empty glory associated with it. Through this, Shaw forces the audience to reconsider their traditional views of military honour.

Shaw also applies anti-romanticism and realism to the theme of love and marriage. Raina begins the play with a romantic image of love, seeing Sergius as a "hero" who matches the idealised lovers in novels. However, Sergius is soon revealed to be vain, flirtatious, and insincere. His secret affair with Louka proves that he is not the perfect man Raina believes him to be. On the other hand, Bluntschli, who makes no grand declarations of love and is straightforward in his conversation, slowly earns Raina's respect and affection. Their relationship is based on mutual understanding and truth rather than false admiration and social expectation. The eventual pairing of Raina and Bluntschli shows Shaw's belief in realistic relationships where honesty and practicality are more valuable than romantic fantasy.

Social class and social pretensions also undergo criticism through the realistic approach of the play. The Petkoff family takes pride in their wealth and status, often making exaggerated claims about their modern house and important position in society. Catherine Petkoff is particularly concerned about appearances and maintaining social superiority. However, Louka, the maidservant, challenges this hierarchy by openly criticising the behaviour of her masters and aiming to marry Sergius, a man of higher class. Shaw shows that class divisions are artificial and that personal qualities matter more than

social rank. Louka's ambition and eventual success in marrying Sergius demonstrate a realistic understanding of social mobility, which contrasts with the rigid and outdated social structures celebrated in romantic narratives.

The language and dialogue of the play also reflect realism. Shaw avoids poetic speeches and flowery language. Instead, he gives his characters sharp, witty, and natural dialogue that reflects how people actually speak. Bluntschli's blunt and humorous remarks break the artificial tone often found in romantic dramas. His casual manner makes the audience see how unrealistic and theatrical the behaviour of characters like Raina and Sergius can be. This stylistic choice reinforces Shaw's anti-romantic purpose and grounds the play in the realities of everyday life.

War and Heroism

Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* offers a sharp criticism of conventional ideas of war and heroism that were popular in both literature and society during his time. Through his witty dialogue and realistic characters, Shaw exposes the false glorification of war and challenges the traditional image of the heroic soldier. The play presents war not as a grand and noble adventure, but as a dangerous, foolish, and often absurd activity driven by mistakes and accidents.

Sergius Saranoff is introduced as the model of romantic heroism. He has led a cavalry charge that is considered brave and glorious by Raina and her family. To them, Sergius is the perfect example of a military hero. Raina calls him her "hero of the cavalry charge," and Catherine speaks proudly of his victory. However, as the play progresses, Shaw gradually undermines Sergius's image. It is revealed that Sergius's charge succeeded only because the enemy had the wrong ammunition and could not defend themselves properly. This fact exposes the emptiness of so-called heroism, as the success was not due to skill or courage, but to pure luck and enemy incompetence.

Captain Bluntschli, in contrast to Sergius, represents Shaw's realistic view of war. Bluntschli is a professional soldier who understands the brutal and foolish nature of warfare. His matter-of-fact attitude and ironic remarks strip away the romantic illusions of battle. He tells Raina that cavalry

charges are “the most laughable thing in the world,” and admits that he carries chocolates instead of cartridges to keep his energy up. His famous line about soldiers — “Nine soldiers out of ten are born fools” — directly attacks the popular image of brave and honourable warriors. Bluntschli’s practical and honest attitude shows that survival and efficiency, not glory and heroism, are what really matter in war.

Shaw uses humour and irony to strengthen his argument. The fact that Bluntschli survives the war and prospers while Sergius, the so-called hero, is shown as vain, uncertain, and even ridiculous, highlights the weakness of romantic notions of war. Sergius himself begins to feel disillusioned when he says, “Soldiering is the coward’s art of attacking mercilessly when you are strong, and keeping out of harm’s way when you are weak.” His confession shows that even he recognises the gap between the reality of military life and the ideals he pretended to follow.

The idea of heroism is also criticised in personal relationships. Sergius, despite being praised as a war hero, behaves dishonourably by flirting with Louka, betraying his engagement to Raina. Bluntschli, who never claims to be a hero, behaves with more honesty and integrity throughout the play. By contrasting these two men, Shaw suggests that real heroism lies not in dramatic gestures on the battlefield, but in truthfulness, rationality, and respect for others.

Shaw’s anti-romantic approach to war and heroism also extends to the way the characters talk about military leadership and strategy. Major Petkoff, supposedly a senior officer, is confused about basic military matters and struggles with simple things like folding a coat. His ignorance and laziness further show how military leaders are often unqualified and concerned more with comfort and appearances than with competence. Through such comic moments, Shaw criticises not only individual ideas of heroism but also the institutions that celebrate and reward them.

Gender Roles and Feminism

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In *Arms and the Man*, Bernard Shaw challenges the traditional gender roles of 19th-century European society and presents progressive ideas that anticipate modern feminist thought. Through his female characters—Raina, Catherine, and Louka—Shaw questions the expectations placed upon women and highlights their capacity for independence, intelligence, and social mobility.

Raina, at first, seems to fit the conventional image of the romantic, upper-class woman. She sees herself as the delicate and idealistic fiancée of a heroic soldier. However, her encounter with Captain Bluntschli begins to break down these illusions. Bluntschli treats her not as a fragile figure but as a capable individual, and their honest conversation allows Raina to move beyond the artificial role that society expects her to play. Gradually, Raina shows wit, curiosity, and a desire for truth, rejecting the false ideals of romantic love and hero worship. By the end of the play, her decision to marry Bluntschli, a practical man of the middle class, instead of the aristocratic Sergius, reflects her independence of mind and her willingness to step outside traditional gender expectations.

Catherine Petkoff, Raina's mother, at first glance appears to be a typical matron concerned with family honour and social status. However, she also displays qualities of strong-mindedness and authority within the household. She manages affairs with confidence and often directs her husband, Major Petkoff, who is portrayed as less competent. Her admiration for Sergius's military achievements and her pride in the family's wealth reflect her internalisation of social values, but Shaw gives her enough intelligence and control to suggest that women, even within conventional roles, exercise considerable influence.

The character of Louka provides the most direct challenge to traditional gender and class roles. As a maidservant, Louka is expected to be obedient and humble. However, she is bold, outspoken, and ambitious. She openly criticises her masters and refuses to accept the limits imposed on her because of her gender and class. Her refusal to be treated as inferior and her determination to rise socially through her relationship with Sergius make her a powerful figure of resistance. Unlike Nicola, who accepts his servant status, Louka fights for recognition and equality. Her eventual success in forcing Sergius to marry her can be seen as a victory against both gender and class oppression. Through Louka,

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Shaw highlights the idea that women, regardless of their position in society, have the right to assert themselves and seek better lives.

Sergius's treatment of women also exposes the double standards of patriarchal society. While publicly engaged to Raina, he privately flirts with Louka, showing that men often expect women to follow rules that they themselves break. Louka's sharp remarks reveal this hypocrisy, and her victory over Sergius underlines Shaw's criticism of male dominance and romanticised views of women's roles.

Shaw's presentation of gender roles is further emphasised by his realistic and direct dialogue, which avoids sentimentalism. His female characters are not passive or purely decorative figures; they are intelligent, active participants in shaping their own destinies. By giving women strong voices and allowing them to defy expectations, Shaw anticipates the arguments of later feminist thinkers who called for equality, self-respect, and social reform.

6. Language, Style, and Structure

Wit and Satire, Problem Play, Realistic Dialogue, Three-Act Structure

7. Critical Interpretations

Shaw critiques Victorian ideals, Comedy of Ideas

8. Important Quotations (For Examination)

"What use are cartridges in battle? I always carry chocolate instead." — Bluntschli

"I think we two have found the higher love." — Sergius

"Soldiering is the coward's art." — Bluntschli

“I want to be treated as a woman.” — Louka

“You hero! You chocolate-cream soldier!” — Raina

9. Arms and the Man in Context

Fabian Influence and European Politics context

10. Examination-Oriented Key Points

Shaw’s philosophy: Fabian socialism; realism

Character of Bluntschli: Rational, humane

Themes: Anti-romanticism, war, class, gender

Setting: Bulgaria, Serbo-Bulgarian War

Language & Style: Satire, irony, wit

Raina’s development: Romantic to realist

11. Suggested Long Questions

Discuss Arms and the Man as an anti-romantic comedy.

Analyse Bluntschli’s role in challenging romantic notions of war.

Examine Shaw’s treatment of social class and gender roles.

Evaluate the significance of the title Arms and the Man.

12. Suggested Short Questions

How does Bluntschli differ from Sergius?

Why is Bluntschli called a “chocolate-cream soldier”?

What is the role of Louka?

How does Shaw use humour to criticise romantic ideals?

Captain Bluntschli

Captain Bluntschli is arguably the central figure in George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, serving as the primary vehicle through which Shaw deconstructs the romantic illusions surrounding war and heroism. A Swiss professional soldier fighting as a mercenary for the Serbian army, Bluntschli introduces a pragmatic and anti-romantic worldview that sharply contrasts with the idealistic characters around him. His famous declaration that he carries chocolates instead of cartridges exposes the absurdity of conventional notions of military glory.

Bluntschli's realism is a conscious choice shaped by his experiences of warfare. He believes that survival and rationality, not flamboyant bravado, define a good soldier. This stance unsettles Raina Petkoff, who has been steeped in romantic fantasies about war and heroism. However, it is precisely Bluntschli's honesty, intelligence, and grounded nature that eventually captivate her. Through his interaction with the Petkoff family and Sergius, Bluntschli's views on competence, class, and love challenge both military and social pretensions.

Bluntschli is also significant as a symbol of cosmopolitan rationalism, transcending nationalistic fervor. His neutral Swiss identity reflects Shaw's own Fabian socialist belief in rational, cross-border solutions

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to human problems. Bluntschli's practicality extends beyond the battlefield to civil life; his inheritance of a hotel business at the play's end signifies his rootedness in reality and competence.

In summary, Captain Bluntschli is a modern realist hero who shatters traditional notions of war, romance, and social hierarchy, embodying Shaw's rationalist ideals and providing the intellectual backbone of the play.

Major Sergius Saranoff

Major Sergius Saranoff is a complex figure in *Arms and the Man*, representing the archetypal romantic hero whose grandeur is steadily undermined by the realities of human folly and Shaw's incisive wit. As a Bulgarian officer and Raina Petkoff's fiancé, Sergius initially appears as a gallant and dashing figure, admired for his reckless charge that wins a battle. However, Shaw quickly reveals that Sergius's victory was more accidental than skilful, exposing the disconnect between appearance and reality.

Sergius embodies a romantic idealism that manifests both in his approach to war and in his understanding of love. He views courtship and honour in theatrical terms, striving to live up to outdated codes of chivalry and masculinity. Yet, as the play progresses, Sergius grows disillusioned. He realises that military honour is hollow and that societal expectations, particularly regarding class and marriage, are constraining.

His flirtation with Louka, a servant, highlights his internal contradictions. While publicly bound to Raina and aristocratic decorum, he is attracted to Louka's assertiveness and disregard for class boundaries. This subplot reveals Sergius's yearning for authenticity, which contrasts sharply with his superficial romantic gestures.

Sergius ultimately represents the transition from obsolete romantic heroism to a more self-aware modernity. His decision to pursue Louka and relinquish Raina indicates his acceptance of personal truth

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over social performance. Shaw uses Sergius both to critique romanticised ideals and to suggest the potential for individuals to grow beyond their social conditioning.

Raina Petkoff

Raina Petkoff, the heroine of Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, is a young woman from a wealthy Bulgarian family. Her character plays a central role in exploring Shaw's themes of romantic idealism, realism, and social hypocrisy. Through Raina's journey from naïve romanticism to mature understanding, Shaw not only criticises the false ideals of war and love but also shows the growth of a woman who is capable of questioning social conventions.

At the beginning of the play, Raina appears as a typical romantic heroine. She is deeply influenced by the ideals of love and bravery that she has read in novels and heard from her social surroundings. Her engagement to Sergius Saranoff, a man who has just led a successful cavalry charge, feeds her fantasies about heroic soldiers and noble battles. When she says, "My hero! My hero!", it is clear that she admires Sergius not as a real person but as a symbol of the perfect romantic hero she dreams about. Shaw uses Raina's character here to represent the upper-class people of the time who had false, exaggerated ideas about war and romance.

However, Raina's character begins to change when Captain Bluntschli, a professional Swiss soldier, enters her bedroom seeking shelter. Bluntschli, unlike Sergius, speaks practically and honestly about the harsh realities of war. He tells her that soldiers often carry chocolates instead of cartridges and that war is not as glorious as people think. Although Raina is shocked at first, she also becomes curious and gradually realises that her ideas about war and heroism are childish. This moment marks the beginning of her transformation from an idealist to a realist.

Raina also undergoes a personal transformation in terms of her views on love and relationships. Her relationship with Sergius, though socially approved, lacks depth and honesty. Sergius's flirtation with her maid Louka further exposes his flaws and shakes Raina's belief in romantic perfection. In contrast,

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her growing friendship with Bluntschli is based on truthfulness and mutual respect. Bluntschli does not flatter her like Sergius; instead, he treats her as an equal and challenges her to think critically. This allows Raina to drop her false airs and become more genuine. By the end of the play, she chooses Bluntschli over Sergius, symbolising her rejection of shallow romantic ideals in favour of a more realistic and fulfilling relationship.

Another important aspect of Raina's character is her intelligence and independence. Even though she starts as a dreamer, she is not afraid to make bold decisions. She shelters an enemy soldier, lies to protect him, and finally decides to marry a man outside her social class. These actions show that Raina is not just a passive character but someone who has the courage to follow her heart and challenge societal expectations.

In conclusion, Raina Petkoff is a well-rounded character whose personal journey reflects Shaw's criticism of romantic idealism and social pretensions. Through her interactions with Bluntschli, she moves from naïve fantasies to a mature understanding of life and love. Raina's character teaches readers and audiences the importance of honesty, realism, and personal growth. She represents Shaw's modern heroine—intelligent, independent, and capable of shaping her own destiny.

Minor Characters

Catherine Petkoff

Catherine Petkoff, Raina's mother, is a typical upper-class Bulgarian woman. Like her daughter, she is impressed by the romantic ideas of war and nobility. She proudly speaks about the Petkoff family's wealth and their modern house with a library and an electric bell. Catherine represents the social pretensions of the upper class, who often exaggerate their sophistication and importance. Her excitement about Sergius's military victory and her concern for social status show how deeply she

believes in appearances. However, Shaw portrays her with humour and irony, making the audience aware of her limited understanding of the real world. Catherine's character helps to expose the false pride and shallow values of the aristocratic class.

Louka

Louka, the maidservant, is one of the most significant minor characters because she challenges the rigid class system. Unlike Nicola, who accepts his lower position, Louka is bold and ambitious. She openly criticises the hypocrisy of the upper class and dreams of rising above her social status. Her relationship with Sergius, though scandalous, highlights the gap between social appearance and private behaviour. Sergius, a nobleman, flirts with Louka even while being engaged to Raina, exposing his own double standards. Louka's intelligence, confidence, and defiance make her an important character who questions the established social order. By the end of the play, she succeeds in forcing Sergius to marry her, which represents a symbolic victory over class barriers.

Nicola

Nicola, the manservant, is a contrast to Louka. He is practical, obedient, and careful not to offend his masters. Nicola believes that servants should stay in their place and behave respectfully, even if they are treated unfairly. He advises Louka to control her ambition and avoid attracting trouble. Nicola's character reflects the traditional view of social hierarchy, where people are expected to accept their position in society. However, Shaw presents him not as a fool but as a shrewd man who understands how to survive within the system. His plan to open a shop with the money he earns shows his quiet ambition and business sense. Nicola adds to the realism of the play by representing the voice of common sense and social convention.

Major Paul Petkoff

Major Paul Petkoff, Raina's father, adds humour and lightness to the play. He is a good-natured but somewhat lazy and simple man, who is more interested in comfort than in military matters. His confusion about how to fold a coat and his surprise at modern inventions like an electric bell provide comic relief. Like Catherine, Major Petkoff takes pride in his family's status, but he is less pretentious and more easy-going. His interactions with Bluntschli reveal his lack of understanding of military strategy, which further emphasises Shaw's criticism of incompetent leaders. Major Petkoff's character highlights the gap between social reputation and actual ability, a key theme in the play.

References (For Further Reading)

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(3)



Discuss or Explain 'Twelfth Night' as a Shakespearean Comedy :-

Comedy surely makes an appeal to man's intellect and it always aims at correction and exhortation. So, we can define comedy as a play which deals with the trivial and insignificant happenings of everyday life and which aims at the reform of society.

While every comedy aims at correction and by appealing to man's reason it helps to get rid of evils. Shakespeare's comedy aims at sheer joy and pleasure. Chariton

Q
No

(4)

P-2

He wrote tragedies because it was his taste, but he wrote comedies to relieve his mind from the heaviness.

All Shakespeare's comedies are romantic. They are synthesized with the temperament of romantic practicality.

Only the background offers us the romanticism, the plot of the play and the action of the play is directly based upon the facts of life.

9. 'Midnight Night' the theme?

Q
No

(5)

P-3



and the knight-ship of the Sir Toby and Squeech are the romantic elements; yet the main plots as well as the sub-plot are nicely woven love stories having the realistic touch.

Second and the most evident characteristic of Shakespearean comedy is the predominance of women. In Twelfth Night Viola overshadows the passive existence of duke. Woman is always on the front and the males are insignificant. In Twelfth Night are not behind the

(6)

P-4

are in a fix as to whom to declare the hero of the play. Sebastian cannot be the hero because he stands on the stage for a very little time and Duke's position is also suspect. We are not wrong if we find the hero and the heroine both in Viola herself.

None of the Shakespearean ~~comedy~~ or comedies lacks in humour. Since satire is usually absent, neither the actors nor the spectators suffer any wrinkle upon it.

(7)

P-5

This humour is ^{not} absurd, it is always wise and intellect has more part to play than animal vigour. What a fine example of humour of dialogue is it:

"I'll drink to her as long as there is passage in my throat and drink in Illyria."

This humour is which Shakespearean comedy aims at is general, sympathetic, tolerant and sparkling. Shakespearean characters laugh with and not laugh at the vicious.

Optimistic Notes:

Shakespearean Comedies

P-6

and vivacious moods. In 'Twelfth Night' every character is optimistic and therefore busy in the concerned endeavour. Orsino's proposals are coldly rejected yet he sends Viola again and again; Olivia's love is not returned by Cesario; yet she sends the clown to call her lover; Malvolio is after the countess and has a strong hope and Viola ceases not loving. Thus, the action is based upon optimism and everything looks bright.

In Shakespearean Comedy, the fools and the clowns have a significant part to play. They are professionals, and they do not

(9)

P-7



they were not fools by birth; they are rather wise than the heroes and heroines. A critic says about the clown of 'Twelfth Night',

"He is the wisest character of the play."

Conclusion:

In short we may say that Shakespearean comedies are unrivalled because of their strange blending of pathos and joy, realistic element, superb characterisation and their universal appeal. Since 'Twelfth Night' fulfills all the features of Shakespeare-

The Bet-Chekhov

Fifteen years ago, a party was thrown at a banker's home

where many intellectuals such as journalists and lawyers attended. During that party, the group in attendance had many lively discussions, ultimately turning to the topic of capital punishment.

As the group argued, the two sides of the debate coalesced into two representatives: the banker, who is for capital punishment and believes that it is more merciful, and a lawyer, who believes that life imprisonment is the better option, due to its preservation of life. [The lawyer](#) believes that any life is better than none, and that life cannot be taken away by the government, since life cannot be given back if the government realizes that it made a mistake.

[The banker](#) and the lawyer decide to enter into a bet, with the banker wagering that the lawyer could not withstand 5 years of imprisonment. The lawyer, young and idealistic, decides to up the ante and makes the bet longer: 15 years. If he could last to the end of his sentence, the lawyer would receive two million rubles for winning the bet.

The banker cannot fathom his good fortune, and even offers the young lawyer a way out, saying that he is being hasty and foolish. Nevertheless, the lawyer decides to stick to his word and the bet is carried out.

For fifteen years, the lawyer lives on the banker's property, in a small lodge, and has no human contact. He can have any item that he desires. At first, the lawyer does not comfort himself with any liquor or tobacco, confining himself to playing the piano. But as the years progress, he gives in and spends much of his time drunk or asleep.

Later, the main focus of his time becomes books, as he searches for adventures and comforts that he cannot possess physically. He takes great advantage of the banker's ability to provide any book, and asks that the banker test the result of his reading by firing two shots in the garden if his translations of several languages is indeed flawless. The banker acquiesces and confirms the lawyer's suspicion that he has mastered languages.

As the years go by, the lawyer reads virtually every genre under the sun. He makes his way from the lighter reading of the early years, to the dense text of the Gospels and Shakespeare. The banker, by this time, has gone broke due to his own recklessness and gambling. He begins to worry that the lawyer's bet with him will ruin him financially.

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The banker begins to hope against all hope that the lawyer will break his vow and lose the bet. He doesn't even feel remorse at his evil thoughts, excusing them on the basis that they are in his own best interest. In fact, the banker even manages to convince himself that the lawyer is getting the better end of the deal, since he will still be relatively young at 40, and, with the 2 million rubles, relatively rich.

With this in mind, the banker goes to investigate how the lawyer is doing. He finds that his prisoner is asleep at his desk, looking much older and careworn than he ever imagined him to be. After observing him for a few seconds, the banker notices a letter on the table.

In it, the lawyer proclaims his intention to renounce earthly goods in favor of the spiritual blessings. The prisoner has become entirely embittered during his captivity. He has developed an intense hatred for other humans and believes that there is nothing that he or they can do to ever reconcile this chasm. To prove his seriousness, the lawyer decides to leave his prison five hours before the appointed time, and renounces his claim to the two million, thereby freeing the banker from his debt and from financial ruin.

The banker cries and kisses the prisoner with relief. The next day, watchmen alert the banker of the lawyer's escape, and the banker is unsurprised. He walks over, takes the letter from the lodge, and locks it in a fireproof safe.

Analysis

In [*The Bet*](#), Chekov decides to analyze which is worse: life imprisonment or capital punishment. In order to do this, he sets up a bet that would likely never take place in real life. This is typical of Chekov, who likes to examine philosophical questions (against the backdrop of a simple plot) as they might play out in real life, with real consequences, rather than simply examining them in the abstract.

Through this story, Chekov demonstrates the pitfalls of idealism and the foolishness of youth. Had the lawyer been older and wiser, he would never have decided so impulsively to go through with this bet. Had he had a family, a wife, children—any support structure that depended on him—he would not have agreed. So the bet also demonstrates the selfishness of man and youth. With nothing to lose, and two million to gain, the lawyer cannot think of a reason to reject the bet.

It is very interesting that Chekov does not show the readers the thoughts of the lawyer as he makes this bet. The only time that we see the thoughts of the lawyer clearly is later in the story, through a letter. We never see the lawyer's thought process wholly unvarnished and unfiltered, as we often see the thoughts of the banker. This allows the lawyer to remain a pure model of idealism, sacrificing years of his life to prove his moral principles, something that most would find hard to stomach in real life. It lends the lawyer a polished, holier aura.

The story also shows the toll that separation from human society can take on a person. Whereas at first the lawyer was full of virtue, eschewing wine and tobacco, he later gives himself in to his vices, drinking and smoking constantly. He has lost some of his idealism, even as he continues to seek to prove it, and himself, right.

The story is left rather open-ended, with the reader left with a sense that the story hasn't finished. Chekov may have done this on purpose, to prompt the reader into thinking about the consequences of the banker and the lawyer's actions. What ultimately is the fate of the lawyer? Does he live out his days happily? Is the banker able to live remorse-free, feeling no guilt over taking so many years away from a young, bright man? Maybe the old banker realized the vanity and emptiness of his life; we will never know.

The banker does feel some contempt for himself, but the story does not give the reader much more detail than that. It is possible that the banker struggles with his decisions for the rest of his life as he does choose to hold onto the lawyer's last letter, but it is equally possible that he simply forgets about the lawyer in a few years time, locking away all thought of him from his mind.

4th Sem MIL

Tara by Mahesh Dattani – Summary, Critical analysis

Mahesh Dattani's "Tara" not only reveals the struggle of a disabled child against a variety of odds, it also lays bare the ugly face of the Indian society. The uncomfortable issues that Mahesh Dattani discusses in his play "Tara" are about the helplessness of women in Indian society. The story concerns Tara, a Siamese girl, born in an upper-middle class family of the Patels. Tara is born conjoined as one body with her brother Chandan. They need to be separated from each other by means of a surgical operation. Dr. Thakkar, an eminent physician, is consulted by Tara's mother Bharati, and the latter's father, an influential politician. The Siamese twins have three legs one of which belongs to Tara as the blood supply comes to this leg from her body. But under the instruction of Bharati and her father, that leg is cut from Tara's body in order to ensure that the male child Chandan gets two healthy legs. As a result, the girl becomes cripple and her life is in danger.

Mahesh Dattani thus highlights a terrible malady of the male-dominated society. Whenever the question of choice does arise between male and female, it is the male who is chosen. In Tara's case, the discrimination against her begins right from the time of surgery. Dr. Thakkar takes bribe from the guardians, sells out his conscience and ethical values and does the operation that results in Tara's untimely death. Her twin brother is declared the sole heir of their grandfather's property while Tara is given not even a penny. Not only that; her father Mr. Patel remains a silent observer of Tara's ordeal and makes no attempt to redress his daughter's sufferings.

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Tara is ridiculed by her classmates at school for her limp, caused by her artificial leg. She is mentally tortured even by her neighbours Prema, Nalini, and Roopa. Roopa calls her “a real freak of Nature”. Mr. Patel who represents the male-dominated society does not want her to pursue higher studies while he urges his son Chandan to get admission into a college. Tara is much more intelligent and vibrant than her brother, yet she is ignored and neglected. Her case is a pointer to the evil of gender discrimination.

Bharati soon repents for the injustice she has done to her daughter. She shows her love and concern for Tara. And when her daughter requires Kidney transplant, Bharati decides to donate her kidney to Tara, thereby expiating for her guilt. But it is too late; the damage, done to Tara, is beyond repair. When Tara learns about the role of her mother and grandfather as regards the operation, she is terribly shocked and devastated. Her soul bleeds in agony and finally she dies. Chandan has nothing to do with his sister’s untimely death; yet he holds himself responsible. He escapes to London, renames himself as Dan and lives a self-condemned life. He writes the story of Tara, and it actually becomes the story of his own tragedy.

In the play “Tara” Mahesh Dattani questions the role of a society that treats the children born in the same womb in two different ways. Tara is sacrificed because she is a girl and therefore she is not allowed to have a better life than her brother. Dattani’s play thus brings into open the callousness and the heartlessness with which society discriminates between men and women, thus leading to an identity crisis in Indian women.
