CHAPTER I

American Drama and Provincetown Players

It is interesting to note that American literature had to struggle to establish itself as a respectable subject of study. The cause of the bad reputation suffered by American drama can be related historically to the Puritan distaste for drama and theatre which had strong influence for many years. Susan Harris Smith in *American Drama: The Bastard Art* says,

The roots of genuinely native American drama lie in a spontaneous oral tradition—honky-tonk, vaudeville, burlesque and minstrel shows. The non-literary origins are further prejudicial to readers because these always have been considered to be vulgar, lower-class, and, more recently, sexist and racist entertainments. But even when imported drama and American imitations of European models finally triumphed over lingering puritan prohibitions and became an accepted part of the literary output, drama still remained in the cultural shadows. (13)

It had not been included and most of the times offered a negligible role in higher education. Howard Mumford Jones speaks of American literature as the “orphan child of the curriculum”. The expansion of American literature did not happen until after World War II when American Studies entered universities to forge nationalist feelings. Those who advocated American literary studies had to fight the overwhelming presence of English Studies, those hoping to profess American drama had to struggle harder. English Studies, on the other hand, established itself as a formal discipline in Oxford and Cambridge universities in the early twentieth century. English Studies became an important factor to symbolize nationalist feelings and foster patriotism. English
literature also aimed at inculcating a sense of pride in English culture and tradition. Arts and literature that flourished during the time was linked with people’s fears, hopes and aspirations. It was deeply connected with the politics of the time and transformed poetry, novel, drama and music. It was English taste that dominated American taste for quite a long time. However James Kirk Paulding, a reviewer of American Quarterly Review, states that during the early nineteenth century there were around sixty American plays that were worthy of attention but it was not until late nineteenth century that the bias against American plays ceased. It was the war of 1812 and the rise of nationalist feelings that marked the growth of native works. Gradually when American literature secured an honourable position, it was poetry and prose which dominated; drama resided in the margins both in the canon and in the discipline. There is a general tendency of prioritising poetry and prose and relegating drama to the periphery of American literature. Arthur Hobson Quinn observes that drama was basically neglected in American literary histories because of few numbers of printed plays. In the preface of his book, A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War, Quinn states, “Many of the stage successes, both of the past and the present, have been kept from publication by the protective instinct of the producing manager, who feared for his property rights and to whom the literary reputation of the playwright was of secondary importance” (xi). Many critics are of the opinion that the step taken by the Dunlap Society towards collecting plays and the introduction of teaching of American drama in colleges and universities are the major factors in recovering status and recognition. Once American drama received critical attention in the twentieth century, it came to be defined exclusively in relation to the contribution of male dramatists such as Eugene
O’Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and Edward Albee, the significant contributions made by the women playwrights were marginalised.

Twentieth century American drama reflected and dealt with issues concerning the early women’s movement. This encouraged women to write more plays and to develop a certain sense of freedom of expression that was clearly manifested in the plays written by them which represented the self-consciousness of the women playwright. Various little theatre\(^\d\) groups were established in New York during the early twentieth century and one of the major developments in American drama was the proliferation of women playwrights who aimed at creating a national drama that would portray life with truth without conforming to conventional plots and theatrical devices. The main aim was to represent the social questions of the day and exploring the conditions of women at the social and psychological level. During the period 1910-1920, movies seemed to have become a popular source of entertainment and urgency was felt by American theatre practitioners to forge the idea of anti-commercialism with relation to the establishment of theatres. An attempt was made to create serious theatre for the American audience where people belonging to different walks of life such as social workers, bohemians, artists, scholars, feminists would come together. Such an attempt paved the way for the Little Theatre Movement that fostered the idea that theatre is an important means of self-expression. The popular groups that helped towards the growth of the Little Theatre Movement were the Provincetown Players, Washington Square Players, Neighborhood Playhouse and the Chicago Little Theatre.

Although these theatres worked towards bringing reform in a conservative society but sometimes their efforts seemed to be contradictory. The fact that these little theatres neglected the role of women in the Little Theatre Movement was highlighted by women
belonging to various women’s clubs. Women were educated and earned many degrees in the newly introduced theatre courses but often they were not welcomed to any profession other than teaching.

But the Provincetown Players was an exception. There was no special emphasis on promoting women dramatists but their decision to reject European drama which was exclusively the domain of the male, hints at the possibility of fostering a theatre movement where both sexes would be given equal opportunity. A considerable number of women worked in this theatre group being involved in writing, producing, directing, costume designing, acting and so on. Provincetown Players historian Robert K. Sarlos states that a larger number of women were involved in the ‘cultural awakening’ of America in which theatre played a very significant role. Mabel Dodge arranged meetings where various intellectuals and revolutionaries of the times came together and discussed important issues such as sex antagonism. Gertrude Stein and Emma Goldman critiqued the traditional ideas about society and art emphasizing the role of women in both these spheres of life. The environment in which these women worked influenced them greatly as feminism was in vogue during those days. Women were involved in movements that sought civil liberties incorporating equality in marriage and right to vote much of which got reflected in the plays by the women of the Provincetown Players. Most of the plays by the Provincetown women show the presence of a central female character and a certain critical attitude towards stereotypical gender roles, conventions of marriage, maternity and so on. This chapter will give an overview of how the Players originated as a theatre group and will also study the contributions made by the women dramatists towards American Drama by looking at some of their well-
known works that most often depicted the ‘condition of women’ during the early twentieth century.

The main aim of the Provincetown Players was to encourage plays by American dramatists that had real artistic and dramatic value as opposed to the Broadway plays that were mainly controlled by commercial syndicates. The Provincetown Players sought to:

…establish a stage where playwrights of sincere, poetic, literary and dramatic purpose could see their plays in action, and superintend their production without submitting to the commercial manager’s interpretation of public taste. Equally, it was to afford an opportunity for actors, producers, scenic and costume-designers to experiment with a stage of extremely simple resources— it being the idea of the PLAYERS that elaborate settings are unnecessary to bring out the essential qualities of a good play. (qtd. in Kenton 1997: 34)

The Provincetown Players originated as a group of friends, mostly artists and writers, who had come to Provincetown in the summer of 1915 on a vacation. The establishment of the Provincetown theatre needs mention here because it was not a stage that was equipped with modern theatre stage design or a formal kind of a gathering. Neith Boyce and her husband Hutchins Hapgood decided to entertain their friends by staging Neith Boyce’s one act play, Constancy, on their veranda that faced a harbor. The play was a parody of the romance between Mabel Dodge, a rich socialite and John Reed who was a poet and a famous journalist and their relationship was known to almost everyone in the Greenwich Village. Robert Edmond Jones was a stage designer who was also on this vacation and he arranged a set for the staging of the second play called Suppressed Desires by Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook. It was quite an entertainment for the
friends and Cook decided to stage two new one-act plays, *Change Your Style* and *Contemporaries*, on the Lewis Wharf that was owned by Mary Heaton Vorse. She talks about its origin in *Time and Town*,

> We dragged out the boats and nets which still stood there.
> We made the seats of planks put on sawhorse and kegs.
> We ransacked our houses for costumes and painted our own scenery.
> Out of these odds and ends we made a theatre. (118)

After the performances made by the group, a new enthusiasm towards theatre was felt by the people of the Greenwich Village. A turning point in the history of Provincetown Players as well as the American theatre was the introduction of the playwright Eugene O’Neill. His play, *Bound East for Cardiff*, was performed for the first time on July 28, 1916 on the Lewis Wharf. The play was an immediate success and O’Neill came to be recognized as an extraordinary playwright due to his innovative and artistic efforts. *Bound East for Cardiff* is a one-act play based on the dreary experiences of O’Neill’s voyage to New York from Buenos Aires on a steamer. It is about the hardships faced by the seamen while travelling in the sea. The protagonist, Yank, suffers from a chest injury in an accident on the ship and is afraid of death that is awaiting him. O’Neill became the first dramatist to challenge the materialism of the century and with the unique use of dialect, light and sound, he staged the lower class life and culture on American stage. Susan Glaspell recounts of the success that the play achieved during its premiere in *The Road to the Temple*, “It is not merely figurative language to say the old wharf shook with applause.” (254) His play inspired almost every bohemian artist of Provincetown to work together as Provincetown Players and explore a stage in New
York. Provincetown, which was earlier known as a famous international fishing port, gained reputation as a home for the avant-garde artists.

Most of the Greenwich Village bohemians found a new sense of freedom in Provincetown where they publicly smoke and drank. Many of the Greenwich Village feminist believed that a woman’s place was everywhere and that it was not possible to establish a socialist economic system without the consideration of women’s equality in all spheres of life. They were inspired by the radical sexual ideas of Ellen Key, a psychologist from Sweden. His theories talked about women’s rights to sexual satisfaction and maternity, within and outside marriage. The women also embraced the theories of Havelock Ellis who raised the voice to bring about changes in marriage and divorce laws. The women also found the way towards sexual freedom through Margaret Sanger’s proposition of the ‘birth control’ which paved the way of avoiding unwanted pregnancy. The women of Greenwich Village were radicals who experimented with free love, open marriage, live-in relationships and so on. The milieu in which the Provincetown Players lived got reflected through their works.

Fortunately the women of the Provincetown Players were witnessing the time when many social and political theorists were talking for the advancement of their sex. Moreover most of the Provincetown women of the early twentieth century were the first generation of women to enjoy educational and professional benefits. Except a few of them, most women were economically privileged and were associated with the feminist movement notably Edna Kenton. These women were well-educated, independent beings who were instrumental in creating a community of artistic and intellectual people who would work together enthusiastically towards creating a new world, a world that would encourage the right to choose or reject marriage, right to one’s sexuality, right to
maternity and at the same time abolish sexual double standard that was a hindrance towards the social quality of women. One of the main objectives was to revolutionize the concept of marriage and motherhood where women would enjoy personal freedom by restructuring their personal relationships. Such a world that they aspired would further enhance their ability to manifest their artistic expressions freely. The women of Provincetown were striving towards their goal of establishing a new world which also included their desire to create an innovative theatre company. The stage provided them an opportunity and a platform to delineate their views on society and men by staging the personal conflicts between men and women having greater social repercussions. The Players wrote about their experiences in Provincetown in their diaries, articles, novels, poems and so on. The place was considered by many as a great source of inspiration for writing mostly because of its geographical uniqueness. Provincetown with its peaked hills, sand dunes, exotic sea with one of the widest range of fish species attracted many visitors who recorded their journeys on the ‘city of sand’. Henry David Thoreau visited Provincetown four times during his life and in 1849 which was his first visit he said, “…did not see enough black earth in Provincetown to fill a flower pot.” (Thoreau. 307)

The place became a site for pilgrimage for many writers and artists who visited the town for inspiration, peace, health and inquisitiveness.

Some of the early plays that were performed on the second bill of 1916 season by the group were Winter’s Night by Neith Boyce Hapgood, Not Smart by Wilbur Daniel Steele, Trifles by Susan Glaspell, Freedom and Eternal Quadrangle by John S. Reed and Enemies by Neith Boyce. Along with Bound East for Cardiff, two other plays namely Not Smart, a reprise of Daniel’s earlier play and The Game by Louise Bryant were performed. In September, the group finally left to pursue their future career in the
city of New York and they formally organized themselves as a group called the Provincetown Players. In New York they rented a brownstone at 139 MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village and turned it into a theatre. The auditorium was believed to have one of the most uncomfortable seats in the city. After sometime they shifted to another building at 133 MacDougal Street which was earlier a stable and organized it into a proper space for theatre. It is this theatre which had been rebuilt many times that came to be known as the Provincetown Playhouse. George Cram Cook served as the president of the group for many years. The Provincetown Players comprised artists who belonged to different cultural and religious backgrounds. Most of them worked towards bringing artistic innovation, challenged materialism, questioned the traditional role of women and re-evaluated the man-woman relation.

The Provincetown Players’ contribution towards American Drama is significant for the number of good theatrical productions it offered and most importantly the significant role that women played in this theatre group. The women were part of almost every sector in the theatre group and some one hundred and twenty women were members of this Playhouse. Most of the women of Provincetown theatre were feminists and they believed that a commitment towards social change and artistic innovation are mutually dependent on each other. Heterodoxy club was an organization where these women regularly gathered to discuss important issues such as suffrage, motherhood, sexual mores and educational reforms related to arts especially theatre. Edna Kenton was one of the founding members of the Heterodoxy and other members from the Players who were a part of this group included Susan Glaspell, Ida Rauh and Eleanor Fitzgerald.

Edna Kenton was a member of the Provincetown Executive Committee and she mainly read and selected plays for performance from 1917 to 1922. She was a renowned
novelist, critic and editor who constantly worked towards the upliftment of the underprivileged women of the society. She defines feminism as a woman’s constant attempt to realize her personality and her attitude towards life and her own self. Kenton believed that every woman should make her own decision instead of being simply a follower of decisions made for her by others. Kenton’s ideas influenced many of the Provincetown women writers who sought to challenge the traditional way of viewing women. Ida Rauh was one of the chief administrators of the Provincetown Theatre and also a member of the Women’s Trade Union League. She performed in more than twenty five plays of the group and also directed several productions. Nina Moise is an important Provincetown Women who directed and co-directed some nineteen plays during her tenure of one and a half year with the group. The Provincetown Players had aimed at making the authors stage their own work and this became difficult when commercial theatres were promoting the role of modern directors. Surprisingly at a time when women directors were hardly recognized in commercial stage, women of the Provincetown Theatre directed almost half of the group’s production. M. Eleanor Fitzgerald was the group’s treasurer for many years and she was mainly engaged fund-raising, bookkeeping, selling tickets, answering phones and so on. Marguerite Zorach designed sets for the Provincetown theatre and was regarded by many as one of the best known artists of her generation in America. George Cram Cook’s mother, Ellen, was involved in costume designing and Christine Ell ran the restaurant which served as an eating spot and a gathering moment for the entire group. Some women were also the historians of the Provincetown Players namely Mary Heaton Vorse, Susan Glaspell and Edna Kenton who wrote revealing chronicles about the group’s establishment, its consequent developments, theatrical accomplishment and personal relationships.
The Provincetown Players was an exceptional theatre because of the participation of a large number of women that could hardly match any other little theatres of that time. The women of Provincetown wrote and co-authored works that appeared on the Provincetown stage. One of the most important dramatists of the group is Susan Glaspell whose eleven plays were produced during her association with the Provincetown Players. These included five one-act plays, four full-length plays and two short comedies that were co-authored with her husband. All these were staged on the Provincetown theatre and Eugene O’Neill was the only dramatist to have surpassed this number of productions. Glaspell had written a number of short stories namely “The Last Sixty Minutes”, “The Preposterous Motive”, “For Love of the Hills” all of which had become during that time. Her first novel named The Glory of the Conquered (1909) deals with the ongoing conflict between a woman’s duties towards her career and her family. Her next work Fidelity (1915), was partly autobiographical that dealt with one’s fidelity towards marriage and more importantly towards oneself. Glaspell’s entry in the theatre world happened with her play Suppressed Desires (1914) which was a satire on Freudianism. The play satirizes those people who overanalyze every action, action and dream. Although psychoanalytic theories had become popular among the Players but the play could not make a long lasting impression.

In 1916, Glaspell had finished writing her next play, Trifles, a story based on a thrilling murder case of a housewife named Minnie Wright who was accused of killing her husband. Glaspell had covered the story herself when she was a reporter in Iowa. The play is interesting because all the evidence of the murder remains unnoticed by the men who had come to investigate and search for clues of the murder. However the wives of these men were able to understand the crime scene and found the evidence as they could
easily interpret the frustrations of Minnie’s life and see things from a woman’s point of view. *Trifles* was later published as a short story known as “Jury of Her Peers” which was further adapted into a short film by Sally Heckel that was nominated for Academy Award in 1980. Along with *Trifles* many other works by Glaspell were presented on Provincetown stage which includes *The People, Close the Book, The Outside, Woman’s Honor, Bernice* and *Tickless Time*. *The People* (1917) basically deal with the relation between art and life. The story is about a disordered radical publication company named “The People” which is about to close because it is not prospering and it lacks proper funds for its functioning. The editor of the magazine, Edward Wills, is disillusioned and has no will to work because he feels that they have not been able to ‘change anything’. He finds it a problem that the avant-garde artists should actually motivate the people to a better future but in reality the artist feels himself much superior to the common people and in that sense they cannot connect with the people. At a time when the editor feels demoralized, he is saved by a reader of the magazine called “Woman from Idaho” and a writer of the magazine named Sara who inspires him to continue publishing the magazine. According to the Woman from Idaho, modern art should not deal only with the future because that makes it isolated from the rest of the world as the same happened with Wills and “The People”. She believed that art should focus on the present because once while reading an article by the editor, Wills, she could connect to the living past of Lincoln’s words through Will’s words in “The People”. Glaspell presented how art and life are inextricably linked and how women play catalytic roles in challenging men’s artistic views. It is interesting to see that only these two women were able to inspire Wills who had regarded to stop the publication of this magazine earlier. Glaspell herself
played the role of the woman in this play and the ideas shared by her welcomed a lot of speculation and discussion within the Provincetown group.

Her next play, *The Outside* (1917), concerns the life of two women namely Mrs. Patrick and her housekeeper, Allie Mayo, who retreat to a former life-saving station near the end of Cape Cod and live there permanently. The male characters in the play are life-savers but they are involved in a mundane project of restoring the dead body of a drowned man. In spite of the fact that their job should be morally uplifting but it is just like any other job which is done by ‘force of habit’. These men can be metaphorically seen as male artists working to restore a dead kind of male art although the work is itself uninspiring. Allie Mayo was widowed twenty years ago and Mrs. Patrick had suffered a marital betrayal. These women live a life of isolation which is suggested by the emptiness of their room. Mrs. Patrick prefers to stay outside her house most of times, watching the sand that tries to bury the twisted vines which attempts to move out of the forest. She dismisses the potential of the future and does not bother about the importance that past hold onto the present. However it through Allie that Glaspell represents the role of the women artists who, like the vines; should reach out beyond the forest to ‘the outside’. Allie Mayo talks of the strange twisted vines that ‘reach out farthest’, a metaphor suggesting that the avant-garde artists do not solely focus on the future; they do so by safeguarding the best things of the past. Glaspell wanted to suggest through this play that modernity should evolve from a definite past like the growing of the vines as seen in the play. The vines, although they look strange, are significant when we realize their relation to the past and how they have helped in conserving the woods and its life into the future.
In *Woman’s Honor* (1918), Glaspell satirizes the various conception of the ‘honor’ of a woman as understood by men. The play is about a murder of a man named John Erwalt and Young Gordon Wallace is held guilty of the crime until he presents an alibi that could prove his innocence. On the night of the murder, Gordon seems to be in the company of a woman whose name he is not willing to utter so as to save her ‘honor’. Such a revelation could have saved him but he believes that it is a man’s duty to guard women and their honor and he is even ready to die to shield a woman’s honor. Such an attitude towards women is laughed at by the Lawyer who is in charge of the case. He forces him to disclose the name of the woman but Gordon refutes. The lawyer despises most of the women as ‘cowards’ because many of them pretend to be noble souls and make the men believe the same. And this makes the Lawyer hate them and he finds it sickening.

Glaspell throws light on the different ideals that men possess and their individual views regarding women; in this play the views of the Prisoner, Gordon and the Lawyer, Mr. Foster presents two completely oppositional characteristics of women. Glaspell has also introduced representative types of women like The Shielded One, The Motherly One, The Scornful One, The Silly One, The Mercenary One, and The Cheated One. They do not have individual names and their identity exists in relation to others, the men and how they perceive them. They had initially come to save the Prisoner but they finally decide to save themselves by getting Gordon killed. Each of these women presents their views on ‘a woman’s honor’ and the Scornful One feels that Gordon is actually ruining the life of the woman whose honor he wants to save because a life that is earned at the cost of someone else’s life is no life at all. She also comments that a woman’s honor is only about one single thing, which is her morality, whereas a man’s honor concerns
everything except that thing. She makes many bold statements throughout the play that highlights the double standards set by the society for men and women.

Glaspell’s another play in three acts, *Bernice* (1919), deals with the life of the central character, Bernice, who is dead as the play opens. She is not physically present but we get information about her from her family, friends and her maid, Abbie. We are told that Bernice is dead in a room offstage and although her cause of death is a natural one, she has asked her maid not to reveal the truth about her death. She wants to use it as a means to torture her husband, Craig, by making him guilty of the fact that Bernice has taken her own life due to his infidelity towards her. Glaspell again uses her theatrical device of the ‘absent center’, here Bernice, whose presence is felt even more than all the physically present characters. Bernice’s friend named Margaret is initially heartbroken due to her death but towards the end of the play she understands that Bernice’s deception has actually changed the person in Craig and that Bernice has been able to impact others’ lives by reaching beyond the medium of words from life into death of her supposed suicide. The important idea is that in order to change the situation of her life, Bernice had to sacrifice it much like Minnie in *Trifles*. Bernice had led an isolated and frustrated life due to various reasons. She had lost her child, her father had isolated himself from everyone and her husband remained away from home for many days. Bernice was also diagnosed with ulcer in her stomach and this made her realize the ultimate sort of helplessness that she was engaged in throughout her life. Her decision to feign the cause of her death was made to rewrite the life she had led and bring about some meaningful changes in it. She might also have wished on her deathbed to anticipate some feeling of satisfaction that she would have felt in the life that she longed for. Glaspell, through her female characters especially Bernice, shows the fatal
frustrations surrounding their lives but at the same time there is a hope that the audience on the other side will reach the light which these women could not experience.

In *Inheritors* (1920) Glaspell depicts the growing chauvinism of the postwar times. She was deeply involved with the feminist issues and being a member of the Heterodoxy club she voiced blatantly against economic and social inequalities in America. She was also preoccupied with the thoughts of the relationship between art and politics. Her play was considered to be too radical for the times and she even risked arrest under Espionage and Sedition Acts of 1917–18. Through the central character of the play, Madeline Fejevary Morton, a young woman, Glaspell voices the repressed and biased elements of the society during the postwar period. Morton is the spokesperson who supports democracy, liberty of speech and the rights of the colonized people in America. In this play, Glaspell highlights the hypocrisy of the government that does not practice the important national values of liberty and equality which are part of the ‘inheritance’ possessed by the Americans. Morton is a college student who fights for the Hindu students that are protesting against the British domination in their country. Morton supports the foreign students despite the pleas of her family. She is the ‘inheritor’ of her family’s commitment towards democracy and even faces prison when she attacks the police for subduing the protest of the Hindus. Her heroic commitment towards democratic values makes her a role model for the activists and the play resonates with ideas of tolerance and free speech will. Glaspell brilliantly uses the stage as a medium to share her own views about democracy and an effort to bring about some social changes within the country.

One of the most memorable of Glaspell’s works is *The Verge* (1921) that chronicles the life of an unconventional woman named Claire Archer. She is a scientist who is
experimenting on plant species to create new forms of life. The title of the play is significant as it suggests a lot about Claire’s own views about life and her multiple perspectives on the idea of a ‘verge’. She is married to a conventional man and attempts to break free to find outlets for her new ‘self’ and her creativity through her experimentations. She is on the brink of madness and her ideals and values are far removed from social propriety. Claire is dominant in her role as an artist and a scientist who is capable of creating or destroying life forms but at the same time she is afraid of the fears of constriction which she feels in the presence of the men in her life. She always looks for ‘outerness’ and ‘otherness’ as she refuses to be held within forms that are modeled for women. Through Claire, Glaspell reflects the forces of modernism in which theatrical, artistic, literary and other modes challenged the dominant forms of social and cultural expression.

Glaspell’s comedy *Chains of Dew* (1922) basically revolves around the campaign that was spreading all over United States regarding birth control. A very crucial issue of those times, Glaspell dramatizes this through some of her female characters namely Nora Powers and Dotty and represents the changing roles of women in America during the first half of the twentieth century. Nora Powers is the girlfriend of Seymore Standish who leads a dual life, spending half of his time of a year in Greenwich Village as a bohemian and the rest of his time in Midwest as a bourgeois. Nora is annoyed listening to his complains of being over burdened by his duties and responsibilities of his marriage and the family. Therefore she decides to go his home and discovers that rather his wife and mother feel subdued by him. Eventually Dotty is befriended by Nora and both of them work together to set up the first Birth Control League in Standish’s living room. Seymore, a conservative patriarch, strongly opposes this whole thing about birth
control and dismisses it as ‘dreadful’. The birth control campaign along with the fight for suffrage was seen by many opponents as disturbing the traditional fabric of domestic life. In the play, Dotty faces a conflict between her liberal ideas of the movement and her duties as a wife. The play resonates with many important issues of the early decades of the twentieth century like gender ideology, double standards, marital relation and liberty to reproduce. Glaspell’s choice of the birth control rights as the subject of her comedy exposes the problems that are central to modern life. She uses the Provincetown stage to highlight the follies of her culture and also seriously examined the problems of modern American society.

Glaspell’s Pulitzer-prize winning play, *Alison’s House* (1930), revolves around a poet named Alison Stanhope which is supposedly based on the life of the poet Emily Dickinson. The play opens on the New Year’s Eve, 1899 and we understand that Alison had been dead for the past eighteen years. Glaspell once again uses the device of the ‘absent center’, Alison who is the central character of the play but is absent from the stage. As the play moves on, Alison’s family discover some of her unpublished love poems that reveals her emotions for a married man. The family faces a dilemma regarding what they should do with her work. Publishing the poems would definitely increase her stature as a poet but it might also degrade the name of the family whose reputation was already open to suspicion. Glaspell explores the relationship of art and life and also highlights the issues of morality and social values with regard to art and artists in American society.

Along with Glaspell, the dramatist who primary concern was the ‘women question’ is Neith Boyce. Most of her plays deal with the man-woman relationship and a woman’s struggle to make a choice between two different worlds, one orchestrated by the society
and the other that she has decided for herself. Her play, *The Lowestoft Cup*, centers around a woman protagonist named Clara who is in a conflict of mind because she will soon be married into a conventional family and the thoughts of being a part of a tradition she does not identify herself with makes her worried. However she finds solace in her fiancé’s cousin who is a liberal person and is strongly against the double standard and the categorization of women as the ‘other’. Another play titled *Spring Medley* deals with the dilemma faced by a woman who is stuck between her life as a poet and her personal relationships with men in her life. Boyce’s *Constancy* (1915) was staged on the first bill of the Players and it is about the unsettling relationship between Jack Reed who was a member of the group and Mabel Dodge, a resident of the Provincetown. Certain dialogues in the play are taken from the letters exchanged between the lovers and are also reminiscent of the messages that Dodge had sent to Boyce explaining their quarrels. Some critics even find autobiographical elements in the play due to its concern with fidelity and infidelity which was a problem in Boyce’s own marriage.

One of Boyce’s most famous works is *Winter’s Night* (1916) whose protagonist, Rachel Westcott, is one of the most radical women of the times as presented by the Provincetown Players. The play opens with Rachel and her brother-in-law Jacob returning from the funeral of Daniel, husband of Rachel. Rachel loves working with colors and fabrics and her entire farmhouse is decorated with her work. She desires to go the city and establish her own business but her marriage had restricted her till now. Although she promises to mourn her husband’s death for a year and wear black but she feels relieved of her unfulfilling marriage. She says that she was free after his death and she could have what she had always wanted. She would now be able to set up her own business and realize her dreams. The twist in the story comes when Jacob declares his
love for Rachel and wishes to marry her. Jacob is projected as a helpless man who is unable to live all by himself and is scared of the thought of being alone while Rachel moves away to the city. He pleads her not to leave him alone and take him along with her. Boyce here subverts the assumption that marriage is the ideal state for all women as Jacob and not Rachel is depicted as the distressed being. Rachel declares that while being married to Daniel, she felt as if she was trapped in a prison and she also rejects Jacob’s proposal as she has greater things to achieve in life, that is, to start her own shop in the city. Audiences might sympathize with the poor Jacob but it is also understood that Rachel wants her own life apart from the inner spheres of domesticity.

Mary Carolyn Davies was another famous playwright of the Players who was a versatile writer practicing her art in short stories, novels, poetry for various magazines and anthologies. Many of Davies’ works deal with the Provincetowners, one of the well-known works being *The Husband Test* (1921). It offers a close study of the Greenwich Village milieu and its people who are full of ideas but ‘no clean table napkins’. The protagonist is named Bettina Howard whose fiancé is a lawyer, William Clark. She breaks the engagement when he refuses to allow her to join a costume ball that was popular in the Village then. Bettina is disillusioned by the fact that women always suffer in marriages and therefore decides to go on one-month trial weddings with each of her suitors. At the end it becomes clear that it is not possible to find a man who is perceptive and practical at the same time. *Tables and Chairs* (1929) also deal with the complication in marriages and the choices that one has to make. The protagonist called Girl is courted by two men who stand for two different sides of her own self. One is a conventional man who believes in traditions and domesticity while the other is a vagabond dressed somewhat like a buffoon. The Girl is allured by both
these fellows but also scared by both choices and she finally decides that free companionship is more pleasing than any traditional marriage.

*The Slave with Two Faces* is one of her most remembered works and the play is also special because it was staged by Nina Moise and featured the finest actors of the group namely Ida Rauh, Blanche Hays and Hutchinson Collins. The play is an allegory of life that depicts the conflict between the forces of Life and Death. Throughout the play we are constantly reminded that one needs to be strong before Life, a character in the play. Life is actually a slave who pretends to be strong and a person who knows this truth may only survive. More than a mere allegory, the play deals with the performance of gender relations. Life is portrayed as a man who seduces the Second Girl to perform the traditional feminine roles by flattering her as an epitome of feminine beauty. Lured by his words, she decides to please him but she also says that she is afraid of him. In the play even the language of subservience is fatal and the Second Girl becomes his slave the moment she gives him the crown that she was wearing. The First Girl, however, survives because she maintains her power by retaining her crown.

A representative woman of the Provincetown Players is Rita Wellman whose plays vary in form and subject matter. She established her career as a playwright with *The Telescope* (1913), a melodrama where the protagonist kills herself because she misjudged that her husband had killed her lover. Wellman’s *Concerning Our Own* (1913) was quite popular during its time for it mocked at a number of attitudes shown towards the world of theatre. The character of the play Philip Ross who is a playwright is proud because he believes that his daughter is ‘innocent’ as he does not let her attend the theater. His wife Victoria who is an actress however holds a totally different view about the influence of theatre on morality. According to her, married woman can live
out their dreams through acting without being involved in any scandal. Through the characters that she plays, gives her the opportunity to go beyond what the society demands and live life on her own terms at least for some moments. Wellman’s next play, *Georgie: The Girl Who Does as She Pleases* (1914) is quite modern in its approach towards marriage and its prospects. The central character of the play Georgie is a widow who is not saddened at the death of her husband but is worried about the idea that she will have to marry her lover now. She speculates on those things that she will have to face with him most of the times ending in bickering. It is a four-act comedy and Wellman has aptly used farce to highlight the cynic behavior of people and the ways of the society.

Rita Wellman is the first person among the Players to have her work staged on the Broadway even before Eugene O’Neill’s *Beyond the Horizon*. Wellman’s *The Gentile Wife* featured on Broadway in December, 1918 directed by Arthur Hopkins and stage designed by Robert Edmond. The play centers around the woman named Naida, a talented Opera singer, who is married to a Jewish scientist, David Davis. She holds the opinion that women can be successful in performing their roles as artists as well as wives and mothers. Naida promises to pursue her career whole heartedly but she is annoyed that it is her husband’s work that always takes the top priority. The play also raises the issue of anti-Semitism as an important theme in the play when Davis is made fun of by his colleagues and not promoted due to his religion difference. Some of the other well-known plays by Wellman include *Barbarians, Funiculi-Funicula, The String of Samisen* and *The Rib-Person* all of which were performed by the Players. *Funiculi-Funicula* (1917) offers a sharp criticism on the way of life led by the bohemians during the early twentieth century. Alma, the protagonist is an artist who lives with her partner
Taddema, a poet, in a ragged apartment. They give birth to a baby which they thought would be fun. But the audiences are shocked to hear what Alma has to confess. Being a mother it is unnatural to say so but she declares that they actually hate their little girl because she has always been on their way of things. *Funiculi-Funicula*, like many other plays of the times, depicts the condition of women who try hard to reconcile their roles between career and family. The play is pessimistic in its approach as the couple fail to be successful parents and artists.

The playwright Edna Ferber’s venture into the Provincetown Players started with *The Eldest* (1920). The play revolves around the woman named Rose, the eldest daughter of the family who works like a slave in her worn out house toiling to take care of her ailing mother, father and indifferent younger siblings. She still hopes that her lover, Henry, would return someday who had left her some fifteen years ago. When he actually returns, he is widowed but becomes rich by that time. Ironically he starts courting Rose’s sister, Floss, who reminds Henry of the beauty Rose possessed when she was at her youth. Rose’s mother is bed-ridden for reasons unknown and it seems possible that she chose to remain in the bed to avoid the drudgery that Rose is now suffering. The play also criticizes the perspective of the society that sees women of middle age as ‘disappointed old maids’ while men of similar age is far from being old, they maintain their youthful vigor and continue to be enjoy privileges irrespective of their ages. Rose is rejected by Henry because she has lost her charm by indulging in a dreary existence while it seems natural that Henry courts Floss, a girl who is almost half his age. Moreover, Pa, Rose’s father is a selfish man who does not care about his invalid wife and is self-absorbed in his own life enjoying movies whenever he wished. And there is Henry who is least bothered about Rose’s feelings who had been waiting for him for
such a long time. Instead he shamelessly dates his former lover’s sister who seems to be a more perfect match for him now. Through the character of Rose, Ferber showed that even she possessed strength like many of her female protagonists in the novels, short stories and plays. Rose could have left her family to its own destiny but she was strong willed and worked as a responsible sister and a daughter. The play also highlights a harsh indictment on the relationship of sexes. Ferber’s other important works include *The Royal Family* (1927), *Dinner at Eight* (1932) and *Stage Door* (1936).

Djuna Barnes was one of the most innovative playwrights of the Provincetown Players. She was well-known as a novelist, dramatist, short story writer, journalist and poet. Most of her works were based on the experiences of the life in Provincetown. She had close acquaintances with the Provincetowners namely Jimmy Light, Ida Rauh and Charles Ellis all of whom lived in the same apartment where Barnes lived. Most of her works appeared during 1919-1920 when the Players’ productions were supervised by Light and Rauh. Her first play that was performed by the group was *Three from the Earth* and it appeared in 1919. The play immediately gained attention due to its extraordinary stage setting, language and acting. The play is about a middle aged woman named Kate who is referred to as an ‘adventuress’ and loves to follow her free-will. Most of Barnes’ protagonists are strong independent women who love liberty and so does Kate. She has three sons from an old lover and they have now approached her to get back their father’s letters. The characters are compared with some animals to suggest their sexuality. Kate is a bold woman who declares that she has no virtue and she feels that she could probably reinvent her identity again by getting married to the judge of a supreme court. Her next work, *An Irish Triangle* staged by the Players in 1920 is a satire on conventional morality where the protagonist, Kathleen O’Rune
reveals to her neighbor that her husband, John, is having an affair with the lady of the manor. The wife learns about the ways in which gentlewomen talk, walk, eat and dress from her husband who gets this knowledge from the lady he loves. She also reveals that the lady will soon become the master’s lover to know how aristocratic men behave and talk and thereby teach John about their way of life. The play is a detailed conversation between two women that highlights the affectation of people and criticizes the notion of morality.

Barnes’s last play staged by the Players was *Kurzy of the Sea* (1920). Many renowned actors of the group were seen in the play namely Norman Millay, Charles Ellie, Blanche Hays, Eda Heinemann and James Light. The protagonist of the story is Kurzy who celebrates freedom of an independent woman not affected by the rules of the society or men. Most of the women of Barnes’s work are projected as people who break taboos, violate boundaries and defy categorization and to mention some of them, Helena in *To the Dogs* (1923) and the title character in *The Dove* (1920) are perfect examples of such daring women. In *Kurzy of the Sea* Rory is a young man who is viewed by his mother Molly as ‘a drab thing and a slow’. He is a misogynist who does not want to marry unless he gets a ‘real unhuman woman.’ He has developed such a frame of mind after going through innumerable legends and fairy tales. However his father manages to get a mermaid, Kurzy, for him and he finally agrees to marry her. Ironically it is Kurzy who escapes from the stricture of marriage announcing that she has miles to swim suggesting her free and independent spirit. She takes away the chance from Rory to experience happiness in marriage as he could not appreciate the real virtues of a real woman, Kurzy by throwing her back into the sea. She is a woman who will not be caught in the expectations of a conventional world.
Sophie Treadwell’s contribution towards American drama is significant for the plays that she wrote dealing with the universal human experience during the early twentieth century. Most of her plays are based on real life experiences of women who are caught in a world guided by crass materialism. She was a journalist who worked for the New York Tribune and had covered the Mexican Revolution in 1920. Her works were inspired mainly by events that she had come across while working as a journalist. In Gringo there are a number of crucial issues that Treadwell deals with. She is concerned with the increasing socialism in Mexico, the idea of marriage during that period and most importantly the shifting roles of women in the society as they were then empowered by the voting rights and the freedom that accompanied it. Treadwell’s experiences in Mexico were translated into her dramatic work, Gringo (1922), which concerns the American-Mexican relationship set against the background of an American’s mine in Mexico.

Her most famous play, Machinal (1928), is also based on a real life event that Treadwell had covered, the murder case of Ruth Synder and Judd Gray. Ruth Synder, a housewife and Judd Gray, a salesman had murdered Ruth’s husband, Albert Synder and designed the scene it in such a way so as to make it look like a robbery. But police investigation found them guilty and a trial was held. Both the accused blamed each other for the murder and Gray commented that it was bad liquor and evil woman that had placed him in such a position and he warned every men against these two objects stating that they are too strong for any man. Almost every newspaper of New York projected Synder as a vamp but it was Treadwell who pointed out that Ruth was more of a ‘matron’ than she was represented by the press. Both Ruth and Judd were held guilty and sentenced to death in the electric chair. This became sensational news for the public and the media
both as Ruth was the first woman to be electrified at the turn of the century in New York State. This story provided the basis for Treadwell’s *Machinal*. The play revolves around the life of a woman named Young Woman who lives in a hard, mechanized, machine-like modern world. The play became popular for the technique that Treadwell had used in the play. She has divided the play into nine scenes which significantly suggests the various phases in the life of a young woman. The scenes are interestingly known as “To Business”, “At Home”, “Honeymoon”, “Maternal”, “Prohibited”, “Intimate”, “Domestic”, “The Law” and “A Machine”. Apart from these *Machinal* is regarded as one of the most representatives of Expressionist plays which exposes the emotional reality of the protagonist by using a number of devices and techniques. Expressionist plays which heavily rely on short dialogues and scenes, repetitive language, sounds of machines, representative characters are all present in this play. The opening scene of *Machinal* is set in an office which looks dull and monotonous because of the mechanized life of the workers who are repeating phrases and we also hear the constant sound of the typewriters, telephones and machines. The Young Woman who works in that office finds herself out of place. She feels trapped and alienated and does not identify herself with the place she works in. Such a scenario could be the case with any woman who finds it hard to adjust with the mechanized life of America. The play projects her inner struggle to find solace amidst the drudgery of American life. Treadwell captures the shift in the American social and cultural life after World War I when it became quite common for women to work in business places. The early twentieth century saw women working as stenographers, typists, telephone operators and so on. In *Machinal*, the Young Woman is also a stenographer in an office who takes dictation in shorthand.
The woman named Lily in the play, *For Saxophone* (1934) resembles the protagonist of *Machinal* in many ways. Both of them are young women who want to be sexually and emotionally liberated and also seek freedom from their conventional marriage. Lily is unable to reconcile her need for sexual fulfillment with the social restraints of her times. The crux of the problem lies in the fact that she is incapable of conceiving herself as the subject of her own life and feels stifled all the time. Treadwell, in this play, hints at the fault that lies in the society’s indifference and unconcern towards women’s pursuit of their emotional and sexual fulfillment. These plays probably mark Treadwell as a significant American dramatist who introduced a feminist aesthetics in the theatre where women are seen as subjects in the play and at the same time there is a continuous effort towards appealing the female sensibility in the audiences. Treadwell’s other famous plays include *Gringo, O Nightingale, Ladies Leave, Lone Valley* and *Plumes*. She had mostly concentrated on the issues of women in her plays as well as novels. Most of her women protagonists are projected as strong independent women who seek control over the world and this is seen in her plays like *Constance Darrow, Rights, The Settlement, To Him Who Waits* and many others.

Rachel Crothers has made a major contribution towards America Drama and she certainly deserves attention for the immense work she has done as a playwright in the early twentieth century in America. She is one such dramatist who wrote her best works before the World War I, a time when very few women writers had emerged in America voicing the social and moral problems faced by women. Crothers wrote more than thirty plays most of which were commercial successes and also directed many of them. She has been a constant presence in American theatre throughout her career as a dramatist from 1906 when she wrote her first play, *The Three of Us*, till 1937 when her last hit
appeared, *Susan and God*. The play had 288 performances and was awarded with the Theatre Club’s prize for the brilliant play of the season 1937-38. Unfortunately her plays have been ignored by theatre historians and literary critics who have also paid little attention to the works of many women dramatists of the early decades of the twentieth century who talked about the double standards, relation between sexes, conflict between their private and public lives. Crothers’s works were marginalized by major drama historians and critics but efforts have been seen by recent production houses, for example the Mint Theatre Company, which is working for the revival of the neglected plays by American women playwrights.

Crothers was preoccupied with many vital issues of the times that concerned women and she dealt with the themes of free love, divorce, gendered relations, and prostitution in her plays. Most of her works like *The Three of Us* present women as strong and bold figures for the challenges they had to face at the turn of the century mostly the conflict between their private and public lives. But there are also plays like *Young Wisdom* and *Mary the Third* that parodies and criticizes the idea of radical feminism. Many free-willed women of her plays despised traditional roles but they ultimately chose to live a conventional life at the end when their commitment and love towards their family were questioned. In many other plays, “Crothers records a sense of disillusionment with the women’s movement and a tendency to blame it for deficiencies in women’s emotional life”. (Gottlieb, 133)

Crothers was writing at a time that witnessed rapid social change which she was quite aware of. She believed that if one wanted to see the signs of changes of the times then one must look at women as their evolution was the most important event in modern life. Crothers’ work, *The Three of Us*, was written at a time when the Nineteenth
Amendment still had fourteen years to be brought into effect and very few women had raised the issue of inequalities in marriage as did Crothers. Her plays mostly reflect the lives of the middle class women in America who had witnessed considerable changes during the early decades of the twentieth century.

Her play *He and She* (1920), depicts the problems faced by the modern American individuals in a period of change. The play is set in 1910 whose central characters are Tom and Ann Herford, a married couple with a child. Tom and Ann both work as sculptors and Tom, who supports women’s rights, is happy with the fact that she is doing well in her career. The main problem arises and creates a conflict in the family when Ann wins a sculptural commission and Tom loses. Tom was doubtful whether he could cope up with the thought of his wife’s success and his failure. Ann was also uncomfortable with Tom’s embarrassment and was upset with the possible effect that would be there on their relationship. It was a crucial issue whether Ann would be able to manage her maternal duties along with her professional commitments because her daughter was already feeling neglected as her parents were busy with their works. There are other characters in the play whose views about women are important to consider. Tom’s assistant clearly states that he does not want his fiancée to continue her work as a journalist once they are married and he thinks it is better if she becomes a housewife. The young lady however does not regard it as a good prospect for her. Ann’s father is disappointed with his daughter because of her decision of building a career that would jeopardize her marriage. At the end of the play Ann takes the decision of quitting her career for the sake of the family and especially her daughter. She comments that when a woman becomes a mother everything in her life changes and believes that motherhood must be given more priority than one’s career. The play however does not give any
sense of anti-feminist stance because the dilemma faced by the female protagonist has been well justified and leaves the audience for some speculation. Ann has been a lady of great talent and capabilities but her commitment towards her family came in the way of her success. Ann Herford is regarded by many critics as one of the great female protagonists of American drama in the 1920s. Crothers’ portrayal of Ann Herford brings home the fact that in the real and practical world gender equality is still a pretension and this applies to liberated men and women both. There are also other characters with contrasting views which should be taken note of. There is Ann’s father, a man from the older generation for whom there is nothing to debate and following the convention is the best choice for a woman. But we also see the fiancée of Tom’s assistant, an example of a New Woman who still wants to continue her job after her marriage. The play was performed in Broadway in 1920 but was not a box-office hit. However it was revived in New York in 1980 and in 2005 which turned to be huge successes.

Rachel Crothers wrote plays that were original and trendsetter in many ways. She dealt with themes and issues that were discussed by very few female writers of that period, for example, she wrote about prostitution and slavery in her play Ourselves (1913). Broadway produced many plays based on brothels, slavery, diseases sexually transmitted, illicit relations and so on mostly by male writers and these plays followed a pattern of representation where they would be a brothel or abduction scene. But Crothers’ treatment on this subject matter was different and there was no such scenes presented to entertain voyeuristic men. As a research work for her play, Crothers paid visits to the Bedford Street Reformatory for Women and interacted with some of the imprisoned sex workers to know their life and experiences. She used a completely female-centered perspective to reflect upon the life of the protagonist of her play.
Ourselves. The story is about a woman, Molly, who is rescued by Beatrice, a wealthy philanthropic lady from a reform home for sex workers. Molly seeks to live a better life after being released but there are people who do not believe that such a life is possible for a Fallen Woman.\(^6\) Molly desires to marry Leever, her pimp, and settle down but he betrays her and she is forced to live with Beatrice as her maid. Molly confesses that it is impossible to live without a man in her life when she sees so much love around her. Crothers has bridged the gap between the social constructed moral distance between Beatrice and Molly when both give their opinions about marriage and its necessity. The fallen figure of Molly has been subverted when she expresses her desire of a socially constructed legitimacy of her personal life. Many Provincetown plays have dealt with the theme of prostitution like *The Web* by Eugene O’Neill, *Moondown* by John Reed and *Cocaine* by Pendleton King but Crothers representation has been different in the sense that the story is told from a woman’s perspective and there is a clear suggestion that the standards of morality should be equal for both men and women. The problem hinted in the play is that the male sexual appetite is at fault and not a woman’s weakness or immorality. Crothers also expresses her skepticism through this play which doubts the reformist intention of a society which is faulty and full of pretentions. Very few American male playwrights like Clyde Fitch has depicted society’s attitude towards gender roles in the early twentieth century. His play, *Sapho*, written in 1900 is a significant step towards the transformation of American society’s perspective on gendered relation and status of women.

Another play where Crothers is concerned with the female identity and societal norms regarding women is seen in *The Three of Us* in which the female protagonist refutes the idea that a woman’s honour rest completely on a man and that it is his obligation to
protect her honour. *A Man’s World* deals with the story of a female writer who writes under the name of a man hoping for greater popularity and *Young Wisdom* is a satire written on the idea of a New Woman. *Nice People* and *Mary the Third* are critical commentaries on the evolving changes in attitudes towards the concept of marriage. Her last play *Susan and God* depicts the life of a woman who is too engrossed with her idealism of religion and decides to leave her family to live as an evangelist. But at the end of the play she realizes that rather than working for the idealism which is artificial she should be committed towards her family and achieve a stable life with them. She sees this as a meaningful gesture than being involved in complex things such as faith and salvation.

Crothers had gained immense popularity among the American audience and readers owing to her versatile genius in writing, directing, staging and casting many of her plays. Although Crothers is less remembered in the present times, her contribution towards American drama made her one of the most successful women writers during the 1920s before the coming of Lillian Hellman in the 1930s. Crothers was preoccupied with the theme of women’s economic independence and not seeing marriage as the only means of her financial security. Her plays are mostly representative of the condition of women in America in the early decades of the twentieth century and her major plays include *Myself Bettina, The Heart of Paddy Whack, Once Upon a Time, Mother Carey’s Chickens* and *Expressing Willie*. She paved the way for women in the American theatre in the twentieth century and influenced many notable playwrights of the Provincetown theatre group especially Susan Glaspell. Crothers was not only engaged with theatre but also worked as an activist throughout her life. She founded many organizations like the United Theatre Relief Committee, the Stage Women’s War Relief Fund and the
American War Relief Fund for the welfare of the theatre world and the nation as well. Her efforts were duly acknowledged by the government and she was awarded with the Chi Omega by Eleanor Roosevelt, a gold medal award presented to an American woman who has made great contribution in the fields of social work, art, letters, business, politics and so on. Crothers has been referred to as a “genuine trailblazer” by Ethan Mordden for her influential force in the development of modern American drama.
Notes

1. Little theatre movement was introduced in United States during the 1910s. This was an initiative taken by various theatre practitioners to overcome the influence of cinema which was slowly replacing theatre with its grand spectacle. The movement began in various cities like Boston, Seattle and Chicago among others promoting a non-commercial mode of entertainment. The community theatres of the present times can be regarded as an outcome of the little theatres.

2. During the early twentieth century, the Greenwich Village served as the artistic mecca for the radical young individuals who sought social freedom from their restrictive lives in their hometown. The intellectual and artistic vanguards of America migrated to this village and challenged and undermined the conventional views on politics, psychology, sexuality and so on. Women of this village discussed women’s changing status in the society and worked towards the reformation of their gender. They experienced the new found freedom in this village; women often drank and smoke in the public, enjoyed open relationship, retained their maiden names after marriage and some unmarried men and women lived together demanding sexual freedom.

3. During the period 1915-1922, the total number of productions was 145, out of which 60 plays were directed and co-directed by women.

4. Rachel Crothers’s Susan and God was staged on June 18, 2006 by the Mint Theatre Company. Susan Glaspell’s Alison’s House was also produced by the same company on September 24th 1999.
5. The idea of the ‘New Woman’ was gaining grounds in the beginning of the twentieth century America. A new woman was believed to be a progressive intellectual who asserted personal autonomy and independent womanhood in all the spheres of life. A detailed study on the concept of the ‘New Woman’ will be done in Chapter III titled “Portrayal of the New Woman”

6. The term ‘Fallen Woman’ refers to those women who have lost their innocence or chastity and therefore fallen from the grace of God. This figure has been used by many playwrights for artistic explorations. The figure of the fallen woman has been a constant presence in American drama during the early twentieth century and some theatre historians and critics associate these plays featuring prostitutes, courtesans and other fallen women with a different genre of plays known as the ‘brothel drama’.
Works Cited


