B.A. English Semester IV
Paper I: Drama (B)

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Recommended Readings
Modern Drama: A Very Short Introduction by Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr
A Short History of English Literature by Pramod K Nayar
A Compendious History of English Literature by R.D. Trivedi
A History of English Literature by Edward Albert

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Modern drama

Modern Drama refers to plays written in the 19th and 20th centuries The word "modern" implies current art work, the term "modern drama" is frozen into the historical dramatic movement away from Victorian drama, with its exaggerated and non-realistic characters, to the realistic depictions of psychological, genuine characters depicted in realistic settings. Post-modernism began after WW I**,** so "Modern Drama" flourished between 1800 and 1914. Modern dramatists include such playwrights as Tennessee Williams, Oscar Wilde, and Henrik Ibsen.

The First phase of modernism in English drama was marked by the plays of G.B. Shaw and John Galsworthy, which constitute the category of social drama modeled on the plays of Ibsen. The second phase comprise the plays of Irish movement contributed by some elites like Y.B. Yeats. In this phase the drama contained the spirit of nationalism. The thirds and the final phase of modernism in English Drama comprise plays of T.S. Eliot and Christopher Fry. This phase saw the compositions of poetics dramas inspired by earlier Elizabethan and Jacobean tradition.

Unlike the earlier drama of Shakespeare and Sophocles, modern drama tended to focus not on kings and heroes, but instead on ordinary people dealing with everyday problems. And like much of the literature of this period, which expressed reactions to rapid social change and cataclysmic events like World War I, it often dealt with the sense of alienation and disconnectedness that average people felt in this period. Three of the most emblematic plays of modern drama are Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Shaw's *Major Barbara*, and O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is often considered the first "modern drama" and Chekhov's plays are always held up as models of “Modern Drama.” The Ibsenion play is essentially a drama of ideas, of characters swayed with ideas and struggling against the 16 forces of convention and society.

If William Archer propagated the plays of Ibsen, it was Shaw who imported the real Ibsen spirit into English Drama. Shaw was immensely influenced by the plays of Ibsen and, like him; he became a champion of conferring the new freedom of subject-matter and technique on English drama. Since the appearance of his first play Widowers Houses in 1892, Shaw strode on the English stage like a versatile Titan almost till the end of his days. Among modern English dramatists, he proved the most zealous advocate o f rationalism and realism, brushing aside Victorian cobwebs, a proper climate for a drama of ideas, enlarging the dramatists vision and, above all, slowly forging an appreciative and responsive intellectual audience for his problems plays. ” The plays of Shaw are inspired by a conscious iconoclastic Galsworthy the two other great luminaries in the firmament of modern drama gave a version of realism in their work, which has no touch of the partisan spirit or the zeal of the propagandist. Shaw’s realism and the naturalism of Barker and Galsworthy have to be distinguished further. Shaw is essentially an intellectual, cold, penetrating, satirical, often flippant, but the latter have nothing of the imp or the mountebank in them.

No account of modern British drama can be complete without a reference to the Irish Movement and the Provincial Repertory Movement. The new Irish Theatre was founded in 1892 by a group of prominent Irish writers with W. B. Yeats at their head. Later on, Miss, A. E. Horniman, a wealthy English woman, joined this group of writers and provided funds with which

the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, was constructed. The Irish Movement, also known as Celtic Revival, was essentially national in character, and concentrated on Irish themes and ideas. It also aimed at reforming the stage and turning it into a thing of beauty. The movement, however, was not intended to espouse the cause of realism or naturalism.

Including Ibsen's play, some of the best modern dramas are *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams, *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde. Modern drama is dominated more by comedy than tragedy. Robertson, and Brecht had considerable influence on the dramatists, and Irish theatre contributed enormously to the development of modern English drama. Realism and social problems were the guiding force of the playwrights, and poetic drama was revived by Yeats and T.S.Eliot. In the inter-war period this was highly appreciated because of theatre-lovers' dissatisfaction with realism and naturalistic prose dialogue.

The arrival of the cinema with its wider scope of presentation bedimmed the theatre, and particularly the masses of lower taste and the war-stricken people thronged the cinema to find entertainment, they did not find in the theatre. The dramas became more and more obscure, with a subcutaneous significance under the smooth surface, and the dialogue was not so simple as even the plays of Shaw and Galsworthy.

From 1890 to 1920, the pursuit of realism and naturalism dominated the field, though Yeats and Synge were not content with realism. Gradually, a shift from realism was explored by the dramatists, and the greatest inter-war dramatist O'Casey who based his plays on the stark slum life of Dublin "really transformed his work into poetry." Writers such as J.M.Barrie and A. A. Milne catered to the demand of sentimentalism, and from this trend was not free his realistic play Journey's End (1929).another interesting feature of the modern play was its concern with the post mortem life manifest in plays like Outward Bound (1923) by Sutton Vane. The comedy, as we have said, was the ruling force, and the satirical and cynical work of Somerset Maugham and the blasé (nonchalant) sophistication of Noel Coward anticipated the atmosphere of the later twenties.

Characteristics of Modern Drama

Advances in science and technology, expanding city life, nationalism, changes among social classes, and the move from an agrarian to an industrial economy influenced dramatic themes. Plays were often censored or banned due to their explicit or controversial content, leaving them performable only for small, private audiences. The Well-Made Play and Melodrama—genres of the nineteenth century—were ridiculed. Dramatists including Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906) and George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) applied conventions of these plays but adapted them to social and psychological issues rather than incidents.

August Strindberg (1849–1912) abandoned dramatic rules for the logic of dreams. Anton Chekhov (1860–1904) abandoned stock characters and extreme drama for understatement and nuance.

The Independent Theatre Movement: Naturalism

Naturalist theatres included André Antoine's Theatre Libre in Paris, J. T. Grein's Independent Theatre in London, Otto Brahm's Freie Bühne of Berlin, and Konstantin Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre are among several independent theatres allowing modern playwrights to perform works outside of commercial theatres. Naturalism originated in 1860s France as a movement interested in science and social behaviours caused by biological factors as

opposed to Romanticism's interest in emotion and personal experience. Naturalism grew out of an interest in Darwin's theories about creatures, their survivability, natural selection, and dependence on the environment.

Theatre and the Avant-Garde

Futurism, led by F. T. Marinetti (1876–1944) in Italy, removed the human character from theatre and relied on puppets, machines, and inanimate objects. Dadaism, led by Romanian Tristan Tzara (1896–1963), flourished in the Cabaret Voltaire in Zürich during World War I, and created nonsense poems, musical pieces, and masked performances. Surrealism, led by Andre Breton (1896–1966), focused on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical and dream theories. Alfred Jarry's King Ubu (1896) became an iconic surrealist play. Frenchman Antonin Artaud (1894–1948) became surrealism's most influential dramatist and created a Theatre of Cruelty—a primal theatre inspired by ancient rituals, as well as the Marx Brothers' film comedies. Artaud's The Theatre and Its Double (1938) discusses plague, primitive myths, and Balinese "animated hieroglyphics" in the context of curing the decadence of modern life. The avant-garde became associated with progressive art, particularly related to socialism and anarchism. In Italy futurists became associated with Fascism—extreme nationalism and advocacy of war

Expressionist drama

Of the new experiments, the most influential was 'expressionism'. Expressionist drama was concerned not with the society but with man. Its purpose was to present a deep, subjective, psychological analysis, not so much of an individual as of a type, and it dealt with the subconscious. The hitherto-used dramatic forms and methods of expression were inadequate, and the dramatists sought unrestricted freedom. In the expressionistic dramas, the dialogue was cryptic and patterned, and there was a combination of verse and prose. Symbolic figures, embodiments of inner, secret impulses, were introduced on the stage in an attempt to make clear the psychological complexities of character. Such a drama, by its very nature, difficult, and it did not stay in the field for long. As a matter of fact, the most extreme forms of expressionism were never practied; The British dramatists did not wholeheartedly welcome the new sentimental ideas, and expressionism soon became a thing of the past. Of expressionist English dramatists, the most important figure was Eugene O'Neil, and Elmer Rice (1892-1967), his countryman, wrote only one play of this kind- *The Adding Machine*. In Britain, the influence of expressionism is seen in O'Casey's The Silver Tassie and Priestley's Johnson over Jordan.

Problem plays

Problem play**,** type of drama that developed in the 19th century to deal with controversial social issues in a realistic manner, to expose social ills, and to stimulate thought and discussion on the part of the audience. F. S. Boas, a critic, used the term to describe certain plays by William Shakespeare that he considered having attributes like Ibsen's nineteenth-century problem plays. The genre had it's beginnings in the work of the French dramatists Alexandre Dumas *fils* and Émile Augier, who adapted the then-popular formula of Eugène Scribe's "well-made play" (*q.v.*) to serious subjects, creating somewhat simplistic, didactic thesis plays on subjects such as prostitution, business ethics, illegitimacy, and female emancipation. The problem play reached it's maturity in the works of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, whose works had artistic merit as well as topical relevance. His first experiment in the genre was *Love's Comedy* (published 1862), a critical study of contemporary marriage.

According to Chris Baldick, this genre rose "from the ferment of the 1890s… for the most part inspired by the example of Ibsen's realistic stage representations of serious familial and social conflicts". He explained it as follows:

> Rejecting the frivolity of intricately plotted romantic intrigues in the nineteenth-century French tradition of the 'well-made play', it favoured instead the form of the 'problem play', which would bring to life some contemporary controversy of public importance—women's rights, unemployment, penal reform, class privilege—in a vivid but responsibly accurate presentation.

It originated in nineteenth-century France but was effectively practised and popularized by the Norwegian playwright Ibsen. It was introduced into England by Henry Arthur Jones and A. W. Pinero towards the end of the nineteenth century. G. B. Shaw and Galsworthy took the problem play to its height in the twentieth century. H. Granvi lie-Barker was the last notable practitioner of this dramatic type. Thus the problem play flourished in England in the period between the last years of the nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth.

The problem play is sometimes called "the propaganda play," for the obvious reason that it's intent is overtly didactic and propagandist. The writer of the problem play is not a pure aesthete, a dispassionate creator of beautiful artifacts for there own sake. He is not like Henry James's "God of creation" who remains out of His creation indifferently "paring his finger nails."' Ibsen, Shaw, and Galsworthy have written such plays to direct public attention to social evils and wrong attitudes. And, what is more, a problem play is not something merely diagnostic but also something therapeutic; in other words, it not only spells out the ills but also prescribes uie-fernedy. Shaw scoffed at the slogan "art for art's sake."
A Doll's House portrays a woman's escape from her childish, subservient role as a bourgeois wife; *Ghosts* attacks the convention that even loveless and unhappy marriages are sacred; *The Wild Duck* shows the consequences of an egotistical idealism; *An Enemy of the People* reveals the expedient morality of respectable provincial townspeople.

Ibsen's influence helped encourage the writing of problem plays throughout Europe. Other Scandinavian playwrights, among them August Strindberg, discussed sexual roles and the emancipation of women from both liberal and conservative viewpoints. Eugène Brieux attacked the French judicial system in *The Red Robe.* In England, George Bernard Shaw brought the problem play to its intellectual peak, both with his plays and with their long and witty prefaces. Shaw's first play—a problem play—was, in the words of A. C. Ward, "adramatic essay in 'social realism' long before the term had been coined in Russia or elsewhere. Built around the theme of slum-landlordism, *Widowers 'Houses* represents the cruel oppression of the poor slum-dwellers by big financier-landlords.*Mrs Warren's Profession* is about the evil of prostitution. The play is about the economics of prostitution as a profession in a free society. It's other aspects are ironically made subsidiary. Mrs Warren is far from being a romantic courtesan. She is an ordinary, successful harlot. *The Apple Carl* is yet another thought-provoking comedy. Shaw defends the institution of monarchy which is represented in the play by King Magnus whose sagacious tactics upset the "apple cart" of democratic leaders. There is a group of Shaw's plays (such as *Man and Superman, Heartbreak House,* and *Back to Methusaleh)* which treat his favourite concept of "Life Force" and being so are not strictly problem plays but plays of ideas. Galsworthy as a writer of problem plays is hugely inferior to Slum. ! fe lacks his wit, humour, and intellectual sharpness. Il is said that Shaw's plays are deficient in emotion. Galsworthy's are .not, but emotion in his works is hardly different from cheap and mushy sentiment. His best-known play *Strife* represents the conflict between striking workers and factory-owners, neither of

them ready to surrender to the other. *The Skin Game* dramatizes the struggle between old aristocrats and the newly rich industrialists. *Justice* and *The Silver Box* represent the evils of law, which treats some as more equal than others, as also the irrationality of consigning people to solitary imprisonment.

Granville-Barker was the last notable practitioner of the problem play. His plays include *The Manying of Ann Leete, Waste*(which was censored), *The Madras House,* and *The Voysey Inheritance.* The last named, to quote Ward, "was his finest achievements, and one of the best and richest plays of modern times."

Shaw's Mrs Warren's Profession (1902), examining attitudes towards prostitution; and Galsworthy's Justice (1910), exposing the cruelties of solitary confinement and the legal system. Some plays by later writers such as A. Wesker, J. McGrath, Caryl Churchill, H. Brenton, and D. Hare also raise contemporary issues, often using a wider canvas than their predecessors. In Shakespearean studies, certain of the 'dark comedies' are known as problem plays, notably Measure for Measure, All's Well that Ends Well, and Troilus and Cressida. These plays are difficult to classify because their sombre themes and cynical tones contrast oddly with their comedic elements, and the moral issues raised are not satisfactorily resolved. The term was originally applied to these plays by Frederick S. Boas (1862–1957, scholar of early modern drama).

Drama of ideas

Drama of Ideas ", pioneered by George Bernard Shaw , is atype of discussion play in which the clash of ideas and hostileideologies reveals the most acute problems of social and personal morality. This type of comedy is different from theconventional comedy such as Shakespearean comedies. In a Drama of Ideas there is alittle action but discussion. Characters are only the vehicles ofideas. The conflict which is the essence of drama is reachedthrough the opposing ideas of different characters. The aimof Drama of Ideas is to educate people through entertainment.

Arms and the Man is an excellent example of the Drama of Ideas. Here very little happens except discussion. The plot is built up with dynamic and unconventional ideas regarding warand love. Shaw criticizes the romantic notion of war and ove prevailing in the contemporary society. Unlike the conventionalcomedies, here characters are engaged in lengthy discussion and thus bring out ideas contrary to each other.

To Shaw, drama was preeminently a medium for articulating his own ideas and philosophy. He enunciated the philosophy of life force which he sought to disseminate through his dramas. Thus Shavian plays are the vehicles for the transportation of ideas, however, propagandizing they may be. Shaw wanted to cast his ideas through discussions.

Shavian comedy

By creating plays involving over-exaggerated scenarios and characters that center on current day issues, Shaw uses a method designed to provoke thought and action for a better society, commonly known as Shavian Method. The Shavian Ethic preserves the ideal of creative evolution and allows the "Life Force" to continue moving humanity on to the next higher state of being. Shavian Method includes exaggeration in excess. Theatre, by nature, already has heightened and overplayed themes, plots, characters and everything else in order to convey a story, a moral, and so on. Shavian drama is basically intellectual, physical action and emotional conflict are bound to be missing.

Shavian method is present in this play as in Mrs. Warren's Profession, although it is not as obvious. There are some definite opportunities for Shaw to use 'spectacle' in several places but rather than focus the attention on suicides or weddings he keeps the spotlight on Morell's path of self-discovery.

Shavian method facilitates the work of Shaw's ethic in that social and religious ideals must be removed or at a minimum reconsidered in order to bring about a true change in society. The conflict in Shavian drama depends much on the Shaw-hero. The clashes he has with the antagonist, or the society itself, or the mother-woman, provide the intellectual conflicts which result in character-interaction.

Propaganda plays

The Propaganda Play is a play which is written for the purpose of enforcing a particular point of view. The characters in the play were not individuals but protagonists in an economic conflict. Piscator's version of Dreiser's novel, An American Tragedy (March 13, 1936), was another propaganda play. Economic justice, insisted 1. Allardyce Nicoll, was only a contributing factor in the tragedy and not the whole tragedy. Dreiser at first objected to Piscator's interpretation, but as Mr. Wentz points out in another article in this issue, he later came to accept it. The Federal Theatre's "Living Newspaper" dealt with such problems as slum housing in New York City. It made no pretense to be an art theater; it's purpose was to convey certain specific information and to enforce definite convictions. Propaganda played a very important role in the Russian Revolution. George Orwell wrote his novel *Animal Farm* after this revolution, and used anti-communist propaganda as its major theme. The author manipulated the speech of the character Squealer, which is a pig portrayed as Napoleon's spokesperson. Adam Johnson's novel *The Orphan Master's Son* deals with the themes of identity, state power, and propaganda in North Korea. The story is about two men from North Korea who revolted against the tyrannical government of their country. Many critics consider some historical plays of Shakespeare as Tudor propagandas, as they depict civil war dangers, and commemorate the Tudor dynasty's founders. Similarly, in his play *Richard III*, Shakespeare uses propaganda, when we see Richard shapes the readers' perceptions.

Social drama

A drama about people and they place where they live; a drama that deals with the way people get along with others. Victor Turner defines the social drama as "a sequence of social interactions of a conflictive, competitive, or agonistic type" (33), and he delineates its stages as breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration or schism. the social drama begins when a member of a community breaks a rule; sides are taken for or against the rule breaker; repairs—formal or informal—are enacted; and if the repairs work, the group returns to normal, but if the repairs fail, the group breaks apart. or Turner, "A social drama is mostly, at least on the surface, under the sign of indicativity. That is, it presents itself as consisting of acts, states, occurrences that are factual, in terms of the cultural definition of factuality. Every culture has a theory that certain 'things' actually happen, are 'really true,' that 'have been' or 'are." The Clinton-Lewinsky saga is exemplary of the interplay between indicative social drama and subjunctive cultural performances. Richard Schechner (Performance Theory) describes this interplay as a mobius strip: the social drama's conflicts and characters fund the content of performances; and performances, in turn, color and inflect the social drama

New Woman

The **New Woman** was a feminist ideal that emerged in the late 19th century and had a profound influence on feminism well into the 20th century. The term was used by writer Charles Reade in his novel *A Woman Hater*, originally published serially in *Blackwood's Magazine* and in three volumes in 1877. In 1894, Irish writer Sarah Grand used the term "new woman" in an influential article, to refer to independent women seeking radical change. Furthermore, the New Woman tends to be well-educated and to read a great deal. The New Woman is physically vigorous and energetic, preferring comfortable clothes to the restrictive garb usually worn by women of the era. She often has short hair, rides a bicycle, and smokes cigarettes--all considered quite daring for women at the turn of the century.

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* makes prominent mention of the New Woman in its pages, with its two main female characters discussing the changing roles of women and the New Woman in particular. Mina Harker goes on to embody several characteristics of the New Woman, employing skills such as typing and deductive reasoning, to the amusement of the older male characters. Lucy Westrenra wonders if the New Woman could marry several men at once, which shocks her friend, Mina. Feminist analyses of *Dracula* regard male anxiety about the Woman Question and female sexuality as central to the book.

The ‘New Woman’ was the term used to describe these first-wave feminists, who presented something of a challenge to the social, political and artistic male establishment, not least within the commercial theatre. The New Woman pushed the limits set by a male-dominated society, especially as modeled in the plays of Norwegian Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906). The "New Woman" was also a nickname given to Ella Hepworth Dixon, the English author of the novel *The Story of a Modern Woman*.

There were, however, some male playwrights at the end of the nineteenth century who were writing plays with more sympathetic feminist protagonists. One such example is Arthur Wing Pinero’s *The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith* (1895) where the eponymous heroine demonstrates her radical views by lecturing against marriage, living with her lover and advocating ‘free love’. After facing hostility and rejection by even her friends, she becomes defeated and turns to religion for solace. Another late nineteenth-century play with a sympathetic portrayal of a woman who has transgressed society’s moral values is Henry Arthur Jones’s *Mrs Dane’s Defence* (1900) where a young ‘widow’ embarking on marriage with the son of a famous judge, is found to have concealed her affair with a married man in Vienna.

These women, the creations of liberal Victorian men, tend to reflect *male* attitudes and in some cases *male* sympathy; there were very few plays in the commercial theatre where women spoke for themselves.

It’s worth noting that the most famous fallen woman of all, Thomas Hardy’s *Tess*. In the tragedy of Tess, rural poverty, gender politics and the hypocrisy of the established church come together in a work that is often considered to be one of the first English Modernist novels.

In St John Hankin’s *The Last of the De Mullins* (1907), Janet De Mullin is a woman who exemplifies the New Woman; she lives an independent life having left home pregnant with an illegitimate child. When, much later, she is offered the financial security of her father’s fortune if she will give up her London hat shop and bring her son back to the family home, she declines, despite her father’s order that she should obey him:

Fanny Hawthorn in Stanley Houghton's *Hindle Wakes* (1912) is another woman who refuses to be bullied into marriage just because she's had an affair with a man. However, Fanny is from a different social class; she's a weaver in Lancashire. She has transgressed by spending a clandestine weekend in Blackpool with the boss's son, Alan Jeffcote.

Cicely Hamilton and Elizabeth Robins, both New Women playwrights, spent years performing 'woman-as-victim' roles in melodramas before becoming radicalised into the feminist cause and writing there own plays. Cicely Hamilton was a founder of the Women Writer's Suffrage League, a member of the Women's Freedom League and Actresses Franchise League, and was later an avid campaigner of women's and children's rights, equal guardianship and pay. One of her early works, *Diana of Dobson's* (1908), is set in a drapery business and her protagonist, Diana Massingberd, sleeps in a company dormitory with all the constraints of the 'living-in' system.

All the New Women in the plays considered here have been concerned with personal liberation, the freedom for women to decide there own sexual, marital and economic fate. However, alongside the personal politics of sex and marriage, one issue dominated the early part of the century: the question of women's suffrage. The newly politicised American-born actress, Elizabeth Robins, wrote *Votes for Women* (1907), where the central character Vida Levering is a suffragette.

In fiction, New Woman writers included Olive Schreiner, Annie Sophie Cory (Victoria Cross), Sarah Grand, Mona Caird, George Egerton, Ella D'Arcy and Ella Hepworth Dixon. Some examples of New Woman literature are Victoria Cross's *Anna Lombard* (1901), Dixon's *The Story of a Modern Woman* and H. G. Wells's *Ann Veronica* (1909).

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Unit II
Henrik Ibsen: *A Doll's House*

A Doll's House- (a three-act play) is considered the beginning of modern drama. By dramatizing Nora's conflict between her inner desire and what she has been taught to want, Ibsen argues that average people, and their seemingly trivial problems, are as important as Oedipus or Hamlet.

The play is about the travails of an upper-class housewife. Set in Ibsen's native Norway, ***A Doll's House*** focuses on Nora, a typical housewife married to the successful banker Torvald. Despite having a seemingly perfect life on the surface, Nora feels unfulfilled and comes to realize she and Torvald do not really know each other. The play ends with Nora leaving Torvald, possibly forever.The play is also modern in the way it portrays Nora's feeling of alienation. She has everything society has told her she should want, but still feels unfulfilled. The play generated extreme controversy at the time it was written for seeming to question these societal norms.

In *A Doll's House,* Ibsen paints a bleak picture of the sacrificial role held by women of all economic classes in his society. In general, the play's female characters exemplify Nora's assertion (spoken to Torvald in Act Three) that even though men refuse to sacrifice their integrity, "hundreds of thousands of women have." In order to support her mother and two brothers, Mrs. Linde found it necessary to abandon Krogstad, her true—but penniless—love, and marry a richer man. The nanny had to abandon her own child to support herself by working as

Nora's (and then as Nora's children's) caretaker. As she tells Nora, the nanny considers herself lucky to have found the job, since she was "a poor girl who'd been led astray."

Act I of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* opens with Nora Helmer arriving home from a Christmas shopping trip. Her husband, Torvald, greets her and playfully chastises her for spending so much money. Nora argues that since Torvald was recently promoted at work, the Helmers have more financial leeway than they have had in previous years. As they talk, the doorbell rings. The Helmers' maid Helene informs them that two guests have arrived: Dr. Rank, a close family friend who is terminally ill, and, much to Nora's shock, her old school friend Christine Linde.

After the guests are admitted, Dr. Rank and Torvald meet in Torvald's study while Nora and Mrs. Linde remain in the sitting room. Nora pityingly remarks that Mrs. Linde is now a childless widow and apologizes for not staying in touch after marrying Torvald. Mrs. Linde explains that she has lived a hard life since her husband died and feels lost with no one to care for. Mrs. Linde hopes Nora might convince Torvald to give her a job at the bank that he now manages, which Nora agrees to do.

Nora than recounts the woes of her own first year of marriage, wherein Torvald fell ill from overwork. To restore his health, the Helmers had to take an expensive trip to Italy. At first, Nora claims that her wealthy father gave them the money. However, after Mrs. Linde insinuates that Nora does not understand true suffering, Nora reveals that she acquired the money by taking out a loan—something she should not have legally been able to do.

When a low-level bank employee named Krogstad arrives requesting to see Torvald, both Nora and Mrs. Linde react uneasily. Dr. Rank, who joins Mrs. Linde and Nora in order to give Torvald and Krogstad privacy, calls Krogstad "morally sick."

After Torvald and Krogstad's meeting ends, Torvald, Dr. Rank, and Mrs. Linde depart the Helmers' home, leaving Nora to play with her children. Krogstad soon arrives to speak with Nora privately, revealing that he is the source of her loan. Furthermore, he reveals that he knows Nora illegally forged her father's signature on the bond. Torvald intends to fire Krogstad from the bank, so Krogstad uses the proof of Nora's forgery to blackmail her into advocating for him. Krogstad threatens to reveal Nora's crime and thus disgrace her and her husband unless Nora can convince her husband not to fire him. Nora tries to influence her husband, but he thinks of Nora as a simple child who cannot understand the value of money or business. Thus, when Torvald discovers that Nora has forged her father's name, he is ready to disclaim his wife even though she had done it for him. Later when all is solved, Nora sees that her husband is not worth her love and she leaves him.

Themes

The Sacrificial Role of Women

In *A Doll's House,* Ibsen paints a bleak picture of the sacrificial role held by women of all economic classes in his society. In general, the play's female characters exemplify Nora's assertion (spoken to Torvald in Act Three) that even though men refuse to sacrifice their integrity, "hundreds of thousands of women have." In order to support her mother and two brothers, Mrs. Linde found it necessary to abandon Krogstad, her true—but penniless—love, and marry a richer man. The nanny had to abandon her own child to support herself by working as Nora's (and then as Nora's children's) caretaker. As she tells Nora, the nanny considers herself lucky to have found the job, since she was "a poor girl who'd been led astray."

Individual and Social Fabric

This is one of the most important themes of the play. Most actions of an individual are in response to the society or community they live. Nora is a loyal wife and a dedicated mother, but she does not stick to the moral framework of society. She thinks it morally right to deceive her husband about her debt and forgery. Even suicidal thoughts are for her husband, who will ruin himself when protecting her later. Mrs. Linde yearns to be a caretaker and play the role of

nurturer. She betrays Nora, which helps her see the true nature of Torvald. Also, Krogstad does not achieve happiness through any means but realizes by the end that he can achieve it through his reformation. He learns that a person must give proper respect to his personality if he wants to win the respect of others in society.

Love and Marriage

Another important theme of the play is love and marriage. Nora and Torvald Helmer are presented as a happy couple, leading a blissful married life. The use of pet names by them for each other shows the involvement of love as opposed to Mrs. Linde's life. This marriage proves a contrast to the marriage of Mrs. Linde and Krogstad that happens by the end of the play, which shows that love and marriage are based on realistic expectations. When the reality of the deception of Nora dawns upon Torvald, he reveals the other side of human nature and immediately expels Nora from his life, while she is also ready to go away. On the other hand, Mrs. Linde and Krogstad have never been in love with each other.

Materialism

Materialism is an essential thematic strand that runs throughout the play. Stress upon money is the specific focus of the married couple Nora and Torvald Helmer. Financial autonomy and success are the central points of Torvald's point of view about success, whether it is in marriage or business. His refusal to take cases that do not give him satisfaction is the primary reason for his financial success. Nora, too, thinks that by providing material comfort, she can win her husband as well as her married life. However, expectations of the material success of Nora and Torvald dash to the ground by the end of the play when they come to know the truth.

Religion

Although religion does not directly appear in the play, it has some importance. For example, the events of the play occur around or on Christmas. While the events of the first act take place in the evening, the second on the day of Christmas and third on Boxing Day. The arrival of Christmas Tree in the first act also shows this occasion. Secondly, there is much stress on the morality that is undoubtedly Christian morality. However, it is interesting that it has not been directly mentioned. Only Torvald accuses Nora of having "no religion" and that his father does not have any principle. Nora too admits by the end that she does not know the reality of religion and that she is not sure about the clergy as well.

Corruption

It is a minor theme but plays an important role in the progress of the play. Dr. Rank is an epitome of corruption and has inherited tuberculosis along with moral degradation from his father. In the same way, Torvald accuses Nora of inheriting moral ineptitude about money and financial matters from her father. In other words, it is suggested that such corruption, whether it is physical, or moral is a curse for the society.

Thus, *A Doll's House* questions the entire fabric of marital relationships, investigates the development of self-awareness in character, and eventually indicts all the false values of contemporary society which denies the worth of individual personality.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Torvald Helmer.
Nora, his wife.
Doctor Rank.
Mrs Linde.
Nils Krogstad.
Helmer's three young children.
Anne, their nurse.
A Housemaid.

A Porter.
[The action takes place in Helmer's house.]

Nora is the protagonist of the play and the wife of Torvald Helmer. Nora initially seems like a playful, naïve child who lacks knowledge of the world outside her home. She does have some worldly experience, however, and the small acts of rebellion in which she engages indicate that she is not as innocent or happy as she appears. She comes to see her position in her marriage with increasing clarity and finds the strength to free herself from her oppressive situation. Torvald's severe and selfish reaction after learning of Nora's deception and forgery is the final catalyst for Nora's awakening. But even in the first act, Nora shows that she is not totally unaware that her life is at odds with her true personality. She defies Torvald in small yet meaningful ways—by eating macaroons and then lying to him about it, for instance. She also swears, apparently just for the pleasure she derives from minor rebellion against societal standards. As the drama unfolds, and as Nora's awareness of the truth about her life grows, her need for rebellion escalates, culminating in her walking out on her husband and children to find independence.
Krogstad - A lawyer who went to school with Torvald and holds a subordinate position at Torvald's bank. Krogstad's character is contradictory: though his bad deeds seem to stem from a desire to protect his children from scorn, he is perfectly willing to use unethical tactics to achieve his goals. His willingness to allow Nora to suffer is despicable, but his claims to feel sympathy for her and the hard circumstances of his own life compel us to sympathize with him to some degree. **Mrs. Linde** - Nora's childhood friend. Kristine Linde is a practical, down-to-earth woman, and her sensible worldview highlights Nora's somewhat childlike outlook on life. Mrs. Linde's account of her life of poverty underscores the privileged nature of the life that Nora leads. Also, we learn that Mrs. Linde took responsibility for her sick parent, whereas Nora abandoned her father when he was ill.
Dr. Rank - Torvald's best friend. Dr. Rank stands out as the one character in the play who is by and large unconcerned with what others think of him. He is also notable for his stoic acceptance of his fate. Unlike Torvald and Nora, Dr. Rank admits to the diseased nature (literally, in his case) of his life. For the most part, he avoids talking to Torvald about his imminent death out of respect for Torvald's distaste for ugliness.

Bob, Emmy, And Ivar - Nora and Torvald's three small children. In her brief interaction with her children, Nora shows herself to be a loving mother. When she later refuses to spend time with her children because she fears she may morally corrupt them, Nora acts on her belief that the quality of parenting strongly influences a child's development.
Anne-Marie - The Helmers' nanny. Though Ibsen doesn't fully develop her character, Anne-Marie seems to be a kindly woman who has genuine affection for Nora. She had to give up her own daughter in order to take the nursing job offered by Nora's father. Thus, she shares with Nora and Mrs. Linde the act of sacrificing her own happiness out of economic necessity.

Nora's Father - Though Nora's father is dead before the action of the play begins, the characters refer to him throughout the play. Though she clearly loves and admires her father, Nora also comes to blame him for contributing to her subservient position in life.

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Unit III
George Bernard Shaw: *Candida*

Candida, a comedy by playwright George Bernard Shaw, was written in 1894 and first published in 1898, as part of his *Plays Pleasant*. Candida was a propagandist and the name indicates that Shaw is going to deal with 'the Woman Question' - a burning issue in the contemporary late Victorian society. The name 'Cadida' has a special symbolic significance in this respect. In addition to this, as A. C. Ward points out, when the play was first written it's full title was *Candida: A Mystery,* and that mystery part also contributes an additional significance to the title.

Candida examines marriage and the relationship between husband and wife in the late Victorian era. It centers around Candida Morell, a beautiful and charming woman who is married to Reverend James Morell, a dedicated Christian socialist. The couple have taken in Eugene Marchbanks, a young, idealistic poet, who Morell found sleeping on the Embankment in London. Candida finds herself the subject of a tug-of-war between the two men as Marchbanks declares his passionate love for Morell's wife. The crisis reaches it's peak when Marchbanks challenges Morell to question Candida's love for him and the true state of his marriage. Marchbanks believes that Candida deserves his eternal love and devotion, observing that household chores and domestic expectations are far beneath her. Alternatively, Morell believes that his wife needs his care and protection. However, neither man's expectations of Candida are correct. Ultimately, she declares that she loves and must be with the "weaker of the two"--her husband. Morell is the man that needs *her* care and protection, who is selfless enough to step down when he believes she may love another, and the man to whom Candida wishes to be "the sum of all loving care".

Characters:

Candida
Candida has been called Shaw's representation of the "ideal woman." On the surface she is young (thirty three), intelligent, physically attractive, kind, efficient, sensitive, loving, supportive, a good wife and a loving motherCandida is not all of these things. Her kindness is shallow and her sensitivity is limited to those who are immediately important to her. She has made a successful (and probably happy), marriage by shielding her husband from reality. She has shown him respect, while having little respect for what he thought he was trying to accomplish. Candida presents herself as the **newly emerging emancipated woman**. She openly disapproves of her husband's sermons. Again, she remains steadfastly dutiful maintaining the traditional conduct of woman. She never declines her wifely duty. Marchbanks is a fiery romantic full of compassion for Candida.

The Reverend Alexander Mill is "a young gentleman gathered by Morell from the nearest University settlement, whither he had come from Oxford to give the East End of London the benefit of his university training." He is, at least to me, intellectually dishonest and thoroughly obnoxious. He has won Morell over "by a doglike devotion." Burgess is a businessman - ignorant, shallow, greedy, bigoted, totally insensitive to the feelings of those around him. (I have difficulty believing that Candida could have been sired and raised by such a boor.) His role in the play is to underscore Morell's self-righteousness by giving him the opportunity to pontificate on his father-in-law's greed. And last, there's Proserpine Garnett, Morell's secretary, who suffers from what Candida calls "Prossy's complaint." Prossy is a lonely, 30 year-old, lower middle-

class woman who loves Morell, but would never admit it, even to herself. She provides the definition of Morell's effect on others.

Marchbanks
Marchbanks is pathetic. In describing him, Shaw uses the word, "sensitiveness," as opposed to "sensitive." It is appropriate, for the only emotions Marchbanks feels are his own. Youth may excuse his hubris - his assumption that he could almost dictate Candida's feelings, but I see no way to excuse the viciousness he shows to Morell, or the disdain he shows the other characters, or the brutality of his demand that Candida choose between them. Marchbanks is a poet because Shaw says he is a poet. But poetry, indeed all art, is a giving, and Marchbanks is a taker. Marchbanks is absolutely convinced of his own rectitude and righteousness. But he is a coward, and can only express himself brutally. Morell is absolutely convinced of his own rectitude and righteousness, and cannot hear unless beaten over the head. Candida makes Eugene's judgment - she chooses her husband - but not until making it clear to Morell that he is: The weaker of the two.

Themes

The theme of the play is that women should have the right to navigate the line between security and freedom, domesticity and boundless imagination, for themselves. Candida is a strong female character, and indeed "candid" or frank in her words and actions. Ultimately, she decides not to pursue the life which is more viscerally compelling, but the man who needs her the most, her husband Morrell. Her decision is final by the end of the play when she says "I give myself to the weaker of the two."

The issues are infinitely complex, infinitely controversial. As Shaw later wrote in his Man and Superman, "Those who talk about the blessings of marriage and the constancy of its vows are the very people who declare that if the chain were broken and the prisoners were left free to choose, the whole social fabric would fly asunder. You can't have the argument both ways." Shaw has ruthlessly exposed the loss of freedom and the tyranny to which married women are subjected. Eugene, the young lover, declares that Candida wants 'reality^, truth and ^ freedom', the truth being the truth about her marriage and the freedom from the bond that ties her to her moralizing husband. By this impression of Candida's domestic life on Eugene, Shaw wants to show that her dutiful, respectable and noble-minded husband is really a bore and a tyrant, even though he considers her as his 'treasure'.

Unit IV

J M Synge: *Riders to the Sea*

It must have been on Synge's second visit to the Aran Islands that he had the experience out of which was wrought what many believe to be his greatest play. The scene of "Riders to the Sea" is laid in a cottage on Inishmaan, the middle and most interesting island of the Aran group. While Synge was on Inishmaan, the story came to him of a man whose body had been washed up on the far away coast of Donegal, and who, by reason of certain peculiarities of dress, was suspected to be from the island. In due course, he was recognised as a native of Inishmaan, in exactly the manner described in the play, and perhaps one of the most poignantly vivid passages in Synge's book on "The Aran Islands" relates the incident of his burial.

The other element in the story which Synge introduces into the play is equally true. Many tales of "second sight" are to be heard among Celtic races. In fact, they are so common as to

arouse little or no wonder in the minds of the people. It is just such a tale, which there seems no valid reason for doubting, that Synge heard, and that gave the title, “Riders to the Sea”, to his play.

It is the dramatist’s high distinction that he has simply taken the materials which lay ready to his hand, and by the power of sympathy woven them, with little modification, into a tragedy which, for dramatic irony and noble pity, has no equal among its contemporaries. Great tragedy, it is frequently claimed with some show of justice, has perforce departed with the advance of modern life and its complicated tangle of interests and creature comforts. A highly developed civilisation, with its attendant specialisation of culture, tends ever to lose sight of those elemental forces, those primal emotions, naked to wind and sky, which are the stuff from which great drama is wrought by the artist, but which, as it would seem, are rapidly departing from us. It is only in the far places, where solitary communion may be had with the elements, that this dynamic life is still to be found continuously, and it is accordingly thither that the dramatist, who would deal with spiritual life disengaged from the environment of an intellectual maze, must go for that experience which will beget in him inspiration for his art. The Aran Islands from which Synge gained his inspiration are rapidly losing that sense of isolation and self-dependence, which has hitherto been their rare distinction, and which furnished the motivation for Synge’s masterpiece. Whether or not Synge finds a successor, it is none the less true that in English dramatic literature “Riders to the Sea” has an historic value which it would be difficult to over-estimate in its accomplishment and its possibilities. A writer in The Manchester Guardian shortly after Synge’s death phrased it rightly when he wrote that it is “the tragic masterpiece of our language in our time; wherever it has been played in Europe from Galway to Prague, it has made the word tragedy mean something more profoundly stirring and cleansing to the spirit than it did.”

The secret of the play’s power is its capacity for standing afar off, and mingling, if we may say so, sympathy with relentlessness. There is a wonderful beauty of speech in the words of every character, wherein the latent power of suggestion is almost unlimited. “In the big world the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children, but in this place it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old.” In the quavering rhythm of these words, there is poignantly present that quality of strangeness and remoteness in beauty which, as we are coming to realise, is the touchstone of Celtic literary art. However, the very asceticism of the play has begotten a corresponding power which lifts Synge’s work far out of the current of the Irish literary revival, and sets it high in a timeless atmosphere of universal action.

Its characters live and die. It is their virtue in life to be lonely, and none but the lonely man in tragedy may be great. He dies, and then it is the virtue in life of the women mothers and wives and sisters to be great in their loneliness, great as Maurya, the stricken mother, is great in her final word.

“Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied.” The pity and the terror of it all have brought a great peace, the peace that passeth understanding, and it is because the play holds this timeless peace after the storm which has bowed down every character, that “Riders to the Sea” may rightly take its place as the greatest modern tragedy in the English tongue.

Riders to the Sea begins on the Aran Islands, as Nora, a young woman, brings in a small bundle and tells her older sister, Cathleen, that they may be the clothes of their drowned brother Michael. A priest told her the body of a drowned man had been found, but they do not want their mother, Maurya to know. Michael has been missing for a week; the family has already lost the family patriarch as well as four other sons to the sea. They hide the bundle in the turf loft of the cottage. Maurya is busy planning for Michael's funeral, consumed by her grief and lamenting that she has lost all her sons to the sea. She discusses the last remaining son, Bartley, with her daughters. Bartley is planning to go to sea to sell the family horses. Nora and Cathleen think they need the money, but Maurya is hoping that the priest will stop him due to the dangerous tides. Bartley enters the cottage looking for rope. Maurya tries to stop him, but he is determined to create a halter for the horses for his trip. Maurya tries to dissuade him by showing him the preparations for Michael's funeral, but he ignores her. He says goodbye to his sisters, but his mother refuses to give him any blessings as he leaves. This is significant as it is an Irish tradition that a son receives the blessing of his mother before he leaves. Maurya's daughters are shocked she broke this tradition. As Bartley leaves with the horses, Cathleen notices that he has taken no food and sends Maurya after him to give him food and blessings. She leaves with a stick from Michael, lamenting over how the old people never leave anything behind for the young people in the family, as is customary. When Maurya is gone, her daughters retrieve the bundle of clothes from the loft to check if they are from Michael. Nora observes her own stitching on the clothing, and confirms that they are her brother's. They now know that their brother's body has been found and the priest has already buried him.

The sisters hide the clothes again, and they assume Maurya will be in a better mood because she got the chance to bless Bartley. However, she comes back in a panic, saying she saw Michael upon a grey pony. She could not bless Bartley due to the shock. The girls try to calm her down by showing her Michael's clothes and telling her that her son got a proper Christian burial. As she grieves, villagers come into the cottage, carrying Bartley's body. The pony Maurya saw, that she thought she saw Michael upon, knocked Bartley into the sea where he drowned. Maurya gets on her knees near Bartley's corpse and sprinkles him with holy water. She says she is resigned to her fate and can finally sleep at night. After all, the sea has claimed every man in her family, and it can take nothing more from her. The preparations for Michael's funeral will now be used for Bartley's. The play ends with Maurya praying that her husband, his father, and her four sons will rest in peace. The curtain falls on her prayer.

Themes: Religion, Superstition, and Nature

The strongest theme in *Riders to the Sea* is the conflict between religion, superstition, and nature. On the surface, Maurya and her family are devout Catholics. The most important thing to Maurya is the return of Michael's body so he can have a proper Catholic funeral. When Bartley's body is returned, she blesses it with holy water. Throughout the play, the characters pray to God and ask for blessings. Everyone views the young Catholic priest as a prominent community leader. Under that religious surface, however, it becomes clear that Maurya, and perhaps the community at large, no longer trust in God's control. After first glance, the family's religious comments—such as "God help us," "[t]he blessing of God on you," or "God spare us"—seem mechanical rather than reverential, suggesting they have lost their meaning as prayers.

Community

Riders to the Sea tells the heartbreaking story of the destruction of one family, but the text references the downfall of an entire community and it's way of life. The traditional fishing community can survive only with young men to do the hard labor, including fishing and trading on the sea. Without them, the entire community struggles. Synge illustrates this struggle through the hungry pig that tries to eat the new rope. It can also be seen in the meager meal Maurya provides Bartley, the "cake" (bread) made of grass, and the few possessions Bartley has to take with him on his journey. The family is poor, and the struggle will intensify

without Bartley. Before he leaves, Maurya notes: "It's hard set we'll be surely the day you're drownd'd with the rest." Although her daughters are healthy, their community does not treat young women as being as capable as the young men, as Maurya notes of Cathleen, "How would the like of her get a good price for a pig?" She laments that without a young man, the family will suffer and look "for the grave."

Spirituality and Mourning

Riders to the Sea depicts a devout community of Catholics for whom faith is a stabilizing force amid the harsh realities of their lives. Allusions to God are threaded throughout the play as characters bless one another, pray, and plead for mercy.

Characters

Maurya

Maurya has given birth to six sons during her life on the coastal island lying of at the mouth of Ireland's Galway Bay. Four of them are already dead, along with their father and grandfather. She is old and poor and fears that the extended and uncharacteristic absence of her son Michael means he is about to added to the list of her deceased loved ones. As if worrying that Michael has drowned weren't enough stress, she also doesn't appear to be very successful at persuading her other remaining son, Bartley, from crossing over to the mainland in a bid to deal away a couple of horses. In the end, Maurya has only her daughters to help with the cold comfort of knowing that there are no more men in her life for the sea to take from her. She feels at last a sense of peace and serenity now that her greatest anxiety has been lifted.

Bartley

Bartley is the youngest of Maurya's six sons; when Michael's death is confirmed, he steps up to become the family's sole financial support. His means of supporting the family is what gives the play its title: he rides horses out to sea and to the steamer ship, which must lay anchored far offshore; the horses are sold at a fair on the mainland. Maurya refuses to give Bartley her blessing after having a vision of his impending death.

Cathleen

Cathleen is the eldest of Maurya's daughter. Cathleen is 20 years old; she commiserates with Bartley's position and is scornful of her mother's superstitions. In contrast to the somewhat mystical bent of her mother, who is given to lamentations and omens, Cathleen is pure practicality in action, which is a great necessity when living with someone like Maurya.

Nora

The youngest member of the clan, Nora is much more patient with mother's penchant for self-pity than her oldest sister is. At the same time, she provides a great sounding board for Cathleen to express her contrarian views.

The Priest

The priest is never actually seen on stage, but his presence is so vital to the story that he must be considered at least as important a character as Nora. It is the priest who delivers the message through Nora that Maurya must put her faith and trust in a God that would never allow every last one of her sons to die while she is still alive. He is younger and more modern than Maurya.

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Anton Chekhov: *A Marriage Proposal*

The last few years have seen a large and generally unsystematic mass of translations from the Russian flung at the heads and hearts of English readers. The ready acceptance of Chekhov has been one of the few successful features of this irresponsible output. He has been welcomed by British critics with something like affection. Bernard Shaw has several times remarked: "Every time I see a play by Chekhov, I want to chuck all my own stuff into the fire." Others, having no such valuable property to sacrifice on the altar of Chekhov, have not hesitated to place him side by side with Ibsen, and the other established institutions of the new theatre. For these reasons it is pleasant to be able to chronicle the fact that, by way of contrast with the casual treatment normally handed out to Russian authors, the publishers are issuing the complete dramatic works of this author. In 1912 they brought out a volume containing four Chekhov plays, translated by Marian Fell. All the dramatic works not included in her volume are to be found in the present one. With the exception of Chekhov's masterpiece, "The Cherry Orchard" (translated by the late Mr. George Calderon in 1912), none of these plays have been previously published in book form in England or America.

It is not the business of a translator to attempt to outdo all others in singing the praises of his raw material. This is a dangerous process and may well lead, as it led Mr. Calderon, to drawing the reader's attention to points of beauty not to be found in the original. A few bibliographical details are equally necessary, and permissible, and the elementary principles of Chekhov criticism will also be found useful.

The very existence of "The High Road" (1884); probably the earliest of its author's plays, will be unsuspected by English readers. During Chekhov's lifetime it a sort of family legend, after his death it became a family mystery. A copy was finally discovered only last year in the Censor's office, yielded up, and published. It had been sent in 1885 under the nom-de-plume "A. Chekhonte," and it had failed to pass. The Censor, of the time being had scrawled his opinion on the manuscript, "a depressing and dirty piece,—cannot be licensed." The name of the gentleman who held this view—Kaiser von Kugelgen—gives another reason for the educated Russian's low opinion of German-sounding institutions. Baron von Tuzenbach, the satisfactory person in "The Three Sisters," it will be noted, finds it as well, while he is trying to secure the favours of Irina, to declare that his German ancestry is fairly remote. This is by way of parenthesis. "The High Road," found after thirty years, is a most interesting document to the lover of Chekhov. Every play he wrote in later years was either a one-act farce or a four-act drama. [Note: "The Swan Song" may occur as an exception. This, however, is more of a Shakespeare recitation than anything else, and so neither here nor there.]

In "The High Road" we see, in an embryonic form, the whole later method of the plays—the deliberate contrast between two strong characters (Bortsov and Merik in this case), the careful individualization of each person in a fairly large group by way of an introduction to the main theme, the concealment of the catastrophe, germ-wise, in the actual character of the characters, and the of a distinctive group-atmosphere. It need scarcely be stated that "The High Road" is not a "dirty" piece according to Russian or to German standards; Chekhov was incapable of writing a dirty play or story. For the rest, this piece differs from the others in its presentation, not of Chekhov's favourite middle-classes, but of the moujik, nourishing, in a particularly stuffy atmosphere, an intense mysticism and an equally intense thirst for vodka.

"The Proposal" originally titles "A Marriage Proposal" (1889) and "The Bear" (1890) may be taken as good examples of the sort of humour admired by the average Russian. The latter play,

in another translation, was put on as a curtain-raiser to a cinematograph entertainment at a London theatre in 1914; and had quite a pleasant reception from a thoroughly Philistine audience. The humour is very nearly of the variety most popular over here, the psychology is a shade subtler. The Russian novelist or dramatist takes to psychology as some of his fellow-countrymen take to drink; in doing this he achieves fame by showing us what we already know, and at the same time he kills his own creative power. Chekhov just escaped the tragedy of suicide by introspection, and was only enabled to do this by the possession of a sense of humour. That is why we should not regard "The Bear," "The Wedding," or "The Anniversary" as the work of a merely humorous young man, but as the saving graces which made perfect "The Cherry Orchard."

"The Three Sisters" (1901) is said to act better than any other of Chekhov's plays, and should surprise an English audience exceedingly. It and "The Cherry Orchard" are the tragedies of doing nothing. The three sisters have only one desire in the world, to go to Moscow and live there. There is no reason on earth, economic, sentimental, or other, why they should not pack their bags and take the next train to Moscow. But they will not do it. They cannot do it. And we know perfectly well that if they were transplanted thither miraculously, they would be extremely unhappy as soon as ever the excitement of the miracle had worn off. In the other play Mme. Ranevsky can be saved from ruin if she will only consent to a perfectly simple step—the sale of an estate. She cannot do this, is ruined, and thrown out into the unsympathetic world. Chekhov is the dramatist, not of action, but of inaction. The tragedy of inaction is as overwhelming, when we understand it, as the tragedy of an Othello, or a Lear, crushed by the wickedness of others. The former is being enacted daily, but we do not stage it, we do not know how. But who shall deny that the base of almost all human unhappiness is just this inaction, manifesting itself in slovenliness of thought and execution, education, and ideal?

The Russian, painfully conscious of his own weakness, has accepted this point of view, and regards "The Cherry Orchard" as its master-study in dramatic form. They speak of the palpitating hush which fell upon the audience of the Moscow Art Theatre after the first fall of the curtain at the first performance—a hush so intense as to make Chekhov's friends undergo the initial emotions of assisting at a vast theatrical failure. But the silence ryes almost a sob, to be followed, when overcome, by an epic applause. And, a few months later, Chekhov died.

This volume and that of Marian Fell—with which it is uniform—contain all the dramatic works of Chekhov. It considered not worth while to translate a few fragments published posthumously, or a monologue "On the Evils of Tobacco"—a half humorous lecture by "the husband of his wife;" which begins "Ladies, and in some respects, gentlemen," as this is hardly dramatic work. There is also a very short skit on the efficiency of provincial fire brigades, which was obviously not intended for the stage and has therefore been omitted.

Lastly, the scheme of transliteration employed has been that, generally speaking, recommended by the Liverpool School of Russian Studies. This is distinctly the best of those in the field, but as it would compel one, e.g., to write a popular female name, "Marya," I have not treated it absolute respect. For the sake of uniformity with Fell's volume, the author's name is spelt Tchekoff on the title-page and cover.

In short play "A Marriage Proposal," Anton Chekhov describes the odd courtship of Lomov, who seeks marriage with his neighbor's daughter. Lomov, aged 35, is a long time neighbor of **Choobookov**. He is a landowner who has inherited property from his aunt. Though he is well fed and healthy, he is hypochondriac. He suffers from palpitations and sleeplessness due to his nervousness. He has passed a critical stage of marriage. He now knows that if he will

search for an ideal woman or true love, he will never marry. So he is now desperate to marry Natalia. He thinks that she is not bad-looking and has some education. He wants to lead a steady and regular life. So, he visits the house of his neighbor Choobookov early morning dressed in a formal suit. Choobookov is surprised at the unexpected arrival of Lomov in his formal dress. Lomov asks him Natalia's hand in marriage. Choobookov is also desperately looking for a suitable man for his 25-year-old daughter, Natalia. As a father of a grown-up daughter, he immediately gives joyful permission to marry Natalia.

She is invited into the room. Lomov becomes nervous and instead of putting his proposal, he begins to beat about the bush. When he says that his Ox Meadows touch her birch woods, she begins to argue with him about the ownership of that piece of land. After her father notices they are arguing, he joins in, and than sends Lomov out of the house. Choobookov than tells his daughter that Lomov was there to propose her.

Natalia repents and asks her father to call him back. Lomov comes and she asks him about his hunting program. He says that he will start hunting after harvest because his best dog has gone lame. At this point, Natalia contradicts him again and claims that her dog Leap is better than his dog Guess. Thus the quarrel begins again till over-excitement makes Lomov faint in a chair. Seeing him quiet and unmoving, Natalia thinks that he is dead and becomes hysterical. At last Lomov comes into senses and Choobookov forces them to kiss each other and accept the marriage proposal. Immediately following the kiss, Natalia and Lomov start quarreling. Choobookov shouts for Champagne because he wants to celebrate their marriage and at the same time he feels free by the burden of his grown-up daughter.

Themes

Practicality and myth

One of the themes of *A Marriage Proposal* is the difference between practicality and myth of marriage. At first audience speaks only to Lomov and took no notice of Natalia (until the very end) because Lomov was the one she wanted to make use of, however, once she had realization, she took every notice of Lomov. We expect, in Chekov's ideas, most married couples are like that. They are not interested in things or people unless they can use them; they are terribly practical.

Landowning Class

A major theme in *The Proposal* is Chekhov's satire of the landowning class in 19th-century Russia. As mentioned in the Context section, the landowners were a small, privileged class who were notoriously conservative in clinging to old values that defined them. They knew their advantage in society was based mainly on owning land, as opposed to having a title of nobility. As a result, they opposed any reforms that would allow their peasants to own a piece of land. Chekhov makes fun of the landowners by depicting Lomov, Natalya, and Chubukov as obsessed about ownership of a worthless tract called Oxen Meadows. There pride and greed are so extreme that they override a marriage proposal. Lomov calls Chubukov a land grabber, but, in truth, they all are.

Romance and Marriage

Chekhov's theme of romance and marriage runs throughout each section of the comedy. The narrative satirizes marriage mainly through the use of situational irony. This type of irony involves a difference between what is expected to happen and what does happen. The audience expects Lomov's proposal to Natalya to be filled with romantic sentiments, loving caresses, and perhaps even tears of joy. However, what the audience gets is bickering between two petty people who each want to prove they are right above anything else. Romantic love has been thrown out the window.

Lack of Communication

Chekhov uses three methods to covey the lack of communication theme. The first is Lomov's style of speech. He has a roundabout way of talking that prevents him from getting to the point.

For example, instead of directly proposing to Natalya, he talks about their families. Also, he often stops his train of thought to mention something else. Many times, this tendency is caused by his hypochondria. In the middle of his argument with Natalya and Chubukov about Oxen Meadows he cries, "You're a snake and a ... Oh, my heart ... And it's an open secret that before the last elections you bribed ... my eyes are gone blurry." Secondly, when Lomov digresses from the main point, he and Natalya each value the digression more than the central topic of conversation. For instance, with Oxen Meadows, Lomov and Natalya view the issue of who owns this plot of land as more pressing than the primary purpose of their talk. Finally, Lomov, Natalya, and Chubukov are more concerned about proving they are right than understanding their opponent's viewpoint. This attitude blocks communication because they end up barraging one another with biased statements and insults instead of being empathetic.

Setting
The scene is laid at CHUBUKOV's country-house
A drawing-room in CHUBUKOV'S house.

Characters

Ivan Vassiliyitch Lomov : Tschubukov's neighbor, thirty-five-year-old Lomov decides to formally propose marriage to Natalia Stepanovna, although he has known his neighbor for years. When he formally asks Natalia's father, Stepan Tschubukov, he is hugged by this parent. Nevertheless, he is worried that Natalia will refuse and remains nervous. A hypochondriac, Lomov thinks he is cold, and believes he has a roaring in his ears. Further, he complains of a weak heart, insomnia, strange aches, and other ailments.
Stepan Stepanovitch Tschubokov, 70 years old, a landowner
Natalia Stepanovna, his daughter, 25 years old

Work Sheet: Henrik Ibsen' *A Doll's House*

Find the Act/Scene, speaker, and the context for the following:

1. "One day I might, yes. Many years from now, when I've lost my looks a little. Don't laugh. I mean, of course, a time will come when Torvald is not as devoted to me, not quite so happy when I dance for him, and dress for him, and play with him."
2. "You have never loved me. You have only thought it pleasant to be in love with me."
3. "But this is disgraceful. Is this the way you neglect your most sacred duties?"

4. “I believe that before anything else I'm a human being -- just as much as you are... or at any rate I shall try to become one. I know quite well that most people would agree with you, Torvald, and that you have warrant for it in books; but I can't be satisfied any longer with what most people say, and with what's in books. I must think things out for myself and try to understand them.”
5. “I must stand on my own two feet if I'm to get to know myself and the world outside. That's why I can't stay here with you any longer.”
6. “It’s true Torvald. When I lived at home with Papa, he used to tell me his opinion about everything, and so I had the same opinion. If I thought differently, I had to hide it from him, or he wouldn't have liked it. He called me his little doll, and he used to play with me just as I played with my dolls. Than I came to live in your house.”
7. “That's no way to talk about our marriage!”
8. “I mean when I passed out of Papa's hands into yours. You arranged everything to suit your own tastes, and so I came to have the same tastes as yours.. or I pretended to. I'm not quite sure which.. perhaps it was a bit of both -- sometimes one and sometimes the other. Now that I come to look at it, I've lived here like a pauper -- simply from hand to mouth. I've lived by performing tricks for you, Torvald. That was how you wanted it. You and Papa have committed a grievous sin against me: it's your fault that I've made nothing of my life.”
9. “When I lost you, it was as if all the solid ground dissolved from under my feet. Look at me; I'm a half-drowned man now, hanging onto a wreck.”
10. “Our home has been nothing but a playroom. I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I was papa's doll-child; and here the children have been my dolls.”
11. “You arranged everything according to your own taste, and so I got the same tastes as you - or else I pretended to. I am really not quite sure which - I think sometimes the one and sometimes the other.”
12. “I am afraid, … I do not exactly know what religion is. ... When I am away from all this, and am alone, I will look into that matter too. I will see if what the clergyman said is true, or at all events if it is true for me.”
13. “I would gladly work night and day for you, Nora--bear sorrow and want for your sake. But no man would sacrifice his honour for the one he loves.
“But hundreds of thousands of women have done!”
14. “To desert your home, your husband and your children! And you don‘t consider what people will say!
15. “I cannot consider that at all. I only know that it is necessary for me.
16. “It‘s shocking. This is how you would neglect your most sacred duties.”
17. “What do you consider my most sacred duties?”
18. “Do I need to tell you that? Are they not your duties to your husband and your children?”
19. “I have other duties just as sacred.”
20. “That you have not. What duties could those be?”
21. “Duties to myself.”
22. “Before all else, you are a wife and mother.”
23. “I don‘t believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as you are — or, at all events, that I must try and become one. I know quite well, … that most people would think you right, and that views of that kind are to be found in books; but I can no longer content myself with what most people say, or with what is found in books. I must think over things for myself and get to understand them.”
24. “When I was at home with papa, he told me his opinion about everything, and so I had the same opinions; and if I differed from him I concealed the fact, because he would not

have liked it. He called me his doll-child, and he played with me just as I used to play with my dolls."

25. "Do you know, when I am out at a party with you like this, why I speak so little to you, keep away from you, and only send a stolen glance in your direction now and then?--do you know why I do that? It is because I make believe to myself that we are secretly in love, and you are my secretly promised bride, and that no one suspects there is anything between us."
26. "And when we are leaving, and I am putting the shawl over your beautiful young shoulders--on your lovely neck--then I imagine that you are my young bride and that we have just come from the wedding, and I am bringing you for the first time into our home--to be alone with you for the first time--quite alone with my shy little darling!"
27. "My darling wife, I don't feel as if I could hold you tight enough. Do you know, … I have often wished that you might be threatened by some great danger, so that I might risk my life's blood, and everything, for your sake."
28. "What a horrible awakening! All these eight years--she who was my joy and pride--a hypocrite, a liar--worse, worse--a criminal! The unutterable ugliness of it all!--For shame! For shame!"
29. "I ought to have suspected that something of the sort would happen. I ought to have foreseen it. All your father's want of principle--be silent!--all your father's want of principle has come out in you. No religion, no morality, no sense of duty--. How I am punished for having winked at what he did! I did it for your sake, and this is how you repay me."
30. "Now you have destroyed all my happiness. You have ruined all my future. It is horrible to think of! I am in the power of an unscrupulous man; he can do what he likes with me, ask anything he likes of me, give me any orders he pleases--I dare not refuse. And I must sink to such miserable depths because of a thoughtless woman"
31. "|No fine speeches, please. Your father had always plenty of those ready, too. What good would it be to me if you were out of the way, as you say? Not the slightest. He can make the affair known everywhere; and if he does, I may be falsely suspected of having been a party to your criminal action. Very likely people will think I was behind it all--that it was I who prompted you! And I have to thank you for all this--you whom I have cherished during the whole of our married life. Do you understand now what it is you have done for me?"
32. "And as for you and me, it must appear as if everything between us were just as before--but naturally only in the eyes of the world. You will still remain in my house, that is a matter of course. But I shall not allow you to bring up the children; I dare not trust them to you. To think that I should be obliged to say so to one whom I have loved so dearly, and whom I still--. No, that is all over. From this moment happiness is not the question; all that concerns us is to save the remains, the fragments, the appearance—"
33. "no, first I must destroy these hateful things. Let me see--. [Takes a look at the bond.] No, no, I won't look at it. The whole thing shall be nothing but a bad dream to me. [Tears up the bond and both letters, throws them all into the stove, and watches them burn.] There--now it doesn't exist any longer."
34. "What is this?--such a cold, set face! My poor little Nora, I quite understand; you don't feel as if you could believe that I have forgiven you. But it is true, Nora, I swear it; I have forgiven you everything. I know that what you did, you did out of love for me."
35. "You have loved me as a wife ought to love her husband. Only you had not sufficient knowledge to judge of the means you used. But do you suppose you are any the less dear to me, because you don't understand how to act on your own responsibility?"

36. “No, no; only lean on me; I will advise you and direct you. I should not be a man if this womanly helplessness did not just give you a double attractiveness in my eyes. You must not think anymore about the hard things I said in my first moment of consternation, when I thought everything was going to overwhelm me. I have forgiven you, Nora; I swear to you I have forgiven you.”
37. “Yes, do. Try and calm yourself, and make your mind easy again, my frightened little singing-bird. Be at rest, and feel secure; I have broad wings to shelter you under.”
38. “How warm and cosy our home is…. Here is shelter for you; here I will protect you like a hunted dove that I have saved from a hawk's claws; I will bring peace to your poor beating heart. It will come, little by little”
39. “Tomorrow morning you will look upon it all quite differently; soon everything will be just as it was before. Very soon you won't need me to assure you that I have forgiven you; you will yourself feel the certainty that I have done so.”
40. “Can you suppose I should ever think of such a thing as repudiating you, or even reproaching you? You have no idea what a true man's heart is like”
41. “There is something so indescribably sweet and satisfying, to a man, in the knowledge that he has forgiven his wife--forgiven her freely, and with all his heart. It seems as if that had made her, as it were, doubly his own; he has given her a new life, so to speak; and she has in a way become both wife and child to him.”
42. “So you shall be for me after this, my little scared, helpless darling. Have no anxiety about anything,… only be frank and open with me, and I will serve as will and conscience both to you--. What is this? Not gone to bed? Have you changed your things?”
43. “No, that is just it. You don't understand me, and I have never understood you either--before tonight. No, you mustn't interrupt me. You must simply listen to what I say. Torvald, this is a settling of accounts.”
44. “. We have been married now eight years. Does it not occur to you that this is the first time we two, you and I, husband and wife, have had a serious conversation?”
45. “I am not speaking about business matters. I say that we have never sat down in earnest together to try and get at the bottom of anything.”
46. “What! By us two--by us two, who have loved you better than anyone else in the world?”
47. “You have never loved me. You have only thought it pleasant to be in love with me.”
48. “I mean that I was simply transferred from papa's hands into yours. You arranged everything according to your own taste, and so I got the same tastes as you--or else I pretended to, I am really not quite sure which--I think sometimes the one and sometimes the other.”
49. “When I look back on it, it seems to me as if I had been living here like a poor woman--just from hand to mouth. I have existed merely to perform tricks for you, Torvald. But you would have it so. You and papa have committed a great sin against me. It is your fault that I have made nothing of my life.”
50. “No, I have never been happy. I thought I was, but it has never really been so.”
51. “And you have always been so kind to me. But our home has been nothing but a playroom. I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I was papa's doll-child; and here the children have been my dolls. I thought it great fun when you played with me, just as they thought it great fun when I played with them.”
52. “There is some truth in what you say--exaggerated and strained as your view of it is. But for the future it shall be different. Playtime shall be over, and lesson-time shall begin.”
53. “you are not the man to educate me into being a proper wife for you.”

54. “Indeed, you were perfectly right. I am not fit for the task. There is another task I must undertake first. I must try and educate myself--you are not the man to help me in that. I must do that for myself. And that is why I am going to leave you now.”
55. “It is no use forbidding me anything any longer. I will take with me what belongs to myself. I will take nothing from you, either now or later.”
56. “|To desert your home, your husband and your children! And you don't consider what people will say!”
57. “I don't believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as you are--or, at all events, that I must try and become one. I know quite well, Torvald, that most people would think you right, and that views of that kind are to be found in books; but I can no longer content myself with what most people say, or with what is found in books. I must think over things for myself and get to understand them.”
58. “This is unheard of in a girl of your age! But if religion cannot lead you aright, let me try and awaken your conscience. I suppose you have some moral sense? Or--answer me--am I to think you have none?”
59. “I assure you, … that is not an easy question to answer. I really don't know. The thing perplexes me altogether. I only know that you and I look at it in quite a different light. I am learning, too, that the law is quite another thing from what I supposed; but I find it impossible to convince myself that the law is right. According to it a woman has no right to spare her old dying father, or to save her husband's life. I can't believe that.
60. “When that was done, I was so absolutely certain, you would come forward and take everything upon yourself, and say: I am the guilty one.”
61. “I would gladly work night and day for you, Nora--bear sorrow and want for your sake. But no man would sacrifice his honour for the one he loves.”
62. “It is a thing hundreds of thousands of women have done.”
63. “Maybe. But you neither think nor talk like the man I could bind myself to. As soon as your fear was over--and it was not fear for what threatened me, but for what might happen to you--when the whole thing was past, as far as you were concerned it was exactly as if nothing at all had happened. Exactly as before, I was your little skylark, your doll, which you would in future treat with doubly gentle care, because it was so brittle and fragile.”
64. “it was then it dawned upon me that for eight years I had been living here with a strange man, and had borne him three children--. Oh, I can't bear to think of it! I could tear myself into little bits!”
65. “I see, I see. An abyss has opened between us--there is no denying it. But, Nora, would it not be possible to fill it up? Nora. As I am now, I am no wife for you.”
66. “I won't see the little ones. I know they are in better hands than mine. As I am now, I can be of no use to them.”
67. “How can I tell? I have no idea what is going to become of me.”
68. “I have heard that when a wife deserts her husband's house, as I am doing now, he is legally freed from all obligations towards her. In any case, I set you free from all your obligations. You are not to feel yourself bound in the slightest way, any more than I shall. There must be perfect freedom on both sides. See, here is your ring back. Give me mine.”
69. “Both you and I would have to be so changed that--. Oh, … I don't believe any longer in wonderful things happening.”
70. “Empty. She is gone. …The most wonderful thing of all--?”

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Work Sheet: George Bernard Shaw's *Candida*

Find the Act/Scene, speaker, and the context for the following:

1. "Ah, my boy, get married—get married to a good woman; and then you'll understand. That's a foretaste of what will be best in the Kingdom of Heaven we are trying to establish on earth. That will cure you of dawdling. An honest man feels that he must pay Heaven for every hour of happiness with a good spell of hard, unselfish work to make others happy. We have no more right to consume happiness without producing it than to consume wealth without producing it. Get a wife like my Candida; and you'll always be in arrear with your repayment."
2. "Time for him to take another look at Candida before she grows out of his knowledge."
3. "Oh, a man ought to be able to be fond of his wife without making a fool of himself about her."
4. "Candida here, and Candida there, and Candida everywhere! (She licks the envelope.) It's enough to drive anyone out of their SENSES (thumping the envelope to make it stick) to hear a perfectly commonplace woman raved about in that absurd manner merely because she's got good hair, and a tolerable figure."
5. "I have no feeling against her. She's very nice, very good-hearted: I'm very fond of her and can appreciate her real qualities far better than any man can. …You think I'm jealous. Oh, what a profound knowledge of the human heart you have, Mr. Lexy Mill! How well you know the weaknesses of Woman, don't you? It must be so nice to be a man and have a fine penetrating intellect instead of mere emotions like us, and to know that the reason we don't share your amorous delusions is that we're all jealous of one another!"
6. "Ah, if you women only had the same clue to Man's strength that you have to his weakness, Miss Prossy, there would be no Woman Question."
7. "I meant no offence by it. A clergyman is privileged to be a bit of a fool, you know: it's on'y becomin' in his profession that he should. Anyhow, I come here, not to rake up hold differences, but to let bygones be bygones."
8. "Yes, the lowest, because you paid worse wages than any other employer—starvation wages—aye, worse than starvation wages—to the women who made the clothing. Your wages would have driven them to the streets to keep body and soul together. (Getting angrier and angrier.) Those women were my parishioners. I shamed the Guardians out of accepting your tender: I shamed the ratepayers out of letting them do it: I shamed everybody but you."
9. "ve turned a moddle hemployer. I don't hemploy no women now: they're all sacked; and the work is done by machinery. Not a man 'as less than sixpence a hour; and the skilled 'ands gits the Trade Union rate."
10. "Foolish ideas! Oh, you mean Socialism. No."
11. "Do you know, you are a very nice boy, Eugene, with all your queerness. If you had laughed at my father I shouldn't have minded; but I like you ever so much better for being nice to him."
12. "Candida thought I would rather not have you here; but she was wrong. I'm very fond of you, my boy, and I should like you to see for yourself what a happy thing it is to be married as I am."
13. "Oh, I am not forgetting myself: I am only (covering his face desperately with his hands) full of horror. (Then, dropping his hands, and thrusting his face forward fiercely at Morell, he goes on threateningly.) You shall see whether this is a time for patience and

kindness. (Morell, firm as a rock, looks indulgently at him.) Don't look at me in that self-complacent way. You think yourself stronger than I am; but I shall stagger you if you have a heart in your breast."

14. ". Why, my dear child, of course you do. Everybody loves her: they can't help it. I like it. But (looking up whimsically at him) I say, … do you think yours is a case to be talked about? You're under twenty: she's over thirty. Doesn't it look rather too like a case of calf love?"
15. "To her! Eugene: take care. I have been patient. I hope to remain patient. But there are some things I won't allow. Don't force me to show you the indulgence I should show to a child. Be a man."
16. "Oh, let us put aside all that cant. It horrifies me when I think of the doses of it she has had to endure in all the weary years during which you have selfishly and blindly sacrificed her to minister to your self-sufficiency—YOU (turning on him) who have not one thought—one sense—in common with her."
17. "some devil is putting these words into your mouth. It is easy—terribly easy—to shake a man's faith in himself. To take advantage of that to break a man's spirit is devil's work. Take care of what you are doing. Take care."
18. "ou will be married; and you will be working with all your might and valor to make every spot on earth as happy as your own home. You will be one of the makers of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth; and—who knows?—you may be a pioneer and master builder where I am only a humble journeyman; for don't think, my boy, that I cannot see in you, young as you are, promise of higher powers than I can ever pretend to. I well know that it is in the poet that the holy spirit of man—the god within him—is most godlike. It should make you tremble to think of that—to think that the heavy burthen and great gift of a poet may be laid upon you."
19. "Then help to kindle it in them—in ME—-not to extinguish it. In the future—when you are as happy as I am—I will be your true brother in the faith. I will help you to believe that God has given us a world that nothing but our own folly keeps from being a paradise. I will help you to believe that every stroke of your work is sowing happiness for the great harvest that all—even the humblest—shall one day reap. And last, but trust me, not least, I will help you to believe that your wife loves you and is happy in her home. We need such help, Marchbanks: we need it greatly and always. There are so many things to make us doubt, if once we let our understanding be troubled. Even at home, we sit as if in camp, encompassed by a hostile army of doubts. Will you play the traitor and let them in on me?"
20. "Is it like this for her here always? A woman, with a great soul, craving for reality, truth, freedom, and being fed on metaphors, sermons, stale perorations, mere rhetoric. Do you think a woman's soul can live on your talent for preaching?"
21. "It's the gift of the gab, nothing more and nothing less. What has your knack of fine talking to do with the truth, any more than playing the organ has? I've never been in your church; but I've been to your political meetings; and I've seen you do what's called rousing the meeting to enthusiasm: that is, you excited them until they behaved exactly as if they were drunk. And their wives looked on and saw clearly enough what fools they were. Oh, it's an old story: you'll find it in the Bible. I imagine King David, in his fits of enthusiasm, was very like you. (Stabbing him with the words.) "But his wife despised him in her heart."
22. "You think because I shrink from being brutally handled—because (with tears in his voice) I can do nothing but cry with rage when I am met with violence—because I can't lift a heavy trunk down from the top of a cab like you—because I can't fight you for your wife as a navvy would: all that makes you think that I'm afraid of you. But you're wrong.

If I haven't got what you call British pluck, I haven't British cowardice either: I'm not afraid of a clergyman's ideas. I'll fight your ideas. I'll rescue her from her slavery to them: I'll pit my own ideas against them. You are driving me out of the house because you daren't let her choose between your ideas and mine. You are afraid to let me see her again."

23. "If you give any explanation but the true one, you are a liar and a coward. Tell her what I said; and how you were strong and manly, and shook me as a terrier shakes a rat; and how I shrank and was terrified; and how you called me a snivelling little whelp and put me out of the house. If you don't tell her, I will: I'll write to her"
24. "Yes, to be idle, selfish and useless: that is to be beautiful and free and happy: hasn't every man desired that with all his soul for the woman he loves? That's my ideal: what's yours, and that of all the dreadful people who live in these hideous rows of houses? Sermons and scrubbing brushes! With you to preach the sermon and your wife to scrub."
25. "Yes, I MUST be talked to sometimes. (She makes him sit down, and seats herself on the carpet beside his knee.) Now (patting his hand) you're beginning to look better already. Why don't you give up all this tiresome overworking—going out every night lecturing and talking? Of course what you say is all very true and very right; but it does no good: they don't mind what you say to them one little bit. Of course they agree with you; but what's the use of people agreeing with you if they go and do just the opposite of what you tell them the moment your back is turned? Look at our congregation at St. Dominic's! Why do they come to hear you talking about Christianity every Sunday? Why, just because they've been so full of business and money-making for six days that they want to forget all about it and have a rest on the seventh, so that they can go back fresh and make money harder than ever! You positively help them at it instead of hindering them."
26. "Yes, Prossy, and all the other secretaries you ever had. Why does Prossy condescend to wash up the things, and to peel potatoes and abase herself in all manner of ways for six shillings a week less than she used to get in a city office? She's in love with you, James: that's the reason. They're all in love with you. And you are in love with preaching because you do it so beautifully. And you think it's all enthusiasm for the kingdom of Heaven on earth; and so do they. You dear silly!"
27. "Why, you're spoiled with love and worship: you get far more than is good for you. No: I mean Eugene."
28. "It seems unfair that all the love should go to you, and none to him, although he needs it so much more than you do."
29. "He's a wonderful boy: I have grown fonder and fonder of him all the time I was away. Do you know, James, that though he has not the least suspicion of it himself, he is ready to fall madly in love with me?"
30. "Some day he will know when he is grown up and experienced, like you. And he will know that I must have known. I wonder what he will think of me then."
31. "Don't you see? It will depend on how he comes to learn what love really is. I mean on the sort of woman who will teach it to him."
32. "But suppose he learns it from a bad woman, as so many men do, especially poetic men, who imagine all women are angels! Suppose he only discovers the value of love when he has thrown it away and degraded himself in his ignorance. Will he forgive me then, do you think?"
33. "I mean, will he forgive me for not teaching him myself? For abandoning him to the bad women for the sake of my goodness—my purity, as you call it? Ah, James, how little you understand me, to talk of your confidence in my goodness and purity! I would give them both to poor Eugene as willingly as I would give my shawl to a beggar dying of cold, if there were nothing else to restrain me. Put your trust in my love for you, James, for if that

went, I should care very little for your sermons—mere phrases that you cheat yourself and others with every day”

34. “He is always right. He understands you; he understands me; he understands Prossy; and you, James—you understand nothing.”
35. “I was afraid of making you uneasy, too. It looked as if it were a weapon. If I were a hero of old, I should have laid my drawn sword between us. If Morell had come in he would have thought you had taken up the poker because there was no sword between us”
36. “There are limits to my appetite for poetry—even your poetry. You've been reading to me for more than two hours—ever since James went out. I want to talk.”
37. “Candida, Candida, Candida, Candida, Candida. I must say that now, because you have put me on my honor and truth; and I never think or feel Mrs. Morell: it is always Candida.”
38. “Nothing, but to repeat your name a thousand times. Don't you feel that every time is a prayer to you?”
39. “I was ass enough to keep it until about ten minutes ago. Up to that moment I went on desperately reading to her—reading my own poems—anybody's poems—to stave off a conversation. I was standing outside the gate of Heaven, and refusing to go in. Oh, you can't think how heroic it was, and how uncomfortable!”
40. “When Candida promised to marry me, I was the same moralist and windbag that you now see. I wore my black coat; and my collar was buttoned behind instead of in front. Do you think she would have loved me any the better for being insincere in my profession?”
41. “A woman like that has divine insight: she loves our souls, and not our follies and vanities and illusions, or our collars and coats, or any other of the rags and tatters we are rolled up in.”
42. “Out with the truth, man: my wife is my wife: I want no more of your poetic fripperies. I know well that if I have lost her love and you have gained it, no law will bind her.”
43. “Misery! I am the happiest of men. I desire nothing now but her happiness. (With dreamy enthusiasm.) Oh, … let us both give her up. Why should she have to choose between a wretched little nervous disease like me, and a pig-headed parson like you? Let us go on a pilgrimage, you to the east and I to the west, in search of a worthy lover for her—some beautiful archangel with purple wings”
44. “She does not ask those silly questions. It is she who wants somebody to protect, to help, to work for—somebody to give her children to protect, to help and to work for. Some grown up man who has become as a little child again. Oh, you fool, you fool, you triple fool! I am the man, Morell: I am the man.”
45. “That foolish boy can speak with the inspiration of a child and the cunning of a serpent. He has claimed that you belong to him and not to me; and, rightly or wrongly, I have come to fear that it may be true. I will not go about tortured with doubts and suspicions. I will not live with you and keep a secret from you. I will not suffer the intolerable degradation of jealousy. We have agreed—he and I—that you shall choose between us now. I await your decision.”
46. “Morell: you don't understand. She means that she belongs to herself.”
47. “I have nothing to offer you but my strength for your defence, my honesty of purpose for your surety, my ability and industry for your livelihood, and my authority and position for your dignity. That is all it becomes a man to offer to a woman.”
48. “I give myself to the weaker of the two.”
49. “When there is money to give, he gives it: when there is money to refuse, I refuse it. I build a castle of comfort and indulgence and love for him, and stand sentinel always to keep little vulgar cares out. I make him master here, though he does not know it, and could not tell you a moment ago how it came to be so. (With sweet irony.) And when he

thought I might go away with you, his only anxiety was what should become of ME! And to tempt me to stay he offered me (leaning forward to stroke his hair caressingly at each phrase) his strength for MY defence, his industry for my livelihood, his position for my dignity"

50. "It's all true, every word. What I am you have made me with the labor of your hands and the love of your heart! You are my wife, my mother, my sisters: you are the sum of all loving care to me."
51. "Am I YOUR mother and sisters to you, Eugene?"
52. "I no longer desire happiness: life is nobler than that. Parson James: I give you my happiness with both hands: I love you because you have filled the heart of the woman I loved."
53. "In a hundred years, we shall be the same age. But I have a better secret than that in my heart. Let me go now. The night outside grows impatient."
54. "We have no more right to consume happiness without producing it than to consume wealth without producing it."
55. "Do you think that the things people make fools of themselves about are any less real and true than the things they behave sensibly about? They are more true: they are the only things that are true."
56. "Wicked people means people who have no love: therefore, they have no shame. They have the power to ask love because the don't need it: they have the power to offer it because they have none to give."
57. Alcohol is a very necessary article... It makes life bearable to millions of people who could not endure their existence if they were quite sober. It enables Parliament to do things at eleven at night that no sane person would do at eleven in the morning.
58. Julie went to her hotel room window to check that the Campo, the central square of Siena, Italy, was still out there.
59. "We have agreed-he and I-that you shall choose between us now. I await your decision. It is made clear, however, that Candida may decide on neither man: Candida: Oh! I am to choose, am I? I suppose it is quite settled that I must belong to one or the other."

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Worksheet- J M Synge's *Riders to the Sea*

Find the Act/Scene, speaker, and the context for the following:

1. "The young priest says he's known the like of it. "If it's Michael's they are," says he, "you can tell herself he's got a clean burial by the grace of God, and if they're not his, let no one say a word about them, for she'll be getting her death," says he, "with crying and lamenting."
2. ""I won't stop him," says he, "but let you not be afraid. Herself does be saying prayers half through the night, and the Almighty God won't leave her destitute," says he, "with no son living."
3. "It will be wanting in this place, I'm telling you, if Michael is washed up to-morrow morning, or the next morning, or any morning in the week, for it's a deep grave we'll make him by the grace of God."
4. "It's a hard thing they'll be saying below if the body is washed up and there's no man in it to make the coffin, and I after giving a big price for the finest white boards you'd find in Connemara."
5. "If the west wind holds with the last bit of the moon let you and Nora get up weed enough for another cock for the kelp. It's hard set we'll be from this day with no one in it but one man to work."
6. "It's the life of a young man to be going on the sea, and who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she saying it over?"
7. "Why wouldn't you give him your blessing and he looking round in the door? Isn't it sorrow enough is on every one in this house without your sending him out with an unlucky word behind him, and a hard word in his ear?"
8. "In the big world the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children, but in this place it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old."
9. "Ah, Nora, isn't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north, and no one to keen him but the black hags that do be flying on the sea?"
10. "And isn't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher, but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking?"
11. "God forgive you; isn't it a better thing to raise your voice and tell what you seen, than to be making lamentation for a thing that's done?"
12. "I've seen the fearfulest thing any person has seen, since the day Bride Dara seen the dead man with the child in his arms."
13. "I'm after seeing him this day, and he riding and galloping. Bartley came first on the red mare; and I tried to say "God speed you," but something choked the words in my throat. He went by quickly; and "the blessing of God on you," says he, and I could say nothing. I

looked up then, and I crying, at the gray pony, and there was Michael upon it—with fine clothes on him, and new shoes on his feet."

14. "It's little the like of him knows of the sea. . . . Bartley will be lost now, and let you call in Eamon and make me a good coffin out of the white boards, for I won't live after them. I've had a husband, and a husband's father, and six sons in this house—six fine men, though it was a hard birth I had with every one of them and they coming to the world—and some of them were found and some of them were not found, but they're gone now the lot of them. . ."
15. "They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me.... I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. [To Nora]. Give me the Holy Water, Nora, there's a small sup still on the dresser."
16. "They're all together this time, and the end is come. May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen and Shawn [bending her head]; and may He have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of every one is left living in the world."
17. "Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied."
18. "What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied."
19. "If it's Michael's they are, you can tell herself he's got a clean burial by the grace of God, and if they're not his, let no one say a word about them, for she'll be getting her death, with crying and lamenting.
20. "Middling bad, God help us. There's a great roaring in the west, and it's worse it'll be getting when the tide's turned to the wind. [She goes over to the table with the bundle.]Shall I open it now?"

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Worksheet- Anton Chekhov's *A Marriage Proposal*

Find the Act/Scene, speaker, and the context for the following:

1. "We just get along somehow, my angel, to your prayers, and so on. Sit down, please do.... Now, you know, you shouldn't forget all about your neighbours, my darling. My dear fellow, why are you so formal in your get-up? Evening dress, gloves, and so on. Can you be going anywhere, my treasure?"
2. "Then why are you in evening dress, my precious? As if you're paying a New Year's Eve visit!"
3. "I mean, I'm awfully excited, as you will please notice.... In short, you alone can help me, though I don't deserve it, of course... and haven't any right to count on your assistance...."
4. "And I've always loved you, my angel, as if you were my own son. May God give you both His help and His love and so on, and I did so much hope... What am I behaving in this idiotic way for? I'm off my balance with joy, absolutely off my balance! Oh, with all my soul..."
5. "I'm trembling all over, just as if I'd got an examination before me. The great thing is, I must have my mind made up. If I give myself time to think, to hesitate, to talk a lot, to look for an ideal, or for real love, then I'll never get married...."
6. "And it's impossible for me not to marry.... In the first place, I'm already 35—a critical age, so to speak. In the second place, I ought to lead a quiet and regular life.... I suffer from palpitations, I'm excitable and always getting awfully upset...."
7. "At this very moment my lips are trembling, and there's a twitch in my right eyebrow.... But the very worst of all is the way I sleep. I no sooner get into bed and begin to go off when suddenly something in my left side—gives a pull, and I can feel it in my shoulder and head.... I jump up like a lunatic, walk about a bit, and lie down again, but as soon as I begin to get off to sleep there's another pull! And this may happen twenty times...."
8. "I have long, since my childhood, in fact, had the privilege of knowing your family. My late aunt and her husband, from whom, as you know, I inherited my land, always had the greatest respect for your father and your late mother. The Lomovs and the Chubukovs have always had the most friendly, and I might almost say the most affectionate, regard for each other. And, as you know, my land is a near neighbour of yours. You will remember that my Oxen Meadows touch your birchwoods."

9. “There’s nothing to argue about. You see, my aunt’s grandmother gave the free use of these Meadows in perpetuity to the peasants of your father’s grandfather, in return for which they were to make bricks for her. The peasants belonging to your father’s grandfather had the free use of the Meadows for forty years, and had got into the habit of regarding them as their own, when it happened that...”
10. “No, it isn’t at all like that! Both my grandfather and great-grandfather reckoned that their land extended to Burnt Marsh—which means that Oxen Meadows were ours. I don’t see what there is to argue about. It’s simply silly!”
11. “What a surprise! We’ve had the land for nearly three hundred years, and then we’re suddenly told that it isn’t ours! Ivan Vassilevitch, I can hardly believe my own ears.... These Meadows aren’t worth much to me. They only come to five dessiatins [Note: 13.5 acres], and are worth perhaps 300 roubles [Note: £30.], but I can’t stand unfairness. Say what you will, but I can’t stand unfairness.”
12. “I don’t want the Meadows, but I am acting on principle. If you like, I’ll make you a present of them”
13. “I can make you a present of them myself, because they’re mine! Your behaviour, Ivan Vassilevitch, is strange, to say the least! Up to this we have always thought of you as a good neighbour, a friend: last year we lent you our threshing-machine, although on that account we had to put off our own threshing till November, but you behave to us as if we were gipsies. Giving me my own land, indeed! No, really, that’s not at all neighbourly! In my opinion, it’s even impudent, if you want to know....”
14. “Then you make out that I’m a land-grabber? Madam, never in my life have I grabbed anybody else’s land, and I shan’t allow anybody to accuse me of having done so....”
15. “Please don’t shout! You can shout yourself hoarse in your own house, but here I must ask you to restrain yourself!”
16. “If it wasn’t, madam, for this awful, excruciating palpitation, if my whole inside wasn’t upset, I’d talk to you in a different way!”
17. “You won’t prove anything just by yelling. I don’t want anything of yours, and don’t intend to give up what I have. Why should I? And you know, my beloved, that if you propose to go on arguing about it, I’d much sooner give up the meadows to the peasants than to you. There!”
18. “You may take it that I know whether I have the right or not. Because, young man, I’m not used to being spoken to in that tone of voice, and so on: I, young man, am twice your age, and ask you to speak to me without agitating yourself, and all that.”
19. “No, you just think I’m a fool and want to have me on! You call my land yours, and then you want me to talk to you calmly and politely! Good neighbours don’t behave like that”
20. “The monster! First he takes our land and then he has the impudence to abuse us.”
21. “And that blind hen, yes, that turnip-ghost has the confounded cheek to make a proposal, and so on! What? A proposal!”
22. “What’s that? What’s the matter with you? [Clutches at his head] Oh, unhappy man that I am! I’ll shoot myself! I’ll hang myself! We’ve done for her!”
23. “He’s coming, I tell you. Oh, what a burden, Lord, to be the father of a grown-up daughter! I’ll cut my throat! I will, indeed! We cursed him, abused him, drove him out, and it’s all you... you!”
24. “My heart’s palpitating awfully.... My foot’s gone to sleep.... There’s something keeps pulling in my side.”
25. “Forgive us, Ivan Vassilevitch, we were all a little heated.... I remember now: Oxen Meadows really are yours.”
26. “Don’t excite yourself, my precious one.... Allow me.... Your Guess certainly has his good points.... He’s pure-bred, firm on his feet, has well-sprung ribs, and all that. But, my

dear man, if you want to know the truth, that dog has two defects: he's old and he's short in the muzzle."

27. "Yes really, what sort of a hunter are you, anyway? You ought to sit at home with your palpitations, and not go tracking animals. You could go hunting, but you only go to argue with people and interfere with their dogs and so on. Let's change the subject in case I lose my temper. You're not a hunter at all, anyway!"
28. "Drink this!... No, he doesn't drink.... It means he's dead, and all that.... I'm the most unhappy of men! Why don't I put a bullet into my brain? Why haven't I cut my throat yet? What am I waiting for? Give me a knife! Give me a pistol! He seems to be coming round.... Drink some water! That's right...."
29. "If he's come to borrow money, he'll be sorely disappointed!"
30. "Natalya Stepanovna is an excellent housekeeper. She's not bad-looking ... and she went to school! ... What more do I want?"
31. "These Meadows aren't valuable. They only come to about 12 acres, but that's not the point. It's the unfairness!"
32. "Just hurry up and get married. She's willing and all that and so on. I give you my blessing but please just leave me in peace!"
33. "Well, you see, it's like this. I'm sorry to trouble you …. I've come to you, honoured Stepan Stepanovitch…with a request. It's not the first time I have had the privilege of coming to you for help, and you have always…., so to speak... I beg your pardon, I am very nervous. If you don't mind I'll drink some water, honoured Stepan Stepanovitch."
34. **"**You are wrong! Both my grandfather and greatgrandfather reckoned that their land extended to Burnt Marsh—which means that Oxen Meadows were ours. There is no point in arguing. It's simply ridiculous!"
35. "If there is any giving to do - I'll do it, because they're mine! I cannot believe your behaviour! Up to this we have always thought of you as a good neighbour and friend. Last year we lent you our threshing-machine, which meant us putting off our own threshing till November. Now you treat us as if we were gypsies. Giving me my own land, indeed! In my opinion that's not at all neighbourly! In fact, I think it's downright insulting!"
36. "You'll have to excuse me but I'm having severe heart murmurs.... Let's face the facts....shall we? You will remember that on the Marusinsky hunt my Guesser ran neck-and-neck with the Count's dog, Fresher while your Messer was chasing up the rear."

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- *The Cambridge Companion to J. M. Synge* edited by P. J. Mathews
- *Contentual Counter Poles in J. M. Synge's "Riders to the Sea"* by Andrea Roth
- *A History of Irish Theatre 1601-2000* by Christopher Morash

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