Chapter 10
The Story of English Drama

Introduction:

The word 'Drama' comes from a Greek word meaning "thing done". And the things it does, as with acting, create a world apart- a world modelled on ours. The two words- drama and play are synonymous but in our country, the word drama is more popular than the word play.

Drama is not solely a form of literature; it is at once literary art and representational art. As literary art play is made of words.

Dramatic elements

- plot
- character
- dialogue
- gestures
- scenic effects
- music
- soliloquy

The function of words, or of literary elements in drama will vary. In some plays the, actors are of first importance and the words play a negligible part. In other plays, the words are of primary importance, as in some of G.B. Shaw's plays. The words used in a drama may be either verse or prose but whichever form is employed, the general purpose of the drama must be served. It has a plot, character and dialogue. In a play characters appear and events happen without any intermediate comment or explanation. Drama, then, offers us a direct presentation of its imaginative reality. In this sense it is a representational art. It is also a composite art. It cannot be comprehended and enjoyed without the help of some external accessories. It is designed for performance on the stage and not for personal perusal. It is designed for representations by actors who impersonate its different characters.

Drama thrives on the art of self-detachment. A good dramatist like Shakespeare treats his character with God-like impartiality. In a drama the different parts of plot or of what we generally call the dramatic structure are known as **exposition, complication, crisis, denouement** and **catastrophe** (in a tragedy) or **conclusion** (in a comedy). So far as the art of characterization is concerned, the dramatist has no alternative but to make his characters reveal themselves through speech and action.

Dramatic Structure

- Exposition (or initial incident)
- Complication (or rising action)
- Crisis (or turning point)
- Denouement (or falling action)
- Catastrophe (in a tragedy)
- Conclusion (in a comedy)

Parallelism is an outstanding feature of dramatic design and appears in the form of the reduplication of motives, interest and themes. The principle of contrast is equally important. The contrast is inherent in the very nature of the conflict which is the backbone of drama.

There are different types of drama. In a **tragedy**, the conflict terminates in a catastrophe while a **comedy** leads to a happy conclusion. **Tragi-comedy** is both tragedy and comedy. **Farce** means a dramatic work designed solely to excite laughter. Melodrama is to tragedy what farce is to comedy. The masque is a form of dramatic entertainment which involves dances and disguises and in which the spectacular and musical elements predominate over plot and character.

Types of Drama

- Tragedy
- Comedy
- Tragi-comedy
- Farce
- Melodrama
- Masque
- One Act play

Story of Drama:

The story of English drama takes us back to the century succeeding the coming of the Normans. The religious plays appeared in England soon after the Norman Conquest.

These sacred pays were known as **Miracle Plays** or **Mysteries**. Their purpose was directly didactic. The earliest **Miracle** in England was ***Ludus de Sancta Kathurian*** which was performed about the year 1110. These **Miracle** plays – increased steadily in number and in popularity. By the years 1300 the Miracles went out of ecclesiastical hands. They were adopted eagerly by the trade guides. They were under the general control of the council of the town. By the beginning of the fourteenth century all these plays were in various localities of England.

In the later Middle Ages developed another kind of dramatic literature, known as **Morality Plays** in which the characters were virtues personified such as *Beauty*, *Strength*, *Gluttony* and *Peace*. The Moralities were in existence as back as Henry VI's time (1422-71). Among the famous Morality plays are the ***Marriage of Wit and Wisdom***, ***Everyone***, ***The Four Elements***, ***The Trial of Treasure*** and the ***Pride of Life***. What is known as **Interlude** was also a late product of the dramatic development of the Morality Play. It flourished about the middle of the sixteenth century. John Heywood was the most famous writer of Interludes. Besides the **Miracle Plays** and **Interludes** there were several folk plays of several kinds.

These early experiments in play writing are of great importance because they provided a kind of training School for English dramatic genius and did much to prepare the way for the development of artistic drama which flourished during the Renaissance period.

During the period, there was a great revival of interest in Latin literature. English writers went back to the classics for inspiration and example in drama and in other fields of literary enterprise. They learned many valuable lessons in the principles of dramatic construction and technique. The first real comedy entitled ***Roister Doister*** was written about 1550 by Nicholas Udall.

The classical influence upon tragedy was greater. It was under the influence of Seneca that the first English tragedy entitled ***Gorboduc*** was written by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton. The quarter century which followed the production of ***Gorboduc*** was a period of great confusion. In the end, the romantic form of drama was established by Shakespeare's immediate predecessors who were known as the University Wits. Arranged roughly in order of time they were John Lily, Thomas Kyd, George Peele, Robert Greene and Christopher Marlowe. Among these dramatists an important position will be assigned to Marlowe. William Shakespeare collaborated with him and was profoundly influenced by him.

To the public theatre of the sixteenth century came William Shakespeare (1564-1616) as actor, playwright and shareholder in theatrical undertakings. His dramas are a great river of life and beauty. They can broadly be put under seven groups - the Early comedies, the English histories, the mature comedies and the Roman plays. The great

tragedies of Shakespeare are **Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Julius Caesar** and **King Lear**. In the plays of Shakespeare, Man occupied the centere of creation. He enjoyed free-will and became responsible for his destiny to a greater extent. This was in keeping with the Renaissance spirit, which reacted against the Medieval fatalism. In intensity of emotion, depth and power of style these tragedies stand supreme and achieve the high water mark of Shakespearean excellence.


William Shakespeare

English drama reached the highest point in the decade following Elizabeth's death in 1603. Queen Elizabeth reigned from 1558 to 1603 and her successor James I from 1603 to 1625. Thereafter we find the dawn of Jacobean age which covers roughly the period that follows Shakespeare. The Jacobean drama lost the optimistic and nationalistic temper of the early Elizabethan drama. Ben Jonson (1573- 1637) was a learned scholar and the greatest contemporary of Shakespeare. George Chapman, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Middleton, and John Webster were other Jacobean playwrights who had enriched the Jacobean dramatic literature by their contributions.

With the restoration of Charles II in the year 1660, all the theatres were reopened in England. Actually the break between 1642 and 1660 was not complete for entertainment of one kind or another had continued. Nor were the older writers forgotten. It was in comedy that the Restoration found its peculiar excellence. The comedies of the Restoration age were varied, but it was in the works of three writers - Etherege Wycherley and Congreve - that the one distinctive type, **the comedy of manners** was evolved.

The drama of the eighteenth century did not reach the same high level as the novel. Only Goldsmith and Sheridan made permanent contributions to the English stage. The Licensing Act of 1737 restricted the freedom of expression by dramatists and drove a number of good men out of the theatre.

The drama of the early nineteenth century was on the whole deplorable. The prosperous middle class society had no genuine appreciation of drama as an art.

The twentieth century showed a talent with which the nineteenth century could not compete. H. Granville Barker and Vedrenne produced season plays at the Court Theatre which brought an enlightenment into production and a discipline into acting. The twentieth century produced a galaxy of distinguished dramatists. John Galsworthy based his plays on social problems. His success with audiences in the theatre began with ***Strife*** (1909) and ***Justice*** (1910). Another great dramatist was George Bernard Shaw whose career was the longest in English dramatic history beginning with ***Widowers' Houses***. T.S. Eliot revived the tradition of verse drama in the twentieth century. His important plays are **Murder**

in the Cathedral, ***Family Reunion***, ***The Cocktail Party***, and the ***Confidential Clerk***.

Christopher Fry also achieved success with verse drama like **Lady's Not for Burning** in plays which captured London audiences. The theatre had suffered a lot with the war and in 1940 Hitler contrived to do what even Puritans had failed to achieve by closing the London theatre. The major theatrical adventure of the post war was the establishment of a Company of the Royal Court Theatre. To the Royal Court Theatre in 1956 came John Osborne's ***Look Back in Anger*** which caught the imagination of a generation.


G. B. Shaw

Samuel Beckett, an Irishman gave a philosophical dimension to world drama through his ***Waiting for Godot***. He portrayed the incoherence and meaningfulness of human life. Harold Pinter, an actor himself, was influenced by Beckett and wrote many plays. His ***The Homecoming*** presents a picture of broken family ties. Arnold Wesker's plays are influenced by socialism and they portray race, class and the problems of human relationship in our age.


T. S. Eliot

American Drama:

There is a rich tradition of drama in the USA. Eugene O' Neill, Arthur Miller and Tennesse Williams have presented the vital aspects of the American society in their plays. O'Neill's ***The Hairy Ape***, ***Anna Christie***, ***Desire Under the Elms*** and ***The Iceman Cometh*** have psychological insight into man's personality. Arthur Miller's ***All my Sons*** and ***Death of Salesman*** also probes the inner life of the characters. Tennesse William's plays evaluate the impact of the American dream on the identity of his characters.


Samuel Beckett

African Drama:

Many dramatists from Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana and South Africa have written plays in English. Wole Soyinka who belongs to the Yorubu tribe has experimented with the English language and dramatic techniques in his plays. He resents

modern civil violence and believes in a sense of justice and universal brotherhood of man. His ***A Dance of Forest*** and ***The Lion and the Jewel*** have been very successful on the stage.


Rabindranath Tagore

Indian Drama:

In India there has been a long tradition of writing plays in English. Asif Currimbhoy has written many plays and has won acclaim by his ***The Tourist Mecca***. Rabindranath Tagore translated many of his Bengali plays into English himself. His ***Chitra*** and ***Red Oleander*** have been popular with the audience. Similarly Girish Karnad, the great Kannada actor, director and playwright has translated his plays into English, too. His ***Hayavadana*** and ***Tughlaq*** have also been successful all over India on the stage in their English version.

Exercises

1. Complete the statements given below:

a) The word 'drama' comes from .....
b) The word drama means .....
c) Drama offers us a ..... of its imaginative reality.
d) In a tragedy the conflict terminates in .....
e) The purpose of the Miracle plays was .....
f) In Morality plays, the characters were .....
g) **Roister Doister** is the first .....
h) The first English tragedy is .....
i) In the plays of Shakespeare man occupied .....
j) T.S. Eliot revived ..... in the twentieth century.
k) **Tughlaq** is written by .....

2. Answer these questions very briefly:

1. Write the names of dramatic elements.
2. What are the dramatic structures of a tragedy?
3. What is parallelism?
4. What is a Farce?
5. What is a masque?
6. Write any five types of drama.
7. Who were known as the University wits? Write their names.
8. In which Age was the Comedy of manners written?

Chapter 11

STORY OF THE NOVEL IN ENGLISH

We are fond of telling others about the things we know and imagine. Of all the senses, our sight is the most perfect and delightful. It fills the mind with variety of ideas, converses with objects at greatest distance and (continues without being satiated with proper enjoyments.) The work of art is to entertain the imagination. Novel is a vital record of what we see, feel, think and learn from life. Thus novel is an expression of life through the medium of language. Novel is not newness but genuineness. A novel grows directly out of life. It is the nearest thing to life and a mode of amplifying experiences and extending our contact with our fellowmen beyond our personal contact.

Do you remember the story told by your grandmother? What were your feelings then? Did you feel the thrill? In many ways, we are still like the primitive man today. First we are attracted by the narrative; later we appreciate the style and the significance. But this is not always so. When you grow up and read novels, you will get what you want and what you need. In fact novels will give you the kind of satisfaction you yourself may not have imagined. Novels are a combination of imagination and intellect that express life in the form of a story. They show motives and influences which govern human life.

Would you not like to know the story of the development of the novels? To come to the present stage, the novel had to pass trough several centuries. The earliest forms of thc novel are the Greek Romances. Now let me tell you here the word novel includes all prose fiction. It may be divided into stories and romances.

The rise of the novel was the result of the democratic movement of eighteenth century. The greatest achievement of this age was the actual beginning of the novel. But before that there were some writers who had given elementary form to the novel. For example, writers like Bunyan (1628-88) and Defoe (1660- 1731) who took advantage of the public interest in fiction. Let me tell you here that Bunyan is considered to be a great prose writer. **The Pilgrim's Progress** began as an allegory but in course of time Bunyan began to be considered the pioneer of the modern novel.

You must have heard of the **Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe**. Do you know the name of the writer? Yes he is Daniel Defoe (1660 - 1731). In this novel he describes the experiences of Alexander Selkrik who spent five years in solitude island.


Daniel Defoe

The novel in its genuine form came with Richardson (1689 -1761) and Fielding (1707-1754). Richardson is called the father of the modern novel. His novel **Pamela** tells the story of the trial and tribulation and the final happy marriage of a young girl. The writer, in a realistic manner paints the inner life of the middle class society.

Have you heard of **Tom Jones**? The novelist is **Henry Fielding**. He firmly established the novel as an independent form. He gave genuine pictures of men and women without moralizing over their vices and virtues. Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) emphasized on the high principles and purity of domestic life. The **Vicar of Wakefield** deals with a character who undergoes pain and misfortune but ends up triumphant with his faith in God. A few novelist of the romantic age came under the spell of medievalism and wrote novels of terror or the Gothic novels. In the **Mysteries of Utopia** Ann Radcliff (1764- 1823) relates the story of an innocent and sensitive girl who falls in the hands of a heartless villain named Montoni. He keeps her in an isolated castle full of mystery and terror. Jane Austen(1774-1817) infused good sense and balance into the English novel which had earlier become too emotional. She refines and simplified it, making it a true reflection of English life. She had in her inner mind, the idea of presenting the English society exactly as it was. **Pride and Prejudice** is the best and most widely read of her novels. Among the contemporaries of Austen was Sir Walter Scott (1771- 1832). But he was vastly different from her. He depicted pageantry of history on broader canvases. Scott deals with the chivalric and exciting adventures of life. He is the first English writer of the historical novel such as **Ivanhoe** (1819) followed by **Kenilworth** (1821). Scott was the first novelist who made the scene an essential element in fiction. We breathe the very atmosphere of the place and feel the presence of the moors and mountains in his novels. The Victorian age in English literature began in the second quarter of the nineteenth century and ended by 1900. In this age the novel made rapid progress.


Sir Walter Scott

Novel reading became the chief occupation of the educated class. A number of brilliant novelists showed that it was possible to adapt the novel to many purposes. The

early Victorian period saw the heyday of the English novel. The two most outstanding novelists of the period were Dickens and Thackeray. The other novelists were the Bronte Sisters, Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot – all female novelists and Charles Read Meredith and Thomas Hardy among the male writers. All these novelists had a number of points of similarity. They identified themselves with their age and were its spokesmen. They voiced the doubts and fears of the public, but they also shared their general assumptions. They were conscious of the havoc of the industrial revolution, the presence of mass poverty and accumulation of riches in a few hands. Yet they believed that these evils were temporary and that England was growing prosperous. They produced novels that were truly national. You must be acquainted with **Pick Wick Papers** and **David Copperfield**. Dickens had the knack of combining humour with pathos and the best examples of it you can find in these novels. There were many great novelists in the Victorian age. Thomas Hardy made the novel as serious a medium as poetry which could deal with the fundamental problems of life. He had a deep compassion for mankind, especially for the poor and downtrodden. R.L. Stevenson (1850- 1894) introduced romantic adventures in the novels.


Rudyard Kipling


Joseph Conrad

The modern age in English literature started from the beginning of the twentieth century (1900-1960). The impact of scientific thought was mainly responsible for the attitude of interrogation and disintegration of old values. In an age of mass education, the novelists began to appeal to the masses. They began to look upon nature as a system planned by the Divine architect. A number of writers began to voice these ideas in their writings. One great disadvantage under which the modern writer labours is that there is no common ground on which the writers and their readers meet. The novel is full of adventure and experiments peculiar to the modern age which is an age of transition and discovery. It is the most important and popular medium of this age which could compete with both film and radio. The modern novel is psychological. It deals with relation between loneliness and love.


D. H. Lawrence

The immediate ancestors of the modern English novels who dominated the early part of the twentieth century were Wells, Bennet, Conrad, Kipling and Forster. These writers write for a small group of people. D.H. Lawrence is concerned with how individuals could fully realise themselves as individuals so as to make true contact with others. There are such fine description and narrative in modern novels as remind us of the works of great English poets. Thus we see novels embrace every aspect of interest. It is like telling a story. Every form of life grows in the novels. It is the greatest educational force in the modern world. Now English, as we all know, is no more a monopoly of the British. It has become an international language. Today, besides the British novels, we have the Indian, African, Canadian and many other novels in English. We shall talk in brief about all of them.



E. M. Forster

Indian Novel in English

Indian English novels have won worldwide recognition. The Indian novelists have established a great tradition.

The Indian novel in English is part of the Indian literature. It reflects the social, political and cultural ambience of the time. Bankim Chandra's **Raj Mohan's Wife** written in 1864 was the first Indian novel in English. He wrote profusely in Bengali and awakened national consciousness through his novels. The 30s saw the Indian movement for freedom under Mahatma Gandhi. The three great novelists of the time represented the three aspects of Indian life. Mulk Raj Anand wrote social novels and tried to break the barriers of caste and creed. His **untouchable** is an attempt to abolish the evil of untouchability. Economic slavery and colonial exploitation are the subject matter of **Coolie** and **Two Leaves and a Bud**. R.K. Narayan through his social comedies has mirrored the little ironies of domestic life and crumbling old values in the developing society. Raja Rao has championed the case of Indian Philosophy on the one hand and the essence of Gandhism on the other. **The Guide** of R. K. Narayan and the **Serpent and the Rope** and **Kanthapura** of Raja Rao are immortal works.



Mulk Raj Anand

As the novel consolidated some more novelists joined the band wagon and wrote

extensively on all aspects of Indian life. Nayantara Sahgal wrote political novels like **Storm in Chandgarth** and **Rich Like Us,** Kamala Markandaya wrote novels of social concern like **Nectar in a Sieve** and **Some Inner Fury**. The partition of India figures in scores of novels like Khushwant Singh's **Train to Pakistan**, K.S. Duggal's **Twice Born Twice Dead**, Chamanwahab's **Azadi**, Manohar Malagaonkar's **A Bend in the Ganges** etc. Anita Desai's focus is on the inner consciousness of her characters as in **Cry**, **The Peacock**, **Bye, Bye Blackbird** and **Voices in the City**. Arun Joshi wrote existential novels like **The Foreigner** and **Strange Case of Billy Biswas**. Some Indian English novelists have also experimented with the form of the novel. Mulk Raj Anand wrote **Untouchable** in the stream of consciousness technique while Vikram Seth wrote **The Golden Gate** a novel entirely in sonnets. Among the recent ones the most remarkable are Amitav Ghosh for his **The Shadow Lines**, Vikram Seth for his **A Suitable Boy**, Shashi Tharoor for his **The Great Indian Novel**, Arundhati Roy for her **The God of Small Things**, Raj Kamal Jha for his **The Blue Bedspread** and Kiran Desai for **The Inheritance of Loss**.



R. K. Narayan



Anita Desai



Ernest Hemingway

The Indian English writing which began with Dean Mohammand's prose work has developed into a full fledged literary genre. The Indian English fiction has won five Booker prize so far. The new novelists have potential enough to clinch recognition as a world literature in English.

American, Australian and Canadian novels

American novelists have made a remarkable contribution to English literature. They have depicted in their novels various and multifaceted aspects of the social, cultural and political problems of the time. Some of the important American novelists and their works are Herman Melville (**Typee** and **Mobydick**), Mark Twain (**Tom Sawyer**, **Huckleberry Finn**), Henry James (**The Europeans**, **The**

Ambassadors and **The Portrait of A Lady),** Ernest Hemingway (**For Whom the Bell Tolls, The Old Man and the Sea** and **A Farewell to Arms**), John Dos Parros (**The 42nd Parallel** and **The Big Money**) John Steinbeck (**Of Mice and Men** and **The Yapes of Wrath**) and Saul Bellow (**Herzog** and **Humboldt's Gift**).


Henry James

In America, Africans were brought as slaves to work on the plantations. Gradually they became free and used English for creative writing. The novels written by them are protests against oppression and racial discrimination. Richard Wright wrote **Native Son** and **Black** Boy. Ralph Ellison's **Invisible Man** is a moving story of the Afro-Americans. Similarly, Afro-American women also wrote excellent novels depicting the sufferings of the black women in the American society. Tony Morrison's **The Blue Eye, Sula** and Alice Walker's **The Colour Purple** desire racial and sexual equality.

Like the USA in Canada, too, the English novel is growing. Margaret Atwood is critical of male dominated Canadian society. Her **The Edible Woman** wishes gender equality. Similarly in Australia the novel in English has made great progress. Patrick White's **Voss** and **Tree of Man** plead for an Australian identity.

The Canadian novels advocate existence of life in diversity. The idea they represent is that in spite of differences, man has to learn the value of reconciliation, tolerance and love for mankind. Michael Ondaatje, Alice Munro, Joan Barefoot, Beatrice, Ruddy Wiebe, Atwood are representative writers of the Canadian novel of today.

African novel in English

With the spread of British Conquest, English rule in many African countries made English the official language there. The English educated writers wrote challenging British colonialism and highlighting the tribal virtues. In Nigeria, Chinua Achebe's **Things Fall Apart** and **Arrow of God** are portrayal of his country and people.


Chinua Achebe

In Kenya Ngugi Wa Thiong in his novels criticised colonialism, neo-colonialism and put his faith in the Kenyan masses. His novels **Weep Not Child, Petals of Blood** and **Devil on the Cross** are great works in which Ngugi foresees a bright future through struggle against western supremacy. A

similar note is shared by the novelists of South Africa. Alex La Guma in his **A Walk in the Night** attacks apartheid. Nadine Gordimer has written against racial prejudices and oppression both during the apartheid regime and in the new democratic and multiracial South Africa. **The Conservationist, A Guest of Honour** and **A Son's Story** are great achievements.

Caribbean Novel in English

Many African slaves and Indian indentured labourers were brought by Western colonisers to Trinidad, Jamaica, Barbados and other nearby countries to work in the plantations. They were subject to most inhuman treatment. The English educated writers from these places wrote about racial discrimination, wide atrocities and the quest for rootedness. George Lemming's novel **In the Castle of My Skin** and Earl Lovelace's **The Dragon cannot Dance** depict the sufferings of the blacks. The novels of V.S. Naipoul like **The House for Mr Vishwas, The Mimic Man, Half A Life** and Lakshmi Persaud's **Butterfly in the Wing** and **Shastra** are sensitive narratives of the agonies of the Indians.

We hope you must have enjoyed reading the stories of the growth and development of the English language and the stories of the English poetry, drama and novel all over the world. The richness of the English language is also due to the translation of the works of different languages into English. You must try to read as much as possible and some day you may also become able to translate the great works of the Indian languages into English. This would contribute to better understanding among various cultures and strengthen universal brotherhood.

Exercises

1. Complete the statements given below:

a) A Novel is a vital record of .....
b) A novel is an expression of .....through .....
c) A novel grows .....
d) Novels are a combination of .....
e) The Vicar of Wakefield deal with .....
f) Jane Austen infused ..... and ..... into the English novel.
g) Dickens had the knack of combining ..... with.....

2. Answer these questions very briefly:

1. Write the name of the earliest forms of the novel.
2. Which work is considered the pioneer of the modern novel?
3. Who wrote the **Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe**?
4. Who is called the father of the modern novel?
5. Who is the first writer of the historical novel?

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