GOVERNMENT ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE

(Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli)
PALKULAM, KANYAKUMARI-629 401

STUDY MATERIAL FOR B.A.ENGLISH

BRITISH DRAMA

II - SEMESTER

ACADEMIC YEAR 2022-2023

PREPARED BY,

DEPARTMENT OF B.A.ENGLISH, (SF)

BRITISH DRAMA

UNIT-I

EDWARD - II

Christopher Marlowe

Christopher Marlowe (baptised 26 February 1564 – 30 May 1593) was an English playwright, poet and translator of the Elizabethan era. Marlowe was the foremost Elizabethan tragedian of his day. He greatly influenced William Shakespeare, who was born in the same year as Marlowe and who rose to become the pre-eminent Elizabethan playwright after Marlowe's mysterious early death. Marlowe's plays are known for the use of blank verse and their overreaching protagonists.

The play opens with the newly installed king recalling his banished favorite from the exile to which his father sent him. Now that Edward II sits on the throne, both he and Gaveston quickly reconcile themselves to the enjoyment of each other at the expense of everything—and everyone—else. Edward even admits that he would rather see his entire kingdom fall to the fates than lose his precious Gaveston. What follows is the story of a monarch so consumed by his passion for another man that he forgets, ignores or simply does not care about the matters of state. This turns out to be a major problem for a man surrounded by Machiavellian schemers, plotters, and conspirators.

Edward II, first performed probably between 1587-1592 and published in 1594, is one of Renaissance playwright Christopher Marlowe's most famous works. Based off of the history of King Edward II, the play depicts the king's homosexuality and love for a lowborn man as dangerous to the realm, thus leading to his nobles' revolt and his own brutal death at their hands. Edward's reign (1307-1327); this was a famous compilation of British, Irish, and Scottish history that many writers such as Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Edmund Spenser turned to for inspiration. "*Edward II* was kept off the stage for more than 200 years, in large part because of the cultural ambivalence of its social matter and the spectre of male sexuality as a threat to the civilized order of society and power. It depicts a gay relationship in the 14th century, written in the 16th century, in a way that most stories and lives were not openly portrayed until the late 20th century.

THE ALCHEMIST

BEN JOHNSON

Ben Jonson, byname of Benjamin Jonson, (born June 11, 1572, London, England—died August 6, 1637, London), English Stuart dramatist, lyric poet, and literary critic. The play concerns the turmoil of deception that ensues when Lovewit leaves his London house in the care of his scheming servant, Face. With the aid of a fraudulent alchemist named Subtle and his companion, Dol Common, Face sets about dispensing spurious charms and services to a steady stream of dupes.

Lovewit has left for his hop-yards in London, and he has left Jeremy, his butler, in charge of his house in Blackfriars. Jeremy, whose name in the play is Face, lives in the house

with Subtle, a supposed alchemist, and Dol Common, a prostitute. The three run a major con operation.

Face, a London servant and conman, enters with Subtle and Doll Common, his criminal associates. Face's master, Lovewit, has fled the city for his country home on account of an outbreak of the plague, and Face is running a criminal operation out of Lovewit's city home in his absence. They are waiting for their first victim of the day: a law clerk named Dapper. Dapper is in search of a "familiar," a bit of alchemical magic that will help him win at cards and gambling, and Face has convinced him that Subtle is a respected mystic and doctor of alchemy. Dapper arrives and is greeted by Face in a captain's disguise. Subtle tells Dapper that he has the skill to conjure him a "familiar," but he is hesitant. Alchemical magic cannot be used to such immoral ends, Subtle says, but Dapper begs and promises to give half his winnings to Subtle and Face. Subtle agrees and tells Dapper that he must meet the "Fairy Queen" to get his "familiar," and she doesn't rise until the afternoon. He must come back, but he must first complete the ritual. Dapper must fast and place three drops of vinegar in his nose, two in his mouth, and one in each eye. Then, he must wash the tips of his fingers and his eyes and "hum" and "buzz" three times. Dapper agrees and immediately runs home.

Next is **Abel Drugger**, a local shopkeeper, who comes to Subtle looking for advice on his new business. He asks Subtle where he should place his door and shelves and how he should display his merchandise to guarantee success. Subtle tells Drugger that his new business should face south, and that he should place a magnet under the threshold of his door to attract business. He says that Drugger was born under a "rare star" and will be very lucky in business and in life. In fact, Subtle says, Drugger is so lucky, he might even come into possession of the **philosopher's stone**—a rare alchemical substance that is said to turn base metals to gold and produce the elixir of life, which promises eternal youth and life. Drugger gives Subtle a handful of coins and excitedly rushes out the door. Face looks to Subtle. Since it is his job to find "gulls" like Abel Drugger, Face says, he clearly deserves a larger cut of the profits.

Sir Epicure Mammon arrives next, along with his friend **Surly**. Mammon believes that Subtle is busy creating the philosopher's stone for him, and Mammon has been talking around town as if he already has it. With the stone, Mammon will transform himself into a rich man, and he will cure the sick and stop the plague in its tracks. Surly doesn't believe in the magic of the philosopher's stone, and he thinks Face and Subtle are conmen; however, Mammon is convinced they are all legitimate. Face greets them dressed as an alchemist's assistant and says that Subtle is busy at "projection," one of the final stages of the alchemical process, after which the stone is created. Mammon tells Face all about his plans for the elixir, which he will also use to give himself unparalleled sexual prowess. He will have sex with 50 women a night, and he will line his bedchamber with mirrors, so his reflection is multiplied as he walks naked through his "*succubae*." Subtle enters and tells Mammon to go home and fetch all his metal and iron, for they will soon make "projection." Surly tries again to tell Mammon that Face and Subtle are conmen, but Mammon is distracted by Doll, who has just walked by. Mammon definitely wants to meet her when he comes back. Surly tells Mammon that Doll is clearly a prostitute and they are in a "bawdy-house," but Mammon won't hear it.

There is a knock at the door and **Ananias**, an Anabaptist who has come to barter for Mammon's metal and iron, enters. Ananias isn't impressed with Subtle and Face's fancy

alchemical jargon, and he calls them "heathens." Subtle asks Ananias if he has brought money, but Ananias says he and his brethren will give Subtle no more money until they "see projection." Subtle angrily kicks Ananias out, claiming he will only negotiate with Ananias's pastor in the future. Face enters with Drugger, who tells him about a rich widow named **Dame Pliant**. Dame Pliant has come to town with her brother, **Kestrel**, who is looking for someone to teach him to quarrel and live by his wits. Kestrel is also looking for a husband for his sister, and he will only allow her to marry an aristocrat. Face tells Drugger that Subtle is the wittiest man in London, and he can read Dame Pliant's horoscope as well. Drugger agrees to bring Dame Pliant and her brother to see them, and Face excitedly tells Subtle about the widow. They briefly argue over who will get to marry Dame Pliant and ultimately decide to draw straws—and to not tell Doll.

Ananias returns with his pastor, **Tribulation Wholesome**. Neither men like nor trust Subtle and Face, and Tribulation even refers to Subtle as "antichristian," but they are willing to do what they must to get the philosopher's stone and further their religious cause. Tribulation apologizes to Subtle for Ananias's earlier visit, and Subtle tells him that he is still weeks away from creating the stone, but he offers to teach them to melt pewter to cast Dutch money in the meantime. Tribulation says he will return to his brethren to determine if casting money is lawful and exits with Ananias. Face enters and says he has just met a Spaniard who is very interested in meeting Doll, and he is headed over later. There is a knock at the door, and Doll says it is Dapper, who has returned for his "familiar." Face tells Doll to put on her "Fairy Queen" disguise and get ready. Subtle enters dressed as a "Priest of Fairy" and tells Dapper he must empty his pockets of all valuables before he meets the Queen. Subtle and Face dress Dapper in a petticoat—the only way the Fairy will meet him—and blindfold him. Suddenly, there is another knock at the door. It is Mammon, and since Face and Subtle don't want Dapper and Mammon to meet, they gag Dapper with a rag and a gingerbread cookie and shove him in the privy.

Mammon enters with his metal and iron and asks where Subtle is. Face claims he is busy in his laboratory, so Mammon asks about Doll instead. Face claims Doll is a "rare scholar" and the sister of an aristocrat, and he says she has gone mad after reading the works of a Puritan scholar. Face offers to introduce Mammon to Doll, but Mammon must not mention religion, and he must keep their introduction quiet—if Subtle thinks Mammon has any ill intentions, he won't give him the stone. Doll enters, and after Mammon sweet talks her a bit, they go to the garden for more privacy. Then, Subtle enters with Kestrel and Dame Pliant. Subtle agrees to teach Kestrel how to be witty, but first he must meet Dame Pliant. He kisses her and pretends to read her palm, and he tells her she will soon marry an aristocrat. Subtle escorts Kestrel and Dame Pliant to his office, where he can begin Kestrel's lesson and read Dame Pliant's fortune, and Face enters with the Spaniard.

The Spaniard is really Surly in disguise, but he pretends not to speak English, and Subtle and Face don't seem to notice. They insult the Spaniard, believing he can't understand them, and they openly admit they are out to "cozen" him. Then, Face and Subtle remember the Spaniard has come to see Doll, who is busy in the garden with Mammon. They begin to panic, but Face suggests they introduce the Spaniard to Dame Pliant. Subtle hesitates, wanting Dame Pliant for himself, but ultimately agrees. Face goes to fetch Dame Pliant and Kestrel and convinces them that the Dame is destined to marry a Spanish count, which, Face says, is the

best sort of aristocrat. Kestrel agrees and orders his sister to the garden with Surly to get to know each other. Face, Kestrel, and subtle exit, and Doll and Mammon enter. Doll is ranting and raving in an acute bout of insanity, and Mammon is unable to calm her down. Face enters and guides Doll out of the room, followed by Subtle, who is angry that Mammon has obviously behaved lustfully with Doll. He claims Mammon's behaviour will set "projection" back at least a month. There is a loud explosion from the other room, and Face rushes in, claiming the stone has burst into flames. There is nothing to be spared, Face says, and Mammon leaves, convinced his sinfulness has cost him the stone.

In the meantime, Surly tells Dame Pliant that Subtle and Face are conmen. He tries to tell Kestrel as well, but Kestrel decides to test out his new quarreling skills and chases Surly from the house. Suddenly, Doll claims that Face's master, Lovewit, has returned and is standing outside. Face tells Doll and Subtle to pack up their loot and get ready to leave, and then Face goes to shave. Lovewit is talking to the neighbors, who say a steady stream of people have been in and out of his house all month. Lovewit asks where his butler, Jeremy, is, but no one has seen him. Love wit goes inside and is greeted by Face, who, since shaving, looks again like Jeremy the butler. He tells Love wit he was forced to close up the house after the cat came down with the plague and has been gone for the past three weeks. The house must have been occupied by criminals in his absence, Face says. Suddenly, Face's victims—Mammon, Surly, Kestrel, and the Anabaptists—converge on the house, looking for the "rouges" who tricked them, and Dapper appears, having eaten through his gag. Face knows he is caught, so he promises to introduce Love wit to Dame Pliant if he promises not to punish him. Lovewit agrees and refuses to let in the angry victims, who go to fetch the police.

Dapper is still interested in meeting the "Fairy Queen," so Face, Subtle, and Doll quickly pull one last scam. Doll disguises herself as the Queen, gives Dapper a bird for good luck, and promises to leave him trunks full of treasure and "some twelve thousand acres of Fairyland." Dapper exits just as the police arrive, and Face tells Subtle and Doll they must leave before they are arrested. Love wit has pardoned Face, but not them, and there is no time for them to take their profits. Doll and Subtle leave angrily, having been tricked and robbed by Face. Lovewit convinces the police that criminal conmen broke into his house in his absence, and he chases off Face's angry victims. Lovewit turns to the audience and says he is very happy with his new wife, Dame Pliant, and Face says he is happy to get off "clean" from his crimes and "invite new guests."

Belief of course is essential to theater, and the play's many metatheatrical forays play on this theme. Note how Jonson exploits theatrical convention to alienate the audience, such as when Surly, as a Spaniard, initially seems to be another character altogether.

Jonson, in portraying two Christian believers, explicitly considers whether there is a difference between having faith in the particulars of a Christian denomination—or having faith in God, or in anything transcendent—and believing in the false tricks of the conmen. All denominations cannot be completely right, so do some people believe because they have been conned rather than simply mistaken? The play opens with an argument that continues throughout the play between Subtle and Face. It concerns which of them is the most essential to the business of the con, each claiming his own supremacy.

UNIT-II

THE GOOD NATURED MAN

-OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Oliver Goldsmith (10 November 1728 – 4 April 1774) was an Anglo-Irish novelist, playwright and poet, who is best known for his novel The Vicar of Wakefield, his pastoral poem The Deserted Village, and his plays The Good-Natur'd Man and She Stoops to Conquer.

The reader of this comedy, without being apprised that the writer was Goldsmith, would soon perceiveit to be the work of no common mind. Here are contained peculiarities of character, with ideas, observations, and expressions, such as could only come from the pen of a man of genius.

But, with all the merit of this drama, all that knowledge of human nature evinced by the author through-out the composition, it will easily be observed that he might have done more—that something yet is wanting to make the production equal in value toothier of his writings; or equal to some dramatic works, of that very period, by men of inferior talents.

The town thought so indifferently of this play, on its first appearance, that it was doubtful whether it would be suffered to appear again ; and though, upon consideration, they recanted their unjust opinions, they never recompensed the author by warmly espousing that, which they had once rejected. Th(? characters, which gave offence on the first nightof " The Good-natured Man, ‘are those which, having been since closely imitated, and brought again. and again upon his stage, have, for several years past, furnished many a pleasant scene in opera, comedy, and farce. In Goldsmith's days, his bailiffs were exploded, as too vulgar to exist in presence of refined public—the public are become less nice, or bailiffs less inelegant. The female characters of this comedy gave no of-fence, neither could they give entertainment to theaudi-cnce; for Mrs. Croaker and Garnet are uninteresting, and the two young ladies, though deep in love, are in-animate. Authors generally think love a substitute for every other passion, and yet fail of describing that one. It is supposed by the rigidly pious, who never frequent a theatre, that the power of love is painted on the stage in the most glowing and bewitching co-lours—when, alas ! the insipidity of lovers, in almost every play, might cure the most romantic youth and damsel of the ardour of their mutual attachment. The characters of Croaker, of Honey wood, and of Lofty, are those which have been most successful and they are particularly worthy the attention of the reader. They each deserve this highest praise which fictitious characters can receive—In diction they are perfectly original, yet are seen every day in real life. In drawing these three men, of three such different dispositions, had the author but invented greater variety of incident, in which their several humours had been more forcibly displayed, the comedy would then have delighted the careless and

Ike ignorant spectator, as well as the attentive and judicious. Croaker is the favourite part in representation, because he is the most comic; but, in reading, greater degree of amui^ement will perhaps arise, from the sedater faults of Lufty and Honey wood. Few are the persons ihat have resided for any time in London, who have not met with a Mr. Lofty among their acquaintance, though free from the villany of his deceit, and merely possessing the foible of his vanity. • In the propensities of Honey wood, many a reader will meet with his own : and it may be suspected that the author, in writing this character, frequently furned a conscious

glance upon the infirmities to which he was subject; and that he made this portrait thus bold and natural, from having viewed himself. Number less dramatists have, no doubt, in someone personage of their creation, or in two or three separately, delineated their own most prominent features; and, surely, in that speech of Sir William Honey wood, about the middle of the third act, be-ginning, " That friendship,"—and, in another he delivers near the conclusion of the play (in which are the sentences next quoted) is accurately described, part of Goldsmith s character. A disposition which, though inclined to do right, had not courage to condemn the wrong—-those splendid errors, that still took name from some neighbouring duty-^charity, that was but injustice ^ bene- violence, that was but weakness; and friendship, that was but credulity." The following lines, from a well-known fable, writ-ten by Garrick, seem to finish the character of this distinguished poet, with as much truth as he has here himself begun it.

The mishaps begin as the hero of this story leaves his home with a broad grin upon his good natured face. Mingling with a lot of schoolboys, who are playing football, he becomes the butt of their overflowing spirits and is buffeted about as though he were a football. Passing a partly finished building, he is just in time to receive a load of brick upon his head, which a careless laborer has permitted to slip from his shoulders. Passing along the highway, he is run into by a huckster with a cartload of over-ripe bananas and falls into the cart; smiling in his good natured way, upon a handsome young woman, he receives a thrashing at the hands of her escort, who mistakes him for a flirt. While enjoying the river breezes from a pavilion on the waterfront, he is thrown into the water by a boisterous rowdy. While seated upon the railing of a landing dock he is again thrown into the river and when pulled from the water is given up by his rescuers for dead. They place him upon a stretcher and carry him to his home. As his wife falls prostrated upon his body, to the surprise of all, he rises to a sitting posture and his good natured grin puts all into good humor again.

UNIT-III

ALL FOR LOVE

-JOHN DRYDEN

The theme of All for Love is **the conflict of reason and honor with passion in the form of illicit love**. From the preface it seems that Dryden wished to show how Antony, torn between these two, chooses unreasonable, passionate love and is conse- quently punished for his denial of reason.

All For Love begins with John Dryden's dedication of the play to an aristocratic patron, Thomas Osborne. He praises Osborne for his loyalty to the crown during the English Civil War. This praise leads Dryden to a larger consideration of the merits of the English constitutional monarchy, which he calls the best form of government in the world. Dryden thinks that *all* attempts at "reform" are dangerous, since any rebellion strikes at "the root of power, which is obedience."

Two priests of the Temple of Isis, Serapion and Myris, observe that there have been several frightening omens in Egypt recently. For instance, the water of the Nile overflowed and left behind monstrous sea creatures. They express their fears for the future of their kingdom, since Antony and Cleopatra have recently and disastrously lost the Battle of Actium to Antony's rival for power in Rome, Octavius. Antony has now locked himself away, hoping to cure himself of his love for Cleopatra. His old general Ventidius arrives to try to bring some hope. He tells Antony that he has an army in Lower Syria that is loyal to Antony's cause. However, the army will only fight for Antony if he comes to them—they do not want to fight for Cleopatra in Egypt. In order to claim his army, then, Antony will have to leave her.

Cleopatra is in despair when she hears that Antony plans to leave her. She sends her eunuch, Alexas, who gives Antony a ruby bracelet in the shape of bleeding hearts. Alexas petitions Antony to go see Cleopatra one last time, so that she can fasten the bracelet on his wrist, although Ventidius warns against this. When Cleopatra appears for her audience with Antony, she swoons and protests pathetically that she only wants to die. At this, Antony proclaims that will never abandon the woman who loves him, even if it costs him his life.

Several other visitors come to the Egyptian court: Antony's old friend Dollabella, who is in love with Cleopatra, and Antony's wife Octavia. Octavia has also brought their two daughters, Agrippina and Antonia. Octavia tells Antony that she is still loyal to him as a wife despite his abandonment of her. Ventidius and Dollabella urge Antony to abandon Cleopatra and take back Octavia. Octavia tells her daughters to go to their father. At their embrace, Antony is so moved that he tells Octavia he will leave Cleopatra.

The battle with Octavius continues to go disastrously for the Egyptians. As Antony watches from the roof of the palace, the Egyptian navy surrenders without a fight and joins the Roman forces. Antony becomes convinced that Cleopatra has betrayed him to Octavius. Alexas comes up with another plot, recommending that Cleopatra hide in her monument, which she does. Alexas tells Antony that Cleopatra was so distressed at his suspicions of her that she killed herself. At this news, all the fight goes out of Antony. He explains that all he wants now

is to die, since Cleopatra was the "jewel" that made his life worth living. All his conquests, glory, and honors were merely the ransom he used to buy her love.

Now, Antony says, is the time to give up his power struggle with Octavius and let the world "know whom to obey." Ventidius accepts Antony's desire to die and expresses his wish to go with him, since his own life is not worth living without Antony. Antony then asks Ventidius to kill him first, but Ventidius stabs himself instead. Antony then falls on his sword but misses his heart and begins bleeding profusely. Meanwhile, discovering Alexas's deception, Cleopatra rushes into the room and finds him on the ground. As Antony dies in her arms, he makes her promise to join him soon in the afterlife.

Cleopatra dresses herself in her royal robes and sits herself on the throne beside Antony. Her maids, **Iras** and Charmian, bring her a poisoned asp that fatally stings her. Cleopatra proclaims that she will die with Antony as his wife, in a bond that no "Roman laws" will be able to break. As she dies, she challenges Octavius to ever separate them now. Iras and Charmian follow her example and also commit suicide. Serapion bursts into the throne room, leading Alexas in chains. When he sees the bodies, he remarks on how noble Antony and Cleopatra look, and expresses the hope that they will live a happier and freer life in heaven than they found on earth.

UNIT IV

MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL

-T.S.ELIOT

T.S. Eliot, in full Thomas Stearns Eliot, (born September 26, 1888, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.—died January 4, 1965, London, England), American-English poet, playwright, literary critic, and editor, a leader of the Modernist movement in poetry in such works as *The Waste Land* (1922) and *Four Quartets* (1943). Eliot exercised a strong influence on Anglo-American culture from the 1920s until late in the century. His experiments in diction, style, and versification revitalized English poetry, and in a series of critical essays he shattered old orthodoxies and erected new ones.

The central theme of Murder in the Cathedral is **martyrdom**. Martyrdom means the act of suffering and death of a martyr. A martyr is someone who has sacrificed their life for the cause of God and Jesus.

Murder in the Cathedral is divided into two parts, with an interlude separating them. The play begins with the thoughts of the Chorus, a group of common women of Canterbury. They say that Archbishop Thomas Becket has been away from his Canterbury congregation (of which they're members) for seven years. Becket has been away because of religious and political conflicts he came to have with King Henry II. While they miss his presence, the Chorus does not wish for Becket to come back, as they fear his return would stir up old conflicts which might get him killed. Three priests who served the Archbishop in the past then enter the scene, as well as a herald who informs them and the Chorus that Becket is in England, back from France. The Chorus is dismayed, worried that Becket's return will lead to his death, and therefore their own religious turmoil (they'll lose their spiritual leader). The priests, on the other hand, readily welcome Becket back to Canterbury.

Becket enters the scene, and is shortly accosted by four "tempters"—four people who, one-by-one, try to persuade or tempt Becket into adopting certain views on how he should balance his religious power as Archbishop with its associated political power—political power which could either supplement his religious authority or replace it altogether. Becket discounts all the tempters' proposals, thinking that none of their visions for his future are sourced in the higher, spiritual dimension of fate or God's plan. He decides that martyrdom—sacrificing his life in devotion to God—is his fate, and refuses to be tempted by other, more earthly pursuits of political power or worldly, secular desires.

In the interlude, Becket gives a sermon to the congregation of Canterbury Cathedral. He asks his audience to think about sainthood from a divine perspective and reconsider the conventional, human understanding of saintliness as pure, peaceful and gained without torturous hardship, adding that Jesus's disciples became saints only after experiencing great suffering. He ends the sermon by saying that it may be the last time he stands before the congregation, foreshadowing his martyrdom.

In the second part of the play, four knights serving Henry II arrive at Canterbury Cathedral and accost Becket, calling him a traitor to the crown. Before Becket left, the king appointed him to be the Chancellor of England as well as Archbishop. After initially accepting

both positions, however, Becket immediately dropped the chancellorship. Further, the knights say Becket then began to abandon all the king's policies which he had formerly supported. Claiming they've been sent by the king, the knights ask Becket if he'll agree to appear before Henry II and speak for his actions. Becket responds by saying that, if the king has ordered such an appearance, then the public ought to be allowed to know Henry II's charges against him and personally witness his defense against them. The knights disregard this response and move to attack Becket, but the priests and some attendants enter the scene before they get a chance to. The knights leave, promising to return for Becket.

Knowing that the knights will be returning to murder the Archbishop, the priests try to persuade him to go into hiding, but Becket refuses, fully committed to his martyrdom. When the knights come back to the cathedral, the priests bar its front doors, preventing them from entering. Becket, however, demands that the priests open the doors, thereby offering his life up to the swords of the knights and to his own martyrdom, saying it's against the Church's policy to exclude anyone from entering one of its cathedrals. The priests unbar the doors, and the knights enter and kill Becket.

Devastated by Becket's death, the Chorus cries out in painful desperation that the sky and air be cleansed of the death newly sprung upon Canterbury. The priests, however, conclude that Becket's death was a manifestation of fate, and that the Church is stronger for it. The four knights then turn towards the audience and offer arguments in defense of their decision to murder Becket. They describe why they think he was a traitor to the king and also largely responsible for his own death. The play ends with the Chorus asking God to forgive them and have mercy on them for not seeing—at first—Becket's martyrdom as having incredible spiritual significance beyond their own personal concerns. Following the priests, the Chorus evolves to see Becket's death as something caused by a divine source which they cannot understand but which nonetheless merits their faith and devotion.

THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON

J. M. BARRIE

.M. Barrie, in full Sir James Matthew Barrie, 1st Baronet, (born May 9, 1860, Kirriemuir, Angus, Scotland—died June 19, 1937, London, England), Scottish dramatist and novelist who is best known as the creator of Peter Pan, the boy who refused to grow up. He was born and educated in Scotland and then moved to London, where he wrote a number of successful novels and plays.

The Admirable Crichton (1902), a play by J. M. Barrie, is a satirical comedy dealing with class and social structure, about a butler who rises to become the leader of his aristocratic employers after they are all stranded on a deserted island. Barrie, best known for *Peter Pan*, was a Scottish novelist and playwright. He was made a baronet and a member of the Order of Merit for his contributions to literature. Barrie died of pneumonia in 1937.

The old rules of class and hierarchy are useless in this new environment, and it is Crichton and Eliza who have the practical skills necessary for survival. Crichton becomes leader of the group through his superior ability and the family ends up contentedly following his orders. A bit predictably, Crichton wins the hearts of both Eliza and Mary, the daughter of

the Earl of Loam. Of course the idyll has to come to an end and the class system reasserts itself, though Crichton and Eliza escape with a stash of pearls they sensibly acquired on the island.

James Crichton was born in 1560 in Perthshire and died in Italy in his twenty-second year during an argument in the street with Vincenzo Gonzaga, the son of Crichton's employer, the Duke of Mantua. In his few brief years on the planet Crichton had become a noted scholar, linguist, swordsman, horseman, musician and poet. He also had outstanding good looks. Everything, in fact, that was required for a man of the Renaissance.

At St. Andrews, Crichton probably studied under the famous scholar George Buchanan, who was also tutor to the young king James VI of Scotland and who was responsible for alienating him from his mother Mary Queen of Scots. Buchanan, unsurprisingly, had a reputation for brutality.

Crichton left the university at the age of fourteen having gained bachelor and masters degrees. He travelled to France where he studied at the College de Navarre. Here, according to his 17th century biographer Thomas Urquart, Crichton issued the first of many challenges, that he would answer questions "in any science, liberal art, discipline, or faculty, whether practical or theoretic". What's more, he offered to do so in any one of the twelve languages in which he was proficient!

On this occasion his oratory is said to have drawn the admiration of four professors. While in France, he also participated in tilting and other feats of arms and generally established his reputation as an outstanding talent of the Renaissance. His biographers claim that it was at this time that he gained the description "Admirable".

Crichton's intellectual skills may have brought him great fame but despite apparently coming from an influential Scottish family with links to royalty through his mother, Elizabeth Stewart. His father held lands in Cluny in Perthshire and Eliock in Dumfriesshire and other relatives were senior churchmen. What is known is that on arrival in Venice, Crichton sent some poems to Aldus Manutius, a member of the family of printers who founded the famous Aldine Press. Aldus was so impressed by the genius of Crichton that he introduced him to the Doge of Venice and the Senate, who were also astounded by his ability. Crowds gathered to hear him talk and dispute. Crichton had become a celebrity intellectual.

The professional swordsman was no artiste – he attacked with ferocity and Crichton had to defend himself strongly before he could overcome his opponent, killing him with three sword-thrusts. It was this as much as his reputation as an orator that inspired the Duke of Mantua to hire Crichton, some say as a companion for his son Vincenzo.

Although he was only in the Duke's employ for a few months, Crichton wrote plays and poems and enhanced his reputation as a musician during this period. His death was as dramatic and extraordinary as his life. On 3rd July 1582, on his way back from visiting his mistress (some biographers add the touch that he was strumming a guitar), Crichton was accosted by the masked street gang led by Vincenzo Gonzaga.

Crichton managed to fight so successfully that the majority of his attackers fled. The last one was unmasked as Vincenzo Gonzaga himself, causing Crichton to fall to his knees and offer his sword to his opponent, who coolly took it and stabbed Crichton through the heart. The

drama of James Crichton's life has echoes in the work of playwrights such as Shakespeare. A tale of talented youth cut off in its prime had appeal for both the Elizabethans and the Victorians.

UNIT V

SAINT JOAN

-GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

George Bernard Shaw, (born July 26, 1856, Dublin, Ireland—died November 2, 1950, Ayot St. Lawrence, Hertfordshire, England), Irish comic dramatist, literary critic, and socialist propagandist, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925.

Shaw's play examines the themes of **individualism, faith and even feminism**. Joan possesses all of these traits: Her extreme individualism leads her to many victories and wins her many followers, but it can also be viewed as egocentric and imprudent.

Saint Joan begins in 1429 at the castle of Vaucouleurs. Captain Robert de Baudricourt sits at a table and berates his steward for the fact that there are no eggs. The steward is convinced that the hens won't lay eggs until De Baudricourt agrees to see "The Maid" who called on De Baudricourt two days ago and is still outside, speaking with soldiers and praying as she waits to be seen.

Reluctantly, De Baudricourt sends for her: she is Joan of Arc, a simple country girl of 17 or 18 years, dressed in men's clothing and with a persuasive confidence about her. She informs De Baudricourt that he must give her a horse, armor, soldiers, and send her to the Dauphin: she is on a mission to raise the siege of Orleans, acting on the word of God as it is conveyed to her through the voices of saints she hears in her head. De Baudricourt balks at being ordered around by a young girl, but Joan won't be refused. She tells him that two soldiers, Bertrand de Poulengey and Monsieur John of Metz, have promised to support and accompany her in her journey. Reluctantly, De Baudricourt yields to Joan's demands. Joan and her soldiers depart for Chinon to meet with the Dauphin. After they leave, the steward rushes in to inform de Baudricourt that the hens have begun to lay eggs again, which de Baudricourt sees as proof that Joan really was sent by God.

Sometime later, Joan reaches the Dauphin at his castle in Chinon, in Touraine. She informs him that she has been sent by God to drive the English out of France and crown him king. The Dauphin is skeptical, having little interest in warfare and knowing that the English are more adept at fighting than the French, but things are so dire that France really has nothing to lose, and Joan eventually convinces him to let her command his army.

Joan and her army reach Orleans on April 29, 1429. On the river Loire, she meets Dunois, the Bastard of Orleans. Joan is impatient to begin fighting, which Dunois regards as overconfident and foolish. Dunois tells her the English are across the river, but he is hesitant to strike before the wind changes directions, as they must travel up the river and attack the English from the rear. Dunois has prayed incessantly for a west wind, but to no avail. Joan joins Dunois in praying. Shortly after this, Dunois's page announces, with awe, that the wind has changed. Dunois sees this as evidence that Joan is sent from God, and they prepare to fight the English.

Sometime later, at a tent at an English camp, John de Stogumber (the Chaplain) and the Earl of Warwick discuss Joan: they believe she must be witch, as there is no other way to explain the French's sudden rush of military victories.

Peter Cauchon (the Bishop of Beauvais) enters. Cauchon and Warwick discuss the problems Joan presents for their respective institutions. Cauchon believes Joan is guilty of heresy and, as a churchman, he believes he has an obligation to make sure she recants and saves her soul from damnation. At the same time, he acknowledges the danger Joan and her ideas pose for the Church: Joan's relationship to God is unmediated by the Church—she believes she can talk to and understand God's word without help from the Church—and this threatens the power the Church holds over its people.

Warwick is less concerned with the problem Joan poses to the Church but fears the threat Joan's political ideologies pose to the existing feudal structure and society: acting on God's orders, Joan wants the common people to be answerable to the king alone which would result in noblemen like Warwick being ripped of their power. Cauchon and Warwick don't see eye to eye—Cauchon's concerns are spiritual, and Warwick's are temporal—but the two men can agree that they share Joan as a common threat to their respective institutions' hold on power. They agree that Joan must be stopped.

Scene V takes place in the cathedral at Rheims. After numerous military victories, Joan has finally crowned Dauphin king: he is finally King Charles VII. Dunois enters the cathedral to find Joan praying. Having fulfilled her promises to God, Joan plans to return home to the country, but she suddenly asks Dunois if they can continue to fight and drive the English out of Paris before she leaves. Dunois has doubts that the French will be able to keep their victory streak going, and the Archbishop accuses Joan of obstinance, overconfidence, and the sin of pride. Charles VII, too, believes Joan is taking things too far. It's also revealed that Joan's actions and confidence have earned her many enemies. The crown, the military, and the Church all tell Joan that if her enemies capture her, she's on her own: none of them will step in to rescue her from whatever gruesome fate is in store for her.

By May 30, 1431, Joan has been captured by the English and is on trial for heresy. Cauchon sincerely tries to give Joan a fair trial. He provides her with ample opportunities to recant and save her soul and body from destruction, but she refuses to reject the validity of her voices and place the authority of the Church before the direct word of God. Joan learns that she will be burned at the stake immediately because she refuses to recant. In a panic, she hurriedly signs a document rejecting her previous statements under the assumption that she will be allowed to go free.

When Cauchon informs her that she will be sentenced to life in prison, she rips the recantation to pieces and accepts her fate. She is immediately burned, except for her heart, which the Executioner reveals couldn't be destroyed. The Chaplain rushes into the courtroom in a deranged panic: witnessing the cruelty and gruesomeness of Joan's execution has had a profound effect on him, and he now regards his earlier enthusiasm to see her burned for witchcraft with shame and moral reprehension. He informs Warwick and Cauchon that a soldier offered Joan a makeshift cross in her final moments and regrets that he did nothing to prevent her burning.

Ladvenu, a Dominican monk who is sympathetic toward Joan, reveals that he, too, offered Joan a cross. When the flames grew so high that they threatened to enrobe Ladvenu as well as Joan, however, she told him to get down and save himself. Ladvenu believes the selflessness Joan demonstrated in her final hours is proof that she was sent from God, not from the devil, and that her death was not the end for her, but only the beginning of her redemption.

Twenty-five years after Joan's death, Ladvenu comes to King Charles VII to announce that the charges brought against Joan have been reversed: the Church has cleared her name and smeared the reputations of her accusers. Charles VII is pleased to hear this, as it means he wasn't crowned by a witch or heretic, and his title is therefore legitimate.

Joan then appears to Charles VII in a dream. He tells her the good news. One by one, those who condemned or abandoned Joan appear. Finally, a gentleman in 1920s clothing appears and informs the room that the Church has canonized Joan 500 years after her execution. Everybody praises her and apologizes for doubting her. When Joan asks whether she should come back to life and join them, however, they reject her, make excuses, and disappear. Joan cries out in despair: "O God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive thy saints? How long, O Lord, how long?"

LOOK BACK IN ANGER

-JOHN OSBORNE

John James Osborne was an English playwright, screenwriter and actor, known for his excoriating prose and intense critical stance towards established social and political norms. The success of his 1956 play Look Back in Anger transformed English theatre.

Osborne's play was the first to explore the theme of the "Angry Young Man." This term describes a generation of post-World War II artists and working class men who generally ascribed to leftist, sometimes anarchist, politics and social views.

Look Back in Anger begins in the attic flat apartment of Jimmy Porter and Alison Porter. The setting is mid-1950's small town England. Jimmy and Alison share their apartment with Cliff Lewis, a young working class man who is best friends with Jimmy. Cliff and Jimmy both come from a working class background, though Jimmy has had more education than Cliff. They are in business together running a sweet-stall. Alison comes from a more prominent family and it is clear from the beginning that Jimmy resents this fact.

The first act opens on a Sunday in April. Jimmy and Cliff are reading the Sunday papers while Alison is ironing in a corner of the room. Jimmy is a hot tempered young man and he begins to try and provoke both Cliff and Alison. He is antagonistic towards Cliff's working class background and makes fun of him for his low intelligence. Cliff is good natured and takes the antagonism. Jimmy attempts to provoke his wife, Alison, by making fun of her family and her well-heeled life before she married him. Jimmy also seems to display a nostalgia for England's powerful past. He notes that the world has entered a "dreary" American age, a fact he begrudgingly accepts. Alison tires of Jimmy's rants and begs for peace. This makes Jimmy more fevered in his insults. Cliff attempts to keep peace between the two and this leads to a

playful scuffle between the two. Their wrestling ends up running into Alison, causing her to fall down. Jimmy is sorry for the incident, but Alison makes him leave the room.

After Jimmy leaves, Alison confides to Cliff that she is pregnant with Jimmy's child, though she has not yet told Jimmy. Cliff advises her to tell him, but when Cliff goes out and Jimmy re-enters the room, the two instead fall into an intimate game. Jimmy impersonates a stuffed bear and Alison impersonates a toy squirrel. Cliff returns to tell Alison that her old friend, Helena Charles, has called her on the phone. Alison leaves to take the call and returns with the news that Helena is coming to stay for a visit. Jimmy does not like Helena and goes into a rage in which he wishes that Alison would suffer in order to know what it means to be a real person. He curses her and wishes that she could have a child only to watch it die.

Two weeks later, Helena has arrived and Alison discusses her relationship with Jimmy. She tells of how they met and how, in their younger days, they used to crash parties with their friend Hugh Tanner. Jimmy maintains an affection for Hugh's mother, though his relationship with Hugh was strained when Hugh left to travel the world and Jimmy stayed to be with Alison. Jimmy seems to regret that he could not leave, but he is also angry at Hugh for abandoning his mother. Helena inquires about Alison's affectionate relationship with Cliff and Alison tells her that they are strictly friends.

Cliff and Jimmy return to the flat and Helena tells them that she and Alison are leaving for church. Jimmy goes into an anti-religious rant and ends up insulting Alison's family once again. Helena becomes angry and Jimmy dares her to slap him on the face, warning her that he will slap her back. He tells her of how he watched his father die as a young man. His father had been injured fighting in the Spanish Civil War and had returned to England only to die shortly after. Alison and Helena begin to leave for church and Jimmy feels betrayed by his wife.

A phone call comes in for Jimmy and he leaves the room. Helena tells Alison that she has called Alison's father to come get her and take her away from this abusive home. Alison relents and says that she will go when her father picks her up the next day. When Jimmy returns, he tells Alison that Mrs. Tanner, Hugh's mother, has become sick and is going to die. Jimmy decides to visit her and he demands that Alison make a choice of whether to go with Helena or with him. Alison picks up her things and leaves for church and Jimmy collapses on the bed, heartbroken by his wife's decision.

The next evening Alison is packing and talking with her father, Colonel Redfern. The Colonel is a soft spoken man who realizes that he does not quite understand the love that exists between Jimmy and Alison. He admits that the actions of him and his wife are partly to blame for their split. The Colonel was an officer in the British military and served in India and he is nostalgic for his time there. He considers his service to be some of the best years of his life. Alison observes that her father is hurt because the present is not the past and that Jimmy is hurt because he feels the present is only the past. Alison begins to pack her toy squirrel, but then she decides not to do so.

Helena and Cliff soon enter the scene. Alison leaves a letter for Jimmy explaining why she has left and she gives it to Cliff. After Alison leaves, Cliff becomes angry and gives the letter to Helena, blaming her for the situation. Jimmy returns, bewildered that he was almost hit by Colonel Redfern's car and that Cliff pretended not to see him when he was walking by

on the street. He reads Alison's letter and becomes very angry. Helena tells him that Alison is pregnant, but Jimmy tells her that he does not care. He insults Helena and she slaps him, then passionately kisses him.

Several months pass and the third act opens with Jimmy and Cliff once again reading the Sunday papers while Helena stands in the corner ironing. Jimmy and Cliff still engage in their angry banter and Helena's religious tendencies have taken the brunt of Jimmy's punishment. Jimmy and Cliff perform scenes from musicals and comedy shows but when Helena leaves, Cliff notes that things do not feel the same with her here. Cliff then tells Jimmy that he wants to move out of the apartment. Jimmy takes the news calmly and tells him that he has been a loyal friend and is worth more than any woman. When Helena returns, the three plan to go out. Alison suddenly enters.

Alison and Helena talk while Jimmy leaves the room. He begins to loudly play his trumpet. Alison has lost her baby and looks sick. Helena tells Alison that she should be angry with her for what she has done, but Alison is only grieved by the loss of her baby. Helena is driven to distraction by Jimmy's trumpet playing and demands that he come into the room. When he comes back in, he laments the fact that Alison has lost the baby but shrugs it off. Helena then tells Jimmy and Alison that her sense of morality -- right and wrong -- has not diminished and that she knows she must leave. Alison attempts to persuade her to stay, telling her that Jimmy will be alone if she leaves.

When Helena leaves, Jimmy attempts to once again become angry but Alison tells him that she has now gone through the emotional and physical suffering that he has always wanted her to feel. He realizes that she has suffered greatly, has become like him, and becomes softer and tenderer towards her. The play ends with Jimmy and Alison embracing, once again playing their game of bear and squirrel.