MAN-WOMAN RELATIONSHIP IN POST-WAR BRITISH DRAMA

A STUDY OF JOHN OSBORNE AND ARNOLD WESKER

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Abbreviations

Works by Osborne:

1.	*LBA*	*Look back in Anger*
2.	*EGD*	*Epitaph for George Dillon*
3.	*The E*	*The Entertainer*
4.	*IE*	*Inadmissible Evidence*
5.	*TP & HA*	*Time Present and Hotel in Amsterdam*
6.	*VLW*	*Very Like A Whale*
7.	*WS*	*West of Suez*
8.	*APM*	*A Patriot for Me*
9.	*D*	*Dejavu*
10.	*ASSC*	*A Subject of Scandal and Concern*
11.	*L*	*Luther*

(Books used are of Faber and Faber edition)

Works by Wesker:

1. *Wesker vol* 1 *The Trilogy :*

CSWB	*Chicken Soup With Barley*
R	*Roots*
ITAJ	*I"m Talking About Jerusalem*

2. *Wesker vol 2:*

K	*The Kitchen*
FS	*The Four Seasons*
TVOGC	*Their Very Own and Golden City*

3. *Wesker vol 3:*

F	*The Friends*
OO	*The Old Ones*
LLOBP	*Love Letters On A Blue Paper*

4. *Wesker vol 4:*

J	*The Journalists*
WF	*The Wedding Feast*
M	*The Merchants*

5 *Wesker vol 5:*

Y	*The Yardsale*
WHBL	*Whatever Happened To Betty Lemon*
FPOM	*Four Portraits of Mothers*
M	*The Mistress*
AW	*Annie Wobbler*

(Books used are of Penguin edition)

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INTRODUCTION

I

In the plays of John Osborne and Arnold Wesker the traditional values and institutions are violently turned down by a sceptic generation. Born in a war-torn society, the two playwrights have inherited the suspicion and mistrust afflicting their predecessors. The changes to be experienced in a century are found in a decade. Many among their elders unable to withstand the stress, had stopped creative writing. Many tried to escape into the feeble psalms of waning belief. But the youth rose in revolt. They set out to look for something substantial and strong, which would help them to endure the reality. An imaginary, invisible God could no longer rouse their devotion. Robert Brustein offers a helpful summing up in his scholarly study of drama. He writes, "When Nietczche declared the death of God, he declared the death of all traditional values as well. Man could create new values only by becoming God; the only alternative to nihilism lay in revolt."[1]

Osborne's Jimmy Porter, George Dillon, Jean Rice, Pamela, or Wesker's Ronny Kahn, Dave Simmonds, Andrew Cobham, Peter, all of them betray this rebellious tone. Dissecting contemporary society and dogma, they are confounded to find an inadequacy contained within. While their predecessors were numbed to inertia seeing too much of changes, these playwrights demand some change so that they could look forward to a life with some hope. Jimmy Porter in *LBA* bursts out in rage as there is no change around him. His father-in-law is puzzled to see so much of changes and fails to understand this world. The link between the generations is missing and no one could come out breaking his own shell to bridge the gap. For it was not possible for an individual to do so, the cleavage being both social and moral.

Eugene O'Neil in a letter to Grorge Jean once wrote, "The playwright today must dig at the roots of the sickness of today as he feels it -- the death of the Old God and the

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[1] Robert Brustein, *The Theatre of Revolt*, London, Methuen, 1965, p. 8.

failure of science and materialism to give any satisfying new One for the surviving primitive religious instinct to find a meaning for life in, and to comfort its fears of death with."[1]

That is precisely what Osborne and Wesker are doing. Digging at the roots of sickness they find out how lonely man has become, and how desperately he tries to seek human contact in his struggles for survival. In the industrially developed society of England, mechanization, consumerism, and above all competition in every field, are distracting men, beguiling them for an endless rat-race. Marx had already diagnosed the disease:

> Competition has penetrated all the relationships of our life and completed the reciprocal bondage in which men now hold themselves. Competition is the great mainspring which again and again jerks into activity our aging and withering social order, or rather disorder; but with each new exertion it also saps a part of this order's waning strength. Competition governs the neumerical advance of mankind; it likewise governs its moral advance.[2]

British society, alarmed to see these signs of decay in the fifties, was retaining two contradictory trends. Attempting to resist this moral and social decadence, the first one regarded family as the most sacred of the institutions to keep people together. Marriage was a sacramental institution, children -- the holy deposit; to bring them up accordingly in a happy and peaceful family was a religious duty. Against it, there was an opposite extreme that criticised family-life for its interference in personal freedom, causing discontent. In his essay "The Challenge of Sexuality" Jonathan Dollimore depicts the social panoroma in the fifties that guarded the family as an institution and condemned any idea inimical to it. For the growth and development of a healthy, responsible citizen, family was conceived of as an indispensible unit. A shield against the growing moral corruption, family worked to preserve the best of the culture, despite the limitation it had, and the changes it went through after the war. Dollimore records the other side of the picture too:

> A more open attitude to sexuality gradually developed; its enjoyment became more permissible, albeit within an insistently defined conjugal context; sex manuals became franker and more widely acceptable; and there was some acknowledgement of female sexuality. ... There was an increase in the

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[1] Oscar Cargil, N.B.Fagin and William J. Fisher, ed, *O'Neil And His Plays*, NewYork University Press, 1961, p. 115.

[2] Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, Progress, 1977, p. 190.

> availability of contraception and contraceptive advice. Female chastity became less important, and fashion eroticised the body more explicitly. Divorce increased and in the process lost its stigma. Correspondingly, the Christian ideal of the permanence of marriage bond was displaced, as was, to some extent, the authoritarian and patriarchal conception of family structure. More and more women were in paidwork. Teenage children acquired greater economic independence. [1]

Outgoing mothers now faced a serious problem in respect of bringing up children and maintenance of the household. Moreover joint families were giving way to neuclear families. Affluence, divorce, lack of parental care and control, made the adolescent boys and girls more promiscuous and desperate than ever before. In the profiles and portraits by these playwrights, we do not miss the critical tone underlying their anger and revolt. A radical critique of the family, on account of its, " narrow channelling of sexuality, its socializing of children into rigid gender roles, and its oppression of women in the domestic roles of wife and mother"[2] is implied in what the two dramatists wrote.

Exposition to the broader outer world has made women aware of their position, capacity, and also of their long-felt deprivations. The closer they come through their work or profession, to men, wider have been the scopes for liking or disliking. The "Taken-for-granted" attitude was no more to be expected from this generation even on the sacred vows of religion. Rise of individualism contributed to the inculcation of this new attitude. Right to choose, added to the power of judgement, makes the panoroma vaster for women. Marriage in most cases turns into battle-fields with demands for personal and sexual freedom on both the sides. Marital-complexities in Osborne's and Wesker's plays prove the valildity of the observation that Russell makes, "Women's emancipation has in various ways made marriage difficult."[3]

Although "emancipation" still remains a question mark for women, the relationship was incapable of resolving the complexities stemming from it. In one way or other, their plays are documentation of this intricate attachment. This relationship takes into account

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[1] Jonathan Dollimore, "The Challenge of Sexuality", *Society and Literature 1945-1970,* ed. Alan Sinfield, London, Methuen, 1983, p. 60.

[2] Dollimore, p. 61, "There developed in the sixties a radical critique of the family. The anti-psychiatry movement, associated especially with R.D. Laing, saw the family as the source of mental illness -- in particular, schizo-phrenia."

[3] Bertrand Russell, *Marriage and Morals,* NewYork, Routledge, 1991, p. 94.

the whole behavioural pattern of man, and his interaction with other human beings, as Marx has put it:

> The direct, natural, and necessary relation of person to person is the *relation of man to woman*. In this *natural* species-relationship man's relation to nature is immediately his relation to man, just as his relation to man is immediately his relation to nature -- his own *natural* destination. .... From this relationship one can therefore judge man's whole level of development. From character of this relationship follows how much *man as species-being, as man*, has come to be himself and to comprehend himself; the relation of man to woman is the most natural relation of human being to human being.[1]

Thus the relationship unfolds the whole of a man and explains his response to the universe. In the plays of Osborne and Wesker, men and women in their love and hatred, acceptance and denial, emotion for and indifference to the people around them, reveal their innerselves as individuals. The present study attempts to analyse this performance taking into account the relationship between man and man, woman and woman, and finally, between man and woman in different phases of the lives of the characters. These roles blended together into personal and private life, shade and shape the nature of the relationship. Assumed as love, at first, the relationship does not go beyond the personal territory of a man and a woman. Then the consummation of it in marriage and procreation, makes it possible for the life-flux to continue.

II

Love has been a term, much used as well as abused in human imagination. Basically it means union of a man and a woman and that is what has been desired in all ages. In reality however the situation is different. Despite the glory bestowed on it by poetic and romantic imagination, the relationship between man and woman never was, nor is, smooth and harmonious. Rather the contrary has been true. Hatred, jealousy, anger, and authority, along with physical charm and fear, have made this life-long cohabitation a constant struggle.

[1] Marx, *Manuscripts*, pp. 95-96.

The Biblical story of man's creation relates that, from the instictive fear to be left alone man sought company. Adam begged for a human comapanion as divine presence could not relieve his mortal heart. Communication of man with man could not be alternated by anything else. That is why friendship is looked for, in all kinds of human relationships, be it filial, or marital, or even official.

Friendship and love alike seek to intrude into another mind. Yet love is not friendship. Friendship develops between equals; love has always been a relationship between unequals. The pursuer and the pursued are bound to be unequal. And it is always the fact that even when both partners are in pursuit of each other, the eagerness of both can never be the same, human nature being what it is. Love, moreover leads to marriage, and marriage has, as history records, never been between two equals. One dominates; and the dominating one has usually been the husband rather than the wife.

Friendship is never as intimate as love, nor is it as exposed to conflict as love; precisely because of the equilibriam that friendship creates, guarantees and survives on. Therefore we see that man's desire to dominate, and woman's desire to assert her individuality, but not at the cost of her home and family, have intensified the tension dormant in marriage. This conflicting nature of the relationship is indicative of the fact that irresistible attraction could not establish equality between the sexes. Women have remained a victim of dispute and disparity in most cases. There can be no denying that woman's status plays a vital role in determining the state of progress in a society. Rosalind Miles in her gender-based analysis of modern novels makes the useful point that, " `Sex' is a living issue, indeed a quasi-barometrical indication of any society's values will be given by its assumptions of what is approriate social behaviour, the status of its women, and so on."[1 2]

We notice that from the beginning of civilization an inferior position was marked for woman. An unfavourable male-notion of her capability deprived her of many basic religious, political, social, and legal rights. Hers has been a story of a long struggle and sacrifice to step on the threshhold of the twentieth-century, when she is claiming equal footing with man.

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[1] Rosalind Miles, *The Fiction of Sex*, Vision Press, London, 1974, p.13.

A look-back at history lets us know that in ancient Greece, the so called fatherland of democracy, women were deprived of all social and constitutional rights. It is a wonder how the torch-bearers of civilization continued their progress keeping half of the society in darkness, denying it its due share. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that ultimately the torch-beckoning faded. The Greek classicists took up the theme of war and valour as their subject in epics and plays. However underlying this masculine theme of heroism we do not miss the female fear of captivation. Sophocles' *The Trojan Women*, depicts panic-stricken women, threatened to slavery and consequently retreating to selfdestruction finding no other way to save themselves. Andromache's cry in *The Iliad* was ostensibly for her departing husband, who might not come back; but it was more for her ownself who had no reason to be unaware of the fate awaiting a captive woman in her society.

Not only the war prisoners, women as a social class was regarded a sub-human species, who had no function other than the gratification of the male desire for procreation of children. She was a being of flesh and blood made for the satisfaction of man's physical demand. Her mind and intellect were non-existent even to the philosophers like Socrates and Plato. Plato's *The Symposium*, a detailed discourse on love, acquaints us with the Greek concept of man-woman relationship. As woman was only an instrument for childbirth, love between man and woman was thought of as baser kind which pacified the physical impulse and begot children. Love between man and man aiming as it was at nobler and higher kind of spiritual progeny was the real love and was recognised duly by Plato, Socrates, and other contemporary philosophers.

The fact that surprises us is that despite these rigid social bans, some women could develop themselves intellectually to pursue different branches of knowledge. One of them is quoted by Socretes in *The Symposium*. They belonged to "that class of women who were in the Greek tongue called Hetaerae, and who are by some supposed to have represented, intellectually, at least a higher level of culture than the other members of their sex."[1]

They were in reality prostitutes freed from slavery, living independently. Only a few of them sharp, and intelligent, improved their intellectual level and provided the statesman

[1] G. L.Dickinson, *Greek View of Life*, London, Methuen, 1896, reprint 1941, p. 182.

and philosophers they were visited by, with the companionship the men needed. Their moral freedom inspired them to exercise their mental faculties which was absolutely prohibited to their more respectable sisters. Thus it was not "marriage", but "prostitution" that gave woman in ancient Greece a space, allowing them to open the casement to the male world. Prisoned within the strict family code, the respectable women, on the other hand, had to buy this respectability at the cost of personal freedom in every respect. It might have made them envious of the so-called "fallen" women who in fact enjoyed the company of their men.

However, this disparity between man and woman did not go unchallenged. Greek playwrights could not overlook the strength and courage that provoked women now and then to revolt against the prevailing system. Aeschylus' Clytemnestra, Sophocles' Electra, Euripides' Medea dared to deify this unjust system. They refused to abide by these suppressive laws. Whether their creators consciously admitted their individuality remains uncertain. But the dramatists' portrayal of these female characters suggest that they found it impossible to ignore the virility of these women. These women's boldness and courage made space for them irrespective of the playwright's intention. Only rarely do we get a very tender and loving picture of domestic felicity in the Greek classics. The imposition of monogamy on women and the granting of licentious freedom to men were obviously indicative of a discrimination that shadowed the relationship with both expressed hatred and silent resentment. In his study of Euripides, Phillip Villacott makes an important observation which is apposite. He comments:

> Aeschylus had already boldly opened the question of the relative rights of man and woman in marriage. In *Agamemnon* the Watchman's description of Clytemnestra as 'a woman with man's will' introduces a long series of oppositions between male and female, which is continued by action and imagery in every scene of the play. The first stasimon of *Choephorie* pictures a universal war between the sexes(585-601). In the trial scene in *Eumenides* Apollo's dubious arguments, and Athena's pronouncement, on her city's behalf, of decisive prejudice in favour of 'male supremacy in all things' (737-8), indicate that the author is aware of an urgent living issue which he places before his audience without offering either judgement or advice.[1]

[1] Phillip Villacott, *Ironic Drama: A Study of Euridipides ' Method and Meaning*, Cambridge University Press 1975, p. 84.

Thus, it is beyond doubt that from the very beginning man-woman relationship had been full of controversies. And even though undeclared, woman's stuggle to gain legitimate human right continued.

The man-made socio-religious institutions upheld values like chastity and fidelity to keep society "pure", making exploitatious use of feminine weakness for child and home. Engels' observation that the change to monogamy from polygamy was an important stepping towards modernism is well- known. But Engels would not have been the great social thinker he is, had he failed to indicate the negative effect the change had on women, leading as it did to an inevitable clash between man and woman, each gaining a class identity. He says:

> The first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression with that of female sex by the male. Monogamy was a great historical advance, but at the sametime it inaugerated, along with slavery and private wealth, that epoch, lasting until today, in which every advance is likewise a relative regression, in which the well-being and development of the one group are attained by the misery and repression of the other.[1]

The question Aeschylus failed to solve has remained a living issue ever since. Clytemnestra's self-confidence, strength, and dignity made her first of the feminist characters in world drama. Her murder of her husband to take revenge on her insulted-self as a wife, mother, and a woman, her disowning of the marriage bond, made her unparalleled in world literature. When she utters, "This murder's mine, you clamour./ I was his wife; but henceforth/ My name from his be freed!"[2] it seems that at moments a woman's courage could overcome all obstacles, provided she has an indomitable spirit and unyeilding strength of character. In Euripides' and Sophocles' plays too, we meet women who are often stronger, wiser, and more self-willed than men. Medea's laments over her fate owing to her husband's faithlessness is the eternal wail of woman inflicted by male treachery. She also reproaches women for their dependence on man. Her cry is universal,

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[1] F.Engels, *The Origin of The Family, Private Property, and the State*, Moscow, Progress, 1948, p. 66.

[2] Aeschylus's *The Orestean Trilogy: Agamenon*, Penguin, 1956, p. 94.

like her sufferings. In spite of all her loyalty and submission, Alcestis appears stronger in self-sacrifice than her cowardly and selfish husband.

Coming to Shakespeare, we meet women who are superior to their male counterparts in thier ambition and determination. In cruelty and villainy some of them surpass men. Even the softest and tenderest of Shakespeare's heroines have their individuality. Juliet, Desdemona, and Cordelia were firm in their decisions aginst the hostility of the whole society. It did not affect their innocence, nor spoil their childlike simplicity.

Love and marriage are the usual goals of many of Shakespeare's heroines. But some of them aim at the royal power and prove their worth in the intrigues which are supposed to be exclusively male prerogatives. It would be difficult to find counterparts of Regan, Goneril and Lady Macbeth even in other Shakespearean plays. When Lady Macbeth invokes the dark power to equip her with necessary cruelty to kill Duncan, her prayer is blood-congealing. "Come you spirits / That tend to mortal thoughts! Unsex me here,/ And fill me from the crown to the toe top full/ Of direst cruelty; make thick my blood"(Act 1 sce vii), she prays.

Desdemona's submission to the authority of father and husband, simultaneously, could not hide her determination to cherish her own free spirit. She declares:

> My noble father
> I do perceive here a divided duty:
> To you I am bound for life and education
> My life and education both do learn me
> How to respect you; you are the lord of duty
> I am hitherto your daughter ; but here's my husband
> And so much duty as my mother show'd
> To you, preferring you before her father,
> So much I challenge that I may profess
> Due to the Moor my lord.(act i sc iii)

Strongly she asserts her personal right to choose and submit even though she admits her loyalty.

In the licentious society of English Restoration serious questions tended to be overlooked by light entertainment. Yet in the famous bargain scene in Congreve's *The Way*

of the World, Millament speaks of her desire to achieve personal freedom beyond the marriage vow. She demands the right to seclusion in her own room, right to choose her own clothes, or take tea alone, and this is very much an expression of the growing consciousness in women, their awareness of individual rights and personal privacy. Unmistakably this scene is a manifestation of an independent woman's struggle against the all-pervasive nature of marriage. She loves the man and wants him wholeheartedly, but is unable to forget the dangers of displaying her feeling in-as-much as man is by nature dominating. This scene also holds out a warning against the elements that might sow the seeds of unhappiness in conjugal intimacy. Excessive attachment might result into aversion, ultimately. Millament fears that "over-assuredness" would spoil the real spirit of love just as public display might result in exhibitionism. Hers is a new and modern concept of love which includes a fear of loss and sense of mystery together with the need for personal freedom and privacy. She wants to be well-guarded against the follies of marriage, and hopes her marriage would succeed with all its reviving qualities. She warns, "There is not impudent a thing in nature as the saucy look of an assured man confident of success. I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure"(act 4, sc1). Her idea comes closer to the modern notion of "living together", freeing the relationship from the obligation marriage imposes on both the partners. Some of her demands sound frivolous. But they are rooted in, and arise out of, an awareness of what marital life is like in the world she lives in. She says:

> I shall never bear that -- good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss us before folks like my Lady Fader and Sir Francis, nor go to Hyde park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers and then never to be seen there together again; as if we were proud of one another the first week and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play togerher, but let us be very strange and well-bred; let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while; and as well- bred as if we were not married at all.(act 4 sc 1)

Millament is a practical, worldly-wise woman, who foresees the consequence of an action, and thinks before she leaps. Together with a bright capacity of sensible thinking, her sense of humour, wit and prudence give this heroine a complexity and diversity despite the apparent lightheartedness she displays in her conversation. In his portrayal of the moral

degeneration of Restoration society, Congreve tries to present, even if by implication, an ideal of marriage, based on mutual trust and freedom. He is a realist to admit that love and marriage do not always coincide as adultery, treachery and mal-adjustments are not infrequent.

In the late-nineteenth century, the appearance of Nora on the stage in *A Doll's House*, has given a jerk to the commonly called Victorian concept of feminine respectibility, which is basically an idealisation of motherhood, wifehood, and all other typical womanly duties. The standard of sexual behaviour has been challenged. Social puritanism emphasises "female innocence" to such an extent that many of its critics have called it "female ignorance". Nora's metamorphosis from a "deliberate romantic puppet"[1] to full-blooded human being has been a real shock to the former concept of woman. Her leaving children and husband behind, on the mission to find out her ownself, to look for her own place in the world, and also her newly earned conviction that ultimately one's first duty is to one's ownself, have since then been celebrated as the awakening feminism, although H.Ibsen has strongly disavowed his claim to being titled as the "champion of women's lib."

Waging war against the Victorian ideal of feminity and feminine dependence, Bernard Shaw glorifies the unfeminine woman in his plays who is at once intelligent as a person and competent as mother and wife. He champions Ibsen, but criticises those who misinterpreted him. In Shaw's plays man and woman undergo constant transformation and finally emerge as efficient and capable, with the vitality and life-force, which Shaw insists, are central to existence. His concept of woman blends realism with idealism. This concept John Gasner has described in the following words when he says about Shaw's Candida:

> how constantly he creates characters who are marvellous mother-surrogates while also flourishing as clever and sophisticated women of the world. We need only glance at the marvellous portrait Shaw gave us in Candida who is both mother image and minx, loyal wife and flirt, house-keeper and sock-mender and yet supremely intelligent person as well. And how neatly and perceptively he reverses norms and yet rights them in the long run, so that Candida remains a loyal wife equally for unconventional and natural ... reasons. Shaw, we may

[1] Raymond Williams, *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot*, Penguin 1964, p. 76,"But the novelty, it is said again, is that these deliberate romantic puppets are suddenly jerked into life."

say, was progressive in his espousal of feminism in the 1880s and progressive, too, in going beyond feminism in the1880's.[1]

Shaw's idea of man-woman relation as interaction of two free spirits with all their liveliness, virility, and intellectual pursuits is a new addition to the concept. Thus we see that the evolutionary process pushing forward the wheel of progress, includes the man-woman relationship as a major component. Constant changes in values and outlooks, views and points of views are broadening the horizon of human life and thought. Liberal ideas are gradually widening the mental perspectives with dynamic changes in attitude and lifestyle. This evolutionary process is however known to have been shaken by historical events of great moments. Two such events are the two world-wars that the twentieth century experienced.

The horror at the ruins of war broke man's dream of an ideal, peaceful world, shattering the image of man's superiority over women. The world fell to pieces, and man fell deeper into the mire of degeneration, despair and irresponsibility. He was exposed to his own self with all his vulnerabilities. War left half of the world, particularly Europe, a wasteland, barren, burnt and ruined. Along with life and property were destroyed some of the values on which with deep faith, man had tried to build up his "arcadia". The post-war generation remind us of the fallen angels of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Disheartened and confused in that anarchy and disorder, they lived as if in a repetition of what Milton depicted as "chaos". Age-old ideas and institutions were questioned, their validity doubted. Groping for answers to their questions, the youth desperately dissected all existing orders and beliefs. Moreover, new experiments brought new trends in society. Some ideas, already planted in the ground, are now sprouting and blooming. Ideas of socialism, democracy, and individualism celebrate the rights of the common man. In countering the aggression of Nazism and Fascism, these ideas inspire man to take up arms for survival. The man-woman relationship gets new dimension as the whole socio-economic perspective undergoes a drastic change. Women would no longer remain a shadowy existence. Even D.H.Lawrence, who has sometimes been called a misogynist

[1] John Gasner,"Shaw and the Making of the Modern Mind", *Bernard Shaw's Plays, A Norton Critical Edition*, ed, Warren S.Smith, NewYork, 1970, p. 300.

clinging to the Miltonic idea of "he for God and she for God in him", acknowledges the acceptance of the individual identity of woman as a precondition to the development of the relationship. He protests against some fixed roles imposed on woman by men and says that, for a perfect union it is essential for both man and woman to retain their characteristic and inherent qualities. Repenting over the male mistake of undermining woman, he says:

> If only we could break up this fixity, and realize the unseizable quality of real woman: that a woman is a flow, a river of life, quite different from man's river of life: and that each river must flow in its own way, though without breaking its bounds: and that the relation of man to woman is the flowing of two rivers side by side, sometimes even mingling, then separating again, and travelling on. The relationship is a life-long change and a life-long travelling. And that is sex. At periods, sex-desire itself departs completely. Yet the great flow of the relationship goes on all the same, undying, and this is the flow of living sex, the relation between man and woman, that lasts a life-time, and of which sex desire is only one vivid, most vivid, manifestation.[1]

Simon de Beauvoir, the celebrated spokesman for women's lib, opines in the same manner when she claims freedom for woman. She rightly thinks that it is woman's self-identity which will make her existence significant for herself as well as for man. She says:

> To emancipate woman is to refuse to confine her to the relation she bears to man, not to deny them to her; let her have her independent existence and she will continue none the less to exist for him also: mutually recognizing each other as subject, each will yet remain for the other an other. The reciprocity of their relation will not do away with the miracles -- desire, possession, love, dream, adventure -- worked by the division of human beings into two separate categories; and the words that move us -- giving , conquering, uniting -- will not lose their meaning.[2]

She asserts that the abolition of this hypocritical system will reveal the true form of the human couple.

In post-war drama, we mark some significant trends. A preoccupation of European drama with the theme of individuality and alienation is making it move away from the tender and romantic aspects of life. Stress on the loneliness of man narrows the scope of their dramas. A sense of futility and nothingness burdens human life, and the play becomes

[1] D.H.Lawrence, "We Need One Another", *Phoenix*, London, Heinman,1926, p. 194.
[2] Simon de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans and ed , H.M. Parshley, Alfred Aknoff, New York, 1964, p. 731.

a painful display of apparently meaningless incidents. The European trend termed as the drama of the Absurd, in fact isolated itself from the understanding of the common audience. Beyond the comprehension of the ordinary people, the plays of Ianesco, Becket, or Pirandello are far-fetched in ideas and philosophical interpretation of life as well as in experimental technique and language.

But in the British drama there exists an attempt to link up the gradually missing social values in the everyday language of the common people. Marriage, parent-child relationship, and other social problems are thoroughly analysed in order to arrive at a solution. The post-war plays reveal the playwright's quest for a goal, with a view to save life from becoming a meaningless piles of days. The socio-cultural milieu is elaborately set to emphasize the individual's relation to the universe. Catastrophe in the external world is reflected in the bankruptcy of the inner world of men. Man's failure in love and communication questions the basic unit of social institutions, marriage. Lawrence laments over this broken image of man in the essay we mentioned earlier. He points out the emptiness of man in the modern world. In most respects very different from T.S. Eliot, here Lawrence is not away from the Eliotesque idea of the wasteland. Lawrence believes that this age is stripping man like onions, revealing to him his naked self of barrenness and futility. This painful perception is to be seen in the dramas of the fifties. Rapid changes in social and sexual moralities affect the youth more than others. Discontent spreads and makes them growl inwardly. Authorities and conventions of all most every kind become their target.

Bamber Gascoigne in his detailed study of the twentieth-century drama observes this trend in the mid-twentieth century. There is a difference, as he notices it, between the playwrights of the twenties and the playwrights of the fifties. The latter emerge as the "war-casualties" after the second world war. The playwrights of the twenties saw the world before and after the war. It was not easy for the early playwrights to accept these changes which were in many cases against their long-cherished values. But the playwrights of the fifties are born into these ashes of ruins. They are parts of it and they have memory of the lost happy days in their imagination. Gascoigne points out this difference between two generations beautifully. He notices the goals these generations aim at. He says :

> The modern playwright feels himself inside the society he is writing about; if he does not share them he can sympathize with them. In contrast to this, the playwright of the twenties was an excluded and superior person looking from the outside into a world which he hated. His characters were conceived as symbols of society in its decay and they remained gruesome puppets. Nobody could remember Mr. Zero or The Billionare's son as anything more than ideas, but the characters of the fifties -- Willy Loman, Stanley Cowalski, Jimmy Porter, Beatie Bryant, Archie Rice, and even the tramps such as Becket's philosophic Didi and Pinter's caretaker, Davies -- these all live on as real individual creatures. They also have wide significance as representatives of their society, but this remains an overtone of their personal existence. [1]

These new playwrights are intolerant of every kind of tyranny, and demand its abolition, be it at home or abroad. What Gascoigne says about Arden's *The Surgeant Musgrave's Dance* could be found true of the plays of this period in general, "Its most obvious targets are the horrors of war and of industrial or colonial exploitation, but its deepest protest is against any totalitarian method of ending the injustices."[2]

The present thesis attempts to analyse the nature of man-woman relationship in John Osborne and Arnold Wesker, two of the most important playwrights of the fifties. They are not only the representatives of the post-war period, rather could be called the forerunners of the post-war rebels in their own temperaments as well as in treatment of the age. In fact, they have initiated a movement, "a new wave" in the field of British drama when the stage was eagerly waiting for a change.

Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* belches out the discontent and torments of the age in the Royal Court Theatre in 1956, and the British drama sees the emergence of a new era. Wesker's visit to the Royal Court Theatre one night to see this new play inspired him to conclude that "important things could be said and done in theatre." He had been looking for "inspiration", and the experience of watching *Look Back*, served him with it. The excited apprentice then announces his confident footsteps in the theatre through his full-length play *Chicken Soup With Barley*. In a way this incident ties Wesker with Osborne as two comrades in spite of all their differences in opinion and attitude. Any discussion of the Angry Young Man remains incomplete without them.

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[1] Bamber Gascoigne, *Twentieth Century Drama*, London, Hutcinson, 1962, p. 49.
[2] Gascoinge, p. 205.

Their focus on man-woman relationship demands extra attention as the presentation of this theme reveals their awareness of, and response to, the complexities of the modern world. Individual studies of these playwrights have already been made. But a comparative study has not yet been attempted. This dissertation tries to study Osborne's and Wesker's plays in comparison with each other, because although born in the same age and bracketed within same title, they show differences too. It seeks to identify themselves as individuals in their treatment of the theme. Their differences studied in the perspective provided by their similarities, help us to understand them better. It would also be interesting to see how their background, experience, and awareness shape the artist within.

This study will try to locate their yet unexplored differences as well as similarities, analysing them in the context of war-affected England. Simultaneously there would be an effort to see how far they are topical, and also where they are universal.

MEN IN OSBORNE

Standing on the heaps of ruins in a war-devastated world, the Osborne-heroes try to reach some truth that would offer them the strength to continue the struggle. Underlying all their invectives and railings there is a heart-felt need to realize that after all life is worth living. J.R. Brown in his study of Osborne comments on this aspect of his plays, "All of the Osborne's plays present, in various ways, a story of defeat, and from defeat some personal affirmation develops."[1]

To Osborne's men, life means experiences of death, defeat and failure. They become wiser and maturer in the ways of the world as did Edgar in *King Lear*, "Men must endure/ Their going hence even as their coming hither/ Ripeness is all"(Act v, Sc 11). This lesson justifies Brown's further comment, "But at the centre of Osborne's revelations of character-in-defeat is a realization of the need for courage to continue with the most basic elements of life, that are, by the last scenes, known only too well."[2] This observation reminds us of Hemingway's classic statement, " 'But man is not made for defeat' he said, 'A man can be destroyed but not defeated.' "[3] Like Hemingway heroes, Osborne heroes too, live by a code of conduct which is extremely personal. They try to retain their dignity and spirit inspite of the distorting dilemmas pricking modern man's conscience. They are of Hemingway's "lost generation" in the post-second world-war society, embodying the chaos, confusion, conflict, and despair of the age. In temperament and attitude Jake Barnes and Jimmy Porter are poles apart, but one thing bring them together: both of them are helpless victims of man-made war. Osborne heroes too embody some autobiographical traits, like Hemingway's. Their basic difference lies in the way they face and react to life. Jake Barnes suffers and bleeds internally. His heroism lies in his silent endurance while Jimmy Porter cries, shouts, and protests.

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[1] John Russell Brown, *Theatre Language (A Study of Arden, Osborne, Pinter and Wesker)* London, The Penguin Press, 1972, p. 153.
[2] Brown, p. 154.
[3] *The Enduring Hemingway*, ed Charles Scribner JR, NewYork, Charles Scribner Sons, 1974, p. 740.

Anger and protest are indeed two important features of Osborne's men. Detailed analysis of his plays show that most of the heroes cry against the existing social order, establishment, and the norms and values in vogue. This discontent is rooted in their tragic realization that the world is inadequate to fulfil their demands. The buds of desire cannot bloom into flowers, as the "Invisible worm" eats up the crimson joy and destroys life. It looks as if an incurable lethergy has attacked modern man and ruined all his creative instincts. "Nobody thinks, nobody cares. No beliefs, no convictions and no enthusiasm" Jimmy cries out (*LBA*17).

Osborne-heroes are incorrigibly romantic. Full of vitality and energy as they are, these men want to change the social order. Sometimes they sound rebellious, sometimes reforming socialist. Luther, Holyoake, Jimmy, Archie can be grouped together; they want to bring a change, if not possible in society, at least in individuals. They strive to break their sloth, wake themselves up to life, to feel, to become human beings even if it means to suffer. Jimmy regrets, "No one can raise themselves out of their delicious sloth. .... how I long for a little ordinary human enthusiasm. ... I want to hear a warm, thrilling voice cry out halleluja!"(*LBA*15)

The working class background of his heroes account for their feeling for common people and also for their capacity to suffer. Himself belonging to the working class, Osborne knew quite well what hard realities are. He knew the magic power of money and the miracle it can do. His own childhood and youth is a record of loveless, cold relationships where money determined the strength of the bond. His father was deprived of his own mother's affection as he was an ailing boy and wasted much of her money. In his autobiography Osborne recalled the cold and cruel manner in which his grandmother treated his father. His father's Sunday visits to his mother were ordeals. Osborne notes, "This weakly visit to his mother was something he dreaded and it was not difficult to see why. Her dismissive skill was subtle and brutal. ... Her son was her prize victim."[1] A childhood incident marked his father as criminal in his grand mother's eye forever; even

[1] John Osborne, *A Better class of Person*, London, Faber, 1981, p. 41.

death could not free the poor man from this blame. Osborne gives a moving description of the matter:

> In the course of the Sunday lunchtime catechism of his present employment, preferably, or unemployment, his health and myself, she always struck back to her true course -- Money. In particular, the money he, as a child, had cost his parents through wilful ill-health and some kind of applied original sin. The high point of this bitter retrospect was the South African Incident. .... When he was about twelve my father had won the first prize in a drawing competition sponsored by the *Daily Mail*, a small sum of money and a round trip by boat to Cape Town. ... Eventually and reluctantly he was allowed to board the steamer bound for Cape Town. A few days out in the Bay of Biscay he suffered a violent attack of asthma and was sent ashore to a hospital in Lisbon for some weeks before being shipped home with the bill of several hundred pounds. It was a mishap he was never allowed to forget. The account of family borrowings and scrapings inflicted by his unhappy prize was repeated to him until he died and still recalled afterwards. Like a mark of inner folly the prize caught up with him in death; as she always knew it would. I never heard her say a kindly word to him or of him.[1]

Osborne, being himself a victim of unhappy marriage, felt the failure of his father's life keenly. His analysis of his father's marital life is, "Filial guilt must have been uppermost, or perhaps the inner and physical fatigue that had led him to his healthless marriage."[2] Ironically the father's tormented childhood and bitter marital experiences of youth were repeated in the son's life. Deprived of warm affection in the same manner, Osborne however didnot show to his own mother, the gentle loyalty of his father. He never called his mother, "Mum", after his father's death. She appears as Nelly Beatrice in his autobiography. The ice of bitterness between the mother and the son never broke during her lifetime. Osborne writes:

> Uncurious though she was about me, my disclaiming attitude in front of others was irksome and she repaid it with mockery. After my father died, I addressed her obliquely, and never as 'Mum'. 'Its funny, you never call me 'Mum' or 'Mummy'. People have remarked on it. Just 'she' or 'you'. I'm not the cat's mother, you know'.[3]

These words reveal the hatred, indifference, and cruelty Osborne had been through as a child and youth. It made him cynical towards marriage as he saw that even death failed

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[1] Osborne, *A Better Class*, pp. 41-42.
[2] Osborne, *A Better Class*, p. 40.
[3] Osborne, *A Better Class*, pp. 115-116.

to diminish his mother's hatred or inject some warmth into her stony heart. Sympathy and feeling were words unknown to her, as they were to his grandmother. His father's death could move his mother very little. Keeping the dead body under the same roof, she could spend the night calmly, reading a newspaper. Osborne narrates that terrible experience:

> With my father's body lying in the bedroom across the landing, I had been obliged to share my briefing room with my mother, who spent hour upon hour reading last Sunday's *News of the World*, the bright light overhead, rustling the pages in my ears and sighing heavily. For the first time I felt the fatality of hatred.[1]

The child who had experienced the "fatality of hatred" at the age of eleven could never in his lifetime recover his faith in marital or filial bond. We see his couples happy in fantasy only. The Neobolds in *Right Prospectus*, Tim and Jenny in *Under Plain Cover*, Jimmy and Alison in *Look Back in Anger*, find refuge in a world of fantasy. In reality they either quarrel and betray or remain apathetic to each other as Bill and Anna, Jock Mellor and his wife, Archie and Phoebie do.

Personal experience must have been responsible for the negative attitude he developed towards his own class. Though his heroes emerge from the working or the lower middle class and attack the existing social order, they are not committed to their own class which is a point where they are different from Wesker's men. Osborne had seen through the contempt poverty breeds, the cynicism and isolation it beset people with. He knows how lust for money kills love, unveiling man's selfish naked self. Wesker too belonged to the working class, but he had a deep and loving attachment with his family and a long heritage of left politics. These basic differences account for Osborne's lack of definite positive commitment in that sense and explain the contradiction his men suffer from. Sometimes his men seem rather sceptical and confused. They know what they hate and dislike but always do not know what they love and live for. Ronald Hayman, the drama-critic and biographer has correctly pointed out this dilemma in Osborne's men:

> Most of his heroes come from the working class, but none of them are representative of it and none of them are ever seen against a working class background. A few of the minor characters are typically working class, like Cliff and Luther's father, and there are signs of a good deal of affection for the

[1] Osborne, *A Better Class*, p. 101.

> typical working class mother. .... But affection for working class people is one thing; concern for the conditions they have to live in is quite another, ... John Osborne has never tried to dramatize the predicament of a socially exploited group or to concentrate any of his attention on studying a working class background, or in fact any social context. He focusses so intently on the hero in the foreground that the group and the background often get blurred.[1]

Thus the individual and his response to the world around is Osborne's theme. *Look Back in Anger*, his most controversial play has Jimmy Porter, it's protagonist, portrayed as:

> a tall, thin youngman about twenty-five, wearing a very worn tweed jacket and flannels. Clouds of smoke fill the room from the pipe he is smoking. He is a disconcerting mixture of sincerity and cheerful malice, of tenderness and free booting cruelty; restless, importunate, full of pride, a combination which alienates the sensitive and insensitive alike. Blistering honesty or apparent honesty, like his, makes few friends. To many he may seem sensitive to the point of vulgarity. To others, he is simply a loudmouth.(*LBA10)*

The dramatist in this play emphasises the lonely hero's sense of pride and dignity. He suffers to see people suffer, but is too proud to show his own heartache. Too alert to make himself an object of pity his violent attacks are a shield to hide his own anguish. Still there are moments when Jimmy cannot help exposing his bleeding heart. He remembers the incident of his father's death and the cruel coldest way he was treated by his own people. It is Osborne's own experience reproduced:

> I watched my father dying -- when I was ten years old. .... I was the only one who cared. ... His family was embarrassed by the whole business. Embarrassed and irritated. ... As for my mother, all she could think about was the fact that she allied herself to a man who seemed to be the on the wrong side in all things. .... We all of us waited him to die. .... My mother looked after him without complaining, and that was about all. Perhaps she pitied him. I suppose she was capable of that.(*LBA*57-58).

Jimmy narrates the agony of a small boy listening to the story of his father in death bed:

> All that that feverish failure of a man had to listen to him was a small, frightened boy. I spent hour upon hour in that tiny bedroom. He would talk to me for hours, pouring out all that was left of his life to one, lonely, bewildered little boy, who could barely understand half of what he said. All he could feel was the despair and bitterness, the sweet sickly smell of a dying man. .... I learnt at an early age what it was to be angry -- angry and helpless. ... I knew

[1] Ronald Hayman, *Contemporary Playwrights John Osborne*, London, Heinmann, 1969, p. 9.

> more about -- love, ... betrayal ... and death, when I was ten years old. (*LBA*58)

It is perhaps this early maturity and precociousness which prevented him from becoming a revolutionary despite his rebelliousness. Helena comments on him, "He is born out of his time .... There's no place for people like that any longer-- in sex, or politics, or anything. That's why he's so futile"(*LBA*90).

All Jimmy's grudges and complaints are rooted in his failure to communicate, to make people understand him. His deep love for Alison demands absolute loyalty and devotion. He wants her to share all his pains and agonies but Alison fails to reciprocate. Most of Osborne's heroes Jimmy, Holyoake, Bill, Jock, Redl, try but fail to get any response from their fellow beings as well as from society. They stand alone. Alan Carter rightly observes this loneliness of Osborne heroes:

> They asked to be loved, for themselves complete with failing and fears, as simple human beings, still capable of giving affection, they so desperately need themselves. Osborne heroes are visionaries looking forward to some unknown ideal. They can also look back warmly to the settled order of past. What shatters them and brings so much pain is the indescribable tension of the present as they are forced to seek out and establish relationship in a society which has not their comprehension.[1]

Helena unable to accompany Jimmy in his feeling, expresses the same view, "Sometimes, when I listen to him, I feel he thinks he is still in the middle of the French Revolution. And that's where he ought to be, of course. He doesnot know where he is, or where he is going to. ... he'll never amount to anything"(*LBA*90).

His heroes are romantic in their sigh for the past and longing for a life of dream, something bigger than life, away from the trivialities. Jimmy's antagonism to Alison's father Colonel Redfern does not diminish his sympathy for the lost imperial glory of colonial India. He cannot hate this man, rather he envies him for what he (Redfern) once enjoyed, and what he himself would never get. The way he shares his father-in-law's loss, and turns nostalgic makes him more than a workingclass youth or a revolutionary. This nostalgia for a (glorious!)past, which to a socialist is nothing but a record of injustice and exploitation,

[1] Alan Carter, *John Osborne*, Edinburgh, Oliver Boyd, 1969, p. 5.

makes him different from the committed leftists. His words have a deep sympathetic ring when he says:

> I hate to admit it, but I think I can understand how her daddy must have felt when he came back from India, after all those years away. The old Edwardian brigade do make their brief little world look pretty tempting. All home-made cakes and croquet, bright ideas, bright uniforms. Always the same picture: high summer, the long days in the sun, slim volumes of verse, crisp linen, the smell of starch. What a romantic picture. Phoney too, of course. .... If you've no world of your own, it's rather pleasant to regret the passing of someone else's. (*LBA*17)

Jimmy's nostalgic melancholia for the lost colonial empire echoes those of Ashley Wilkes in *Gone With the Wind*, the epic novel on the American civil war. He too is regretting the past serenity of South America before the war:

> Until the war, life was never more real to me than a shadow show on a curtain. And I preferred it so ... I do mind, very much, the loss of the beauty of the old life, I loved. Scarlet, before war life was beautiful. There was a glamour to it, a perfection and a completeness and a symmetry to it like Grecian art. May be it wasn't so to everyone. I know that now. But to me living at Twelve Oaks, there was a real beauty to living. I belonged in that life. I was a part of it. And now it is gone and I am out of place in this new life, and I am afraid ... I am afraid of facing life without the slow beauty of our old world that is gone.[1]

Both these young men, Jimmy Porter and Asheley Wilkes regret the passing of the imperial world. Both of them are victims of two great wars from the relics of which emerged ideas of equality, fraternity, and democracy. Yet the imperial world retreating like a shadow allure them. It is a contradiction on the part of the Osborne hero. There has been a tendency among some critics to view Osborne as committed left wing writer. But Osborne is not really a committed writer in the usual sense of the term. His heroes feel for suffering humanity, renounce institutions and conventional norms. But they do not preach any ideology or world view as alternative for social reformation. Their protest is not any organised movement from any particular political platform. It is extremely personal, as Charles Marowitz puts it, "personal idealism in collision with institutional dogmas".[2] Marowitz rightly analyses Osborne when he says:

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[1] Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind*, NewYork, Macmillan, 1955, pp. 528-529.

[2] Charles Marowitz,"The Ascension of John Osborne", *Casebook:Look Back in Anger*, Gen ed, A.E Dyson, ed J.R Taylor, London, Macmillan, 1968, p. 164.

> He refuses to conform to other people's idea of his nonconformity. .... I always feel that he is one of the few (small 'c') committed playwrights who really write out of a conviction -- that it is a social and humanist conviction and not an allegiance to maintain the fashion of the irate, verbose radical -- and that unlike the (capital 'c') Committed writers, he is not partial to anything except his art.[1]

Jimmy's feeling for Hugh's mum, his resentment at Alison's indifference to her, Holyoake's stubborn commitment to socialism, are indicative of radical thoughts and views. But like their creator, they too have their own ways to be radical. It is different from Weker's commitment to left view. John Arden, one of their contemporary dramatist, writes in his article "Some Thoughts on Left Wing Drama":

> Osborne is more of an anti-right writer than a downright left one. We may if we wish deduce from Jimmy Porter's railings against the nation, that true socialism would provide a better existence but Porter himself gives us no help there. His misanthropy seems such that any idealistic Socialist wondering into the attic digs would be as roughly handled as Alison's family and friends.[2]

Arden's comment seems justified in Carter's description of Osborne's visit to America:

> He went to America in no predetermined state of mind, but on his return he felt London to be very parochical and petty. In America he enjoyed himself because he was not involved. In England his deep feeling for his country and his sense of outrage at it's injustices constantly trouble him. This outrage at injustice makes him a socialist by temperament, but he is often furious with the Labour Party, feeling that it has made people think beyond the material issues.[3]

In an interview with Kenneth Tynan (referred to by Carter), Osborne admits, "I've always had leftist radical sympathies. On the other hand I'm authoritarian in many ways, simply because of the kind of work I do. If I don't subscribe to some kind of discipline, I wouldn't be able to do it. In that respect, I'm inevitably a conservative rather than an anarchist".[4]

Thus Osborne himself mixes up anarchy and socialism sometimes. In his autobiography he recollects his school life craze for politics and thinks those books dull and

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[1] Marowitz, p. 165.
[2] John Arden," Some Thoughts On Left Wing Drama", *International Theatre Annual* no 5, ed, H.Hudson, London, John Calder, 1961, p. 188.
[3] Carter, p. 14.
[4] Carter, p. 17.

boring later on, "Later, before 1945, we both became intrigued with socialism and the Labour Movement, reading indelibly dull books like George Lansbury and J. B. Thomas, books about the general strike..."[1]

What matters to Osborne heroes most is to "think beyond the material issues". They are haunted by this desire. His most successful man lives in agony and mightmare. Bill Maitland, Jock Mellors, George Gillman, Ben Prosor, Jimmy Porter, all aspire higher and higher. Ultimately the futility of material success horrifies them. It derails them, deadening their hearts. Hollow inside, they feel the panic of isolation. Unable to bear the burden of life, they often even commit suicide or die as does K.L. in *Hotel in Amsterdam* or Jock Mellors in *Very Like A Whale.*

If Jimmy Porter has the fire within to "burn everything up" (*LBA*12), George Dillon is the epitome of an average man, aspiring higher in art, not in matter, "who thought, who hoped, he was that mysterious, ridiculous being called an artist"(*EGD*87). Catherine J. Worth's comment, "Talent in Osborne's world is a heavy burden",[2] trully account for George's sufferings who, "never allowed himself oneday of peace"(*EGD*87). The urge to create, to rise up above the common lot ultimately becomes too heavy a burden for George to bear. More unbearable is the awareness of it, "He achieved nothing he set out to do. He made no one happy, no one looked up with the excitement when he entered the room. He was always troubled with wind round his heart"(*EGD* 87).

Osborne wrote this play in collaboration with George Creighton. It was a time when he himself was trying hard to set foot steadily on the stage. He genuinely felt the pangs of an obscure artist. Moreover at that time he was going through an emotional transition. Like George, Osborne too "loved no one successfully". The unsteady emotional life and series of transitory, brittle marriages are somehow repeated in his hero's lives henceforth. Jimmy, disappointed and deserted by Alison, unites himself with Helena, who could offer him nothing but body and bully. She keeps him satisfied for the time being. Very casually Jimmy remarks about women, comparing them with meals when Cliff asks him whether it is the same between Alison and Helena. He says, "No, of course its not the

[1] Osborne, *A Better Class* pp. 83-84.
[2] Catharine J. Worth, "The Angry Young Man", *Casebook*, p.107.

same, you idiot! It never is! Today's meal is always different from yesterday's and the last woman isn't the same as the one before"(*LBA*83).

That, inability to love and respect had dried up Osborne's heart to the extent of an emotional inertia, is reflected in his hero's restless sex-life. His own dissatisfied mind went on taking one after another girl. Sex to him became a very casual everyday affair. In his autobiography he writes about his days in Brighton, "There was no close season on sex; sex was all year round. .... Whenever I have lunch in Brighton, I always want to take some one to bed in the afternoon. To shudder one's last, thrusting, replete grasp between the sheets at 4 and 6'o clock, in Brighton, would be the most perfect last earthly delight."[1]

This casual attitude to sex reveals the mechanical consumerism overshadowing man-woman relstionship throughout the free commercial world. At the same time it threatens the human world with crudities and cruelties to spoil the basic essence of rationality. George admits of his own physical demands with a painful awareness of spiritual impotency in his own epitaph, "He worshipped the physical things of the world, and was betrayed by his own body. He loved also the things of the mind. but his own brain was a cripple from the waist down"(*EGD*87). These duality and dilemmas make Osborne heroes human beings. Jimmy accepts Alison again, George offers love to Ruth after seducing Josie, Archie Rice chases a young girl of his daughter's age despite the loyalty of Phoebie. Thus they prove themselves vulnerable to mortal mistakes.

George's relationship with Mrs. Elliot is a repetition of the author's memory of a land lady who attended him with maternal care as he reminded her of her dead son. He writes, "When I came back from Treasury at Friday lunchtime and asked to settle up, she refused to let me pay for my room but only for food I had ordered. When I pressed her, she said she had been unable to speak to me all the week because I reminded her of her dead son".[2]

Mrs. Elliot helps George with a devotion and faith that arises out of a feeling that, whatever she is doing, is in a way, a service given to her dead son. She says it with

[1] Osborne, *A Better Class*, p. 208.
[2] Osborne, *A Better Class*, p.179.

conviction, "I'm helping you all I can because I feel that in some small way I'm helping my son, Raymond. He was killed in the war, you know. .... What I'm trying to say is that I want you to feel that you are taking his place in the home"(*EGD*34). Thus we meet mother figures in Osborne who kindle the flame of tenderness in his apparently rough and tough heroes. Although Osborne's mothers are not so strongly portrayed as Wesker's, his heroes go back to these mother figures again and again, displaying the tacit child within, still craving for love, care and indulgence.

After *Look Back in Anger*, Osborne's success continued in *The Entertainer* in which Sir Lawrence Olivier played the protagonist. Another story of a mediocre artist, somewhat frustrated, it presents a middleaged man as the hero. Sighing for the decline of the music hall, the play echoes the nostalgia of Jimmy and Redfern. The "music hall" here stands for Edwardian England as Shaw's *Heart Break House* stands for post-war Europe. Shaw himself thought that, "it was the cultured, leisured Europe before the war",[1] But Osborne's nostalgia is not only a casual sigh or a momentary recollection of a pleasant memory. It is to him, a criterion to compare between the past and present, and thus to judge more objectively the oddities of the living world. It has been viewed appropriately by a recent critic Christopher Innes, "Setting up the past as a standard is open to misinterpretation as sentimental nostalgia: a frequent criticism against Osborne. But the intention is to focus a sharper focus on the present."[2]

Evidently Osborne's swinging into two worlds of past and present reflects his own dilemma between allegiance to the established order and regret for the lost one. John Russell Taylor in his study, *Anger and After*, rightly points out the fact :

> Osborne is here writing of something like the Edwardian splendours of India, which he cannot possibly remember himself and which becomes therefore, for him, a romantic legend to be longed for as an alternative to the indescisions and false values of modern life. The intelligent political man of left-wing sympathies in Osborne tells him-- and us -- that it was the faults in this antediluvian world which brought our world into existence, but the incorrigible romantic looks

[1] Bernard Shaw, *Heartbreak House*, England, Penguin, 1919, p. 7.
[2] Christopher Innes , *Modern British Drama 1890-1990*, Cambridge , Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 109.

> back admiringly, and these plays are battlegrounds (hence much of their excitement) on which the two Osbornes fight it out.[1]

Archie Rice is the typical Osborne hero whose attitude to woman is of pity and patronization. Osborne heroes demand too much from woman, but are not prepared to reciprocate it with least respect and love. Consequently instead of making the relationship pleasant and enduring, they make it strained and burdensome for both. Archie's attitude to his father and wife are markedly different, "He highly patronizes his father whom he admires deeply. He patronizes his wife Phoebie whom he pities whole heartedly"(*E*34). Ironically, pity, which is the reason for his not leaving his old wife is also the reason for flirting with other women openly, "Anyway, he makes no secret of his perennial affairs with other women -- real and fictitious. It is part of his pity, part of his patronage, part of his personal myth"(*E*34). For Osborne, pity is a way of looking down upon a person with contempt and ignorance, particularly in the relationship between man and woman. Jimmy tells of his mother's attitude to his dying father, "Perhaps she pitied him. I suppose she was capable of that"(*LBA*58). It shows how little can be a person's care for another.

Apparently a lighthearted middle-aged comedian, inwardly Archie has a deep sense of sorrow for something inexplicable. His lack of concern for his wife, affected indifference towards his son's death, sarcastic attacks on his daughter, cannot suppress his sense of desperation. A firm conviction that there is something which will pacify his inner self and awaken his dead feelings someday, keeps his spirit up. He confesses to his daughter, "all my life I've been searching for something. I've been searching for a draught. Bass you can drink all the evening without running off every ten minutes, that you can get drunk on without feeling sick"(*E*76). Archie cannot express himself very clearly and is well aware of that deficiency. He regrets, "I could always make a woman better than I could make a point"(*E*76)

This average artist is a man of the world too, well acquainted with the hypocrisy and cruelty against which he warns his daughter, "Listen, kiddie, you're going to find out that in the end nobody really gives a damn about anything except some little animal something"(*E*76). Unable to accept this fact, Jimmy's romantic nature is puzzled and

[1] John Russell Taylor, *Anger and After*, London, Methuen, 1962, reprint 1963, p. 50.

shocked. He shouts and rants. Archie, on the other hand, is a down-to-earth man who accepts it and, "never really believed in all that inner cleanliness"(*E*76). He knows that Jean's youthful aspirations and values will soon be shattered by the disdainful ridicules, and warns her, "If you're not careful, Jean, people will start putting labels on you pretty soon. And then you'll just be nobody"(*E*76).

Archie is not blunt or blind. His self assessment reflects the awareness of his own position in society, as well as his affinities with, and differences from the people around. He confesses:

> We're something that people make jokes about, because we're so remote from the rest of ordinary everyday, human experience. But we're not really funny. We're too boring. Simply because we're not like anybody whoever lived. We don't get on with anything. We don't ever succeed in anything. We're a nuisance, we do nothing but make a God almighty fuss about anything we ever do(*E*54).

In Catherine J. Worth's comments that aspect of Archie's character is indicated which has in it a kind of stoicism. She says, "Archie has passed to a stage beyond anger; that relief is only permitted to the younger generation in this play. His form of self protection is an ironic detachment, a 'comedian's technique that absolves him from seeming committed to anyone or anything."[1] Still, with all his sarcastic comments and apparent indifference, Archie, like other Osborne heroes, could not suppress the intense urge for love and companionship.

Finally he leaves the stage with Phoebie holding her extended hands. He dares not to reject those hands and tells the sotry of a little man, at the end of his show. This little man found himself in paradise and looked for "love". His search for love amongst celestial joy and splendours, made all the riches of paradise appear vain and meaningless. Breaking the lifeless serenity of paradise, his unaffected wonder at the absence of love, in fact, mocked at the poverty underlying the so called divine grace and beauty. The Saint who greeted him there, hearing the little man's question "looked as if he had been struck accross the face by some great hand"(*E*88). He threw his arms round the little man and confessed

[1] J. Worth,"The Angry Young Man", *Casebook*, p. 108.

that he himself had been waiting to hear that word ever since he came. Thus, telling this story, Archie as if admits the glory of love and it's healing power.

In this context we remember Arthur Miller, another great dramatist of this century who was a few years senior to Osborne. Although Miller and Osborne are differnt in temperament and outlook, in Miller's plays, too, we meet war-ravaged generation inflicted by the conflicts between pricking conscience and glittering consumerism. Both Osborne's and Miller's plays display the helpless submission of common men to the conspiracies of power-hungry leader's lust for wealth and authority. Both the playwrights comprehended the catastrophic nature of war and they repeatedly warned against its effects. They took active role in nuclear disarmament programmes; participated in the rallies and demonstrations. They showed that war, in the name of glory or heroism, makes innocent people victim of meaningless death. Miller's *All My Sons* like Osborne's *The Entertainer* records of such cruel and tragic deaths. Those who want to survive, desperately fumble for a comforting companionship. Despite Archie's hatred for the clergy men, his story of paradise is in a way like the final realization of Quentin in Miller's last play, *After The Fall*. Quentin too fails to resolve the puzzle of life and cannot conclude whether "love" is the fate man has to admit. He too, grasps the hands of Holga, an woman he loves, like Archie, before he leaves the stage .

Osborne has marked similarity with another of his American predecessors Eugene O'Neil in respect of family life, background and personal experience. Like O'Neil's father, Osborne's parents were attached to art and stage performance; O'Neil's actor-father too failed to bring harmony and happinesss in his conjugal life. Rather O'Neil's parent's misalliance and travelling life afflicted the children for the worst, creating traumatic effects on their psychology as well as in view of life. A comparative analysis asserts the fact that Osborne's life was an output of the same kinds of sickening experiences as O'Neil's. Osborne's father was the victim of his mother's cruel and cold calculation, as O'Neil's mother was of his father's miserliness. O'Neil's posthumously published play *Long Day's Journey into Night*, which is also the most autobiographical of his plays, in many ways remind us of Osborne's own life. James Tyrone, with his thriftiness, which sometimes amounted to shameless cruelty, could be compared to Osborne's grand mother, whose

calcultive nature won over the mother in her. During Osborne's childhood, his father was infected with tubercolosis and stayed in a sanatorium for some time. Their parting scene had left such an impression on the son's mind, that, after forty years, while setting out to write his autobiography, Osborne could recall the scene vividly. Even in *Look Back in Anger* he shows how the indifference of a family could push one of its member to death, proving terms like love, affection or care to be meaningless. Tyrone's vacillations concerning his own son's treatment, the fear lest he spends more than needed, when Edmund was infected with T.B. are somewhat similar to Osborne's grandmother's frugality, of which she was proudly vocal. The prize incident of his father's childhood mentioned earlier reveals how Osborne was mortified to see a mother's worry over money that had made her overlook her child's illness, and consequently tormented the child with guilt- concience.

O'Neil had reproduced his own experience of T.B. infection in that of Edmund's. Six months experience in the sanatorium gave the playwright time to reflect on his life and future, and thus to know reality more closely. In *A Long Day's Journey Into Night* Edmund shouts against his father's arrangement of low cost treatment:

> I've tried to feel like Mama that you can't help being what you are where money is concerned. But God Almighty, this last stunt of yours is too much! It makes me want of puke! .... But to think when it's a question of your son having consumption, you can show yourself up before the whole town as such a stinking old tightwad![1]

Jimmy's upsurge of emotion when he narrates the incident of his father's mortal illness brings in mind the picture of Edmund's sufferings.

Again in a way like *The Entertainer, The Long Days into Night* dramatises the failure of a middle-aged artist. Tyrone was once a success on the stage, unlike Archie. But with all his myth-like success and personal attractiveness he fails to provide his wife and children with the warmth, affection and security of a "home". Here he is no greater than Archie, the average arist. Phoebie appears to be less sensitive and responsive than Mary Tyrone. It is Archie's first wife who somewhat resembles her in this respect. But in her

[1] Eugene O'Neil, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, B.I.Publications, Bombay,1981, p. 126.

attempts to adjust to the situation, and in devotion to her husband despite the injustices he had done to her, Mary is somewhat like Phoebie. James Tyrone, with all his glory and talent, could not surpass the mediocre Archie, making the same mess of family life. The candour and integrity O'Neill displays in depicting his family in this autobiographical play, is not to be noticed in Osborne's autobiography. Osborne makes no attempt to hide his feelings about his mother and the uncongenial environment that had shaped the cynical man in him. O'Neil's sympatheticc portrayal of his sickly mother might be compared with Osborne's portrayal of his dying weakling father. O'Neill's actor-father was dominating in nature like Osborne's barmaid mother. Their self-centredenss hindered them from forming a good opinion about their son's future that troubled their sons. Depriving the children of spontaneous filial affection and cosy and steady family life, the O'Neils in fact planted the seeds of bohemianism and a kind of sadism in their sons' lives.

Osborne, like O'Neil, had married several times but marital bliss remained a mirage to be chased for till the end. Autobiographical elements intrude into their plays repeatedly, aiming at a cathersis, and unloading of the burden. From the young Jimmy in *LBA*, to the old one in *Dejavu*, we donot fail to find out the author as obviously as we recognise the dramatization of O'Neil's family story in *Long Days into Night*.

Tyrone's poverty stricken childhood accounts to some extent for his action and behaviour, just as does Osborne's mother's remembrance of her own childhood, narrated in the autobiography. Tyrone's mother's fear of dying in a poor house is similar to Phoebie's fear of oldage and death, that keeps her loyal to Archie. It somehow justifies their actions too. Tyrone explains to his son for his miserliness; he tells of terrible poverty and insecurity that besetted his family after his father's death. He narrates how his mother with two minor kids faced the challenges of survival. His remembrance of his mother's fear of dying in a poor house is notable, "Her one fear was she'd get old and sick and have to die in the poorhouse. ... It was in those days I learned to be a miser. And once you've learned a lesson it's hard to unlearn it"[1]. It is not much different from Phoebie's account, "But I don't want to end up being laid out by some stranger in some rotten stinking little street in

[1] O'Neil, p. 129.

Gateshead, or West Hartlepool or another of those dead-or-alive holes!"(E40) Phoebie had left school when she was only twelve; had to scrub a dining room hall for six hundred kids. Tyrone remembers, "I was the man of the family. At ten years old! There was no more school for me. I worked twelve hours a day in a machine shop learning to make files."[1] Thus their experiences of reality have a closeness.

In this context it might not be irrelevant to quote Mrs. O'Neil's recollection of those stormy days in which O'Neil was desperately driven by the desire to pour down his own experiences and get free of the burden that loaded his heart. At the same time it surprises us to find that O'Neil was disturbed by the threats of an imminent war. Mrs.O'Neil remembers:

> He didn't sleep well, and when he was very worried and nervous, he would call me to come to his room or he would come to mine and he would talk, frequently all night, about his work or about this terrible thing of whether we are going to have a World War again. He was terribly disturbed that mankind was so stupid; to go through war only meant destruction for everybody. It really did something awful to him. Then he explained to me that he had to write this play about his youth and his family. It was a thing that haunted him. He was bedevilled into writing it, it was something that came from his very guts, he had to get it out of his system, he had to forgive whatever it was that caused this tragedy between himself and his mother and father.[2]

Thus war and family catastrophes had their impact on both Osborne and O'Neil in their creativity. They both were profoundly disturbed by the anticipatation of the terrible consequences of war on mankind. Simultaneously family misalliances hurt them. They sought to unload the burden in their plays.

Thematically, *A Subject of Scandal and Concern* and *Luther*, are different. Picked up from history, in both plays the male protagonists are rebellious. Their strong sense devoted to reason, and individualism, make them appear renaissance man. Though George Holyoake's religious views are far away from those of Luther, he was an anticipation of Luther in his strength and courage to fight against the world all alone. Ronald Hayman

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[1] O'Neil, p. 129.
[2] Seymore Peck,"A Talk With Mrs. O'Neil", *O'Neill and His Plays*, pp. 92-93

rightly identifies their similarity when he says, "but to Osborne both men had something of the same appeal in that they both fought single handed against the conformist pressure put on them by both their friends and their enemies."[1] Holyoake claimed the individual's right to believe or not to belive, to express one's own views and practise them. Too ahead of time as he is, in him we hear the voice of a modern man and also of the eternal rebellion. He stands against all the conspiracies in the name of religion. He questions the existing law, prohibiting freedom of speech:

> Hoalyoake:.... What is the morality of a law which prohibits the free publication of an opinion?
> Erskine: You must have heard me state the law that if it be done temperately and decently, all men are at liberty to state opinions.
> Holyoake: Then this liberty is a mockery. The word temperate means what those in authority think proper.
> Erskine: An honest man speaking his opinions decently is entitled to do so.
> Holyoake: ... I am here for having been more honest than the law happens to allow. What is this tempearate? What is intemperate? Invectives, sarcasm, p---
> Alexander: Personality...Pleasure..
> Holyoake: --and the like. But these weapons are denied only to those who attack the prevailing opinion.(*ASSC* 31-32)

This complain has been made by men of free thought and liberal views in all ages. Holyoake's rigid and firm conviction make him a lonely but brave man. It is surprising to see that in doubt Holyoake is stronger than Luther is in his faith. He could see through the long-stored corruption and malpractices of the religious institutions. He asks questions which no one dares to ask. A man of the world, he declines to accept the so-called reward of afeter-life at the cost of being exploited in this life in the name of religion. For him religious institutions are more man-made than God-made. He says:

> What you call your Christianity is not Christianity but your Churches' work of two thousand years. I donot deny the goodness that is in it but I deny that it is more than a part of goodness. It is passive and obedient. .... It has always feared the flesh and so it flees from life. It holds out hope of Heaven and the threat of Hell, indulging the fear in individual man, offering an investment instead of a contest. This is submission and I donot believe in it.(*ASSC*35)

Holyoake's final declaration of the glory of humanity adds a new dimension to Osborne's hero and asserts the playwright's sublime view of man. He says, "Whatever there

[1] Hayman, p. 37.

is of personal dignity, honour, or magnanimity, comes from our human, not our religious education. .... I have nothing to fear"(*ASSC*35). A sense of renaissance could be heard ringing in these lines which remind us of Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, the renaissance hero. Marlowe's hero too aspired to surpass his human limitation to celebrate the glory of man, defying the divine authority. Though there is marked difference between Marlowe's and Osborne's hero in their attitude and aim, yet in their boldness to renounce divinity for worldly life, and the faith in suprmacy of man as the owner of whatever there is on earth, they have some affinity reminding us of the renaissance spirit.

Holyoake questions the so-called society in its pride in Christian values of pity, mercy and tolerance. He mocks at their vanity of liberalism, "Am I to count it a misfortune to live in modern times and among a Christian people?"(*ASSC*35) His wife deserts him, his child dies, but he remains indomitable. Through bitterest of experiences he learns that life is not less difficult than death, "Death is a hard thing for any man to face. And so is life"(*ASSC*21). Still this lesson cannot weaken him. Holyoake is perhaps the strongest and most postitive character Osborne has created.

In protesting against an order, most of his heroes do not know the alternative. But Holyoake is aware of what he is fighting for. Both his goal and means are quite clear to him. Unfortunately Osborne didnot develop the play to its full length. Despite his possibilities, Holyoake remains an incomplete man. It is likely that, has Osborne painted in more detail his public life, he would have been the most revolutionary and lively of his heroes.

Luther is a luckier man than Halyoake to get at least Catherine who shares his pains and offers him the shelter of a happy home. He has Staupitz too to understand him and take part in discourse with him. Holyoake's faith in individual responsibility is similar to Luther's view, "No man die for another, and believe for another or answer for another. The moment they try they become a mob"(*L*99). Disappointed by his parents, Luther mixes up love for God with craving for filial affection. Both make him angry and suffer, "When I entered the monastery, I wanted to speak to God directly, you see. Without any embarrassment, I wanted to speak to him myself, but when it came to it, I dried up-- as I always have"(*L*38). His words ring a deep yearning for fatherly affection; he says to his

father, "But I loved you the best. It was always *you* I wanted. I wanted your love more than anyone's, and if anyone has to hold me, I wanted it to be you"(*L*43).

Like Jimmy's mother, his too, frustrated him. His longing for the affection of a mother and her inability to respond, made the gap unbridgeable. He regrets, "Funnily enough, my mother disappointed me the most, and I loved her less, much less. She made a gap which no one else could have filled, but all she could do was make it bigger and bigger and more unbearable"(*L*43).

Ronald Hayman compares Luther's relation with the God, with Jimmy's relation with Alison. He sounds right as both the relationships are full of doubt, confusion, fear and complaints. Luther as well as Jimmy finds loneliness afflicting their mortal and spiritual love. Hayman says:

> In that negative aspect, Luther does stand out as any individual, but the isolation becomes much more real than any kind of positive commitment, even to God. Luther's relationship with God is rather like Jimmy Porter's with Alison: what's made very real is the resentment, the feeling of giving everything and getting nothing back except hatred or indifference, but the moments where Osborne tries to build up a positive feeling of love don't work at all.[1]

Osborne treats the historical Luther more as an individual, fighting within his soul to get salvation rather than as a leader of a movement that shook the whole of Europe. That vast panoroma is deliberately kept aside by the dramatist. Stressing on Luther's personal crisis he has limited the man within a narrow space. A recent critic, Christopher Innes finds in Osborne an attempt to depict Luther as an angry young man. His view is worth consideration. "Luther's achievement," he says, "is limited to individualism, the value of the personal conscience versus social authority, and his revolt offers a self-justifying archetype for the 'angry young man' ".[2]

Moreover Luther's final salvation in the arms of his nun and their son make him a very ordinary worldly man with down-to-earth view of life. His words prove his material wisdom, "It's a shame every one can't marry a nun. They're fine cooks, thrifty house keepers, and splendid mothers"(*L*95). Thus Luther becomes the typical Osborne hero

[1] Hayman, p. 44.
[2] Innes, p. 107.

seeking and finding refuge in a woman's arms. He reveals his shaky disturbed innerself trying to be pacified, grasping a woman's hands, that can offer him shelter. Luther admits, "Sometimes, I'm lying awake in the devil's own sweat and I turn to Katie and touch her. And I say: get me out, Katie, please, ... And sometimes, sometimes she actually drags me out. Poor old Katie, fishing about there in bed with her great, hefty arms, trying to haul me out"(*L*96). Innes's comment is right in pointing out the above conviction that Luther is portrayed more with his personal problems than in historical context. He says, "The deliberate avoidance of wider issues, for instance Luther's role as a political revolutionary, or the social change that occurred as a result of the Reformation, not only made intelluctual analysis problematic. It also diminished the traditional religious significance of the protagonist".[1]

Osborne in his autobiography has admitted that the inner conflict of doubt and faith interested him most. He says, "I wanted to write a play about the interior religious life. I was not yet reconciled to an inheritance of the perpetual certainty of doubt. This effort alone linked easily with the uncertainty of faith, and Luther's explosive revelation of its precedence over good works was irresistible."[2]

Incidentally, Luther, too, conforms to the Osborne tradition of the working class hero, and the class question is germane to the theme of the play. What alienates Luther from his fellowmen is religion, his taking order. The Prior asks him to take any of the two ways:

> Now you must choose one of two ways: either to leave us now, or give up this world, and consecrate and devote yourself entirely to God and our Order. ... once you have committed yourself, you are not free, for whatever reason, to throw off the yoke of obedience, for you will have accepted it freely, while you were still able to discard it(*L*13).

Religion secludes Luther from his fellow men and snatches away his freedom while renouncemnt makes Holyoake free and concerned about his people who are poor and wretched. Holyoake points out to the suffering of the people, "Our national debt is a millstone around the poorman's neck, and our church and general religious institutions cost

[1] Innes, p. 107.
[2] John Osborne, *Almost A Gentleman*, London, Faber, 1991, p155.

us about twenty million pounds annually. Worship is expensive, and so I appeal to your heads and to your pockets: are we not too poor to have God?"(*ASSC*16)

Luther's father, a representative of the poor workingclass, could not but hide his annoyance with religion in his casual remarks like, "Poor old Lucas is sitting there with a glass as empty as a nun's womb"(*L*36). This poor farmer's struggle for existence, and determination to survive all the hardships, keeps him away from the monastery's so called asceticism. He assures his young priest son:

> Your old man's strong enough. But then that's because we've got to be, people like Lucas and me. Because if we aren't strong, it wont take any time at all before we're knocked flat on our backs, ... we can't afford to be finished, because if we're finished, that's it, that's the end, so we just have to stand up to it as best as we can. (*L*35)

This is the wisdom of a common man who has to earn his own bread by his own sweat. He knows that he cannot afford the luxury of relying on any miraculous power. He has to depend on his own body and this is the only capital he can invest. Marx and Engels in their *Manifesto of the Communist Party* have pointed out the apparent similarity between Christian asceticism and feudal socialism. At the same time they warn against the mistake of confusing these two, as ulitmately priests saw the interest of the ruling aristocracy instead of that of the poor working class. They note:

> As the parson has ever gone hand in hand with the landlord, so has Clerical Socialism with Feudal Socialism.
>
> Nothing is easier than to give Christian asceticism a Socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, against the State? Has it not preached in the place of these, charity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life and Mother Church? Christian Socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat.[1]

Luther's later activities prove the veracity of this observation, though Osborne in his play carefully avoids these historical facts. Engels writes of Luther's role in the Peasant's war:

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[1] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto Of The Communist Party* , Peking, People's Publishing House, 1965, p. 62.

> When the Peasant War broke out Luther strove to adopt a mediatory attitude in regions where the nobility and the princes were mostly Catholic. He resolutely attacked the governments. He said they were to blame for the rebellion because of their oppression; it was not the peasants, but God himself, who rose against them. Yet, on the otherhand, he said, the revolt was ungodly, and contratry to the gospel. In conclusion he called upon both parties to yeild and reach a friendly settlement.[1]

Thus Engels thought that it was not Luther's genuine sense of religion that inspired him to side with the exploited people, an indication of which occurs in the play.

Inadmissible Evidence is a perfect picture Osborne draws of the encaged modern man. Bill Maitland, a man near forty, a successful solilcitor, far advanced in the ratrace of material prospect, appears as a staggering hesitant fellow, facing the trial of life. He is panic-stricken as charges are brought against him; he falters to defend himself. The atmosphere of dream presents the unreality and chaos of Bill's own life. Here reality and nightmare are mixed up to suggest the unreality of existence. In the trial scene Bill sometimes tries to defend himself, sometimes judges by self criticism. Both the trial and the defence brings forward a man, who is a victim of modern civilization where skyhigh ambitions rob the individual of essential human qualities. Alan Carter has rightly anslysed Bill's situation, "The indictment of Bill's life is read to him, and his splittered answers are a protest against those parts of modern society which deny the individual, thwart his emotions and destroy his feeling. Recognising the horror of machine which is trampling him under foot, Bill tries to protest, yet knows he is helpless."[2]

Bill's main problem is his lack of communication and consequent isolation. Forsaken by all his friends and relatives, he has lost even his professional skill. Now he fails to have his former strong grip on life; everything just drifts apart. His countless affairs with woman cannot pacify him. Signifying his intense desire to communicate and love these affairs have already proved fruitless. He tries to make friends too, but to no success. He admits:

> I never hoped or wished for anything more than to have the good fortune of friendship and the excitement and comfort of love and the love of women in

[1] F. Engels, "The Peasant War in Germany", as quoted in Marx and Engels' *On Religion*, Moscow ,Progress, 1966, pp. 94-95.
[2] Carter, p. 88.

> particular. I made a set at both of them in my own way. With the first with friendship, I hardly succeeded at all. ... With the second, with love, I succeeded, I succeeded in inflicting, quite certainly inflicting, more pain than pleasure. (*IA*20)

His self-assessment turns self-criticism as he says, "*Only* tolerably bright ... and potentially and finally, that is to say, irrdeemably mediocre. .... I should have to study very hard indeed for my,... Law Society examinations ...."(*IA*17). A sense of insecurity and uncertainty ruins his selfconfidence belittling the man within. He makes pitiful confession of his inability, "This can't hide the fact from me, and never has done, that I am by nature indecisive. .... I have depended almost entirely on other people's efforts. .... That I have never really been able to tell the difference between a friend and enemy"(*IA 18*-19). He makes "Work" a shield to protect himself. He tries to explain why he works hard, "Is it an enjoyment, a duty, an obligation, a necessity or just the effort of fighting, of fighting off the end, whatever is to come to you" (*IA*35).

Loose family ties, children leaving for boarding house, sons unwilling to stay at home, breaking up social relations and increasing isolation of the individual, mark the post-war society and it's problems. Bill's son voluntarily opts for a boarding house. The son writes about things unfamiliar to the father who thinks, "It's like having a priest in the family"(*IA*41). The father's excessive thirst for sensual pleasures might have repulsed the boy. He turns towards things inconceivable to the father. The gap between generations widens only.

Bill's inability to communicate with his daughter, most painfully exposes his failure in human relationships. He forgets her birthday, cannot overcome the dilemma of choosing between the daughter and the mistress. His jealousy of his daughter's youth shocks the audience most. The awareness that she has something which he no longer possesses makes him morbid. It is beyond his comprehension that a girl of seventeen with all her youth and physical charm can need anything more, least of all filial affection. For him, the spells of youth is the only thing a man can need and long for. Moreover, financial care and security are no more a need for her. So his voice is not that of a father, but of a man robbed of youth, the greatest treasure of life. Envious as well as mercilessly critical as he is of his daughter, he sounds unfatherly, rather mean, when he utters, "She's a nice girl but she's

strapping nevertheless seventeen, less than half our age and looked after and cossetted and God knows what. Besides she's young, she's got all that youth everyone's so mad about and admires. Even if she's not very clever or pretty, she's got good old youth. I'd never use anything else if I could help it"(*IA* 61). This jealousy makes him hostile aginst his own posterity defeating the father in him. It isolates him too. His confusion and illusion culminates into a kind of psychological dilemma that evidently expresses itself in asking his managing clerk whether he should leave his wife or not.

He deals with divorce cases only, most of which reflect his own problem of mal-adjustment. His clients manifest different nature of his own failing relationship. The noted drama-critic, Simon Trussler in his review, particularly idenftfies homosexuality as an Osborne tendency to break the taboo. He says :

> The subsequent appearance of a Mr. Maples played by the actor who has previously taken part of Jones -- confirms that the importance of the clients lies not only in the cumulative force of their successive desertions, but in their functions as mirrors of Maitland's own situation. Mrs. Garnsay stands for any of Bill's woman, wanting yet unable to love him because of his compulsive need to withdraw... Mrs. Tonk is any of the woman who repond to him -- or to his 'excessive sexual appetite' ... who move on, hurt or bored as Shirley has done or Joy is about to do. And Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Maples are distorted images of Maitland himself: for the focus of his isolation is narrowing.[1]

But Trussler does not fail to see the inevitable confrontation underlying Osborne's treatment of the theme of homosexuality. He notices, "Thus the story is not only one of increasing isolation, but of life constantly prepared for the inevitable confrontation with a plain cloth policeman in the Picaadilly Circus Lavatories -- just as Bill has always expected the final account he is now rendering."[2]

His terrible loneliness and pathetic murmuring, "When you are in a spot of trouble, as well, ... and you feel you are gradually being deserted and isolated, ... its inhuman to be expected to be capable of giving a decent account of one self"(*IA*92), make him a tragic hero, vanquished and desperate, waiting like Godot for some miracle human touch.

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[1] Simon Trussler, *The Plays of John Osborne*, London, Victor Gollancz, 1969, p. 122.
[2] Trussler, p. 124.

Bill's predicament could be compared to that of Miller's Quentin in *After the Fall*. Quentin is also a man in his forty, looking back to life. The whole action takes place in his memory like Bill. Quentin is also a lawyer, and had marital and extra marital relationships; in his own words, "I have two divorces in my safe-deposit box.." Their frequent attachments and separations, gradually loosening grips, sense of futility, present a state which is almost same. Osborne's words "A site of helplessness, of oppression and polemic"(*IA*9) applies to Quentin too. Published within a year, both the plays depict the tragic plight of modern man in post-war world. Miller's play was first published in 1964, while Osborne's play was published in 1965. Quentin's realilzation, "And all that remained was the endless argument with oneself -- this pointless litigation of existence before an empty bench,"[1] is almost the same as Bill's, when tired of endless pursuits of trust, hope, and love, Bill falters (...when you are in a spot of trouble ... and you feel you are gradually being deserted and isolated....). Like Bill he forgets about his children and misses the parent's day. Bill helplessly sees life slipping off his grip and exclaims, "I can't tell you what it's about. I can't grasp anything"(*IA*112). Quentin wonders, "Why so I think of things falling apart? Were they ever whole?"[2] Quentin's tormented cry for the failing socialism, "Its that I no longer see some final saving grace! Socialism once, then love; some final hope is gone that always saved before the end"[3] are as if repeated with same distress and pain in Jimmy's words when he sighs for the failing imperialilsm. Unable to find any thing positive and anyone active, Jimmy cries, "No body thinks, nobody cares. No beliefs, no convictions, and no enthusiasm. .... The old Edwardian brigade do make their brief little world look pretty tempting"(*LBA*17). We can assume that as Miller's hero is terrified to see life fallilng apart to pieces, Osborne's heroes are shivering to see the picture of broken fragments of life. At the end the lonely Osborne hero turned down by every one he went to, "sits back waiting"; in the final picture that Miller portrays of his hero, "The agony is growing in his face, of total disintegration."[4]

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[1] Arthur Miller, *After the Fall*, NewYork , Viking, 1969, p. 3.
[2] Miller, p. 26.
[3] Miller, p. 16.
[4] Miller p. 110.

The young ambitious lieutenant Alfred Redl in *A Patriot for Me*, dramatizes the dilemma of rejection of social norms at the cost of his own exposure to an abnormal physical demand. Redl becomes the emblem of man in war, torn apart by struggles within and without, with his sufferings and agonies. The military background of the hero is stressed to upheld typical male values. The duel is analysed by the critic of the feminist school like Michelene Wandor in her *Look Back in Gender*, as a test of manhood. She comments, 'The traditional manly way of settling honour with a duel, by an individual with a cause, is presented in the first scene. Military and personal male values are seen as synonymous."[1]

Wandor is right in her observation as we see that the conflict in the play arises out of the hero's attempts to preserve these values in his personal life and failure to assert his manhood in sexual life. His killing Siezynske in the duel is a serious breach of discipline, an action which he would repeat afterward in private and professional life to bring his own downfall. Redl's inability to make love with women reveal a part of his frightened self who wants to protect his manhood from the devouring demands of female sexuality. He says to the Countess, 'whatever it is, I can't give in. Can't and won't'(*APM*51). This struggle makes him realize the fact that, 'Love's hardly ever possible'(*APM*33), as love in ordinary usual sense means to love an woman. In Osborne's men, this fear of female-aggression is presented against their intense desire to retain their authority and manhood. For their shaky state of being as individuals and their conflict with the surroundings they feel constantly threatened to be overwhelmed by female-authority. It makes them over-alert.

Redl's horror at the discovery of his homosexuality and then surrender to it as well as to falsehood and treachery, expose the crime and corruption the male-world is ridden with. It shows how bright and ambitious youngmen like Redl are trapped into it's fatal charms. Oblensky blackmails Redl. He assures Redl that it is nothing unusual and unfair as long as it concerns war; it is rather a part of army life, 'The same as me, my dear friend, ... and very good indeed you are at it, soldiering, war and treachery, or the treachery that leads to wars'(*APM* 80). Wandor's comment on the drag-ball scene that points out the

[1] Michelene Wandor, *Look Back in Gender*, London; Methuen, 1987, p. 15.

paradoxes of army life is pertinent. She notes, 'It is in this scene that we see the ironies and paradoxes of the military way of life as the emblem of manhood being confirmed and undermined by the practice of transvestism which reveals their subversive homosexuality."[1] This non-conformity (to religious and social values) is a crime against his uniform too. Most of Osborne's men are non-believers. They are sceptical of the church and the dogma. Jimmy bursts out when he learns that Alison is going to church with Helena. He cannot think of a man with cool head and enough reason, going to church. He asks her, "Have you gone out of your mind or something?'(*LBA51*) He informs that Alison went to Church for the last time when she was married to him. For him this marriage was in fact 'an execution!" The thought that there must be some intention of connecting his wife to church makes him enraged with Helena. To him Helena as well as religion are the same aggressive forces threatening his world. He growls, 'She's an expert in the New Economics -- the Economics of the Supernatural. It's all a simple matter of payments and penalties. ... She's one of those apocalyptic share pushers who are spreading all those rumours about a transfer of power'(*LBA*55).

Institutional religion and the office of the priest are hateful to Osborne heroes, but in another sense there is in them a deep and secret longing for some kind of spiritual shelter. They need it badly. Archie Rice expresses his feeling about the clergy, when they all have gathered to pray for dead Mick, 'I didn't like the clergy man, any way. I really hated him'(*E*77). Elsewhere his annoyance at the 'hun" and 'clergyman" turns to violent disgust as they irritate him like the 'dogs downstairs'(*E*39). Still Archie looks intently for a personal salvation. He utters to his ownself almost like a prayer, 'Oh Lord, I don't care where they bury my body, ... 'cos my soul's going to live with God.!'(*E*73)

Redl's shield to protect himself from alienation ironically detaches him from life. Alan Carter's explanation for his homosexuality sounds just in this context, 'Redl seeks to cure his personal loneliness by becoming a practising homosexual."[2] His suicide signifies the fatality of individual effort to seek happiness in violation of the order that a society stands for.

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[1] Wandor, p. 16.
[2] Carter, p. 129.

A set of men, confortably well off and well placed, but disillusioned about life, show the emptiness of modern life in *Hotel in Amsterdam*. Boredom is the disease that drains out their energy. But this sickening monotony has not yet spoiled everything. They yearn for something pure and divine. This desire, at least a capacity to long for that, redeems their humane mistakes. Laurie can still feel guilty for not treating his ex-wife well. His repentence seems genuine in as much as the frequent change of partner could not make him happy. Yet he feels helpless and surrenders to the system. He excuses himself by fear of loneliness. He says:

> You live with someone for five, six years. And you begin to feel you don't know them. Perhaps you didn't make the right kind of effort. You have to make choices, adjustments, you have requirements to answer. Then you see someone you love through other eyes. First, one pair of eyes. Then another and more. I was afraid to marry but afraid not to. You see, I' am not really promiscuious. I'm a moulting old bourgeois (*Tp&HA*139).

Unlike other Osborne heroes, Laurie is perhaps the most fortunate man to get a response from his beloved. Jimmy, Bill, Archie do not get this reciprocation despite their expectations. Laurie shouts against the autocracy of K.L in the Jimmy Porter manner, and curses him, "You trade on the forbearance, kindliness and talent of your friends. Go on. ... I simply hope tonight that you are alone ... But I hope, at least, you will feel alone, alone as I feel it, as we all in our time feel it, without burdening our friends"(*TP&HA*117).

Carter finds in Laurie, as in other Osborne-heroes, "The creative artist's pain and disillusionment, his angry frustration and his disenchantment even with money and success."[1] Carter seems right when we examine Laurie's speeches, full of pains and retorts. The fatality and futility of success is uniquely portrayed in the character of K.L. whom we never see but whose absence we feel stronger than any presence. With everything in his grip, he is the emblem of worldly achievements. His all pervading personality does not allow his subordinates any open space to breathe freely. His intellectual autocracy and tyranny trample his employees. He doesnot permit them to credit themselves with any of their own success, own attempt. Nor does he allow them to spend time together. Laurie condemns his tyranny:

[1] Carter, p. 110.

> He takes nothing out of the air round *his* head. Only us. Insinuates his grit into all the available oysters. And if ever any tiny pearl should appear from these tight, invaded creatures, he whips off with them, appropriates and strings them together for his own necklace. And the pearls have to be switched or changed about. Otherwise the trick, the oyster rustling would be transperant and the last thing he wants made known is his own function or how he goes about it. Where does he get the damned energy or duplicity? Where? He's tried to split us up but here we are in Amsterdam.(*TP&HA*117)

Thus the most successful, powerful and proud man is a hollow, lonely, isolated individual inside his own self, who is incapable of tolerating the desertion of his employees. Within a few days of their absence, K.L kills himself. His pathetic end epitomizes the inner vacuum of Osborne's men which they carry with them in spite of all property, wealth and position.

Jock Mellor is another portrait of this kind of man. A multi-millioneer and king of industry, he has got the golden touch of Midas at only forty. But all his material achievements intensely expose his failure to touch any human heart with love or compassion. His craving for "little ordinary human enthusiasm" makes him restlessly move to those whom he expects to reciprocate and understand him. Father, wife, child, old friend, he chases one after another but with no response. At one sleepless night his wife informs him that he has no one to love him or need him(*VLW*39). Jimmy Porter sighs for the lost past, Bill Maitland does not see any future, Jock Mellor's last words for "only tomorrow" drops down dead with his body, leaving behind a present "Bleak,vacant" quite unthinkable. The desperate quest for mental refuge was regretted by everybody he went to. Ultimately he realizes that, "the technique is compromise. No doubt it is inescapable" (*VLW*51).

The flicker of anger that make Jimmy and others rebellious dies down in Jock, Wyatt Gillman, Ben Prosor. They suffer from dissatisfaction, isolation, and boredom of the Osborne hero, but lack the spirit and courage to protest. With advance of years, they have learnt the lesson of compromise. So his later heroes are maturer in age as well as in attitude. They are either self-destructive like K.L, or likely to die like Jock, unable to bear the heavy burden of life or they turn mysogynous like old Jimmy in *Dejavu*.

Jock Mellor suffers silently. No one understands him. No one pays attention. We recall Mrs.Willy Loman's helpless cry in Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, "But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid ... Attention must be finally paid to such a person."[1] Like Miller's heroes, Osborne's are also victims of a mechanized civilization and worst sufferers of war. Yet Osborne's hero makes a more pitiful appearance as Willy has at least an aged wife to care and worry for him, while Jock has none. He lived uncared, unattended, and passes away unmourned.

Old Jimmy in *Dejavu*, has shown the same bitterness, lack of faith and defiance as young Jimmy. But he lacks the positive ambition and rebellious spirit of youth. His cynicism has turned into mysogyny making the man utterly pessimistic and irritating. It is a dark, bleak world he dwells into. He does not have the dreams even. His attitude to life, society, and personal relation is devoid of any positive acceptance. His only weapon to defend himself is self-pity. The horrifying self-knowledge of failure of a whole life groans in him, "It's taken me almost, well, indeed, a lifetime to realize that I am wrong about -- well, everything"(*D*25).

Michael Billington in his review in *The Gurdian* comments, "if he rails at trimming clerics, Australians, mob philanthropists, lower middleclass banalities and reach-me-down progressive attitudes, it is only to disguise his own sense of failure. That is what the play really is: the cri de coer of an eloquent misfit."[2] No matter how articulate Osborne heroes are, they are over-sensitive to make themselves objects of pity to others. Henceforth these offensive attacks.

This male-chauvinism displays itself more profoundly in Osborne's men's attitude to women. Inspite of all their rebellious spirit and liberal views, they dislike intellectual women who are educated, self-conscious and independent. These women have strong personalities; they express their own views and assert their existence. Osborne heroes in the long run do not find them desirable and attractive. At the core of their hearts these men have a desire to dominate, to impose their own will. They want women to be submissive and obedient and thus to satisfy their male-ego. Evangerie in West of Suez says, "Men

[1] Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, *Collected Plays* , London, Secker and Warburg, 1967, p. 162.
[2] Michael Billington,"Cride coeur of an eloquent misfit", *The Gurdian*, June 11,1992.

don't want 'intellectual' daughters any more than they do wives"(*WS*46). Wyatt Gillan regrets his mistake of treating women equally. He says, "The trouble with women is that I've always made a cardinal mistake: of treating them as friends and equals which they patently are not. Women only really love bullies"(*WS*75). Archie Rice reacts sarcastically to the news of his daughter's broken engagement. He chides, "Well I should have thought engagements were a bit suburbian for intellectuals like you anyway"(*E*39). Billy Rice, the grand-father, more rigid about his patricharcal values, refuses the concept of women's lib. He blames it for all mishaps and finds it at the root of all kinds of misdeeds. He utters vehemently, "This is what comes of giving them the bloody vote. They start breaking their engagements, just because they believe every shiftless lay-about writing for the papers"(*E*28).

Osborne himself in an interview in a women's magazine *Women and Beauty* remarks, "I don't like a too-knowledgeable woman."[1] He confides, "I feel it is against her sex".[2] This apparently harmless comment reflects the typical male desire to see woman as woman only: submissive, soft, plaible, charming but ignorant, unaware, meek and mild. Men will maintain her, pity her, use her, and abuse her. He will be attracted to her beauty and charm, enjoy her body and company, but will not accept her as an equal, as free spirit, independent, and articulate, whom he can respect, honour and love as friend or a partner, at home or at work, in all ups and downs.

This attitude of the author himself accounts for the predominance of male characters and their vocal presence in most of his plays. Still for their deep sense of inadequacy, insecurity and need for love, they repeatedly turn with their empty hearts to women, be she mother or wife or friend or mistress.

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[1] Harry Richie, *Success Stories Literature and Media in England, 1950-1959*, London, Faber,1988, p. 52.

[2] Richie, p. 52.

WOMEN IN OSBORNE

In her seminal socio-anthropological study Simone de Beauvoir expresses her doubt whether man ever welcomes the attitude of challenge in women, which she observes particularly common in American women. She sees the arrogance in women as a feed back of male-arrogance and a counter-reaction of the typical male-tendency to see women as inferior. According to Simone it is only an open and unprejudeced view of women among men that can reciprocate the feeling of comradeship and love from women on an equal level. She writes:

> If they would be willing to love an equal instead of a slave --as, it must be added, do those among them who are at once free from arrogance and without an inferiority complex-- woman would not be as haunted as they are by concern for their feminity; they would gain in naturalness, in simplicity, and they would find themselves women again without taking so much pains, since, after all, that is what they are.[1]

She also warns the independent woman against the hostilities awaiting her, because, "she has chosen battle rather than resignation."[2] Her warning is indicative of the fact that, men will not willingly agree to women's claims, as they threaten the authority men have been enjoying for ages; and that, ultimately, woman's rights have to be snatched away.

Perhaps it is coincidental that the militant posture that Simone recommends women to take, finds expression in a character by John Osborne, the dramatist who called himself "Strindberg's man in England" and whom *The Gurdian* termed as "Churlish Misogynist" for his inability to drop even a few tears on the coffin of his dead wife.

In Osborne's *The End of Me Old Cigar*, an American woman declares a fierce battle against menfolk. Overwhelmed to see the traditional values of virginity and fidelity trampled down and man entrapped, she cries enthusiastically:

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[1] Beauvoir, p. 686.
[2] Beauvoir, p. 686.

> I am a soldier, a fighter, I'm an academic ... Help the woman who is obliged to work in any patriarchal, cultural set-up. A reunification of the reverence of the female principle. Give us the Goddess. Dig the Goddesses, Diana, Mary, Penelope. You have wasted us. ... We *are* your waste. Your effluent. Men and their things. Big deal. .... Kill the men. Before we do it. To ourselves. We're so scared(*EMOC* 32).

This violent expression has the typical Osbornian quality. But the utterance of these words by a woman in his play runs counter to the conventional stream of interpretation justified by the playwright's obvious partiality to male characters.

Osborne's plays are generally male dominated with women playing secondary roles. Female characters are brought on the stage to focus on the male characters and on their miseries, pains, pleasures, and problems. The Strindbergian playwright allots them their roles accordingly. It is only in two of his plays, *Time Present* and *The End of Me Old Cigar*, we see women protagonists. Before *Time Present*, most of his major plays had already been written and all these plays have male heroes, such as, *Look Back in Anger, The Entertainer, Inadmissible Evidence, Luther, Epitaph for George Dillon, A Subject of Scandal and Concern, A Patriot for Me, The End of Me Old Cigar* is lately written. The strong individualism that characterises Osborne's plays as well as other Angry literature has a marked proclivity towards male domination in spite of the socio-economic changes that questioned the traditional sex-morality.

In three noted contemporaneously written novels, John Braine's *A Room At the Top*, Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim* and Allan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, class antagonism has been portrayed through man-woman relationship as it has been done in *Look Back in Anger*. We observe that literature of the period reflects the tension between the sexes latent in society, together with manifestation of the socio-political insecurities that made the period restless. In these novels, the working-class hero wants to vindicate his man-hood by subjugating the woman he is involved with, having the patriarchal structure of the society working in his favour.

In *A Room At the Top*, the working-class Joe tries to win the middle-class Susan, sacrificing Alice of his own class. Susan is his ideal Madonna, a symbol of virginity and beauty unspoiled. Against her, stands Alice, whom he enjoys and calls the

"whore type" and also despises. To win his ideal, he must break the class-barrier. Arthur in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* continues his affairs with two married women simultaneously and thinks that had his own wife done so, he would have killed her. This typical display of male superiority and double standard makes the class struggle intenser. Same is the case with heroes in Osborne. Jimmy in *LBA* holds women responsible for all his sufferings; even for his father's death. What it suggests is that the myth of Pandora, or of Eve, as woman at the root of all evils is still working in human mind. George Dillon, another Osborne hero, a dissatisfied, aspiring artist, is separated from his first wife, and fails to build up a fruitful relationship with politically conscious and intellectually aware Ruth. Finally succumbing to the charm of Josie's youthful body he rather confirms his own weakness and inability to reach his goal. Luther and Holyoake's fighting for noble causes keep themselves aloof from being entangled in the complexities of women's affairs. Women in the *Entertainer* and *Inadmissible Evidence*, try to gratify their men's desire as the sole objective. Failing to do so, they either increase their misery or harden the struggle for themselves. Thus women's subordinate role is brought to sharpen and brighten the multi-dimensional nature of the male-characters. Jonathan Dollimore's comment on the above mentioned novels applies to Osborne's plays as well. The comment testifies to the real situation obtaining in the fifties. He writes:

> That women are positioned somehow off-centre in relation to men is just a fact of life(natural); thus men are strongly individuated, whereas women exist primarily to ratify men -- as sex partners, mothers or quite literally as onlookers. Even so, the attitude towards women is ambivalent. On the one hand they are appreciated as givers of pleasure ... On the other hand they threaten to trap and tame the male, to curtail his freedom and, worse, become parasitic upon his virility. [1]

Dollimore's observation is based on the realization of the fact:

> the destructive and unjust operations of power that its male protagonists identify and attack in society at large are reproduced and sanctioned (more or less unconsciouly) by those protagonists in their personal lives and relationships. There is here something more important than hypocrisy. Patriarchy is arguably as fundamental as class, and inseparable from class. In

[1] Jonathan Dollimore, "The challenge of Sexuality" *Society and Literature 1945- 1970*, pp. 69.

> these books, power in its class manifestations is being overtly criticised and foregrounded, and in the very process power in its patriarchal manifestations is being implicitly endorsed and yet drawn into unintended visibility. More over, to see the full extent of patriarchal power in the personal sphere is to see how pervasive it is in the public sphere too and so, finally, to collapse the distinction between private and public. Thus both the family unit and sexual relations are disclosed to be, not havens of retreat from the world of power relations, but two primary sites of their operation.[1]

In this patriarchal world where men fight for power and authority with an over-alertness to retain their sovereignty, Osborne's women try to assert their individuality, though they dare not unlike man, revolt against the whole system. An examination of his plays unfold a world dominated by men where women are fighting to set their foot on a firm ground, to be treated as a human being and not as a woman only.

In our discussion of Osborne's men, we have noticed that Osborne's men are a blending of the revolutionary and the romantic, with anger, protest and imagination as their characteristic features. If his men are incurable romantics, refusing to accept the world as it is, most of his women are extreme realists accepting life as it is, compromising as far as their sense of dignity allows. The awareness of their own inability to cure the anomalies of life give them a strength to endure these. Courage to face the hostilities is the lesson they execute through out all the ups and downs. Alison is an intelligent girl. She follows the situation quickly, adopts herself to it readily. On the night of her wedding she realizes that she has made a mistake marrying below her class. Helpless, and inexperienced, this girl understands very well that she has got herself entangled in an eternal class warfare, with herself as the pawn. Alienated from her own class, she discovers herself amidst the people whose language is beyond her reach. She repents, "For the first time in my life, I was cut off from the kind of people I've always known, ... And I'd burnt my boats. After all those brawling with Mummy and Daddy about Jimmy, I knew I could not appeal to them without looking foolish and cheap"(*LBA*43). This terrible realization intensifies her loneliness and despair but she has enough self respect not to go back to her parents. Rather from this sufferings

[1] Dollimore, p. 70.

she gathers the strength to fight back. Fearful at heart, she makes a shield of silence to protect herself. The weapon works more effectively than any stream of reproaches. Jimmy simply could not tolerate her silence. He feels the amount of humiliation her silence contains. It makes him more and more angry. He becomes furious. A sense of defeat overwhelms him when he sees that his enemy is standing still, despite all his provocations. He admits his incapacity, "Don't think I could provoke her. Not even if I were to drop down dead"(*LBA*19).

Seemingly quiet, timid, and soft, Alison has the capacity to understand her own situation as well as that of other's. She has the rare capacity to observe objectively, which capacity prevents her from being blind even to herself. She is sympathetic to Jimmy despite his mal-treatments of her; she understands him and his situation. Moreover she loves him with the tragic realization that their marriage has turned into a marriage of two classes and not of "true minds". Yet she does not blame him. With a forgiving tone she mentions Jimmy's desire that she and Hugh should be friends which is in fact not possible. Her utterance has a melancholy ring, when she says, "He was so proud of us both, so pathetically anxious that we should take to each other. Like a child showing off his toys"(*LBA*43). She analyses her marriage like a psychiatrist. Explaining her own vulnerable situation after her father's return from India, she justifies her decision, "When the family came back from India, everything seemed, I don't know -- unsettled? Any way, Daddy seemed remote and rather irritable. And Mummy -- well you know Mummy"(*LBA*45).

Jimmy's child like innocence, the sense of mystery and alienness he carries along for belonging to an unknown class, distracted her mind, attracted her youthful curiosity. Her description of Jimmy on their first meeting has a fairy tale touch :

> I met him at a party. .... The men there all looked as though they distrusted him, and as for women, they were all intent on showing their contempt for this rather odd creature, but no one seemed quite sure how to do it. He'd come to the party on a bicycle, he told me,... and he'd been in the sun. Everything about him seemed to burn, his face, the edges of his hair glistened and seemed to spring off his head, and his eyes were so blue and full of the sun. He looked so young and frail in spite of the tired line of his mouth. I knew I was taking on

> more than I was ever likely to be capable of bearing, but there never seemed to be any choice.(*LBA*45)

The scene reminds us of another marriage which proved fatal, almost in the same manner. Gertrude and Walter Morel in *Sons and Lovers*, met at a party, and fell in love at first sight. Their acquiantance too had a blending of mystery and strangeness, invoking awe and wonder in both of them. Lawrence narrates:

> His cheeks were ruddy and his red moist mouth was noticeable because he laughed so often and so heartily. He had the rare thing, a rich ringing laugh. Gertrude Coppared had watched him, fascinated. He was so full of colour and animation .... She herself was opposite. She had curious, receptive mind which found so much pleasure and amusement in listening to otherfolks. .... She loved ideas and was considered very intellectual ... She was to the miner that thing of mystery and fascination, a lady. .... She was a puritan, like her father, high minded, and really stern. Therefore the dusky, golden softness of this man's sensuous flame of life, that flowed off his flesh like the flame from a candle, not baffled and gripped into incandescence by thought and spirit as her life was, seemed to her something wonderful, beyond her. [1]

Thus two persons from two different worlds are attracted to each other as two opposite poles do. At the beginning, the ignorance of each other's class-pattern, way of living, and nature have the thrilling taste of novelty and exciting pleasure of discovering the unknown. But soon this thrill and excitements die into disappointment leading to inevitable clashes. The Morel's married life has an affinity with that of the Porter's, continuing from desperate courtship to the bitterest conjugal conflicts.

Alison's admiration of Jimmy's arrogance and defiance arouses pity in her as has done Othello's stories of adventure in the Venetian Desdemona. Othello announces in the open court their courtship and explains, "She loved me for the dangers I had passed/ And I loved her that she did pity them."(Act i SCiii)

In this marriage, too, the souls so deeply fallen in love are torn to pieces by jealousy and misunderstanding later on. Alison has a feeling that Jimmy woke her up from the sleep of oblivion; she admits that before meeting Jimmy she did not know

[1] D.H.Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*,intro Anthony Beal, London, Heinman, 1963, pp. 9-10.

she was "born." Her words remind us of Donne's famous utterance in "The Good Morrow":

> I wonder by my troth, what thou and I
> Did, till we loved? were we not weaned till then
> But sucked on country pleasures childishly
> Or snorted we in the seven sleeper's den?
> And now good morrow to our waking souls

With her soul waking at the touch of love, Alison becomes aware of reality. She explains to Helena that Jimmy's appearance in the party they first met, was like, "The old story of the knight in shining armour-- except that his armour didn't really shine very much"(*LBA*45). Her words foretell the imminent clash between illusion and reality. Her class superiority, aristocracy and sophistication come into an inevitable collision with her lover's and husband's class heritage, putting into question the authority of the proud, self aware Jimmy.

This turning of the marriage bond into a heavy chain strangling the girl is to be noticed in a famous American play, *A Street Car Named Desire* by Tennesse Williams. The fatal consequence of romantic love between Stanley Kowalski and Stella Dubois has a remarkable affinity with the Jimmy-Alison affair. Like Alison, Stella too comes of a class which is beginning to lose its glory and heritage but finds it difficult to brush off the breeding. Cruel but not crude like Stanley, Jimmy's outbursts and protests have the same kind of vehemence and arrogance. Both of them find a pleasure in mocking at the class-superiority of their wives which in fact is a defence mechanism to hide their own sense of inferiority. Like Alison, Stella too, reaches the verge of the breaking point. The hostile attraction Blanche and Stanley feel towards each other has a kind of repetition in the Helena-Jimmy affair. Stella's surrender to reality and Alison's silent endurance make them stand almost on the same ground. To each other they are like objects of another planet and in marital life they feel themselves set in a strange world, unknown, and hostile.

With her tender response to life, Alison at moments reminds us of another Tennesse heroine, Laura. Tennesse Williams stresses on the psychological conflicts and dramatizes the inner turmoils of man and woman. In *The Glass Menagerie*, Laura,

unable to cope with the dark realities, retreats into the world of fantasy. Her menagerie, full of fragile but beautiful animals, offers her the make-believe shelter she needs to hide herself. At heart she knows that it would break down any moment. Alison too opts for a "willing suspension of disbelief" and retreats with Jimmy into the mask of Bears and Squirrels.

Alison's naive, simple way of reticence and acceptance is stronger than any vocal protest. The way she accepts the Jimmy-Helena affair and the manner she begs to be pardoned for intruding on them, make the situation worse and intolerable for Helena. Helena finally leaves the house as her guilty conscience bleeded her to such a shamefulness that she is compelled to confess to Alison, "That's why everything seems more wrong and terrible than ever. You didn't even reproach me. You should have been outraged, but you weren't. ... I feel so -- ashamed"(*LBA*89). Alison has a simple way of asserting herself. A silent stubbornness prevents her from believing in anyone else's views, be it Helena's or Jimmy's. She says to Helena when Helena reminds her of the confession that she could not believe Jimmy, "I don't think I ever believed in your way either"(*LBA*89).

Her unconventional view of marriage has a tone of rebellion in it, though she dares not slam the door like Ibsen's Nora to step into the wide unknown world. Rather she comes back with the distressed-self of a deprived mother and a humilliated wife. Nevertheless her non-conformity is striking. She states very simply, "Helena -- even I gave up believing in the divine rights of marriage long ago. Even before I met Jimmy. They've got something different now-- constitutional monarchy. You are where you are by consent. And if you start trying any strong arm stuff, you're out. And I'm out"(*LBA*89).

She is rigid in her class stand too. No matter how sympathetically she understands Jimmy, she could not be friendly with either Hugh or his Mum. Despite her confession, "not that I dislike her-- I don't, she's very sweet in fact"(*LBA*46), she could not come down to their level, knowing very well that to live in peace with Jimmy means unconditional surrender of her own ego. Alison's compromise and adjustment carefully exclude what is against her own sense of good. She always

practices her own power of judgement with a strong conviction. She tells Helena, "But I still can't bring myself to feel the way he does about things. I can't believe that he's right somehow"(*LBA*42).

Alison encounters hostility with silent disregard but returns love with love and care. She washes and irons Cliff's shirts, cooks for him, takes care of him as a member of the family. Her treatment of Hugh and Cliff shows her strong sense of like and dislike. She points out the difference between these two men, "If things have worked out with Cliff, its because he's kind and lovable." But "Hugh and I disliked each other on sight" and "Hugh got more and more subtly insulting -- he'd a rare talent for that"(*LBA*43).

Acquainting herself with the crudest facts, marriage sharpens her senses more and more. She gradually loses her upperclass superficiality and wakes herself up from her "beauty sleep". A sense of detachment overwhelms her and she is able to see through the things neutrally. She understands both Jimmy and her own father and can identify their causes for sufferings. She tells her father, "You're hurt, because everything is so changed. Jimmy is hurt because everything is the same. And neither of you can face it."(*LBA*68)

Perhaps there is in her objectivity, an element of superiority feeling for her class position which has a usual tendency of unwillingness to get involved with others sentimentally. As a contrast, Jimmy displays an eagerness to involve in other's affairs emotionally, which is a class-characteristic of the working class. Alison cannot hide it in her indifference towards Hugh's Mum, even when she is sick. James Gindin has rightly marked this difference between Jimmy and Alison in their capacity to feel for the individual or the class as a whole. He comments:

> Jimmy Porter does rant against bishops and 'posh' Sunday papers, against any form of aristocratic gentility or pretense, but his invective is part of a plea for human honesty and vitality, for people to live emotionally as fully and as deeply as they can. He may berate his wife for the genteel background she cannot help; but he is really hurt by her emotional nullity when she ignores the illness of the old woman who established them in the sweet stall.[1]

[1] James Gindin, "Points of View" (1963), *Case Book*, p. 183.

These charges are undeniable and we see that Alison is predictably, unable to give any satisfactory explanation for her not going to see Hugh's dying mother. A class- tendency to undermine the old woman is not unperceptible in her words, when she describes Hugh's mother to her father, "Oh -- how can you describe her? Rather -- ordinary. What Jimmy insists on calling working class. A Charwoman who married an actor, worked hard all her life, and spent most of it struggling to support her husband and her son"(*LBA*64).

Thus, in spite of all her love and simplicity, Alison's class-consciousness keeps her away from Jimmy. It is only the fantasy of the bear and squirrel that can break this class- barrier. At the culmination of their domestic conflict she goes away, inspired and provoked by Helena. She does not take this decision herself, nor on her own. But her coming back is her own decision. The child she loses is hers, and the pain of the child's loss she cannot share with anyone else, nor can she bear it alone. Death teaches her to accept life. Jimmy has already tasted the pangs of death. Now Alison, burdened with the sorrow of loss, comes closer to Jimmy, and the two are united in a feeling of compassion. Sorrow has at last penetrated through her silent contempt and broken her to pieces. She does not want to be stoic and cold any longer. She learns that there is no greatness in sainthood. To suffer like ordinary man is not unworthy, as she admits, "I was wrong! I don't want to be neutral, I dont want to be a saint. I want to be a lost cause. .... I was in pain, ... I'm in the mud at last!"(*LBA*95) Breaking the cocoon of reticence and restraint, a new Alison emerges -- maturer, wiser, more aware of life, more articulate in the ache of living. She may not be rebellious like Nora, but has perhaps learnt what Nora had set out to learn.

There are usually two parallel women characters in Osborne, whom Dollimore marks in "The challenge of sexuality" as a feature of the Angry literature. He writes:

> Contempt for women finds its counter-image in their idealization. *Look Back in Anger* and *The Room At the Top*, both echo the ancient dichotomy of women as madona/ whore. These are opposite sides of the same coin, the madonna mode involves an idealization which, like the contempt, distances and thereby 'objectifies' women. The prominent placing of this contradictory estimate of

> 'women' in these books is evidently related to social and sexual insecurity of the male, and it perhaps marks a crucial point of strain in patriarchial ideology.[1]

Dollimore's observation is right as far as Jimmy's physical relation with Helena is concerned. Helena is as vocal and rude as Jimmy himself. She returns back his bullies instead of swallowing them like Alison. In a way it can be said that Helena is what Alison is not. If Alison is the dream Jimmy is still not sure of, Helena is the reality he can easily get within his grip.

Yet Helena is not all of the "whore type" against the idealized Alison. In spite of all his bitterness, mistrust, and charges of infidelity against them, Osborne could not portray women as "whores". Subconsciously the image of a woman with all her follies, weaknesses, and charms, is unfolded in his plays. She is not less attractive, less lovable, less humane.

Helena carries with herself an air of authority. She has a physical charm and "In JIMMY, as one would expect, she arouses the rabble-rousing instincts of his spirits"(*LBA* 39). But she has a dignity and strength too, making her a self-conscious modern woman. There is a difference between Helena and Josie in *Epitaph for George Dillon*. Though Josie too gratifies George's physical desire, Helena rather resembles Ruth, as Ronald Hayman points out, "When she first appears, Helena looks as though she will be able to put up a much better fight than Alison, but, again like Ruth, she allows all her criticism and all the standards she's been sticking out for to collapse into love the moment she's left alone with him."[2]

She refuses to be compared with Josie because she is given more importance and is more developed in her possesssing more than a physical charm. Yet like Helena, Ruth too, is not as developed as she had scopes for. She speaks very little of herself. The charge Hayman again brings against the dramatist for wasting the scope he had with Ruth is worth considering . He says, "She's used in the long duet with George, but her own story is continued only very perfunctorily -- how she gets herself involved emotionally but not

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[1] Dollimore p. 65.
[2] Hayman, p. 18.

sexually with George and how she decides to leave the family -- but it never gets anything like the forefront focus that the build-up prepared for".[1]

This evident negligence of the female characters is due to the playwright's excessive concentration on the male characters. Helena's sensitivity, authority, maturity and grasp of life, are far away from Josie's juvenile light-hearted flirtieness. John Mander criticises Helena for being typical. He writes, "She is tougher than Alison, and very typical of her class. ... to balance Jimmy a more original character is required. More might certainly have been made of Helena's struggle with Jimmy; as it is, their relations are restricted almost wholly to the sexual plane."[2]

Mander himself makes the mistake of seeing the Jimmy-Helena relation on a purely physical level. But there is certainly more to it than that; there is a deep longing for something to quench the inner thirst. The inadequacy felt in their relationship is felt in the relationship with Alison too. This feeling is indeed a modern phenomenon. Alison diagnoses Jimmy's demand correctly when she says, "He wants something quite different from us. What it is exactly I dont know -- a kind of cross between a mother and a Greek courtesan, a henchwoman, a mixture of Cleopatra and Boswell"(*LBA*91).

The tender moments between Helena and Jimmy reveal in Jimmy a romantic lover, who wants to love passionately, and to pour down the whole of his heart in it with a yearning to be equally reciprocated. Jimmy reproaches Helena for frowning like the "presiding magistrate". Helena asks, "How should I look?" He replies, "As if your heart stirred a little when you looked at me"(*LBA*85).

Deliberately Osborne makes his women incapable of this kind of response, showing their inadequacy and incapacity to meet the demand of his men. He thinks that this meeting of male demand is their only mission in the plays but they fail. Osborne does not want his women to be identified as individuals, least of all superiors. Mary McCarthy in her article "A New World" in the *Case Book*, finds this fact mainfested in Helena and Alison's wearing Jimmy's shirt. She says, "His women appear, so to speak, wearing his

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[1] Hayman, p. 14.
[2] John Mander,"The Writer and Commitment", *Case book*, p. 147.

colours; both girls, while they *are* his, are seen wearing one of his old shirts over their regular clothes. When Alison is found in a slip, dressing to go out, in the second act, this is proof that she is about to revert, away from him, back to her own kind."[1]

McCarthy finds in Helena and Alison's wearing of Jimmy's shirt, a subconscious attempt to forget their single entity. Undoubtedly it is imposed on them by the dramatist. Osborne seems to be trying to make a reflection of Jimmy's desire to forget the existence of women who are treacherous. That women lack soliderity and integrity, and that deficiency inflict men, is stated as a fact in Osborne's world. This is because he sees it from an obsolete male point of view. Alison's keeping in touch with her family after marriage, against Jimmy's consent, is disapproved even by her own father. Colonel Redfern, being the father of the bewildered girl, who is torn apart by the inconsistencies of her situation, thinks it an act of treachery when he learns that his daughter writes to them without her husband's permission. For him, the daughter should no more own her past connections after marriage. Now her husband has the right to claim ablsolute loyalty. In the state of marriage-bond no matter how much he, being the father-in-law, likes or dislikes his daughter's husband, he is regarded the supreme authority. The Colonel has inherited the age-old patriarchal view of women as man's private property, be he the father, or the husband, or the master.

Helena seizes Jimmy the moment Alison has left. The fact that it ultimately pricks her conscience, redeems her finally. Thus we don't fail to notice that Osborne's women, despite the incapacity and inferiority imposed on them, are capable of feeling guilt, distinguishing between good and evil; and are not incapable of self-restraint, above all of self-criticism. Helena affirms Alison of her strong sense of good and evil. She says, "At least, I still believe in right and wrong! Not even the months in this mad house have stopped me doing that. Even though everything I have done is wrong; at least I have known it was wrong"(*LBA*89). Her realization that union in bed cannot unite two persons from two different worlds, makes her a typical modern and practical woman. She utters helplessly, "He wants one world and I want another, and lying in

[1] Mary McCarthy, "A New World", *Case book*, p. 53.

bed won't ever change it. I believe in good and evil, and I don't have to apolgize for that. It's quite a modern scientific belief now"(*LBA*90).

The post-war world went through violent changes in morality, values, views of life and sex. Dollimore narrates the real situation in the sixties in his essay with reference to the political and legal context:

> From the debates of the sixties there emerged a real achievements in the causes of personal freedom generally and sexual liberation in particular, including a sequence of important legal reforms, mostly during the Wilson adminstration of 1966-70: the facilitating of birth control and divorce, the permitting of abortion and homosexuality, the abolition of hanging and theatre censorship and Obscene Publications Act (1959) which led to the *Chatterly* trial. Nevertheless all this should not be seen as a straightforward displacement of dominant conservative attitude by emergent progressive ones. As in the *Chatterly* defense case, the emergent ideology often retains assumptions of the dominant, with the subordinate -- not necessarilly in a minority -- perhaps being allowed no representation at all. Nowhere is this more apparent than in relation to the family.[1]

It had become a moral question whether love or the religious and social context should be the dominating factor to unite two persons. We recall that Thomas Hardy in his *Jude the Obscure* is bitterly critical of marriage. His criticism is exquisitely expressed through illiterate poor housekeeper Mrs. Edlin's simple and naive utterance, "Weddings be funerals a' believe now-a-days!" She makes this comment when she sees that Sue, making up for her seeing Jude again, kisses Phillotson against all her will and despite her aversion. Sue, a modern woman enlightened, unprejudiced, and committed to herself, lives together with Jude, the young

[1] *Dollimore*, pp. 59-60.

revolutionary. Disregarding their own marriages which they feel to have been mistakes they dared to do so. But they could not sustain long in their defiance. Their children's death has brought the tragic apprehension that they are being punished through these innocent victims. In the same way Helena blames herself for the death of Alison's child. Despite all her toughness and boldness, she couldnot free herself from her typical guilt-consciousness, while Alison, whom critics consider weaker, could accept the loss with her unprejudiced mind. Alison accepts it as if it were an accident. In the pangs of guilt Helena's words "It's like a judgement on us" are similar to Sue's, "My children are dead! and it is right that they should be! ... They were sacrificed to teach me how to live."[1] Compared with these, Alison's naive statement, "I lost the child. It's a simple fact. There is no judgement there's no blame--"(*LBA*91), is indicative of a contrast in their characters.

At the core of her heart Helena cherishes a strong sense of morality, something akin to religious faith. Inspiring Alison to go to the church she has already displayed her religiosity. At the sametime she doesnot hesitate to stay with Jimmy without the legal bond. The conflict in her arises out of the fact that she cannot ignore the strength of the marrige bond and the rights it offers, as she admits to Alison, "You are his wife, arn't you? Whatever I have done, I've never been able to forget that fact. You have all the rights--"(LBA88). Simultaneously she cannot keep her faith in marriage as the sacred uniting force. Thus we see Sue, Helena, Alison, all are products of a restless and confused time swinging between doubt and faith. While an alluring new world of fresh ideas and beliefs is beckoning them, the past world of rigid morality has not totally disappeared. Wavering between these two, as they are, they find even the everyday simple facts startling and puzzling. These often bleed their conscience. Their life become in fact desperate attempts to heal these internal injuries.

Osborne's women are neither purely intellectual nor absolutely physical, rather they represent a blending of both. But sometimes we feel a lack of balance or proportion in their roles and portrayals which puts a question mark on their

[1] Thomas Hardy, *Jude The Obscure*, NewYork, Harper, 1957, p. 439.

significance in the plays. The inconsistency expressed through their behaviour often reveals their inner conflicts and a lack of harmony in their personal life. The tender, affectionate mother in Mrs. Elliot, ready to do everything for young George, treats her husband rudely in *Epitaph for George Dillon*. Her wifely behaviour with her husband is devoid of any sense of respect or affection. A dual personality expresses itself in her behaviour to an unknown young man and the middle-aged husband. The progress of the play gradually manifests the crisis dormant in the relationahip of the Elliot couple. Mr. Elliot "the small mean man" who is "small in every sense of the term" (*EGD*25), does not believe his wife. Hurting and humiliating his wife, he reveals his ill manners as well as suspicious nature. Mrs. Elliot is much stronger than Phoebe in *The Entertainer*. Her personality and self-reliance have enriched her with the strength to take her own decisions. The pride of being the breadwinner, a common phenomenon in Osborne's men, is denied to Percy by his wife who is aware of her role in the family. She does not submit, nor does she allow her husband to take over. Instead she warns him, "Look, Percy, I'm warning you, once and for all, this is my house, and I have worked for every penny I bought it with, and everything in it. As far as I'm concerned, you're just the lodger here"(*EGD*27).

Mrs. Elliot's authority to assert herself in the house is a contrast to Phoebie's unconditional surrender. It is also indicative of the fact that she is free from the feeling of guilt Phoebie secretly suffers from. Mrs. Elliot knows that her husband's suspicions are baseless while Phoebie's awareness that she has userped in someone else's domain makes her weaker and meeker. Moral uprightness is an important factor in giving Mrs. Elliot, Ruth, Alison, upperhand over the guilt-pricked Phoebie, Helena and Pamela.

But none of these female characters is portrayed as a complete being. With all her possibilities to be developed into a full grown character, Mrs. Elliot has not been justly drawn. Hayman is right in saying:

> So much is established in Act One about her and her projection on to George of her feelings about her dead son that we expect her to be given a fair amount of space in the foreground for this material to be exploited. But it isn't. Once she has performed her queen bee function of introducing George in to the

> household, she's as useless as a drone because the play changes its mind about what sort of play it is.[1]

Ruth anticipates the emergence of a generation of new-liberated women in the later Osborne plays. She is the predecessor of Helena, Jean, Pamela, and Stella in her self- dignity, consciousness of rights, and in her response to the world; above all in her strength and courage to go alone. Like that of the other Osborne women, Ruth's primary role in this play is to develop the protagonist's character. She performs her allotted task keeping herself as much behind the curtain as possible. Katharine J.Worth's comments in the *Casebook* are pertinent in this respect. She says:

> The one intellectually sophisticated member of the family, Ruth, forces George to explore the reasons for his voluntary self-immolation among the Philistines. She gets beyond the superficial explanation, that he is work-shy sponger, making capital out of a flaunted artistic temperament. Living with the Elliot's is not just an expedient for Dillon but a temptation. Among people who never ask questions he may stop asking himself tormenting questions about the nature of his talent:among people without imagination, he can give his own rest.[2]

She has left her lover because she feels that he is not only a flop, but also a man without integrity. Her ego and honesty are hurt by him. She cannot allow him to demean her self-respect and undermine her sincere love. She loved him because she believed "he had promise". But finally he proved himself a failure and she had waited too long for him to succeed. Practically as she sees through and utters hopelessly, "Youthful promise doesnot look too well with receding hair. I've misjudged him-- he's a complete flop, and I've spent nearly six years giving all I could to him, giving my love to him-- such as it is"(*EGD*33). Her own youth, life, and love prove futile pursuasions. What offends her most and mortifies her ego is the fact that he not only lied to her but neglected her and thus insulted her as a beloved too, refusing to share the smallest of his success. To a modern woman like Ruth love means sharing and caring as well as respecting and honouring the partner. Her humiliation is expressed in a tone of complaint when she says:

> When he told me he hadn't a penny, not even the price of a packet of cigarettes, I went to his jacket pocket, and inside I found a cheque for eight guineas for

[1] Hayman, p. 14.
[2] J. Worth, p. 107.

> some book review or other he'd written. He hadn't even told me about it. Not only did he lie about the money, but he even kept his piffling little success from me. A brainless, cheap little lie. And that did it-- the whole works collapsed, the whole filmsy works. ... I suppose that's really why I left him(*EGD*33).

Ruth's desertion of her lover proves another fact, that is, to be really independent one must educate oneself. In the absence of this education economic self-reliance is incapable of giving the strength and boldness necessary to take one's own decisions. Mrs. Elliot and Phoebie are also working women, but they do not have the courage to break off the undesirable relationship they are entangled in. Jean and Ruth can take such decisions, knowing that it involves more struggle, more antagonism.

Mrs.Elliot does not understand the reason of Ruth's breaking off. She not only disapproves of it, she speaks in a manner typical of a prejudiced, ignorant, woman clinging to age-old ideas. She says, "It's beyond me, dear. It's funny -- you're the only one in the family who doesn't have patience or understanding. While you were enjoying yourself at college, we all had to go out to work. I can only say that college gave you a lot of funny ideas"(*EGD*33). Her words echo those of Billy Rice when he expresses his reaction, hearing the news of Jean's broken-off engagement. His comment on her participation in the Trafalgar Square rally, "Well I should think you want your bloody head read"(*E*28) is a reckoning of her intellectual interests which he condemns. He refuses to accept any idea of woman's lib declaring it an evil consequence of their rights to vote.

Both Billy Rice and Mrs. Elliot, recognise, in their negative way, that, female-education is somehow related to women's lib. They blame it for the new social changes which upset the old social order. Billy, from his typical patriarchal outlook, thinks that the emancipation of woman ravages all the charm and mystery of feminity in women. He laments, "They were graceful, they had mystery and dignity. Why when a woman got out of a cab, she descended"(*E*33). Cab for him is the traditional social system that keep women within a control. He condemns the modern woman's urge for freedom. To him charm and dignity mean obedience and submission. For Mrs. Elliot, notwithstanding her strength and dignity, it is an intrusion in her life-long loyalty to male-supremacy expressed in her overwhelming affection and enthusiasm for George.

Reminding her of her dead son, George is substituting for her unhappy relation with her husband too, as Paul Morel did after his elder brother's death serving as the husband-substitute for Mrs. Morel in *Sons and Lovers*.

Self-criticism makes Osborne women hesitant to step forward. Ruth knows her limitations. Aware of growing age and receding capacity she refuses to be provoked by George. She patiently declines his offer, "But, at my age, and with my lack of right kind of qualifications, there's not much else I can do. Perhaps I haven't the courage to try. At least, I'm safe. And so I go on, from spring, through the summer, to the autumn and another winter, meaningless; just another caricature"(*EGD*60).

Still we must appreciate her bold decision to go alone, a decision Phoebie does not even dare to think of. At the same time we cannot be blind to the fact that Phoebie has her reasons to be compromising and resigning. We remember that she left school when she was only twelve. She had to scrub a dining hall for five hundred kids at that age.[1] She represents the typical working-class woman, plain-looking, middle-aged, who never in her life had been able to enjoy the security and comfort of a happy home nor received any education to teach her to assert herself. She does not protest like Sue or Helena or Jean or Ruth. Simon de Beauvoir narrates such situation and accounts for typical female-fear of social changes and revolutions. She writes:

> Man knows that he can develop different institutions, another ethic, a new legal code; aware of his ability to transcend what is, he regards history as becoming. The most conservative man knows that some evolution is inevitable and realizes that he must adopt his action and thinking to it; but as woman takes no part in history, she fails to understand it's necessities; she is suspiciously doubtful of the future and wants to arrest the flow of time. If the ideals set up by her father, her brothers, her husband are being torn down, she can offer no way of repopulating the heavens; she rushes wildly to the defense of the old gods. .... They seek to compensate for their inactivity by the intensity of the sentiments they exhibit. .... In women's eyes, might makes the right because the rights she recognizes in men depend upon their power. Hence it is that when a society breaks down, women are the first to throw themselves at the feet of

[1] Osborne has here reproduced the experience of his own mother about whom he says in his autobiogrgaphy,"My mother pointed out that her sister's privations were nothing compared with her own. *She* had none of the the advantages of being educated properly but of going out to work at the age of twelve to scrub a dining room floor for six hundred orphans at the Founding Hospital." *A Better Class* , p. 26.

> the conqueror. On the whole, they accept what is. One of their distinguishing trait is resignation.[1]

Simone's observation applies in Osborne's women in as-much-as we see in them the patience, tenacity, and passive resistance, turned into a stoical courage. Lacking the male's aggressive audacity, they distinguish themselves in facing crisis, poverty and misfortune, more energetically than their husbands. These are universally observed in women; Wesker's women too manifest these traits and prove themselves more enduring than men. These above quoted words find expression in Phoebie who describes herself as, "the ugliest bloody kid you ever saw in your life"(*E*55); whose aim in life was to get a husband. She finally succeeds with Archie and made him want her any way (*E*33). She seeks to drive her depression away by going to movies frequently. At heart a loving, caring and affectionate woman, she offers as much as she can to others. She justifies all that a man does, as that is the cultural heritage she had been handed over from childhood. In is in Phoebie's nature that she should submit to the patricharchal system and be incapable of even disapproving a man's deeds, whatever these might be. Archie'e affairs with other women do not disturb her. She takes this polygamic tendency of man as a part of his nature. She excuses her husband by saying, "And if I mention the women, it was just because it's been the same thing with them. It's never bothered me, that so much. ... not even when I was young. Still, I suppose men are different. It's more important to them"(*E*47-48).

Tired of working, what she is worried about most is her approaching old age and the insecurity shadowing over. She dreams of a retired age with leisure and comfort, knowing quite well that it is too much of an expectation for her. Her feeling of insecurity is rooted in her unsteady marriage bond. Moreover she lacks the moral courage to ask her husband to put a stop to his perennial affairs because of her own guilt-conscience. Except the physical relation with man, which she enjoys very little,[2] man to her is an obscure, incomprehensible, unpredictable being. The male-world is a far-off, alien world to her. She never dares to reach it. Ideas of education or woman's

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[1] Beavoir, p. 601.
[2] "Poor old Phoebie she's never enjoyed it very much" says Archie, *E*, p. 70.

lib are beyond her comprehension. She clearly demarcates between the male-world and the female-world and never imagines of transgressing her set boundary. All her care, love, and sympathy are drawn to the men- folk despite the injustice and indifference they offer. She says, "They have to do a lot of things, a lot of things you don't even know about, and its nothing to do with being educated and all that"(*E*48).

Alan Carter has argruably found a similarity between the despair of both Phoebie and Archie as the cruelties of life spare none -- man or woman. He comments:

> It would be wrong to think that *The Entertainer* consists solely of Archie's flippant patter, for Osborne balances this with the same tellingly poignant passages. In one of them Phoebie, morose with gin, suddenly pleads:
>
> 'Phoebie:I don't want to end up in being laid out by some stranger in some rotten stinking little street in Gateshead, or West Hartlepool or another of those dead and alive holes.'
>
> This is a fate which we know is almost certainly awaiting her and Phoebie has realized it. Like her husband she is trapped in a world without hope. Phoebie is sick and tired of her existence amongst a collection of `down and outs' as she calls them and we sympathize with her.[1]

The way she clings to her step daughter and at the same time tries to keep her dignity, is tragic. Her loyalty to Archie, despite his pity, stems from her awareness of realities. She is aware of her limitations and therefore she gives up. Explaining her resignation she says to Jean, "You keep on and on, try your best, and then a time comes when you can't go on any longer. It's not giving in -- or I suppose it is. It's just being sensible"(*E*45).

Thus she refuses to admit defeat. She endures but that does not signify that she is insensitive or deaf. She understands the difference between Brother Bill and Archie and prefers Brother Bill for his treating her respectfully. She confesses, "I like him because he's a gentleman. He's different from your father, even if they did go to the same posh school and all that. I like him because the way he treats me. He talks to me beautifully"(*E*50).

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[1] Carter, p. 67.

Phoebie's behaviour in the light of her past and present and her eager attempts to retain the relationship with her husband or step-daughter, or the long absent brother-in-law, remind us of Marx' observation that, "Poverty is the passive bond which causes the human being to experience the need of the greatest wealth -- the *other* human being."[1] Phoebie needs other human beings desperately indeed. J.R. Brown's comments are pertinent too in this aspect of Phoebie's character, "She had made Archie want her, but now that performance is over, and his inmost feeling for her is pity. In the play Phoebie desperately tries to patch together an appearance of dignity, feeling and good sense."[2]

On the other hand, Phoebe's explicit fidelity is just a contrast to Jean's mother's silent protest. We are surprised to see that the same Archie who ignores and pities Phoebie respects or rather fears his first wife. She, by her unuttered hatred, had earned a kind of honour and awe, unusual in that class of men for women. Archie admits that he loved his first wife, who, "was what you'd call a person of --a person of principle," and, "knew how people should behave, and there were no two ways about it"(*E*70).

She never forgave Archie for sleeping with Phoebie and her protest in silent death was not less effective than a rally in the Trafalgar Square. Archie feels it with a bite of conscience, and admits that she felt everything very deeply. Much more than he himself does. Jean's mother makes her presence felt stronger in absence and accounts for the courage, boldness and sense of self-respect that her daughter exhibits. Jean is her mother's daughter -- firm, dissenting, and self-conscious, refusing to submit to the prevailing system. Full of youthful vigour and enthusiasm as she is, in her we see a new-liberated- woman emerging, who is at once politically conscious, socially responsible, and aware of the rights of the individual. She does not hesitate to take up the challenges offered by her age. It is an age prticularly blended with social and political views that consequently makes the individual aggressive and bewildered. Alastair Davies and Peter Saunders in *Society and Literature1945-1970* say about the political background of the play, "The play expressed not so much a nostalgia for

[1] Marx, *Economic and Philosophic*, p. 106.
[2] Brown, p. 141.

empire as frustration at the national impotence which followed from its loss; for the lesson of Suez was, quite simply, that Britain was no longer a world power, and control of events was now held by the Americans and Russians."[1]

Along with this knowledge of Britain's declining power, another feeling shocked the people. They, by their own experience, concluded that ultimately the war proved nothing but a personal loss, or the loss of a family with no glory of being martyred for a noble cause. The above mentioned writers justly explain, "What affects Mick's family is not simply the cynicism of Britain's public representatives or Britain's evident powerlessness. It is that his death, on a soldier's duty, no longer has any meaning for a Britain of scrumbling selfishness."[2]

Jean takes up the responsibility she feels to be hers. She refuses to accept the world as male's alone, expects to be treated as a human being, and not merely as a woman. She however forgives her grandfather for his obsolete outlook, excusing it on account of old age. But that Graham, her lover, living in an age of liberalism and free thought, being fifty years younger, can hold the same view is impossible for her to accept. She is shocked to see Graham disapproving her political and social activities. Like her grandfather, he is negative to her participation in Trafalgar Square rally or teaching art to a "bunch of Youth Club kids". It is a challenge she is determined to accept. She firmly utters, "But-- something, something made me want to have a go at it"(*E*28).

Her decision to break off the engagement, comes from her unexpected collision with the typical male-authoritative attitude in her lover whom she had so long considered a comrade. With an aching and painful heart, she hopelessly exclaims, "And now Graham wants me to marry him. ... He doesn't want me to try something for myself. He doesn't want me to threaten him or his world, he doesn't want me to succeed. I refused him. Then it all came --Trafalgar Square and everything"(*E*29).

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[1] Davies and Saunders, p. 28.
[2] Davied and Saundres p. 28.

Thus Jean's experience gave her the painful perception that "love" to man means sharing and feeling in so far as it involves only a whole-hearted submission by women to their authority. They love to rule and enjoy women, to take care of them and maintain them. They want to relish the ego of being the bread winner, the noble saviour. Jean is enraged and disappointed. She declines the man who wants to impose such ban on her. Katharine J. Worth does not fail to notice this fact when she makes a comparison between Jean and Jimmy. In her words:

> Jean, like Jimmy Porter, is harsh in her criticism of people who try to escape the pain of life--'you're like everybody else' she tell Archie,'but you're worse--you think you can cover yourself by simply not bothering.' Jean is saddled with an unsuitable fiance who appears at the end of the play for the sole purpose of being given his dismissal. He represents the 'untroubled' or, as Osborne puts it,'the well- dressed, assured, well-educated people' whose 'emotional and imaginative capacity ... is practically negligible'. The tragic events of the play, Billie's death, the killing of Mick, bring home to Jean the primary importance of right feeling: she expresses her need for it by breakeng with her fiance. [1]

Her final rejection of her lover brings a revelation in her mind; she attains the truth that human being is the only source of strength, and courage, goodsense, and vitality. She feels no existence of god in the universe. It is declared in her words, "Here we are, we're alone in the universe, there's no God, it just seems that it all began by something as simple as sunlight striking on a piece of rock. And here we are. We've only got ourselves. Somehow, we've just got to make a go of it"*(E*85)

Jean's commitment to humanity rejecting God and religion is defined by Katharine J. Worth as "Shavian". She is right in her explanation of Jean's transformation into a true revolutionary. She puts it in the following manner, "Jean is a revolutionary in the Shavian tradition: like St Joan, only less effectively, she wants to change the world. Unlike St Joan, she has no faith in anything but man."[2]

There is an important difference between the loneliness of Osborne's men and that of his women. While loneliness makes his heroes like Bill, Archie, Jimmy, or Jock, helpless cynics, it makes Jean, Pamela and Ruth, positive, strong, and duty-

[1] J. Worth, pp. 109-110.
[2] J. Worth, p. 110.

conscious. Jean rather resembles Holyoake in this respect. Like him, she refuses to accept religion as an institution. We feel that Osborne's young rebellious women are non-believers when they stand against anomalies. Stella, the uncompromising vigorous feminist in *The End of Me Old Cigar*, shouts against churchmen, "I hate those angelic little, well-brushed dirty little devils. Church propaganda for the innocence of man in his youth. Two of them jumped on me and ripped my gym-slip off and all but raped me" (*EMOC*16).

The married women in Osborne in their ultimate acceptance of the social convention or the marriage bond accept the conventional religion too. A married Alison goes to church with Helena. But an unmarried Ruth is silent about religion. She remains so intentionally as she says to George, "My politics and your art -- they seem to be like Kate's religion, better not discussed. Rationally, at any rate"(*EGD*57-58). Behind this deliberate silence could be sensed her renouncement of both politics and religion about which she is now confused and frustrated. She, somehow has a realization that these matters could not be explained rationally. Jean's non-conformity is a rejection of the whole patriarchy while Alison's or Mrs. Elliot's or Phoebie's loyalty to convention and male authority is a reason for their loyalty to Church, as Church stands for male supremacy. God is never "she". He is always "He".

Jean's youthful boldness is not possible for Ruth to have. For her it is too late. Still we appreciate her for her sense of dignity. Simone in her study states:

> Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society. It is still true that most women are married, or have been, or plan to be, or suffer from not being. The celibate woman is to be explained and defined with reference to marriage, whether she is frustrated, rebellious, or even indifferent in regard to that institution.[1]

Simone's statement well defines the situation of characters like Jean, Ruth, Alison, Phoebie, Helena, and Pamela. They are portrayed either as married women, or unmarried, marriage being the qualifying factor to decide their status. All their

[1] Beauvoir, p. 425.

thoughts, activities, and decisions, are guided by their relationship with men. They are not independent, living for themselves. This fact remind us Simone again as she says:

> Marriage has always been a very different thing for man and for woman. The two sexes are necessary to each other, but this necessity has never brought about a condition of reciprocity between them; women, as we have seen, have never constituted a caste making exchanges and contracts with the male caste upon a footing of equality. A man is socially an independent and complete individual; he is regarded first of all as a producer whose existence is justified by the work he does for the group.[1]

She further adds that the "reproductive and domestic role to which woman is confined has not guaranteed her an equal dignity."[2] This also is a reason for ultimate resignation of the women who are married, in these plays. Besides, we see that, only those not yet tied into marriage bond, dare to disregard the bond, giving an indication of the changes society is about to undergo. Simone anticipates this inevitable transformation too, "Economic evolution in women's situation is in process of upsetting the institution of marriage: it is becoming a union freely entered upon by the consent of two independent persons."[3]

Osborne dislikes intllectual and careerist women. His own personal experiences make him averse towards careerist women as well as to the concept of much spoken of "women's lib". In his autobiography he narrates the experience with his wife Pamela Lane, who could not make up her mind between career and marriage. They had to live apart for sometime just after they got married as they could not work in one theatre group. This separation was painful to Osborne, but Pamela had not given up her career. Overwhelmed by the passion of first marriage, he tried to secure a job in his wife's theatre-group. He rushed to her, watched the play she was then doing, and with a heart full of hope, met her. He puts the happenning and the experience in the following manner:

> The first night I went upto Derby I watched her play the leading role of Hester in *The Deep Blue Sea*. ... The prize was there, all right, looking better than ever and I could not believe it possible that it might be be slipping away.

[1] Beauvoir, p. 426.
[2] Beauvoir, p. 426.
[3] Beauvoir, p. 425.

> Afterwards, in bed, she said complainingly that she found marriage and a career difficult. Sweet unreason was unanswerable, demoralizing as it did unconfident reason or passion. It was hard to believe that she had even uttered this women's magazine's cliche about career and marriage or to guess at the kind of arrangement she had in mind. She had none. Not only weariness made me refrain from asking. Women's lib was a far-off aberration like Concorde, the Common Market or the National Theatre. The absurdity was patent, but without malice. Almost soothingly, she had absent-mindedly wiped our slate out.[1]

Working women blighted Osborne's hopes from early childhood. His own mother was a successful barmaid; but she was a complete flop as mother and wife. She was unable to show the thinnest ray of love and affection for a lonely, sickly boy, anguishing at heart. Nor could he extract it from the women he came to love. Still we see that in his plays he is not as bitter and sarcastic about them as he is in his autobiographies. There is obviously and significantly a difference between the suffering man and the creative artist. The conflict between his career and married life that tore apart his own mind is not repeated in his plays in the same negative way. Rather we find his educated, intellectual women to be caring, understanding, and compassionate.

Edith, Pamela's mother, comments on the conflict between career and conjugal life in *Time Present*, when Pamela declines any attention and care she offers. She consents to Pamela's decision to stay alone, as she thinks:

> At least people are beginning to realize a woman is not a freak if she wants other things out of life. But there *are* other things, like work, yes and having affairs, and even making love. You cant want to stop all that at your age. You're young and intelligent and healthy and attractive. A lot of people like you(*TP*59).

Married twice, and quite worldly-wise to accept the demands of life, Pamela's mother can see through the reality that in spite of a woman's brave decision to stay alone, she would need some of the things offered by marriage. Her sense of morality does not disapprove of it. Pamela's decision is a kind of resignation and disagreement with the world. She announces, "I shall manage within my own, my own walls. I've no ambitions, I've told you: I love acting. I'm not so keen on rehearsals. I don't wish to be

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[1] Osborne , A Better Class , pp. 252-53.

judged or categorised or wathched. I don't want to be pronounced upon or do it for anyone."(*TP*59)

There is a differnce of opinion about the concept of success between the mother and the daughter. The mother here is preaching more aggressive views about marriage. She says, "And the worst waste I can think of is training a woman to the top of her potential and then just off-loading her into marriage when she's probably at her most useful. Probably at the height of her power"(*TP*16). She thinks Pamela's being an actress is an waste of her potentiality. She rather prefers the politician in Constance. Her assessment of Pamela and Constance may differ, but they join in unbearing the truth that, women are getting involved in the activities of the outer world. They were thus making place for themselves in the wide and huge panoroma of this vast universe. This active participation naturally brings out some by-products like celibacy, personality clash, and extra-marital relations. Not that they were absent in the past, but not as explicit as ever before. Davies and Saunders describe the decade of the sixty, "There was in 1960s Britain a new liberalism. Falteringly, and sometimes half-heartedly, progressive legislation was introduced on a range of moral issues, shifting the responsibility for moral judgements from the state to the individual". [1]

Pamela proves the comment to be true. She does not fear to admit her own responsibility in her affair with Murry. She is neither ashamed of it nor does she blame her pregnancy on Murry. Yet refusing Murry 's offer to advance further, she in fact warns him against imposing his male authority. Their conversation reveal a Pamela devoid of the usual feminine weaknesses:

> Pamela: We've had a good time together, because we've hardly been together--
> Murry: We could be...
> Pamela: Well, we won't be...
> Murry: Why not?
> Pamela: My nose says so.
> Murry: Mine says the opposite.
> Pamela: Well, I rely on mine. Not your's. But, any way, it had its pleasure. Don't renounce n them.(*TP*63)

[1] Davies and Saunders, p. 45.

In these words a maturer Pamela emerges with a wider range of acceptance. She thanks Murry for her pregnancy as it has given her a proof of her feminity. She utters to herself, though apparently to Murry, "At least, I've not dried up like an old prune after all. You've proved that. That should please you"(*TP*65). This boldness to admit and honour her womanhood makes her more humane, more attractive. It also anticipates the inevitable changes society is going through, discarding the rigid moral codes of sexuality imposed particularly on women.

As mentioned before, Pamela is in discordance with her time. Alienated from her society and surroundings, she is resigning more and more. It is to be noticed that the challenging and revolting attitude of Jean in her early twenties is gradually declining into a stoic indifference of the early thirties in Pamela just a decade after. Simon Trussler justly notes Pamela's affinity with Jimmy in her alienation. While analysing her character the critic says, "*Time Present* has a sting in its title. Its actress heroine Pamela is in fact as maladjusted to the swinging sixties as Jimmy Porter was to the fraudulent fifties."[1]

Trussler shows the similarity between Jimmy and Pamela but fails to show the difference between the two women, Jean and Pamela clearly. The courage displayed by Jean is lacking in Pamela. Nor does Osborne show much interest in portraying in details about women in politics. He could have done it in Constance. His portrayal of Jean with her socio-political awareness and in the brief reference to her participation in Trafalgar Square Rally seems a much better portrayal than that of Constance the M.P. In spite of Edith's respect for Constance as a politician, she remains a colourless character with her membership in British Parliament. Compared with Jean, an insignificant part of the common mass, Constance's position in politics, places her in quite a significant role in British society which could have been utilised for developing her into a complete political personality. But we see nothing of her public career or active role in contemporary British politics. She is only Pamela's friend who is an M.P, sharing with her the flat. She shares her distressed loneliness as a single woman

[1] Trussler, p. 140

separated from her child and husband. The play displays her agonised womanhood, which failed with man; not the successful victorious self, who dares to go without man. Even that part is not portrayed in details. Trussler's words define Constance succinctly:

> Constance talks like one of her pamphlets: but Pamela responds like herself -- and this they do at moment when what might have been a crucial and meaningful difference between them comes to the surface of their conversation. In fact Constance offers us no convincing explanation of her commitment to time future, so that Pamela's difficulties with her own decade are given a free theatrical ruin.[1]

Thus in Osborne's male-dominated plays women play subsidiary roles and the reversal is found where woman play the protagonist. *Time Present* is peopled by women; men are present here only to get Pamela her role done. Simon Trussler appropriately says that men perform a specific task in the play. He thinks it unusual not only for Osborne but for other modern dramatists too, who present men only in their functional roles. Crowded entirely by women, in this play the man comes only to help Pamela to conceive and to get aborted.[2] It somehow compensates for the lack of importance of women in other Osborne plays.

The tendency to deify the traditional sex-morality by women culminates in *The End of Me Old Cigar*, where the protagonist Regine runs a brothel. She invites famous men in society and offers them attractive, accomplished girls. Her brothel is a protest against society's hypocrisy and the morality of virginity and chastity. Regine cries out, "Give us a girl for the first of her grooming, her indoctrinartion, and I'll make her first a whore and then her whole self, her *self* for life. The prick is just where it is. The cunt is where the heart lies"(*EMOC*22). These words remind us of Bertrand Russell's criticism of marriage. "Married woman and prostitutes alike make their living by means of their sexual charms, and do not, therefore, only yeild when their own instinct prompts them to do so,"[3] Russell notes.

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[1] Trussler, p. 153
[2] Trussler, pp. 154-55.
[3] Russell, p. 33.

A satire on feminism and social hypocrisy, this play lacks the warmth of life and sounds somewhat like a propaganda on the injustice done by men to women. It is more like a demonstration against the huge machinery of patricharchy where women are tearing all bonds of matrimony, purity and morality. To declare war against the oppression of men, women are using their most abused weapon, sexual charm. Jog condemns the maltreatment of women in service. She shouts, "I can't stand another man, the sight of one. The mother-home-maker secretary kind is still what they want, and they won't believe we're not. All laying down this crap. All stewing maleness and rhetoric"(*EMOC*31).

Here politeness and gentleness are brushed aside. Everything is described in rude and brutal language, in the terms of sex. Regine says about power that it is sexy and particularly recognizable in bed (*EMOC*90). Female sexuallity is being celebrated as a source of strength to entrap man. It is a play that exposes Osborne's satiric and sarcastic attitude to the conception of women's lib, but it lacks the human touch that has enriched his early plays.

His bitter indictment of women is nowhere so explicit than in *Inadmissible Evidence*. The protagonist tries woman one after another and fails. All his desires to communicate and love ultimately ends in lust, leaving him more shattered and ruined. He cannot think of any relation but in physical terms. Women characters are not figures but shadows or voices over telephone; it is a one-man show. Like a mirage they misguide or deceive the lonely, bewildered man. His relationship with his secretary or telephonist is also casual and momentary like that with his mistress and wife. Still they all have to take the blame of tormenting him. They appear in role of seducers as well of the seduced.

While discussing this particular play, Lawrence Kitchin in his *Drama in the Sixties* finds a parallel between Osborne and Byron. He writes:

> A solid Osborne managing clerk and the usual bovine Osborne women represent two different kinds of work, for, as Byron remarked: 'It is terrible work, this love, and undoes all a man's projects for good and glory.' Indeed one memorable point made is the stamina drained from modern executive by

> infidelities, whether he's stalling both wife and mistress on the telephone or seducing the telephonist in a draught from the office floor.[1]

There is indeed a startling similarity between Byron's life and experiences and those of Osborne's. Both of them had a disturbed childhood with dominating mothers. Both of them got involved with girls from the moment of their growing up. But free sex-life could not satisfy them in the long run, nor could it help them to form a respectable view of women. This negative attitude resulted in bitterness and cynicism, earning for them the title of mysogyny. At the same time both Osborne and Byron were discontented with the existing social structure and showed a sarcastic defiance of its norms and values. Their rebellious spirit drove them against all injustices in life. Consequently they proved themselves misfits for the practical world. Relationship with women, particularly, made them objects of criticism as they could not conform to the conventional sex-morality. Byron's sarcastic pen spared no one from darting comments. His all-pervasive criticism in *Don Juan* attacked society with all its abuses, just as Osborne, unable to resist himself, burst out in unreedmable hatred in his famous letter, To My Countrymen.

Yet no one would be able to question their patriotism and concern for people or the country. Byron died in Greece, struggling for its independence. *The Times* in London paid its tribute to dead Osborne in its obituary entitling it,"A Patriot for us". Calling him the "chronicle of post-war England and its follies" *The Times* reminds us of the underlying optimism for a better world in all his invectives and says,"Behind his cynicism lurked the belief that intelligent objection was worth while."[2]

In Byron too, side by side with his bitter and satiric rejection of the traditional moral values and institutions upholding them, there is an appreciation of deep and sincere love for man and country. It glows from the heart spontaneously like those of Juan and Haidee or overwhelms Manfred with melancholic depression for his inexpressible and inexplicable sense of guilt. Byron's confession about himself, "I'm so changeable, being everything by turns and nothing long -- I'm such a strange melange

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[1] Lawrence Kitchin, *Drama in The Sixties*, London, Faber, 1966, p. 190.
[2] *The Times* , Dec 27, 1994

of good and evil that it would be difficult to describe me."[1] has an echo in Osborne's final assesssment of himself in his autobiography.[2]

In Osborne's plays, in contrast to the real women characters, there is an attempt to embody an idealized womanhood in the author's sense of the term. Often it is only a reference, often brief and short appearance, just to give a visual image to the audience of what womanhood should be. The nourishment of this shadowy image in the hero's heart is certainly significant. In spite of all their hatred and aversion, Osborne's men repeatedly turn back their thirsty souls to women with eager expectations to be quenched or fulfilled or healed. Madeline, Jimmy's early love, the Negress whose song enchanted Archie; Annie, whom Laurie deeply loves; and Abigail, whom Pamela cannot help praising, are just what women in these plays are not, and what their men want them to be. They are the source of vitality and liveliness, full of romance, thrill and vigour, with a capacity to respond to life with a stirring heart. They are, in a word, what Shaw called the "Life force". Jimmy says about Madeline, "She had more animation in her little finger than you two put together. .... Just to be with her was an adventure. Even to sit on the top of a bus with her was like setting out with Ulyssess"*(LBA*19). Archie says about the Negress,"But if ever I saw any hope or strength in the human race, it was in the face of that old fat Negress getting up to sing about Jesus or something like that"(*E*70). To Laurie, Annie is "the most dashing ... romantic ... friendly ... playful ... loving ... impetuous ... larky ... fearful ... detached ... constant woman" he has ever met and loved (*HA*139). Pamela thought about Abigail in a negative way at first and after seeing her, was spellbound, "At least she's alive in her own way", and realized that "Abigail isn't wooden."(*TP*78)

These women in their brief appearance or in the references given to, emerge like the rainbow in the blue sky, giving a colourful display of life force mixed with feminine charm and beauty Osborne's men long for and yearn at heart.

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[1] Norton Anthology, n.p. , n.d. p.1133

[2] "Such certainty , like mediocrity, can be unbearably enviable. In particular, to a life overruled by passion."*Almost A*, p. 273.

But again and again they have to come down to the grey earth where mortal women with lonely, tormented selves, are counting days. True, they have their limitations, still in their struggles, defeats, efforts, and aspirations, they are touchable, humane, and lovable. Osborne with all his male pride fails to make their pictures blurred or wiped out.

MEN IN WESKER

Walter Wager in his *Playwrights Speak* refutes the charges of "over simplification and cliches" against Wesker brought by some critics for his explicit left-wing inclination. He says, "Arnold Wesker is not simple because, like so many of us, he is a man with *several* dreams. He is also, like so many other creative people, a product of his environment and a refugee from it."[1]

Wager's comment seems to be true when we study Wesker's plays and see that his men are dreamers with intense creative impulses. They want to insert rhythm and melody in the prosaic hardships of survival. The world they dream of, is never to be eclipsed by the dark shadows of evil and sorrow. With all their youthful zeal and enthusiasm they take arms against the sea of troubles that threaten to overwhelm them. But grabbing jaws of mechanization devour them, dehumanize and belittle them into dwarfs. Wesker fears this dehumanizing effects of the machine and war. He knows that it destroys integrity and totality of life, robbing man of the essential spirit of heroism and courage.

In his plays we see war-torn individuals, who were once war-heroes. Crushed into pieces by the demonic pressure of commercial rat-race, they could neither realize their dreams completely, nor accept the failure boldly. A sense of defeat permeates their life, making them vague like their own fleeting dreams. Sarah in *CSWB* is overwhelmed to see her son back home. She cannot believe her eyes. She exclaims, "I thought you were a dream" Ronnie's reply, "Perhaps I am" (*CSWB*69) is the pathetic confession of a man who cannot hold his grips tightly anymore. This awareness of incapacity is rooted in his inability to face the failures threatening his attempts.

With most of Wesker's early heroes like Peter, Paul, Ronnie, Dave, Pip, Andy, the problem is that they dream of an ideal but are not prepared to face the inevitable

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[1] Walter Wager, *Playwrights Speak*, Intro. John Russell Taylor, London, Longmans, 1969, p. 214.

blows that follow the ways of realizing such dreams. They set on a journey to a utopia that can never be reached. Drenched in the muddy realities, they still step into the quicksand of hopes and dreams. A painful realization of the fact that machine breeds evil and ignorance while capitalism nourishes it sometimes drive them towards a frenzy of madness, often to desperate efforts of personal salvation. Dave's fear and self-pity is the result of his own experiences and good enough to account for his desire to escape from city and society. He says:

> Since being demobbed I've worked in a factory turning outdoors and window frames and I've seen men hating themselves while they were doing it. Morning after morning they've come in with cold hatred in their eyes, brutalized! All their humanity gone. These you call men? All their life they're going to drain the energy into something that will give them nothing in return. (*The Trilogy*164)

Paul in *The Kitchen* sadly speaks of his dream of friendship and removal of the kitchen, "So that's what I dream. I dream of a friend. You give me a rest ... you take away this mad kitchen so I make friends"(*The Kitchen*51). There are moments when enthusiasts like Andrew Cobham resign and appeal, "Don't oppose me, Jake, I am weary of battling"(*TVOGC*155).

In an interview in *Encore* (as quoted in Henry Goodmen's "Arnold Wesker" in *Drama Survey*) Wesker says:

> I want to write about people in a way that will somehow give them an insight to an aspect of life which they may have had before; and further, I want to impart to them some of the enthusiasm I have for that life. I want to teach ... It is the bus driver, the housewife, the miner and the Teddy Boy to whom I should like to address myself.[1]

We see his plays peopled by cooks, waiters, farm labourers and such others. Coming mostly from different professions of the working class, they earn their daily bread by their own sweat, enough to make them practical to endure the deceptions and deprivations of life. But incurably romantic as Wesker's men are, their contradiction lies between their socio-economic background and class-basis on the one hand and

[1] Henry Goodman,"Arnold Wesker", *Drama Survey*, (Minneapolis), I (Fall 1961), pp. 216-217.

their response to it on the other. Like their creator they are "not a defector but an exile"[1] in their own class and society.

What marks the difference is their frustration when their dreams break down. They are unable to accept the fact, unlike their creator. Wesker himself points out the autobiographical elements in his plays, like the similarity between Sarah and his mother, depiction of his own sister and brother-in-law in Ada and Dave and self-portrayal in Ronnie. But at the same time he notes:

> What isn't obvious is what I choose to select and juxtapose and extend. I married my wife: Ronnie in Roots does not. Now, knowing that Ronnie doesn't -- and that there are many kinds of Ronnies, who never face up to the final challenge of their own beliefs or instincts -- altered the details and the shape of the whole play. So this is where the imaginative quality comes into my writing, as opposed to the recreation of facts and incidents.[2]

Wesker's, thus, is not an uncomplicated world. In it individuals of various age, profession and temperament crowd with all their desires, longings and anguishes. H.Ribalow, an American critic notes this realistic aspect of Wesker, "Wesker sees in his men and women the people of the world, with their dreams, their conflicts, their loves, their hates, their inability to get along together."[3] Ribalow does not forget to mention the playwright's ultimate goal. He says, "Behind the daily grubby work there is a message. Men struggle without knowing why. They grope for love, which more often than not, passes them by."[4] His plays, as we see, are dramatization of this struggle.

The Kitchen, his first play, fully imbued with his own experiences as a pastry-cook in Paris, reveals the microcosm with gamut of human experiences and emotions--love, hate, jealousy, business, profit, enmity, sympathy and apathy of all kinds -- personal, racial, religious as well as national. With the hissing sound of the stoves, the busy movement of the waiters and waitresses, it's speed, activity and restlessness, the kitchen stands for the world. Wesker says in the introductory note, "The world might

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[1] Wager, p. 214
[2] *Wesker on File*, Compiled by Glenda Leeming, London, Methuen, 1985, p. 49.
[3] H.U.Ribalow, *Arnold Wesker*, New York, Twayne, 1966, p. 28.
[4] Ribalow, p. 28.

have been a stage for Shakespeare but to me it is a kitchen, where people come and go and cannot stay long enough to understand each other, and friendships, loves, enmities are forgotten as quickly as they are made."(*K*9)

The play shows how modern civilization is stripping man of his individual identity. No one has time to talk or think. Personal griefs, sorrows and feelings are overlooked in this kitchen. Everyone is running. It is quite difficult to individuate the characters until the play reaches the interlude. Only then we get to know them personally. Then we know that there is love, there are dreams and desires extremely personal. They express their inner fears, wishes, longings and sorrows unmindfully only when the "ovens are at half" and they are off the work. Yet they cannot totally detach themselves from the system they are in. They start talking in the language of the kitchen. Gradually transformed, they become themselves. We get to know that the cores of their hearts cherish dreams; dreams of things which in crude and mechanical struggle for living they find beyond reach. Things they dream of are not impossible or heavenly, rather extremely down-to-earth. As Peter puts it, "Raymondo he want a new woman every night. I want a workshop. Paul he wants a friend. Irishman he wants a bed and Hans he just want the million dollars" (*K*52).

Wesker's men have a terrible fear of the mechanizing effects of civilization which fear is echoed in Dimitri's reply to Raymondo's question why he refuses to work in a factory, "I tell you, in a factory a man makes a little piece till he becomes a little piece" (*K*20). These words, narrating Dimitri's painful experience as a day lobourer, are echoes of Marx's observation of the employer-employee relationship in an industrial enterprise. Reflecting on this "Industrial war" Marx concludes:

> And it is neither from devotion nor from duty that the soldiers of this army bear the exertions imposed on them, but only to escape the hard necessity of hunger. They feel neither attachment nor gratitude towards their bosses, nor are these bound to their subordinates by any feeling of benevolence. They do not know them as men, but only as instruments of production which have to yield as much as possible with as little cost as possible.[1]

[1] Karl Marx, *Manuscripts* , p. 35.

Naturally the other dream that beckons them is the freedom from this slavery and the removal of walls between man and man. Paul pleads:

> you take away the mad kitchen so I make friends, so I think -- maybe all the people I thought were pigs are not so much pigs .... --that there's a wall, a big wall between me and millions of people like him. And I think. --where will it end? .... may be one morning we should wake up and find them all gone .(*K*51-52)

Within the four walls of the kitchen there are racial jealousies, ethnic conflicts as well as love and fellow-feelings between man and woman. Paul assures Raymondo when they plan an evening of bachelors that he would not miss his wife. His description of his own wife as a fool is not merely the repining of an unfortunate husband. He is disturbed to think that she is going to have children one day and those kids are going to have a fool for a mother. His feeling of conjugal bitterness and the consequent negative view of women are concomitant of his own frustrated life that could visualize a hazy picture of the future. Paul's view of women is strengthened by the behaviour of Monique with whom Peter is madly in love. She finally leaves Peter because her husband is going to buy a house, although she had been pregnant twice by Peter. Her crude and selfish materialism justifies Paul's misunderstanding of women. She drives Peter mad. He becomes furious when Violet, another waitress, insults him. Desperately trying to assert his manhood, Peter shouts, "Me! Me! Is my kingdom here. This is the side where *I* live"(*K*67).

His mad frenzy breaks the gradually-developed world of Marango, the owner, who does not understand that man can or does need anything but work and food. He is horrified to see the wheel of work stopped, which means, "You have stopped my whole world"(*K*68). Drawing a parallel between the people in the *Kitchen* on the one hand and the common airmen in the *Chips With Everything* on the other, John Garforth says, "The people in the *Kitchen* have dreams, but they have no real control over what happens to them, any more than the Norfolk farmers or the airmen."[1] As far as their fate is concerned, Garforth seems right. But their awareness of being is not the same. The men in the Kitchen are really not as unaware and inarticulate as the

[1] John Garforth, "Arnold Wesker's Mission", *Encore*, 10 (May-June 1963), p. 40.

airmen or the Norfolk farmers are. They at least ask questions and want to escape from this prison. Peter wants Monique to take a decision soon, as he does not want to stay in Tivoli anymore. His reply to Kevin's remark about the Irish Republican Army's activities as "something mad and kid's playing" is significant. To Peter, to live means to dream; he believes, "When a man dreams -- he grows, big, better"(*K*49).

This longing for something higher and bigger drives them to violent outburst and it breaks the calm serenity and self-satisfaction of Marango. As if all on a sudden, he wakes up from the forgetful sleep and finds his castle in the air fallen to pieces. He now desperately tries to know what more is there under the surface, "I want to learn something. Is there something I don't know? .... What is there more, tell me?"(*K*69) The gap he now feels between his employees and himself remind us of Marx's words mentioned earlier. These men in the *Kitchen* are from a background where illiteracy and ignorance prevail. By their sensitivity and consciousness they are able to exalt themselves up to something more than what they appear to be. A feeling that they are encaged in, and a desire to break the cage work in them and make them restless. Peter, Kevin, Paul, Dimitri make an impression on us individually even in this fast-moving picture-parade. But men in *Roots* lack this self- awareness and dreams. Theirs is a sleep of oblivion, devoid of dreams. Life for them is a stagnant marsh without any surge of anger or passion. There is no question, nor any resentment about their state of being; it is just passing of days with no awareness of existence.

Like Osborne's, Wesker's own family and its background worked together to build up the man and playwright he is, making and remaking his plays in the long run. Fortunately Wesker had a happy childhood within the surroundings of a close-knit family. Moreover the family had active involvement in the socialist movement that loomed large in his intellectual expansion. Of course his parents quarrelled, as Wesker had admitted in an interview to Ronald Hayman, "There were times when I was distressed by the rows between my parents". But the redeeming factor was "there was a life in the household, a political and a social life and they were also parents whom I

adored individually so it somehow didn't matter."[1] This is just the reverse of Osborne's childhood experience. The warm and lively community-life gave Wesker a sense of security. He says, "I enjoyed the East End. It didn't worry me that we were poor. I enjoyed the street life. There were aunts and a grandmother next door."[2] All these blended together to make him an imaginative man with a reforming zeal reflected in his organization of the Centre 42. Osborne's childhood memories on the other hand were shadowed by the tormenting coldness of a selfish mother, an indifferent grandmother and a host of careless relatives. He could not learn to trust and love in return of the same. The only person he loved and grabbed at helplessly, died young, leaving him lonelier. Wesker's parents and relatives turned his poverty-stricken childhood to hopefulness against all adversities. These are responsible to a considerable extent for making the difference between them as persons and dramatists.

Like Osborne's heroes, Wesker's are also bewildered in a world where life started with so much of hope and prospects for the oppressed working-class after the second world-war. But all their hopes and desires were ultimately betrayed by the socialist governments in East-Europe and the welfare-state in England. Even then Wesker's faith in basic good sense of human being is never lost, nor does he sound as bitter as Osborne. It appears from his autobiography that Osborne could never forget his mother's icy hatred that did not spare his father even after his (the father's) death. He could not forgive his mother for her unmotherly behavior throughout his life. Contrary to it, Wesker's memory of a loving and anxious mother clinging to her family and party with arduous religious devotion always inspired him to retain his faith in humanity, particularly in women.

Thus we see that Osborne, through his protagonists, pours down his own anger, rebellion, hatred, and mistrust towards society, towards men, women, and towards the system. Osborne's plays are mainly one-man shows, refusing the entrance of anyone else in the lime-light. His men reflect the intolerance, cynicism, and self-

[1] Ronald Hayman, *Contemporary Playwrights Arnold Wesker*, London, Heinman, 1970, pp. 3-4.
[2] Hayman, p. 3.

centredness developed in him by the deprivations and suppressions of a loveless childhood.

Wesker wants to create and recreate his experiences, reprinting the pictures of the people he saw around. He willingly allows other characters not only to develop, but sometimes even to surpass the protagonist. In the same interview he explains to Ronald Hayman why he gives so much emphasis on Sarah's character. He says that he recreated his parents in Sarah and Harry. Ronnie is a self-portrait with whom he intends to take liberty because, he says, "I put myself in the weak role in order that alongside Ronnie, Sarah Khan can emerge and alongside Ronnie in *Jerusalem*, Dave and Ada can emerge. And in *Roots*, Beatie can emerge."[1] Thus it is the playwright's negative capability that makes Ronnie revolt against the demoralizing system, but it does not turn him into a misogynist even when his spirit is withering within.

At the beginning Ronnie is an exuberant, lively young man, very much his mama's boy. He is a product of the age that looked expectantly to the future after a long period of war, death and destruction. As history records, "When the war finally ended, the popular change proved irresistible, and the Labour Party was swept into office on a wave of euphoria and optimism. There was to be no going back to the 1930's".[2]

The play starts in the decade of Sarah and Harry's youth. Now during Ronnie's youth:

> the new Labour government set about implementing war-time reports, laying the basis for free and universal national health, social security and education system, as part of a new welfare state. ... the government also laid down the foundations ... for ... 'mixed economy' by nationalizing industries ... all of which were crucial to any future economic revitalization.[3]

The whole of the young generation seemed to be seized with hope and expectations as if a bright and vibrant future is just within the reach. We see our expeditious hero reproching his father for not attending the party meetings. Ronnie

[1] Hayman p. 2
[2] Davies and Saunders, p. 14.
[3] Davies and Saunders, p. 14.

helds his father responsible for pushing this blood of inertia into his daughter's vein, "How can you know what's going on in the world ? That's where Ada gets her apathy from. She's you! And you are a lazy old sod"(*CSWB*39). A confident Ronnie visualizes the dawn of a new sunshine heralding new days, "it is beginning. Plans for town and country planning. New cities schools and hospitals ... the whole country is going to be organized to cooperate instead of tear at each other's throat"(*CSWB*41).

It is impossible to expect such an exuberant cry in the voice of an Osborne-hero. Instead, Jimmy sighs hopelessly, "It's always so depressing, always the same. We never seem to get any further, do we? .... Our youth is slipping away"(*LBA*14-15). The cause is to be looked for in their childhood-experiences. Jimmy knows from the early days what cruelty and coldness is. His world was never warm and cosy with love. His father, too, had been to the Spanish war like Dave. The Spanish war freed Dave from all the illusions he once had about socialism. He lost faith in the instinctive good sense in human being. Jimmy's father was back home with the death-shell shot. Jimmy recollects, "He'd come back from the war in Spain, you see. And certain god-fearing gentlemen there had made such a mess of him, he didn't have long left to live"(*LBA*57).

Both Mr.Porter and Dave met people who snatched their positivism away; still with Dave, it is not as fatal as it was with Mr. Porter. The indifference of his family hastened the death, making the anguish of a little boy of ten traumatic and unbearable. Jimmy can never wipe away the memory of the agonizing last moments of his father. He always remembers "the sweet sickly smell of a dying man." It obsessed him with "despair and bitterness" for ever.(*LBA*57-58) On the contrary, Ronnie's experience of family crisis is not totally frustrating. Once in their childhood their father had left them, not caring to take sick Ada to the hospital. Yet they found other caring persons like Mrs. Bernstein, their neighbour, who came forward and saved Ada with her soup. After all, for Ronnie, everyone was not as unconcerned as Jimmy, in his case, found them to be. All these bloomed Ronnie to a hopeful, bright, promising youth who wonders to see himself in the mirror, "Young , good looking, hopeful, talented ... hopeful anyway"(*CSWB*53). Ronnie is a sensitive young man who writes poems,

understands others and tries to probe deeper into their problems. He feels his father's troubles very well and says to his aunt, "I don't suppose there is anything more terrifying to a man than his own sense of failure, and your brother Harry is really a very sensitive man. No one knows more than he does know how he's failed"(*CSWB*47).

Ironically these words sound to be an anticipation of Ronnie's own failure. His analysis of his father's defeat imperceptibly identifies himself with Harry. They have at the deep of their hearts, the same make-up, temperament and, above all, a creeping fear of facing the world unlike Sarah's. Sarah shouts at Harry, fights him, tries to get a move with him; than being disappointed, despairs. She does not understand him; it is beyond her comprehension that a man can give up, can spend days only reading books, when he has a world of troubles to face, a wife to maintain, two kids to feed. But Ronnie understands him. External incidents like the Hungarian crisis disillusions Ronnie. He cannot accept the fact of aggression by socialist Russia. It is an outburst of Wesker's own shock as he admits to Wager:

> It's no secret that my sympathy for the Communist cause was drastically shaken by *The Gods That Failed*. That book disturbed me so profoundly -- really shocked me -- that I wrote letters to Spender and Koestler and others to find out if the book was actually cold fact. Then the Hungarian uprising and Soviet intervention shook me even further.[1]

Still we can conclude that it is not only these incidents that derail Ronnie. An inherent inertia works too, eating up all his energy. It ruins all his prospects slowly. Like Harry he loses the spirit to fight. A total despair encroaches upon him. Just as Paul Morel becomes his Papa's boy at the end of *Sons And Lovers*, and desires intensely to come out of his mother's grip, Ronnie too, cannot retain his mother's imposed optimtsm for long. Now he blames his mother for misguiding him. He mocks at her devotion to socialism and asks, "Take me by the hand and show me who was right and who was wrong. Point them out. Do it *for* me. I stand here and a thousand different voices are murdering my mind"(*CSWB*71).

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[1] Wager, p.225.

The disease that poisons Ronnie making him lethargic has the same symptoms as those of his father; excessive thought leading to fear of action. His mother is horrified to discern it. She foresees the father's fate repeated in the son's life. Ronnie's dilemma is somewhat Hamletesque in as-much-as it makes him a coward. A thousand voices penetrating Ronnie's mind and pricking his conscience are ruining his courage to accept the facts. He cannot be resolute to start afresh as Harry did. Harry also used to read books. It annoyed Sarah. Her complain never ended, "Books! Nothing interests him, only books"(*CSWB*13).

Harry even tried to write his autobiography. The proposed title of the book was "Of me, the dummy and my family". The few lines read by Ronnie reveals a man whose thought about life and its meaning is totally confused. No wonder that Sarah could not understand him. For a poor working woman, who had to feed her children, and fight the hostilities to keep body and soul together, there remains very little time to ponder on life and its meaning. It is a job becoming of the dry intellectuals. In this play we notice Ronnie undergoing a transition, a process of transformation. He does not remain merely a working class man fighting for survival. Harry is an anticipation of the intellectualising and declassing of Ronnie. He reads novels, keeps himself informed of the world around and sees the pros and cons of things too clearly to be active and optimistic. This awareness of reality makes Ronnie hesitant and unable to adjust as it makes Ruth in Osborne' *Epitaph For George Dillon* or Jimmy in *Look Back In Anger*. The post-war chaotic disorder contributes to his disenchantment. The temperamental affinity finally makes him a failure like his father.

Sarah is a socialist whom Monty ridicules and charges with fanaticism. But she makes it obvious that to live, fight, and survive, one needs this kind of blind faith capable of making one accept the sorrows and adversities poured down on life.

The Spanish days had taken away from Dave his faith on humanity, socialism and other related values of life. Though he did not return a skeleton like Jimmy's father, bankrupt at heart, he too, is no more the brave fighter that he was. Terror-stricken, Dave's retreat from the "jungle of civilization" is a desperate refusal of modern life and world. Still he is left with some hope to start and there he considers

his wife the only fellow-fighter. If Ronnie is the production of post-war frustration and anarchy, Dave is the distressed remnant that the war left. Unlike Ronnie, he does not give up so easily. That makes him a real soldier. Still a dreamer, Dave concentrates his dreams on the family instead of the nation. He at least continues the fight. Now he accepts the truth that one cannot change society simply by wishing to do so. He admits, "No, of course we cannot change it"(*ITAJ*164).

Nevertheless, he dreams of the closely-attached family and starts working accordingly. He envisions a family where the husband will understand the wife, children will love and respect their parents, and a new generation will spring up with love for life. He concentrates all his faith on marriage, which to him is union of two persons, not an estrangement. He says to Ada, "in a years time this barn'll be my workshop. There I shall work and here, ten yards from me, where I can see and hear them, will be my family. And they will share in my work and I shall share in their lives. I don't want to be married to the strangers"(*ITAJ*165).

Here Dave resembles his creator more than Ronnie does. Ronnie fails to communicate, to retain any relationship for long. His refusal of Beatie is not the refusal of a beloved only, but a sign of his own inability to sustain a fruitful relationship. His own words are expressions of pity for his ownself, "I can't keep a job and I can't keep a girl so every one thinks what I say does not count. Like they used to say of Dad. Poor old Harry -- poor old Ronnie"(*ITAJ* 208). With all his knowldge and capacity to analyse, he lacks the wisdom the average, illiterate Sarah has. Sarah confesses and warns, "I'm always telling you you cant change world on your own"(*ITAJ*210). Yet she does not stop her fighting even in her old age while Ronnie goes on talking and talking only. Dave is once annoyed, "You bloody Khans! You all talk." Ronnie's self-assesment is in fact diagnosis of his own disease that makes a self portrait, "There isn't anything I've seen through to the end ... Isn't that curious ? I say all the right things, I think all the right things, but somewhere, some bloody where I fail as a human being. Like my father"(*ITAJ*217).

Too much of understanding and sensitivity infiltrates a physical lethergy into Ronnie's blood. We remember Jimmy Porter too, only talking and talking and refusing to work because he finds " no brave causes" left any more.

Primarily it is the political situation that disappoints him. He exclaims, "We put a Labour Party in power. ... It wasn't such a useless war after all, ... But what did the bleeders do, eh ? They sang the Red Flag in the Parliament and then started building atom bombs ... And a whole generation of us laid down our arms and retreated into ourselves"(*ITAJ*215).

Frustration thus spreads its roots into his blood. Jimmy Porter and Ronnie are almost of the same ingredients, excepting that Ronnie has still a loving mother to pursue him back, while Jimmy, despite all his grudges against her class, helplsly looks towards Alison, and is paid back by cold silence. Jimmy represents Osborne with his anger, cynicism, fear, and hatred. Ronnie is created in the image of Wesker but is not Wesker himself. The playwright had admitted the difference as had been mentioned earlier. Dave could at least partially do what Ronnie could not do at all. He married his beloved and took the responsibility of his family. In his own way he continues the fight. Wesker portrays Dave in the image of his brother-in-law whom he adored. He dedicated the play to Ralph and Della, his brother-in-law and sister. H. Ribalow remembers his meeting Ralph Saltiel, Wesker's brother-in-law. In his study he mentions:

> Ralph Saltiel and I met when we were both the in service of our countries during world war 11. I was a radio operator in Colombo,Ceylon; Ralph was with the Air Sea Rescue, British boat-building unit in Colombo. Ralph was a brilliant, dynamic, exciting human being who swore that, should he survive the war, he would live as a simple working man, using his hands as carpenter. He was a socialist, a Jew,and a man with strong sense of justice and idealism.[1]

Wesker's portrayal of Ralph in Dave is more true to life than his portrayal of Ronnie for his ownself. Dave is tired of the city-life, of modern civilization. He hates the mechanization that turns man into "working-animal". But unlike Ronnie or Libby Dobson he stands firm. Wesker's own career was not smooth and rose-ridden. He tried

[1] Ribalow, p. 53.

many jobs without any academic career. He had to fight a tough battle to reach his final goal, the stage. He too didnot give up. Perhaps this stamina and perseverance, he learned from his sister and brother-in-law, with whom he stayed in a Norfolk village because he "was so fond of them."

Though they came back again to London, yet it was not a complete surrender. They started with the same hope. Ribalow's reminiscences are not irrelevalent to quote here, "When I visited Ralph Saltiel in London in 1960, he was as exciting a person as I had remembered him, but he no longer was a struggling carpenter in the British country side. .... Visiting with them, one could hardly imagine that they had lived for so long a time under such cirmustances; but they had".[1]

Dave has the same strength and courage to embrace the realities. He is annoyed to see people expecting too much from him. He impatiently asks, "Am I expected to live in the glory of the nineteen-thirties all my life?"(*ITJA*214) He tries to make Sarah and Ronnie understand that he cannot play the role of the ever-glorious fighter for all his life as he did in Spain. As a man of the earth, he cannot deny the down-trodden facts of everyday life. Those youthful dreams and visions are lost but the serenity in his tone when he admits that he is neither a prophet nor a spokesman presents perhaps the maturest man in the *Trilogy*. He seems to whisper to himself, when he says, "I have reached the point where I can face the fact that, I'm not a prophet. Once I had -- I don't know -- a -- a moment of vision, and I yelled ... that I was a prophet"(*ITAJ*215). That phase of life is over. Faced by the cruel facts of survival, he finally adjusts himself to the idea of human limitation. Admitting his own potentialies he says, "Look, I'm a bright boy. There are'nt many flies on me and when I was younger I was even brighter. I was interested and alive to everything, history, anthropology, philosophy, architecture -- I had ideas. But not now"(*ITAJ* 215-216).

These lines speak of the realization of a man who has the understanding that pursuit of knowledge does not mean rejection of life. Knowledge is not a bundle of

[1] Ribalow, p. 53.

insipid, abstract ideas. Dave is not hesitant of accepting his responsibility. He eagerly emerges in the role of a husband and a father. What he fears most is the process that turns man into a machine, the curse of science that sucks the life-blood and leaves man an empty shell. He wails, "I'm not saying I'm useless, but machinery and modern techniques have come about to make me the odd man out. Here I've been, comrade citizen, presenting my offerings and the world's rejected them. I don't count"(*ITAJ*216).

Counter to Ronnie, counter to Libby Dobson, Dave is a more practical, realistic and mature man, capable of self-assesment and self-criticism. Failure does not turn him a fatalist or deafitist. He still hopes to succeed in London. He expectantly consoles himself, " Who knows, may be people will buy furniture in town"(*ITAJ*213).

Ronnie, Libby Dobson, Dave and most other Wesker men embody the typical dilemma the modern man is suffering from. Libby scolds Dave for his backward leap towards rural life as it is impossible to defy and deny the progress of science and simultaneously live as a modern man. That would turn the wheel of progress towards primitive darkness, no matter how sweet the "back-to-nature" slogan sounds. Dobson marks the illogicality of Dave's attempts to do without the modern technological facilities. Well aware of this fact, Dave clings to this decision desperately as it is the only means of his protest against the boredom that the city life infects men with. "The ache of modernism" that gnaws at all his vitality makes him rebellious. He yells, "Do you think we care the city was large or smell of petrol? It was the boredom man -- the sheer boredom. Nine to five! Mass production! Remember? It numbered us, made us soggy and soft"(*ITAJ*182). Libby Dobson and Dave Simmonds seem to represent two aspects of the war-torn man. While Dobson is total negation losing faith in socialism, democracy, women, or humanity as a whole, Dave still goes on struggling with a look forward.

Besides these sensitive, self-conscious characters, there are other people in the *Trilogy* whom we can term as "class" rather than individuals. They are the working people. The Norfolk farmers in *Roots* are those inarticulate, unaware, self-satisfied

men, ever in wishful sloth, whom Wesker targets to hurt and shake. They are less individuated, less personified, lacking dreams and aspiration; consequently they are bereaved of the thrilling experiences of being alive. They are the dumb and mute people for whom Wesker writes plays, and in whom he wants to bring a movement characterised by a consciousness of existence. In Jeamy Beales, Mr.Bryant, Mr.Healy, Frankie Bryant, Wesker shows the parochialism, meanness and self-centredness of the working-class. Despite the common charges of didacticism and propagandism, we cannot overlook the fact that like Osborne, Wesker too, is not at all blind towards the faults of his own class. The difference is that when Osborne has a bitter and caustic view of the silent majority, alienating him from them, Wesker's consciously harsh but reforming attitude in a way identifies himself with them. His note to the actors and producers of the play *Roots* is significant:

> My people are not caricatures. They are real (though fiction) and if they are portrayed as caricatures the point of all these plays will be lost. The picture I have drawn is a harsh one, yet my tone is not one of disgust ... I am at one with these people: it is only that I am annoyed, with them and myself.(*Roots*, Note to actors and producers)

Wesker's men are fighting against the system. The dehumanizing, autocratic authority that provokes war is the underlying theme in *CWE* too. It is purely a male world like the one we find in *A Patriot for Me* by Osborne. Far away as they are from the love of home, the cruel treatment of the authority, the strict discipline of the Royal Air Force, and above all, the cold conduct of the officers peel these young conscripts of their inner sense of good and evil. They are robbed of the tenderness of heart that would bring out human spirit to respond to other's need. Losing their individual identity, they become a pattern, a system, where personal liberty and emotion are exiled for ever. Man is denied his basic human rights.

The class-system prevailing in society manifests itself more strictly in the rigid hierarchy of the airforce and the men we meet remain gloomy, morose, and morbid. Corporal Hill describes himself as an unhappy man without any specific reason. He cannot smile or joke; his excuse is, "Perhaps it's my nature, perhaps it's the way I've been brought up ... The R.A.F brought me up"(*CWE*14). The Wing Commander in his

introductory lecture warns the boys against the rigid life awaiting them. He assures them that no one in this world is in peace as conflict and contradiction are inherent in human nature. The soldiers are only to carry out the orders of their superiors. He says, "The human being is in a constant state of war and we must be prepared, each against the other. ... The reasons why and wherefore are not our concern."(*CWE*21). The pilot officer wants clean man even if it means unreal man. Cleanliness and rigidity go together and create unreality. He admits, "In fact I don't want real men, real men are dirty and nasty, ... I want unreal, super-real men. Those men win wars, the others die of disease before they reach the battlefields"(*CWE*23).

All these expose a world where man is turned a fighting-animal, like the working-animals we found in the *Kitchen*. Human qualities are follies here, and attempts are aimed at destroying those qualities. Consequently when they are given any chance to behave themselves, they behave like animals, a fact that horrified Dave in Spain. Obviously, Wesker protests against the system. He sees through the systems whether it is the R.A.F or a kitchen or any kind of industrialization. Corrupting human nature with hypocrisy and greed, the system demolishes all his efforts to progress towards democracy, and liberalism recurrently. To Wager, Wesker says, "I don't regard the play as a vehicle for any hostility to specific groups or individuals, but rather as attacks on states of mind ... states of mind that men have towards each other in many nations. It's universal."[1]

We feel that the states of mind that Wesker speaks of is that of an individual. His focus is therefore on the individual mind with its dilemma and conflicts. Pip's revolt is against the upperclass and the aristocracy but he is detestful of the poor working-class too. Their poverty, ignorance and obtuseness strike him in apathy. He narrates his experience of a walk through the East End where Wesker himself was born and brought up. The man he met there appeared to him not a person but a class, a poor labour, a marketman or a porter or a docker whom he never noticed carefully before, except for a glance on the newspaper reportings on strike or lock-out. The tea-

[1] Wager, p. 219.

shop, dirty and nasty, repulsed him. Its menu aroused anger and annoyance when he saw that, "the menu, stained with tea and beautifully written by a foreign hand, and on top it said -- God I hated that old man"(CWE17). That old man seemed to him the emblem of millions of colourless creeping creatures who coil and swim about, polluting the world. Digusted with aversion, Pip cannot hide his feeling towards them and shouts, "You breed babies and you eat chips with everything"(*CWE*17).

This subhuman existence makes him contemptuous of the working-class, though he is organising a group of unaware youth to protest against the injustice done to them. The incident forecasts Pip's ultimate surrender to the system and reveals the truth that Pip belongs to the ruling class. Pip, an aristocrat, who reads books, knows history and science, thinks, analyses, and tries to teach his fellow conscripts, in fact never feels one with them. He is always conscious of his superior birth and higher social position. He makes the other boys work for him as he knows that he is arousing a kind of awe and admiration in them. Proudly he declares that "bed" "was always made for me"(*CWE*27). He feels sure that Chas will help him to do his work, because he comes from a class which always arouses amazement in the naive souls of these poor people. His sense of superiority and self conceit is echoed in his words, "You love to hear me talk about my home. We have a beautiful home, Charles, twenty-four rooms, and they're all large and thick with carpets"(*CWE*28).

The pilot offcer detects the reason for Pip's revolt. He knows that it is not simply a family feud between the father and the son, nor is it a noble desire to sacrifice oneself for the cause of the proletariat. Rather it is a lust for power, a conflict of personality and intention to surpass the father or the institution, he stands for. He accuses Pip of hypocrisy:

> Power isn't it? Among your own people there were too many who were powerful, the competition was too great, but here, among the lesser men -- among the yobs, among the good-natured yobs, you could be king. KING. Supreme and powerful, eh? ... Not true? Deny it -- deny it then. We know -- you and I -- we know.(*CWE*60)

Glenda Leeming and Simon Trussler justly observe this aspect of Pip's character when they say, "He turns out, however, to be a rebel but not a revolutionary:

he hates his father and the paternalistic officers, but basically ... he wants a reversal that will give *him* power, not destroy the power-structure itself."[1]

In this play we see man hating man, either being proud of his superiority or feeling humiliated for his inferiority. The Wing Commander's dislike of the civilians is expressed in his words, "How I hate the civilians. They don't know -- what do they know? How to make money, how to chase girls and kill old women. No order, no purpose. Conscripts! They bring their muddled lives and they poison us"(*CWE*31).

Chas hates Pip for his betrayal and finds in him his class enemy. Pip's treachery shocks him. That Pip, who was organizing them to fight, teaching from history the strength and potentialiaty of the mass, finally changes his side is a blow for him. The knowledge that Pip and his class have been exploiting them for generations maddens him. The irony that writhes his heart is the cruel fact that still it is towards these selfish intellectuals that they have to look for leadership, though ultimately these people side with their own class as does Pip. The scorn and spite that choke his voice, pour down the insult and helplessness he feels inwardly, "You lead and then you run away. I could grow with you, don't understand that? We could do things together. You've got to be with someone, there's got to be someone you can trust, every one finds some one and I found you"(*CWE*62). His tone has the same conviction of Victor who believes "But men had to be protected"(*LLOBP*229), when he justifies his concern as a union leader over the ongoing strike and consequent suffering of the labourers in *LLOBP*.

Pip's inability identified by Chas reveals a dwarfish image of the hero. His utterance is full of hatred and scorn, "Your bleedin' stuffed grandfathers kept us stupid all this time, and now you come along with your pretty words and tell us to fend for ourselves. You clever useless leftover you. ... The truth is -- you're scared, aren't you? You call us mate, but you're a scared old schoolboy"(*CWE*62).

Chas's perception of being befooled and anguish at the feeling of being deceived bitterly manifest the unbridgeable gap between the classes. Inspite of all his good wishes and intentions, Pip remains the class he was. The mistrust ringing in

[1] Leeming and Trussler, p. 88.

Chas's words prove true despite the sympathetic attempts Pip once made for them. They all, we feel, Pip, Smiler, Chas, Wilfe, Connibal, are victims of a world where the fight seems futile and meaningless. Wilfe hopelessly utters, " 'Cos you'd just as helpless there, you'd be just as much wind and nothing there, man"(*CWE*65). Leeming and Trussler recognize this fact when they say that Pip's failure to transfer his allegiance from one class to the other is his defeat in a sense.[1] The voice pleading to his fellow conscripts for not to misunderstand him or his class sounds weak and feeble during his final transformation.

At the end the difference, the gap and the situation remain the same against which men keep fighting. Pip's wearing uniform and Smiler's physical collapsing, seem to signify two sides of this individual struggle. Pip takes the lead and orders when Smiler is caught in the trap, bruised and crushed. His moaning voice betrays his resigned heart when he cries, "That bloody lonely moon is cold, I can't stay here"(*CWE*64). We see that the oppressed are trodden to the ground, as ever, and the previleged continue to rule. Their positions do not change.

Though critic Malcom Page thinks that both Smiler and Pip are Christ-figures, it seems he misses the point that it is with Smiler that we identify ourselves more than we do with Pip.[2] Michael Anderson seems more pertinent in his observation when he says that Pip's short-lived revolt against authority fails because the establishment has the power and the tactical intelligence to suppress it. He also thinks that Pip has not been honest with himself. He warns that the desire to be 'king among the lesser men' is as dangerous to any cause as the enemy, and as inevitable.[3]

The play consequently ends with a sense of defeat. At the same time this sense of reality redeems Wesker from the charge of didactcism and propaganda. Hayman criticises him as didactic and says that he tends to let the social problem distract him

[1] Leeming and Trussler, p. 90.

[2] Malcom Page "Whatever Happens to Arnold Wesker", *Modern Drama*, vol-ii, 1968, p. 321.
[3] Michael Anderson,"Arnold the Last Humsnist", *New Theatre Magazine*, vol 8, part iii, Bristol, 1968, p. 21.

from characters' personal predicaments.[1] But if we see how his protagonists are defeated by life we find the view unacceptable. It appears that Wesker is neither didactic nor distracted. Rather he wants his heroes to retain the courage to continue the battle. That is why instead of showing the ideas they stand for, as victorious, he shows their personal fragility and brittleness. It produces a deep concern and a painful awareness mixed with a compassion in Wesker. Therefore we find Ribalow more convincing when he says, "He cares for his people, for his ideas, for the men who have had dreams and seen them crushed by life."[2]

About Wesker's most ambitious work *TVOGC* Ribalow comments, "It is essentially a tale of failure".[3] F.Lumley's remark supports this conviction, "Wesker shares an identity with his environment; although he would like to reach out into the world of imagination and mystery he is too much a realist to have the vision of a mystic. His world is a very real world, with all its problems, now".[4]

Both critics sound true in their observation as far as the theme of the play is concerned. Man aspires and tries, reality obstructs and diminishes. Nevertheless, often the goal itself appears unreal as it does in this play *TVOGC*. The protagonist Andrew Cobham desires to build up six new cities. Being the hero himself, he thinks that "the hero is a bore. The hero is a sign ... of failure"(*TVOGC*165). It is a warning that Wesker gives the audience against superhuminizing the hero. In Andy ultimately we see a compromising, weary man who knows what life exacts a price for its dreams. Andrew with all his ambitions dramatizes the fact that if half of human life is made of dreams than half of it visualizes its splitting up.

Like other Wesker heroes, young Andy wants to change his world. He boldly declares, "I just want to know, all the time, that change is possible. Then, when it's needed"(*TVOGC*131). He soares higher and higher in his imagination. He wants more and more of everything. He wants to father twelve or twenty children, plans to build a

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[1] Hayman, p. 13.
[2] Ribalow, p. 41.
[3] Ribalow, p. 77.
[4] Frederic Lumley, *New Trends In Twentieth Century Drama*, London, Barrie and Rockliffe,1967, p. 279.

house like a cathedral and defies all adversities. He assures himself, "The year of depression for everyone else but world's going right for me"(*TVOGC*135).

His friend and guide Jake defines a rebel and a revolutionary, two significant notions used frequently by the Angry playwrights. Jake says, "I've no time for rebels, they hate the past for what it didn't give them. ... Revolutionaries is what we want -- they spend less time rebelling against what's past and give their energy to the vision ahead"(*TVOGC*138).

Most of Osborne heroes are rebels in that sense, while Wesker's are both rebels and revolutionaries. Andrew Cobham is after all a revolutionary who envisions a future and devotes his whole life to it. Politics is explicit in this play. We see with the former play *CWE* that, Wesker's world is turning more and more male. The RAF world is purely a male world; if ever there are references to women those are full of scorn and contempt.

Only two female characters appear in *TVOGC*; but for some youthful romantic scenes of Andy and Jessie, the world is markedly male, far away from the domestic periphery observed in the *Trilogy*. Man's ambition is taking him away. Unlike Sarah or Ada, now the wife has a diminutive role to play except being the house-keeper, the role that Jessie plays.

Andy has another girlfriend, Kate, but her role is distinct as the intellectual ally of the hero, the role in which Jessie obviously fails. Whether she is intentionally kept away and compelled to fail owing to the playwright's wishes, remains an enigma. Reminiscences of Wesker in the *Trilogy*, makes it difficult for us to accept Wesker in these plays, in respect of his inadequate attention to the female characters. Andy confesses to Kate, "I don't know why we faught for sex equality, so help me if I don't"(*TVOGC*150). Jessie becomes secondary in his life after marriage, just when he is about to start with his noble plans. Usually as it happens in case of the persons from the lower working-class background and also inspired by the ideas of socialism, Andy from his youth has a desire to surpass himself. Professionally a draftsman, his learning architecture in leisure is in fact aimed at that goal of building up new cities. He deeply

longs for someone to guide him. He yearns to show his inner potentialities to someone who will appreciate him. He utters his dream of meeting such a man, recurrently. Jake Latham, the old trade-union leader, turns to be his friend, philosopher and guide, who teaches him that deafeat does not matter in the long run, as all defeat is temporary. It does not matter about present generations but future ones always want to look back and be assured of that someone was around acting on principles (*TVOGC*141).

We see that conflicts, fights and controversies exist bwtween Jake and Andy, but both of them are aware of the fascinating attraction of each other, balancing the relationship. Andy's friendship with Jake and Kate is indicative of the Wesker men's ardent desire to disclose his heart to some one. He earnestly needs to share his dreams and worries with someone capable of understanding. Because of his male pride, a woman, Andy considers to be incompetent of this job. He wants to break the class disparity but is alert to retain his own dignity. His relationship with Kate is full of personal and class hostility which nevertheless makes it more attractive. Kate shares Andy's aspirations, alienations, failures and torments. They walk together, feel together, work together. His relationship with Kate unveils a man who does not discriminate between man and woman and is capable of friendship blended with respect irrespective of gender.

In his relationship with Jessie after marriage, however, the typical male-chauvinist reveals himself who cannot think of woman as anything but a wife or a housekeeper, inferior and unworthy, whose only job is to share the bed, breed children and mother them; in a word, taking care of the house-hold only. The loving, affectionate attachment of the Simondses based on equality and mutual respect in the *Trilogy* is no more to be found in the Cobhams. Andy appears to be a man suffering from self-contradiction; his domestic life does not display the practice of ideas he believes in. Jessie is not a fellow-fighter now, not even a full-grown personality to draw enough attention from her husband. Cobham's transformation is evident in his clear demarcation between the private and the public life. It pushes his wife into the conventional role of a woman. His conversion into a characteristic, authoritative man

reminds us of Pip's going back to his typical class role. The way he reminds Jessie of her place in his house-hold displays his dormant male superiority. He tells Jessie, "You've mothered my children, you've kept my house, you cook, you mend -- what other help can you give? .... You share my bed"(*TVOGC*190). Jessie's protest, "Wasn't it you wanted to treat everyone equally like an aristocrat"(191) rings the same pang and pain expressed in Chas's words, when he felt deceived, "You lead me then you run away"(*CWE*62).

Ronald Hayman has noted a similarity between these two plays which is pertinent. He says, "In a sense *Their Very Own and Golden City* is a development of the central theme of *Chips With Everything* -- the relationship between the rebel and the establishment which tries to win him over"[1]. Though Hayman focuses on the revolutionary spirit of Pip and Andy, we can extend the comparison to Andy's reversed role as husband to Pip's transformation as the officer that makes a clash of personalities inevitable. Andy has an autocratic temperament, a sense of superiority that finally provokes Jessie to revolt. Wesker's Andy reminds us of Ibsen's Solness in the *Master Builder*, with his ambitions and longings for a higher architectural achievement. To some extent Solness's strained relationship with his wife and extra-marital relationship with other women suggest a parallel between these two characters, despite the differences in their situation and temperament. Both these men had to pay a high price for public sucess. Solness had to lose his own children, home and happiness of conjugal life. His alienated wife Aline always loaded his heart with a guilt-consciousness. His attraction for young girls could not free him of that burden. The suspicion and fear woven in their relationship lurked in his mind like a black spot. The fact that he had to renounce the hope of a home of his own for ever goaded him amidst all his glory. Solness's complains against the Almighty, the power he felt curbing his fate to possess his talent solely, is almost the same as the external and internal pressures Andy had to overcome. Harold Clurman's comment, "Solness is plagued by a sense of guilt about what he had done as an artist *and not done*, what he

[1] Hayman, p. 61.

is and what he had wished to be"[1] is in a sense echoed in Ribalow's conclusion of Andy's final achievement, which to him, is his defeat, "There is the freedom to have visions, but not to carry them."[2]

In this play Wesker symbolizes his own dreams and the consequent failures of a socialist cultural platform for the working class in the organisation of Centre 42. We find the other male characters, more or less, as portraits from the panoroma of the vast trade-union workers, he once had acquaintance with. They are union offcials, socialist workers or political leaders. Jake Latham is such a character. Leeming and Trussler think that, he, "illustrates Wesker's power to animate an apparent stereotype: shrewd, wise, humorous, he is the self-taught, experienced, committed working-man, almost a class-myth figure."[3] Their observation is valid in respect of the trade union workers and leaders we recurrently meet in his plays. They make us hopeful with their devotion and sincerity as often we are hurt to see their fraudelent nature exploitive of the poor working people in practical life.

In *LLOBP* we meet Victor, the "retired Yorkshire trade union official, about 65, mischevious, fiercely intelligent", dying of leukomia, disillusioned by the mistracking and inner corruption of the movement. Earlier we had met Ronnie's aunt Cissie who concluded from her whole life's experience as a trade union leader, that it is always easy to handle a boss because he always wants to bribe the leaders, but the workers are tougher to handle for their rigid stand.(*The Trilogy*50)

After his open row with Andy, Jake warns him, "One day you're old and you say right things but its all too late, that's what I'm saying"(*TVOGC*159) His own life proves his words. Michael Anderson reviews rightly, "Everything that Andy is about to try, Jake Latham has tried without success. He seems to have nothing to offer but cynical disillusionment."[4] Latham thus stands for same kinds of experiences followed

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[1] Harold Clurman, *Ibsen*, London, The Macmillan, 1977, p. 172.
[2] Ribalow, p. 84.
[3] Leeming and Trussler, p. 123.
[4] Anderson, p.24.

by disillusionment, already noticed in Libby Dobson in *ITAJ* and Monty Blatt in *CSWB* of the *Trilogy*.

Like Jake, Andy too is lonely and detached at the end. He knows that the success achieved and the glory bestowed on him for it as Sir Andrew Cobham is in fact a compromise, a surrender of one's conscience and ideas; just as Pip knows that his turning an officer is a death of his rebellious spirit, isolating him from the fellow conscripts for whom he at least for once had flashed in flames of revolt. What redeems Andy is that at least he is not totally derailed like Ronnie reaching nowhere. Only one city he could built, but he built it, as he says, "After all, the golden city is built; there were compromises but it's built"(*TVOGC*195).

The pathetic figure that Andy makes in his reception shows him encircled in the same monotony and weariness that devours his neglected, injured wife. Just like Phobe in *The Entertainer*, Jessie, too, waits to take the coat of her husband, to perform the duty of a wife despite all her grudges. As if she too, like Phobe, knows that this man, against whom she is full of complains is the powerless victim of a life that only allures and deceives, offering nothing in the long run.

Andrew and Jake's destiny give us a feeling that human life is more full of sorrows and dissatisfaction than it can conceive or attain. Wesker has such an awareness too. He knows that success is always shadowed by a hidden sense of dissatisfaction. Too much of sorrow may sound incredible, though not unreal, just like too much of success. So he makes a balance by showing Andy's success through compromise, which is not less true. Wesker expresses his apprehension when he says, "Instinctively as an artist, my inclination is not to indulge in morbidity and pessimism, and so I flinch from the oppressive ending. And this is in direct conflict with experience, which is so often apprehensive and depressing."[1]

Just as impossible hopes never baffle Wesker to be impractical and unrealistic, however socialistic he may be, too much of practicality does not ruin his imagination too. His profound sense of reality makes him aware of the private pains and

[1] *File* , pp. 26-27.

sufferings; his creative impulse gives it expression in the *FS*. In an interview he says that at times he was puzzled by the thought whether it is possible to write a play about love without touching social issues at all, and whether it would be a violation of the socialist concept of art to do so. He himself then finds out the answer that it would not be. Because, he argues, even if the millennium comes, "once the economic battle is over, there is still the battle of being alive, of being a human being". [1]

From this view he conceived the *FS*, where for the first time the protagonist is without a class-identity and a political platform. Only two characters, far far away from the social turmoils, are staging a drama based on the elemental human relationship of that between man and woman. The dramatist focuses on the individuals. He wants to flash on the cluttered, hidden corridors of human mind haunted by feelings of hatred, jealousy, betrayal, though he calls it a "story about love coming and dying". [2]

About Adam's past, we only know that he had left his wife and children for some unknown reasons. His profession, social position, political and cultural background, unlike those of other Wesker heroes remain unexplored. His past only avouches the fact that he had tasted failure like other Wesker men. Marriage is no more all pleasure and happiness. Nor the dependence and trust to sustain the bond somehow to be found in this play, as it was found before. Adam's broken marriage attests his incapacity to hold on a permanent relationship. A shadow of doubt swings our mind about his future success in the present relationship. He is a middle-aged man with maturity enough not to be involved in a passionate love affair of youthfull frenzy. We see him all the while haunted and also to some extent guided by the bitter experiences of the past.

Adam shows his worldly wisdom when he assures Beatrice in the first scene, "Not love again. ... I'll give you human warmth but not human love"(*FS*76). Painful past is still haunting him, he anxiously utters, "Not that again. Not all those old, familiar patterns of betrayal, those reproaches"(*FS*76). He is confirmed that Beatrice

[1] *File*, p. 29.
[2] Leeming and Trussler, p. 131.

has gone through the experience. Beatrice at first remains silent and inactive. Adam does everything to heal her. He tends her and brings her back to life. No matter how rancorous he is about life, there are still rays of hope flickering in his mind for a loving home, for human touch. He desires pleasant communication. Despite the fear and dilemma aroused by the bitter past, his intense urge for home and love asserts the truth that no defeat can doom man for ever.

Adam's failure points out his faults too. He admits to Beatrice of his infidelity to his wife. The realization that his own faithlessness had caused her to be faithless in return makes him more tolerant now. Away from her, away from that situation, he can analyse his own conduct objectively and identify the mistakes he once made just as Laurie does in Osborne's *Hotel in Amsterdam*. It saddens him as it does Laurie. He confesses to the guilt and correlates his wife's reactions and counter-reactions. To his own guilt-stricken mind, he even justifies her present desertion. Simultaneously these afflicting memories make him suspicious of women; he says, "I'm always suspicious of a women's offer of obedience"(*FS*82). The words, revealing as they do the complexities and self-contradictions latent in human nature, express a typical male desire to expect absolute loyalty from women, without judging one's own behaviour. The feudal mentality that the wife should be faithful like a slave was hurt when he saw his wife going away with another young man. His demand for supreme loyalty overlooks his own infidelity. His immense endeavours to heal and tend appears to intend the usual male longing to be in the role of the preserver or protector in the pre-marital love; he assures his beloved, "I have a desperate need to give joy, to make some one laugh, to heal, not destroy"(*FS84*). His male ego is gratified in being recognized as the saviour, when Beatrice calls him "my lord". He asks eagerly, "Am I your lord?" expressing his anxiousness to get assured. At the sametime the fear of being possessed frightens his innerself, and he shrinks back from such a shadow in a woman. We notice the same kind of fear in Osborne's heroes. They are afraid of female possessiveness. Jimmy helplessly cries, "She just devours me"(*LBA*37). These lines are in a way repetition of Adam's enraged outcry, "Why does a woman destroy her love with such a desperate possessiveness, why?"(*FS*94) His fear is so intense that he

cannot even applaud his son's picture with paternal affection, lest his mistress is annoyed. Still he could not escape her taunting remarks. He knows that Beatrice wants to grasp him fully, not sparing a little share of attention even to his own children.

Like Ronnie, Andy, and Dave, Adam is also weary, although his battle is a different one. His words are the utterance of an exhausted man, "I'm neither pathetic nor afraid, just weary and sick"(*FS*96). Finally, he feels defeated and deceived. The quest to touch the eternity in a human soul proves impossible and futile. The inadequacy of woman dishertens him; her speculative mind and calculative love cannot pacify his restless mind. He regrets, "All my life I've looked for a woman who had that touch of magic. Passion without deceit, wisdom without cruelty, pity without abuse"(*FS*106). Besides, he has a concern for people, an awareness of the life around. The typical Wesker-hero expresses himself when he asks, "Do you think that when the millenium comes there won't be lovers who grow weary of their sad girls, or that wive's won't weep over empty beds? ... Do you want me to feel for starving children ? I feel for them. Do you want me to protest at wars that go on in the mountains? I protest"(*FS*110).

With his feeling for humanity Adam becomes Wesker's spokesman, despite the change of the theme in the play. At the same time the playwright justifies his realization of the fact that man has his personal sufferings too, that afflicts his heart. Amidst all his noble attempts and glowing achievements it saddens him. Adam laments, "But the heart has its private aches. Not all the good great causes in this world can stop me crying for a passing love"(*FS*110).

The Friends, like the *FS*, excludes explicit politics and concentrates on several abstract themes like cosmic disorder, human response to death, decay and destruction. The play presents a group of men, shaky and confused, apprenhensively turning away from life. They are gathered by the bed side of a friend, a dying girl, full of alacrity, vitality and lust for life, who brings them back to life in the long run. Her death awakens them from the intended oblivion and they embrace the world again. Wesker in his note on the *F* writes, "I believe that the universe, the cosmos, all that is known

and guessed at externally, all that is felt or imagined internally, all is chaos [...] that chaos is the nature of all existence [...] and man's task is the constant effort of creating order and in this lies his richness of spirit and its fulfilment."[1]

This abstract theme makes the play narrative-and idea-based. It's characters are more prone to talk than to act. The group of friends are from a working class background, except Simone. All are within thirty to thirty-five. Only Macey, the manager, is around fifty. Macey, Manfred, Roland and Crispin, these four male characters have their own anguishes and agonies to which each of them respond in his own way. The world they belong to is totally disordered. They feel out of place and terrified. Crispin repeatedly tries to bring Roland and Manfred back to the truth that Esther is dying. But they cannot face the truth. They create a make-believe to shield their fear, pretending that she is getting well. It reveals an acute fear of inevitable death and their inability to accept it. Roland declares like Jimmy, "I sometimes wish we didn't belong this generation. .... There's no -- no nobility in it"(*F*80). They deliberately neglected their business and allowed themselves to go bankrupt. They have withdrawn themselves from the external world. Manfred who only reads, quotes, "we are moving into phases of creative disorder" and exclaims at the knowledge of it, "Well, news like that terrifies me"(*F*77). Crispin agrees with him, admitting his inherent fear of babies, lightnings, dogs, and even of flies.

The existence of evil horrifies Crispin. Roland despairs to see that death is inevitable and imminent, while Manfred doesn't dare to face the challenges of ordering the chaos. Their impending bankruptcy is a sign of their inner hollowness that arouses anger in Macey, who being elderly and wiser cannot accept this willing suspension of youthful energy. He reproches them, "But you've gotten unhealthy, closed, incestuous"(*F*87). He watches Manfred's inertia and bookishness with sneers and exclaims that his sadness has nothing to do with the sufferings of the world, rather it has to do with his image of himself. He charges Manfred with hypocrisy and says that he intends people to be ignorant and sad, so that he himself might appear clever. The

[1] Monnica Mannheimer,"Major Themes in Arnold Wesker's Play *The Friends*" *Moderna Sprak*, Stolkholm, vol lxvi, No 2, 1972, p. 111.

fifty-year-old Macey is puzzled to find out the reason why these men and women are so burdened. He feels this suffering self-invited and wonders at their isolation as he says, "I'm like a father, intruding on his children's privacy. You're all very strange to me in these surroundings"(*F*89). The generation gap is shutting him up, as Simone is left alone for her "class credentials". The extremity in their nature alienates them, proving them to be misfits in the world. Their choice of enormous canvases, unreachable goals, skyhigh ambitions cannot ultimately cope with the everyday trivilities. Macey by his average intellect and worldly wisdom perceives that their extreme impractical nature and behaviour is leading them nowhere(*F*91).

Of these male characters, Macey looks most normal with his ageing desires, sharp observation and stoic acceptance. He admits his attraction for the young girls coming to the shop though he has seen through their dull and insipid minds. He confesses, "I'm reaching the age where I employ a desperate charm in order to gain the attentions of all those lovely young girls whose silly minds I despise. And the price I pay for this flattery is to listen to their flat and dull thoughts"(*F*92).

Macey reproaches this generation for their own created problems and charges them with pollution of the world. He scolds them for spoiling their progeny. He says, "The habit of discontent was all your lot ever created. ... Real little class terrorists you were, intimidating every one, over the age of twenty-five with your swinging this or swinging that"(*F*112). Crispin confesses to this charges in his cry for repentance and accounts for his perversion about the old women; his confession is the terrified mutterings of a derailed youth, "It's that there's so much suffering in the world that I suddenly need other kinds of knowledge, to soothe it all out. .... I want to caress everything, touch people, comfort them, make them calm, tell them not to be worried"(*F*107-108).

Manfred blames their own working-class background for making them cowards and for rotting the world (*F*107). Their bewildered state foresees a grey, blurred picture of the future. At such moments Macey's practical common sense shakes them. Exhibiting his own miseries and sufferings, he tells them how he swallows those failures. He knows why he fails to love the woman whom he once

madly loved. Yet he stays with her as it is the reality that she is his wife, and it was his own choice. Macey condemns their way of philosophizing which makes them escapists. He warns, saying, "It was to avoid building up those little heavy weight philosophies about man and the world out of my own personal disappointments; to avoid confusing self-hatred with hatred of all men; to face the fact that though I'd failed, others hadn't"(*F*113).

Macey's acceptance of life counters the despairs of other men in the play. It resembles that of Dave in the *Trilogy*, who stands against the negation and inertia of Libby Dobson and Ronnie Kahn. What Ronnie, Crispin, Manfred and Roland learn from books and ideologies, Dave and Macey had learnt from life and its challenges. At moments of distress Roland and Crispin display their inner vacuum. Too much of brooding obssesses Roland with death. Panic-stricken, he shivers at the thought of death chasing him. He grieves, "When I die, where will it be? How will it happen? Will I know I'm dying? Will I lie there knowing everything and knowing I can't stop it?"(*F*114)

Crispin's refusal to accept Simone's offer of friendship and love is indicative of his own incapacity to respond to life with a healthy and sound mind and body, in as-much-as perversion has eaten up his soul already. Here Wesker is preoccupied with one basic human emotion, the fear of death. Man is haunted by it even at moments of greatest pleasure. In a letter he writes,(as quoted by Monica Mannheimer) "I think that there are fundamental aspects to life and relationships which will remain unaltered by any kind of scientific change. The obvious example is the fear of death which as someone once observed, is the most important thing which distinguishes man from animal."[1]

In this context we can quote Monica's own comment, who appropriately notes, "Crispin is also filled with a universal human emotion: despair at the existence

[1] Mannheimer, p. 111.

of evil and violence; while Manfred voices a more contemporary, but no less relevant, concern: the problem of the impact of science on our lives."[1]

Simone's dejected outburst against her humiliation brings Manfred back to an awareness of "a great poverty of intention" in themselves. Like other Wesker heroes, he sighs as he acknowledges their misguided states and echoes a pathetic moan in the following words, "it's because of little damages we've done to each other and a terrible sense of defeat and time passing and appetites fading and intellect softening. Our mess is not only made of Esther's dying, but the knowledge that this is a once and only life more than half over"(*F*126).

From the *FS* onwards, we find Wesker preferring and presenting middle-aged protagonists with some positive views. Adam appears on the stage in his middle age; though appeared in youth, Andy reaches his old age before the play ends. The long journey of his life shows how far a man can go, finally. Thus the youthful and lively Ronnie, the rebellious and impatient Pip, the arrogant Peter, the sarcastic Paul make space for middle-aged, experienced, wiser Andy, Victor, Emanuel, Litvanov and Shylock.

The *OO* is crowded with men and women around seventy senile and infirm, rejected by life, waiting for death. Only two young men we meet here, Martin and Rudi. Wesker's young and old men alike think too much. Boomy shuts himself up in a room and thinks over life. Emanuel only broods. Attacked by a kind of paranoia, at times they cannot retain their sanity. Emanuel warns Boomy against too much of brooding. In other plays too, excessive thought make man decrepit, hesitant and lethergic. Oldmen are apprehensive of death, trying to fight the fear. Boomy is quoting from books and gospels; he quarrels with God. Emanuel's refuge is his fantasy. To run away from nightmares, he imagines himself absorbed in his old profession. Counter to this, we get their young sons Martin and Rudi. When Martin fights for human rights, his father Boomy is busy thinking about God and the cosmic order. Martin says, "You

[1] Manheimer, p.111.

quarrel with God about important jobs -- earthquake, cyclones, droughts -- I'll quarrel with men about trivialities -- poverty, injustice, social orders"(*OO*152).

Boomy, like Billy Rice in Osborne's *The Entertainer*, holds a poor view of women's lib. Blaming women for wars, he shouts, "What did the women do when they got the vote? Two world-wars we've had"(*OO*152). Both the father and the son have a common habit of thinking and reading. Martin confutes his father who calls him irresponsible and reminds him that he had always studied carefully and thought responsibly. In his view, study and thoughts are pre-conditions to responsibility, while Wesker's plays often demonstrate that thought-obsessed men are failing in their duties. Knowledge makes Martin rebellious too, he announces, "I do not like what I see. That's not unnatural and if doing what you disagree with is callled irresponsible then irresponsible I am"(*OO*153). Martin resembles Ronnie when he identifies his father's faults; he blames his father directly, "The truth is, and you know it, *you're* the failure. A self-pitying, malicious failure and I won't believe in the image you've given me of myself"(*OO*153). Boomy's withdrawal, passivity and inertia have affinity with Harry's and we feel how justly Martin charges him.

Martin tries his best to perform his duty that involves him in active politics and risks his life. He owes his sense of commitment to his family and duly recognizes it (*OO*177). His failure in personal life cannot hinder him from protesting against the prevailing injustice and chaos in society. He stands alone as the only positive man in the play while another young man Rudi gives up like his father and uncle. Old Boomy, Jack or Emanuel cannot but submit, as Emanuel admits the feeling of futility that old age brings; he also feels a moral obligation to warn the youth of the inevitable frustration waiting at the end (*OO*192).

Rudi takes the warning. His fumbling words display it though all these sinking men are somehow integrated to laughter and dance ultimately, at the vigorous perseverance of an old woman, Sarah. They can respond to life because in the depth of their hearts, they cherish a free spirit, undaunted by the infirmity of old age. Wesker in his essay, "Two Roots of Judaism" mentions these two old brother's recollection of the incident of diamond, and says that the incident, "echo the theme of the free spirit.

Manny throwing the diamonds into the river shows his desire to be free of material benefits: all we do must come from our own hands ... A naive free spirit, perhaps, ... Boomy, on the otherhand, sees the diamonds as a way to freedom, through education."[1]

All Wesker's heroes are Jews persuing knowledge and freedom. They are great lovers of life and bold to overcome obstacles. Even old men like Boomy and Manny can have this strength as is admitted by the playwright. His Jewish origin has instinct intimidation of the hostility he will have to conquer in order to survive.

The Wedding Feast is the tragedy of a middle-aged shoe-manufacturer, who wants to break the barrier between the employer and the employee, an impossible task which most often Wesker heroes set out to start. They want to defy the ugly realities and then having failed, make tragic figures of themselves

Like Bill, in Osborne's *Inadmissible Evidence*, Archie in *The Entertainer*, and Jock Mellors in *Very Like a Whale*, Lois Litvanov is a failure in his family life. Now he is trying desperately to realize his dreams of a benevolent employer who identifies himself with his employees to share their joys and sorrows. In his youth, Lois had been a die-hard Marxist, working actively during the riots in 1936. Stephen, the journalist, informs, "He has been a Marxist. As we all had once been. In our brave youth"(*WF*123). The hero's involvement in the socialist cause and concern for the welfare of the mass, earned Wesker the title of a propagandist. But we cannot overlook the fact in others as well as in Lois's case that it usually remains a dream, often even smashed by the capitalist system. In the long run, Wesker concludes the picture of man as vulnerable, fragile and brittle. Lois sees helplessly his youth, virility and vigour fleeting as does Ronnie or Harry. What ails him more is his being deprived of the attention and care from the dearest ones, his own wife and children. They pay him his due neither as a husband nor as a father.

In the bathroom his telephone conversation with his wife shows the hollow and insipid relationship he is still continuing. The slipping off the gown from his hands

[1] Arnold Wesker, "Two Roots of Judaism", *Distinctions* London, Jonathan Cape,1985, p. 68.

exposes his naked self, the pathetic figure of a defeated man who "slowly crumbles, sinks dejected"(*WF*131). He warns himself against any expectation, denounces all his achievements, saying, "You're growing old ...You're growing fat .... Who the hell needs so many mirrors? .... And so many houses and so many cars?"(*WF*131) His intimation of nothingness is deeply rooted in the cruel manner in which he is treated by the world. He is overwhelmed by a sad feeling of unwantedness, a sense of belonging to nowhere. His blighted private relations could not be mended by his building up of relationship with Kate, the secretary. The marriage-bond cannot be violated, nor can the class-barrier between him and Kate be broken. He cannot fight the system personally. So he intently tries to be a humanist capitalist, which is a desperate attempt to redeem himself somehow. But it also fails, as does his personal life.

Lois dreams of attending the wedding party of his subordinate. Foreseeing the party in imagination, he assures himself to be celebrated, "I'll kiss the bride, ... and I know how they'll all look at me, ... The world must turn on. Man must be fed, houses built, shoes cut and sewn up. ... They'll see two sides of me. And when they're old they'll tell their children and I'll be spoken of with affection, honoured, remembered"(*WF*138).

Wesker acquaints us with the dark sides of mass psychology, portraying in detail how he was treated actually. It is a testimony to his disillusionment with the proletariats too. The last scene of the play has a striking similarity with those in D.H.Lawrence's play *Touch and Go*. In that play Gerald was revenged for his autocratic and despotic treatment of the workers. Lois, too, is mal-treated by his own employees, but ironically it has been for his benevolent and humane conduct. His attempts to break the class-barrier is returned with same scorn by the commmoners with which they paid back Gerald's sense of class- superiority. It shows the impossibility of Lois's mission and also manifests the inherent malice the poor bear against the rich as a class, no matter how kindly they are often treated by individuals. No false glorification of the workingclass is thus to be found in Wesker. Henry Goodman's comment on Wesker's portrayal of the rural working class in *Roots* is valid

in this context too. "Wesker", he says, "smashes all romantic illusions about the purity of rural life and exposes the meanness of people who keep aloof from ideas."[1]

At a certain state, Wesker must have been haunted by the fear of death as we guess from the aspect's recurrent referrences in relation to the characters and plays. *LLOBP*_ depicts the fear-ridden heart of a retired trade-union official who at the age of sixty-five has been attacked by myloid leulomia. Every moment, every day, the nightmarish experience of death approaching sickens this man with horror. He perceives the truth, that, cognizance of certainty of death is more terrible than death itself. It kills man's courage and strength before it destroys the body. Victor can no longer bear the burden of this dirty trick of destiny. He cries, "It's such a burden this knowledge, rotten, heavy. I feel humiliated watching myself become frightened"(*LLOBP*214).

We notice with curiosity the protagonist's switch over to the imagination of after life just after expresssing his hatred for the fear of death. He has a feeling that death is imminent, and that facing of after-life is inevitable. We are eager to know how this man conceives after-life, because like other Wesker-heroes Victor is a socialist and non-conformist refusing loyalty to any religion. Victor wonders, "Where could you place it, this ... after-life? And then I think: it's not a physical place, Victor, that's where you go wrong. It's a spiritual state, a state of awareness unconfined by a physical framework"(*LLOBP*215).

His interpretation of the after-life is his own and it is a kind of perception related to one's soul, while in religious views most of the time an after-life is a physical place to allure people with the aim of expiation from sin. Counting days for death, Victor gets an opportunity to review his past. He looks back to assess the gains and losses. His reminiscences now make everything meaningless -- all the battle he fought, everything he did. Life is unbearable with the shadow of death hovering over. No consolation, no past glory can integrate his broken mind or free it from this obsession. He hopelessly asks, "So what's left? No after-life I can conceive of and no

[1] Henry Goodman, "Arnold Wesker", *Drama Survey*, Minneapolis, 1 (Fall1961), p. 219.

past to feel at peace with. ... thinking about whether there's a heaven, another life, the very worrying about such things makes me feel guilty and shabby"(*LLOBP*216).

A typical modern man, with no formal religious conviction, rather with a sense of futility and mortality, the middle-aged Victor personifies Wesker's maturer ideas and experiences. His loneliness and his inability to communicate with his wife, reveal him as a product of the post-war period with the characteristic Weskerian disillusionment with socialism, trade-unionism and mass movement added to his making. Victor shocks the young trade-union official with the information that while they are losing wages on strike, suffering miserably with family and kids, their leader, the general secretary, is enjoying holidays in Canary islands. But somehow he feels justified in what he did as a trade-union leader for union matters, when Maurice regrets for it as wastage of his talent. He says, "But the men had to be protected. ... Wished they hadn't needed protection, looked after their own bloody selves. But there it is"(*LLOBP*229). His words reflect his personal commitment to society and people. The way he finally reconciles himself with death leaves the image of a man, brave and bold. He says to Maurice:

> You know what helped? I woke up the other day and suddenly out of the blue, no connection with anything, I thought: Leonardo De Vincy is dead. And that seemed reassuring. So I went on: Mozart is dead. Socrates is dead, Shakespeare, Buddha, Jesus, Gandhi, Marx. ... And one day my Sonia will die. And my son, Graeme. ... And there seemed a great unity to it all. A great simplicity.(*LLOBP*232)

These lines conclude that even the fear of death cannot make Wesker the optimist that he is, give up. It is a common knowledge that ordinary human beings try to cling to a faith or power like a straw in such states. The fear of death makes man weak and meek. But Victor receives it just like an everyday simple fact and that makes him not only a courageous man, but a real hero.

The Merchant deals with the most controversial of Wesker's themes. In it he confronts Shakespeare's idea of a Jew. Wesker's Shylock is a man who pursues knowledge, reveres the past, looks for glorification of his own race but is free from all parochialism of race, religion or community. He is a liberal, secular man with respect

for humanity and heritage. Shakespeare has given a touch of humanity to his Shylock when he makes him cry against the injustices done towards the Jews by the gentiles. He shouts that Antonio hath displaced him, deprived him of money, scorned at his nation, laughed at his gains and losses, heated his enemies, and all these he did just because Shylock is a Jew. This image is portrayed with a sense of pity rather than love or respect due to any individual for being a human being, above all. His next speech is almost the moan of a helpless person begging for mercy, not the claims of a confident man for his rights. The much-quoted lines, "Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? ... If you prick us do we not bleed? if you tickle us do we not laugh? if you poison us do we not die?" (*The Merchant of Venice*, act iii scene i) in fact make him an object of pity rather than a respectable human being. In spite of his honest attempts to paint the picture of a man, Shakespeare seems to have presented the typical image of a Jew, the money-lender, who is blood-thirsty, revengeful and devoid of all human qualities. Therefore Wesker reasonably argues and charges Shakespeare with the distortion of the image of the Jew. In an interview Wesker says, "It's a caricature and when you think of the enormous Jewish contribution to civilization there's not one element in the characters that suggests he has an intellect or a culture anything to do with Jewishness. ... It's impact, not it's intention, is anti-semetic."[1]

In Wesker's *The Merchant* there is a deliberate attempt and intention to recover the lost image. Wesker particularly objects to the above-quoted speech in *The Merchant of Venice*, which is to many critics an expression of Shakespeare's sympathy. In the same interview he says, "But as someone once observed, all that he said could apply to a dog or a monkey. Nothing in what he says actually applies to a thinking, sensitive person."[2]

Wesker's Shylock, on the contrary is a close friend of Antonio. Both of them are nice, good, cultured persons, fond of books. In the first scene they are cataloguing

[1] "The Trial of Shylock", *The Gurdian*, April 13, 1994.
[2] *The Gurdian*

the books Shylock owns. Michael Scott in his article rightly comments on Wesker's breaking down the polarity of good Antonio and bad Shylock, of seeing them in black and white. The playwright here builds the image of a man dedicated to the betterment of his community and glorification of it's past. Scot reminds us of Wesker's own socialist background and justly says, "Further he negates the possibility of Shylock maliciously wishing to kill Antonio, by making them friends. Finally he gives Shylock the dignity of being a learned spokesman for the oppressed community."[1]

This Shylock is a totally different man who hides the books as there is a Papal Bull, banning on the Jew's collection of books. Shylock, who is "a hoarder of human genius", has hidden his. This thirst for knowledge, this perseverance in studying and digging the past, this intense desire to cross the limit of the social barriers that law and establishment have imposed on him, make him a free spirit. He defies the rules of the Ghetto and makes friendship with Antonio, keeps him in the ghetto at night; moreover, he makes the business deed disobeying the law in vogue. These laws, whether of Venetian adminstration or of the ghetto, alienate the Jews, declaring and treating them as inferior in all respects. It gives a picture of the Jews as an oppressed class, for whom Shylock stands, with all his intellectual capacity, courage and protective spirit. He respects his own people and wants them to join the greater, perpetual human flux.

The way Shylock explains his religion, accounting for the brilliant, arrogant and wild nature of his community, their love for abstract, idea of one unseen God, displays an analytical, argumentative inquisitive mind ever in quest of knowledge, striving to unveil the mysteries of the world. Both Shylock and Antonio declare their nonconformity and illustrate their liberal, anti-racial, secular attitudes not unlike a modern man with scientific beliefs. Bringing up his daughter with education Shylock refuses to discriminate between man and woman. His only aim is to assert himself and his community with the dignity of an individual and a nation. He refuses to accept favour or sympathy from anyone; it hurts his self-repect and humiliates him as a man. He objects to Lorenzo's pleading (which Shakespeare puts in the Jew's speech) and

[1] Michael Scott," Demytholigising Shylock", *Shakespeare and Modern Drama*, London, Macmillan, 1989, p. 53.

with conviction affirms, "I do not want apologies for my humanity. Plead for me no special pleas. I'll not have my humanity mocked and apologised for. ... My humanity is my right, not your bestowed and gracious previlege"(*M*259).

He can instinctively discern a flash of pity or mercy in other's words or deeds and scorn these with hatred. The tragic plight of the Jews and the jealousy they provoke in others for their talents and efficiencies, are beautifully expressed in his speech, "You will have us all ways, won't you? For our prophecies, our belief in universal morality, our scholarship, our command of trade, even our ability to survive. If we are silent we must be scheming, if we talk we are insolent. When we come we are strangers, when we go we are traitors"(*M*259). These words sound rebellious against the injustices and wrongs done towards the Jews. Wesker further argues, "The free spirit implies the supremacy of the human being over the state, over repressive authority, over that which aims to frustrate initiative, cripple imagination, induce conformity. Shylock embodies all of this: in his friendship, in his passion for books, in his contempt for a racialist law, in the way he reads history." [1]

It seems that Shylock is the final answer Wesker gives to the charges brought against the Jews, not only by Shakespeare but in general. From the *Trilogy* throughout, as in the other plays, Wesker's sense of the past and the feeling of self identity as a Jew have always been noticed. *The Merchant* is a culmination of that sense. In his interview with Hayman, he affirms that, Jewishness, he takes for granted and it has nothing to do with Jewish religion. In his own words:

> I felt Jewish in a *belonging* way or a protective way. ... you have inherited a shared consciousness of your community's suffering. I didn't experience much anti- semitism as a child. What I did I took fairly flippantly. I mean I had Socialist answers for why it existed. And we were a long way from what happened in Europe to other Jews. But there does remain an inherited sense of history of persecution. And it is that which I think gives one a sense of identity.[2]

Wesker's men, thus, continue in a flux, where one's search for identity and self realization, quest for a better world free of oppression and disparity, goes on. But at

[1] Wesker, *Distinctions*, p. 283.
[2] Hayman, p. 5.

every step, this striving for self-assertion overcoming all the hurdles are confronted by racial hostility, institutional exploitation, personal clashes, even by inner disabilities and inadequacies.

Most of his heroes stand on a definite political platform. The rest convey their concern for society, unable to disregard their moral responsibility that they feel towards mankind. An intense urge to change the world drive them. Their dreams to break the shackles of slavery, their thirst for drops of happy life, free of the corruptions, mechanization and capitalism do not take them away from their earthly life, making them supermen. They are men of this world with great expectations and limited competence. Their limitations frustrate them, derail them, confuse them, but make them humane, sensitive and vulnerable. Their weakness is revealed nowhere better than the way they look towards their women for courage, strength and moral support. Evidently, we feel Wesker's men to be weaker than his women. They cannot sustain longer, nor can endure the adversities without the nourishment from the women.

Sarah, Beatie, Ada, Kate, Sonia, Portia, all prove themselves more potential, vital and irresistible. The men feel it, realize it, and recognize their love and affection. They show their gratitude to their women, no matter how turmoiling the relationship is. Significantly they are positive towards their women. Ronnie, Dave, Adam, Victor, Emanuel, Lois, Crispin, Manfred no one denies the role that women play in his life as mother, sister, wife, mistress or friend.

The bitterness and hostility that Osborne-men feel towards women is absent in Wesker's men. They might be depressed to see their life burdened and battered but never turn cynics. They often feel alien amidst the enmities and obstacles but do not lose faith to total despair. Particularly the later heroes: men who are older, maturer, and more experienced, ultimately reconcile themselves to life that attracts and disappears like a mirage, still attractive, still enchanting like a dream. Willfully they submit to this fantasy, knowing it will break soon.

WOMEN IN WESKER

In Wesker's *The Friends* Esther, the dying girl, despite all her sufferings and sickness proclaims, "I-- am a revolutionary. .... My brother is a rebel because he hates the past, I'm a revolutionary because I see the past as too rich with human suffering and achievement to be dismissed"(*The Friends*106). Here Esther stands for her community and celebrates women's instinct to protest against injustice, condemning man's rebellion as futile; she says further, "Women are natural revolutionaries. ... Men are only ever rebels, their angers are negative, tiny"(*F*106). Esther's bold utterance is suggestive of a deeper insight into society and life. Her backward look to past and commitment to assess human civilization in terms of its sufferings while stepping forward indicates a wiser and wider view of life (in women). Her last words envision the emergence of the "modern women" whom Simone de Beavoir anticipates in her *The Second Sex*. This "new woman" is in no way inferior to her male counterpart; sometimes she even surpasses him in her inner strength and courage. Instead of bowing down to the man-made rules of submission, she, "accepts masculine values: she prides herself on thinking, taking action, working, creating on the same terms as men; instead of seeking to disparage them, she declares herself their equal."[1]

In a way Esther personifies this ideal, and like her, most of Wesker's women are not only equal to men, they are often even stronger, maturer in their perseverance, tolerance, courage and stoic acceptance. Repeatedly women occupy the centlral role in Wesker's plays, while men with their inadequacy and vulnerability seem to appear boyish or weaklings. Esther's dismissal of man's rebelliousness as negative and futile adds a new dimension to the meaning of this term, recurrent in the angry plays. We observe that the anger and rebellion of Jimmy and Ronnie create sensation but lead nowhere. Their step towards future stumble as they ignore the past. Their inability to grasp the "whole" with its pros and cons of history, blurrs their view. Their invectives and discontents are a pathetic sigh regretting wastage of youthful energy. Wesker's women are different; they stand

[1] Beavoir, p. 718.

firmly for positive values, optimism, endurance, and survival. They keep the flame of hope burning in the core of their hearts and enkindle it in their men's hearts too.

This optimism is not anything imposed or superficial. It is deeply rooted in the earthly ground, for the women are well aware of the evils, defeats and challenges to the life-flux. Their spirit overcomes all the hurdles in the long run. Like their male counterparts, they also dream of and fight for a world free of pain and suffering. They desire to build a happy home with their husband and children. Still unlike the men in Wesker's plays, they are not easily shattered by the failures and misfortunes. They accept these as inevitable as life itself. Spinning all their hopes round their families they steadily withstand all the oddities. Theirs is a resistance cropping up instinctively from within. Frederick Lumeley's comment on Sarah and Ada in *CSWB* is applicable to most of Wesker's women "they can't change the world themselves, but they lessen the significance of the men's defeat because they carry the seed of hope."[1] Sufferings and disappointments, even death, cannot make life a burden to them. Rather it is a cup full to the brim though their thirst is never quenched. Moreover their creator's liberal and free exercise of imagination and artistic power make it possible to achieve a colourful display of qualities in them.

Unlike Osborne's, Wesker's own pleasant childhood and youth, happy married life, committed political views work together behind this generous portrayal of women in the plays. Wesker himself admits, "As I look back over my work I notice a curious fact, the central characters in most of my plays and stories are women.."[2] He assures us that it is not deliberately done. His explanation echoes what Ibsen said, when he was given a reception by Norwegian Women's Rights Association on the 26th May 1898. Refusing to be a champion of women's cause, Ibsen said, "I must disclaim the honour of having consciously worked for Women's Rights."[3] He affirmed that for him it had always been a matter of "individual rights" as his "task has been to depict people."[4]

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[1] Lumely, p. 275.
[2] Wesker, *Distinctions*, p. 150.
[3] *The Oxford Ibsen* vol viii, ed and trans by James Walter McFerlane, Oxford, Oxford University Press,1977, Appendix 111, p. 363.
[4] *Ibsen vol viii* p. 363.

Wesker in an interview says he wants to write about people in order to give them an insight to an aspect of life.[1] He almost repeats Ibsen in *The Distinction*, "Though no one can seriously doubt that women are unfairly treated in societies throughout the world, I'm not aware of being an especial champion of Women's Rights."[2] Another significant similarity between the two dramatists is their respect for the mother figure. For Wesker, his own mother is the ideal; as he puts it, "I had a strong mother whom I loved and admired."[3] For Ibsen, motherhood is the consummation of feminine virtues and achievements. He thinks that mothers are bestowed with the sacred task of building up a cultured nation, which is similar to his own job as a creative artist. He says:

> I have always seen as one of my tasks that of bettering our country and of raising the level of the people. Two factors apply here: it is up to the mothers by slow and unremitting work to awake a conscious feeling of culture and discipline. ... It is the women who must solve the human problem. Solve it as mothers. And only in this way can they do it. Here lies a great task for women.[4]

Thus both Ibsen and Wesker see women as a great source of strength and energy for mankind. But that is not enough in the case of Wesker. He further adds, "Perhaps it's a combination of all three: strong mother, strong (but not total) feminine nature and a disposition to find women more interesting personalities."[5] May be this "strong feminine nature" is related to the view that "most male artists have a stronger feminine nature than other men."[6]

In *The Golden Labyrinth*, G.Wilson Knight explores the origin of drama and mentions two basic Greek principles, the Dionysian and Apollonian, elaborated by Nietzsche. In the Greek concept of life Dionysian is "best known as the God of fertility and reproduction, and of the release of suppressed human instincts through drink ;" while Apollo is, "the god, whose male yet delicate beauty symbolizes the dream-ideal of Hellenic

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[1] *Encore*, Nov-Dec, 1958, quoted by Henry Goodmen in *Drama Survey*,
[2] Wesker, *Distinctions*, p. 150.
[3] Wesker, *Distinctions*, p. 150.
[4] *Ibsen vol viii*, p. 363.
[5] Wesker, *Distinctions*, p. 150.
[6] Wesker, *Distinctions*, p. 150.

culture."[1] Wilson Knight says, "Nietzsche compares them to the two sexes: the Dionysian is as clearly female in tone as the Appollonian is male; they are sexual archetypes or universals corresponding to the sex split of human creation."[2] Wesker's explanation for this female instinct in a creative artist applies to this view. In dramas of sexual antagonism or approach, Nietzsche thinks that, both these principles are felt. "Power is balanced against love", Nietzsche goes on, "The final aim of the Dionysian-Appollonian harmony is shadowed alike by the catharsis of tragedy, the marriage conclusions of romance and the recurring conception of bisexual persons." [3]

The way Wesker delineates the gamut of women's experience and emotion, in his own words, "women as mother, women as wife, as mistress, as devourer, as survivor, as victim, as laughter, Defiant, supportive, frustrated, suffering, joyous, vindictive"[4] -- presents a multi-coloured rainbow. It offers a testimony to the playwright's deep vision into the winding corridors of women's mind . Wesker's declaration that he finds men "pedantic and predictable" does not surprise us any more. We step into this warm, eventful, feminine world, not less charming, or less enchanting than the crowded and busy male world.

The Kitchen, his first play, ignores women as full-grown individuals. Casual references to women characters, their hasty and brief presence along with bitter comments of Paul, cynicism of Peter, displays the playwright's concentration on the other issues of life. But *The Trilogy* compensates for this lack of attention . Ada, Sarah, Beatie are picked up from Wesker's own life as he confirms, "Sarah Khan in *Chicken Soup* is a member of the Communist Party, and my mother is a member of the Communist Party. Beatie Bryant in *Roots* is the daughter of farm labourer in Norfolk, and my wife is the daughter of farm labourers in Norfolk."[5] Ada is a portrayal of his own sister Stella. [6]

With all their vitality and energy these women symbolize the eternal striving spirit that protect the family bondage of love and care, in this gradually dehumanizing society.

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[1] G.W.Knight, *The Golden Labyrinth :a study of British Drama*. NewYork, Norton and Company,1962, p.4-5.
[2] Knight, p. 6,7,8.
[3] Knight, p. 6, 7,8.
[4] Wesker, *Distinctions*, p. 150.
[5] *File*, p. 49.
[6] *File*, p. 49.

At the same time they assert their individual identity. Sarah and Ada have political involvement, an access into the male world but that has been merged with their personal everyday life. For Sarah, "Politics is living, ... everything that happens in the world has got to do with politics"(*CSWB*61). This plain observation enables her to parallel love and socialism; she clings to the family and socialism with same ardour and zeal.[1]

The close attachment of the Jewish family is embodied in Sarah. She stands for unity, love, affection and commitment. She cannot and does not brood like her husband. But she follows what she believes in, and her political pledge springs from her instinctive maternal care for people. A typical working-class woman, fighting for survival, Sarah is apprehensive of abstract ideas that isolate man from man, making him self-centred. May be it is intellectual apathy that destroys Harry, disillusionment of mechanized civilization that horrifies her daughter and over sensitivity and inquisitiveness that derail her son Ronnie. Concerned with the basic need of fulfillment, Sarah in fact cannot comprehend anything beyond the daily struggle for food and living. Simple but strong and determined, the mother in her rules supreme. She clings to socialism as it offers subsistence to all the suffering, unfed, uncared for people for whom her motherly affection flows.

Wesker owes this optimism to his own mother whom he reveres and loves. The creation of Sarah is perhaps a humble acknowledgement of the debt of a grateful son. He was too meticulous about her to be pleased in the performance of that role by the artists who tried it. A blending of his deep and intense love and artistic imagination, Sarah becomes an ideal of motherhood. Wesker admits, "Sarah has never quite been played as I intended her, being based on my mother, who was not a nagging shrew. Apparently serious things were said by her with humour. Certain militant things were said by her softly. 'You can't have brotherhood without love' -- she would say something like that, with a smile, she'd throw it away."[2]

The mothers portrayed by Osborne in *Look Back*, on the other hand, shock us. Moreover the autobiographies reasonably explain the language he uses to describe Alison's and Jimmy's mothers. Jimmy's ever-boiling heart belches out his hatred for women in

[1] " You have to start with love. How can you talk about socialism otherwise?"(*CSWB*30)
[2] Wesker in an unpublished interview with Glenda Leeming, quoted in *Wesker on File* , p. 16.

general when he speaks of Alison's mother, "Threatened with me, a youngman without money, background or even looks, she'd bellow like a rhinoceros in labour -- enough to make every male rhino for miles turn white, and pledge himself to celibacy"(*LBA*52). The disgraceful words are potently designed to expose the woman with all her evil instincts. She is stripped of everything respectable and good. Osborne spares no rod to humiliate her, "She's as rough as a night in a Bombay brothel, and as tough as a matelot's arm. She's probably in that bloody cistern, taking down every word we say"(*LBA*52).

It is possible and even legitimate to feel pity for this young man who has lost all respect for women. Jimmy's mother, like Osborne's own, was no different. The way she reacted to her husband's mortal sufferings, took care of him without really caring for the man dying, depicts a stony heart, an obvious repetition of the playwright's own experience, narrated in the autobiography. Jimmy informs, "My mother looked after him without complaining, and that was about all. Perhaps she pitied him. I suppose she was capable of that"(*LBA*58).

Such cold indifference in women is inconceivable in Wesker. Sarah is annoyed with her husband for his passivity and self-centredness but never remains indifferent or aloof. All her efforts are aimed at provoking Harry to shake off his inertia and accept the responsibility. Her own sense of responsibility is keen and spares no one with the scope to escape the moral or social obligations as a human being. Harry's lack of concern baffles her, she takes on herself the family liability. It is for her that the family sustains the crisis when Harry leaves them. Michelene Wandor in her study, points out these fact rightly, "Unlike the *Look Back* here the gender roles are reversed and it is Sarah whose voice literally dominates, and it is Harry's silence which symbolizes disintegration."[1]

Like Sarah, Jimmy goes on exploding his anger, trying to get a response from Alison. The way Jimmy craves for a bit of human warmth is reminiscent of Osborne's own feelings in a loveless, deprived childhood and we reasonably find him speaking in the voice of male-domination. His antagonism towards women adds to his bitterness and scepticism to social norms and institutions. An invisible and subtle desire to take revenge makes him

[1] Wandor, p. 21.

contradict his own views. His heroes feel the need for change, but do not know the way. At moments, it seems that he does not truly want the power-structure to change. Despite the working-class background and the hatred he feels towards the upper class, Jimmy's regret for the loss of post-colonial world bewilder us about his political stand. "Establishment" is not merely a class ideal, it also seems to represent the idea of male-authority to him, which he eagerly wants to remain static.

Wesker's transfer of power to women in *The Trilogy*, is, in a way a proof of his commitment to the socialist faith. It is an unhesitant acceptance of the rule of the deprived. Yet Wesker keeps his eyes open to the follies of these poor ignorant people. In an interview he admits, "One of the things that I've inherited from my parents is a kind of intense fear of brutishness -- of the Lumpen proletariat."[1]

Political involvement apart, we can see Sarah also as an ordinary working-class woman, who has to fight a tough battle with two kids all alone. The callousness, indifference and irresponsibility of her husband is typical of the menfolk in the working-class, where it is usual for the wife to worry over the maintenance of the family because the husband spends most of his income for drinks. Such fathers and husbands are common sights in Lawrence's plays and novels.

Harry is different to the extent that he had never been a bad man; Sarah admits, "never beat us or got drunk or gambled -- he wasn't vulgar or coarse and he always had friends"(*CSWB*74). But he could eat salt-beaf sandwiches with his relief money, leaving his sick daughter unattended. He simply does not care and that torments Sarah who cares so much. Sarah is strong and fearless, but she has her own pains and agonies to attend to. She is an unhappy woman who clings to her children unable to get what she desires from her husband. All her attempts to bridge the gap fails, she is unable to make up anything by her love and warmth. Unable to reach her husband she pathetically utters, "I could never understand him. All I did was fight him because he didn't care"(*CSWB*74). They are poles apart though on Sarah's part there is no lack of sincerity. Suppressing all her anger and complaints, a warm voice dominates even in her quarrels; something not to be expected in

[1] Hayman, p. 4.

Osborne's mothers and wives. In her desperate devotion to Ronnie and Ada she resembles Mrs.Morel of *Sons and Lovers*. Dissatisfaction in marriage makes her unusually expectant about children. When Ada goes away to her own family, she centres all her hopes on Ronnie. Ronnie's derailment mortifies her. She could forsee Harry in Ronnie. Still she does not despair, and there she stands invincible. She is a fighter till the end. She hates abstract ideas and despises books. Her angry utterance, "Books!Nothing else interests him, only books. Did you see anything outside? What's happening?"(*CSWB*13) unveils a woman, who refuses to have anything to do with the utopia of ideas.

At the same time, she sees everything but overlooks what is unpleasant. It does not mean that she is unable to see. In fact her matter-of-fact mind knows that, to survive, one has to cling to some inner truth, or faith, which whether it has any real base, is nevertheless essential for life. It is the wisdom of the fighter and survivor. Sarah belongs to a generation for whom everyday troubles contain the meaning and goal of life. Intellectual dogmas are far away from their conception. Life is simply black or white to them.

Mrs. Eliot in Osborne's *Epitaph for George Dillon* or Phoebe in *The Entertainer* belongs to the same generation. Mrs.Eliot is also hostile to books and education. She blames Ruth's college education for her failure in love and carrier, "It's beyond me, dear. It's funny -- you're the only one in the family who doesn't have patience and understanding. ... I can only say that college gave you lot *of* funny ideas"*(EGD*33).

Phoebe too fails to reach her husband. Archie's desires and demands are something more than the struggle for the daily bread. She gives up all hopes of meeting him at that level. To her, the male world is alien, obscure, even education would not permit women to enter in that world. She says with simple conviction, "They have to do a whole lot of things, ... you don't even know about, and it's nothing to do with being educated and all that"(*E*48). Mrs. Bryant in *Roots* shows a kind of mistrust for her own daughter who had school education and thinks that her head is full with "high class squit". To her, Beatie is no more one of them.

Mrs.Eliot's, Mrs.Bryant's, Sarah's and Phoebe's worldly wisdom seem to develop in them a fear of books. Still Sarah is different, for she has a propensity to rise up above her

lot for which she turns towards politics. Her socialism is an extremely personal faith, far away from the formal theories. Monty Blatt says, "Do you think she ever read a book on political economy in her life? Bless her! Someone told socialism was happiness so she joined the Party"(*CSWB*62). But her naive view of life includes learning in a wider sense, in so far as it raises the standard of living to a human state. To her, learning means being concerned with life and people. Beatie's heart aches to see her mother lacking in this feeling; she regrets and says to her mother, "Even his mother cared for me than what you did. Beatie, she say, Beatie why don't you take up evening classes and learn something other than waitressing? Yes, she say, you won't ever regret learnin' things"(*R*127). Sarah fears Harry's type of fondness for books, for it alienates man deadening his senses. She prefers the learning from life, that forges one's emotions, sharpens one's feelings and makes one responsible and eager to rise above the subhuman standard. At the same time she is aware of the abuses of affluence that capitalism spreads, corrupting basic good sense and honesty in man. She has that depth of understanding that consumerism kills the fighting spirit in man, indulging his desires for comfort and luxury. Ignorance of Marx and Engels or political economy does not hinder her understanding of these fundamental facts of life. She tells Ronnie, "When you were a baby and there was unemployment and everybody was thinking so -- all the world was a communist. But it's different now. Now the people have forgotten. ... You give them a few shillings in the bank and they can buy a television so they think it's all over ... Is that what you want? A world where p*eople* don't think any more?"*CSWB*73) Sarah's maternal desire to shelter and protect surpasses her mortal limitations. Ada's warning reminds us of the boundary she wants to cross with her irresolute faith, "How can you possibly imagine that your arms are long enough for God's sake? What audacity tells you you can harbour a billion people in a theory?"(*CSWB*43)

If Wesker's men aspire for a perfect world, Sarah the mother aspires to embrace the world with loving care. Both tasks seem impossible. But while men cannot accept facts, Sarah is prepared to admit her inadequacies, although she goes on trying to improve. Her deep awareness of reality, keen observation and experiences of the hardships are expressed in her words though these underlie as well, her undaunted determination to fght because it is the only way one can depend upon to live. She fiercely reacts to her son's lethergic

frustration, "Who says evil ever finishes? Nothing finishes! A Rusputin comes, you oppose him; a Bismarck comes, you oppose him; a Hitler comes, you oppose him! They wont stop coming and you don't stop opposing. Stop opposing and more will come and the garden'll get covered with weeds and that's life..."(*ITAJ*214) Thus she acquits herself of the charges of reluctance or unability to see the truth, brought by Ronnie, "But you won't face it. You just refuse to face it"(*CSWB*73).

We see her not only seeing through, but also patiently swallowing, the anguishes. There are moments when she expresses her bleeding heart, "I've been lonely for long enough Ronnie. A few more years and I'll be dead. I'm committing no crimes"(*ITAJ*212). Her childhood memories, looking over the countryside of Norfolk, thinking of past days in Hungary present a different Sarah; tender, weak, nostalgic, at such moments she is a woman lonely and melancholy, different from the diehard party worker. Our admiration is mixed with a sense of pity for this old solitary woman who still clenches, knowing her grips are loosening.

Writing on Wesker, Glenda Leeming duly recognizes Sarah's maturer view of life:

> All the *other* characters reject their shared aspirations because *they* see the world and society as too black compared with their own shining hopes: Sarah's last scene reveals the understanding that lies behind her optimism and establishes that, on the contrary, it is she who has taken the really mature attitude of patience and persistence in the face of the greatest discouragement.[1]

Roots is an anticipation of the one-act plays Wesker finally writes in a volume. The playwright's concentration on Beatie in this play implies his increasing interest in the woman question. The absence of the hero in the play might be an indication of the gradual decline of male superiority. He is no more the oppressive, undesired and unavoidable presence he was in woman's life in the post-war world. We find Beatie emerging as the new-liberated woman whom we may compare with Jean in Osborne's *The Entertainer*. Evidently they are descendants of Ibesn's Nora. Jean breaks off her engagement when she feels that her lover wants to possess her body and mind as an owner, not to stand beside her as a fellow-fighter. Beatie, at the distressed moments of desertion, suddenly perceives a

[1] Glenda Leeming, *Arnold Wesker*, London, Longman, 1972, p. 11.

stirring of life within herself, from a long state of oblivion. She greets this rebirth and feels the glory of a full-grown human being. Only then does her imitating voice finds out its own language. She learns that she is giving birth to a new woman within her. Her last exhilerated cry sounds like a girl-in-labour, full of awe and wonder to see a new life coming out of her body. She feels the throbbing of the heart even, "It does work, its happening to me, I can feel its happened, I'm beginning, on my own two feet -- I'm beginning"(*R*148).

It becomes evident therefore that to make way for women, men must either disappear or keep aloof. That is why Harry becomes the symbol of "disintegration", according to Michelene Wandor. A study of the play shows that the conquest of the family territory by woman is a continuation of a historical process which records woman's struggle for self- identity and position from the narrow boundary of marital and maternal obligations, meaning a kind of self-effacement. It seems that it is through family, where she once exercised supreme authority, enjoyed matriarchal power as the mother and head of the unit, and in course of history, according to the sociologists, at some historical transition, lost her sovereignty, that she is once again regaining the power. Wesker's spontaneous portrayal of female superiority might have been indicating towards one vital change the post-war transition was to make forward.

It is in this context that Michelene's comments on this change are significant:

> In both these plays, the family is a potent and real force. In both Jewish and gentile, women are acknowledged as a powerful centres of family. This leads to a fascinating contradiction: on the one hand the women are given a powerful political and cultural voice which in most other plays is the prerogative of men. On the other hand the conventional gender roles within the family are seen to be under strain. This is shown not just through social change (Ada and Dave moving away, Beatie leaving home) but through the way the male bread-winner is undermined by physical incapacity, and it is men who are shown as physically disintegrating. The explicit content of the plays celebrate the potency of women's cultural voice while its symbolic subtext embodies the question of whether the articulation of the female voice implies the damaging or silencing of the male voice. In addition the independent female voice seems to need to be free of male ties: Sarah through Harry's disintegration, Beatie at the end of the relationship.[1]

[1] Wandor, p. 25.

In the post-war days when social values and norms were rapidly changing and families disintegrating, marriages were no more taken for granted as the only respectable vocation for women as it was thought of in Jane Aausten's days. A curious fact is to be observed in this respect; the women who feel a kind of reawakening of their inner selves somehow cannot fit themselves into the old ideas of morality anymore. From marriage, either they have to break up or keep apart. As if marriage contains forces opposed to, or obstructive of, the free development of women's individuality. Nora in a critical moment of her life felt herself ignored and abused as an individual. She left home. Ruth in Osborne's *Epitaph* decides to stay alone. Jean refuses her lover. Leaving home for job Beatie testifies to the social change and consequently forecasts the changing roles of women. Because of their increasing participation in the economic world outside the home, they have more exposure to male society and scopes to review the relationship. Till her refusal by Ronnie, Beatie appears to be the most obedient and blindly loyal woman without any personal life of her own. She just imitates and repeats Ronnie, all her speeches sound like the tautering of a bird. She has pursued Ronnie despite his repeated refusal for three months. At the same time all these make the fact evident that she is strong-willed, obstinate and stubborn enough to go along her own way. She confesses, "I chased him for three months with compliments and presents until I finally gave myself to him "(*R*95). She has inherited this adament attitude from her mother whom she blames, "I'm like you. Stubborn, empty, with no tools for livin"(*R*145). In her attempts to get Ronnie she is the typical woman using all her female charms like a trap. Here she is a generation backward, happy to think like Phoebe that she has at last got her man. Phoebe's words, "I was a plain kid ... I made him want me anyway" are similar to hers, "He never said he love me nor I didn't care but once he had taken me he seemed to think he was responsible for me and I told him no different"(*R*95).

Beatie's idea of education, "Learning was at school and that's finished with"*(95)* or the thought that once she got married and got babies, "I won't need to be intersted in half the things I got to be interested in now"(*R*96) reveals her as the typical Norfolk farmer girl, a Bryant girl, for whom to get a husband and then to have children by him means the fulfilment of life. Here she is no different from her mother or sister. But we notice subtle

changes in her attitude to life and detect the potentialities that announces her metaorphosis, the moment she enters in the Norfolk village. She rushes like a stormy wind into her sister's house. The slovenly and disordered house-hold annoys her. She arranges everything in an order that makes her sister exclaim, "You hit this place like a bloody whirlwind you do. ... Jimmy'll think he've come into the wrong house and I shan't be able to find a thing"(*R*100). City life has impregnated her with a sense of decency, a yearning for better life. She is now conscious of the meanness of her people. Their way of living irritates her. She can identify her own weaknesses, "I didn't know how to talk see, it was all foreign to me. Think of it! An English girl born and bred and I couldn't talk the language -- except for to buy food and clothes"(*R*90). Her being ashamed of her ignorance perhaps starts the process of learning that completes itself in Ronnie's refusal. She is now exalted above her people who have been standing still for ages. Ronnie could foresee her prospective future and replies to Dave in the affirmative about her when he is reproached for not seeing through this "sordid love affair". He says, "It wasn't sordid, you know Dave. ... Beatie Bryant could have been a poem -- I gave her words -- maybe she became one"(*ITA*217). Later events prove his prophecy true. Ribalow notes this in his study.[1] On the other hand Beatie's success ironically marks Ronnie's self-estimate true, "I say all the right things, I think all the right things, but somewhere, some bloody where I fail as a human being" (*ITA*217).

Beatie's staying away and coming back with changed views cause her isolation from her people. Her inquisitiveness, ambitions to rise above the common lot arouse their resentment. They look at her suspiciously. Her mother comments, "She talk of about bein' part o' the family but she've never lived at home since she've left school look. Then she go away from here and fill her head wi' high-class squit and then it turn out she don't understand any on it herself. It turn out she do just the samethings she say I do"(*R*145).

These people, shut and confined in their narrow stagnant world, are hostile to any change or averse even to signs of change. The vast universe, with its ups and downs of history matters little to them. Beatie's strong sense of belonging brings her back to her own

[1] Ribalow, p. 46, "Beatie's final passage, which is quoted in part or in whole elsewhere in this study(and in many essays and volumes about British drama), is the 'poem' that Ronnie talks about to Dave".

people. She wants them to be introduced to her lover. She wants Ronnie to accept her with her background and past. The moment she steps into the old place, she feels the gap and is eager to bridge it. Beatie tries her best to hide the meanness of her people in order to make them presentable to an urbanized Ronnie. All the while she instructs them what to do or not to do. Ronnie's letter ends all her hopes and she plunges into a deep despair. Blaming herself for her failure, suddenly she identifies the hollowness of the townspeople too, and only then she looks for her own roots, "I got no roots in nothing. I come from a family o' farm labourers yet I ent got no roots --just like town people -- just like a mass o' nothing"(*R*145). It is the pronouncement of Wesker himself on the people, about and for whom he is writing his plays; in whom he wants to stir an awareness of life.

Beatie now can see the difference between the dark barren boundary of Norfolk and the wider brighter world that seems to beckon her. A realization that they are a part of a greater community, drifted apart from the mainstream changes her whole view of life. The feeling of existence of a vast universe she could peep through, not step into, fills her with intense pain and humiliation. She feels she is not alone in her suffering. Generously she thanks Ronnie for impregnating this awareness into her and admits her indebtedness to him, despite his refusal. Her ignorance, oblivion and indifference now overflow all her suppressed emotions; she discovers herself:

> I'm tellin' you that the world's 'bin growing for two thousand years and we hev'nt noticed it. I'm telling you that we don't know what we are or where we come from. .... It's not only the corn that need strong roots, you know, its us too. .... We don't fight for anything, we're so mentally lazy we might as well be dead. ... And you know what Ronnie say sometimes? He say it serves us right.(*R*146-47)

Beatie resembles Sarah in her love and understanding. We hear her repeat Sarah, in condemning consumerism and pleasure in superficialism, "Oh yes, we turn on a radio or a TV set may be, or we go to the pictures ... but isn't that the easiest way out? .... Education ent only books and music -- it's asking questions, all the time"(*R*147).

In her final articulation Beatie does not speak for her ownself only. She is no more a lonely village girl thwarted by her lover. She becomes the spokesman of her community, the working class, the farm labourer, the silent majority who must wake up to raise their

voice. Wesker is harsh in portraying them as they are, but not indifferent to them. Beatie's voice is not the voice of an emancipated woman only; Wesker refuses to be a champion of women's lib. Rather it is the voice of that community for whom he works in full faith. Raymond Cowell in his study points out Beatie's transformation as a sign of the inevitable social change, justified by the title of the play, "the way is open through her, for the social class in which she has her roots. The roots have been nourished and have began to grow for themselves and what has happened for Beatie could happen for a whole class."[1] This view seems justified because in her final speech, Beatie identifies herself with her community and sees through the hypocrisy and deception of the "stinking commercial world" that has been exploiting them for years. She now finds that her roots are her own people, her land, her culture, and speaks out for them (*R*145,46,47).

Her defiance of mystic communion with nature, the dogma that Ronnie preaches is similar to Jean's defiance of God in *The Entertainer*(p147). The utterances of both the girls speak of a painful realization of their class identity, an awareness of its poverty, illiteracy and ignorance. The subhuman standard of living of their people, their humiliation by the ruling class enrage them. This agitation in these girls is what makes us hopeful. We see a new wave, a flow; we feel that the inevitable change is imminent, that a historical process has been started.

Besides Beatie, the only other character that draws our attention in this play is Mrs.Bryant. Heavily built, strong, stubborn and arrogant, she is Beatie's mother in every way. Practical, quarrel-some, mean and outspoken, she is the typical village woman, who refuses to be reconciled with her daughters-in-law and fails to shelter her daughter in her distressing need. Still she fascinates us with her strong sense of individualism at moments when she hits back her daughter, feeling herself hurt and mortified by her (Beatie's) sense of supposed superiority. Her sudden outburst of dissatisfaction and anger make her a pathetic figure, revealing the suppressed, deprived and ignored woman within, "Well, what you blaming me for? Blaming me all the time! I heven't bin responsible for you since you left home -- You bin on your own. She think I like it, she do! Thinks I like it being cooped

[1] Raymond Cowell, " Arnold Wesker:Roots", *Twelve Modern Dramatists*, London, Pergamon Press ,1967,p. 104.

up in this house all day. Well I'm telling you my gal -- I don't! There! And if I had a chance to be away working somewhere the whole lot on you's could go to hell -- the lot on you's"(*R*145).

So far she seemed to have been happy in her mean and monotonous life. But this unexpected explosion of her suppressed discontents startle us, as if the cocoon of serenity and affected self-gratification that had shrouded these people so long are breaking up. Just at the moment of Beatie's emotional reawakening, Mrs.Bryant's vehement desire to escape from her world manifests the resentment gnawing at heart of these mute people. Like Sarah, she is lonely and dejected at the end. With the children growing up, she too has to deal with a husband, unconcerned and crude, though not an weakling like Harry.

Mrs. Bryant, Sarah, Phoebe and Mrs.Eliot belong to a generation for whom marriage is a sacred, unbreakable bond, no matter how burdensome and oppressive it becomes ultimately. The world of Mrs.Bryant is a limited world in every sense. Almost imprisoned, no wonder she envys Beatie's courage to leave it. It makes her pitiful and humane.

Sarah's dauhghter Ada on the other hand belongs to the Beatie-group, young, enthusiastic, spirited, full of new ideas of individualism and personal freedom. Despite Wesker's strong protest it is not unlikely for one to find in these characters some traces of "feminism", the term most used in our time. Created in the image of Wesker's own sister Stella, Ada endures like her mother. The paradox lies in her imagination to escape the industrial society and live in seclusion on the one hand, and continue the brave struggle for socialism which means siding with the mass, on the other. We feel that somehow and somewhere she is like her father too, shrinking back from anything too real, too fleshy. But finally she is Sarah's daughter.

She is one of the lost, bewildered youth of the post-war period, horrified to see the jungle of industrialism. Fear of dehumanization haunts her like knightmare as it does Dave, Peter, Paul, Ronnie, Jimmy and others. Disheartened by her fight for socialism, she goes to the village in Norfolk in quest of personal socialism. Apparently she is influenced by her husband. In *CSWB* she shows Dave's Spanish experiences as an excuse for her

disillusionment, but she is not a simple imitator, as Beatie is in her love. She is strong, self-opinionated. She argues for her own belief with firm conviction and is not blind to the party or its limitations. She is as strong in her aversion as Sarah is in her faith. The way she clings to continue their Norfolk life is comparable with Sarah's pursuit of socialism.

One similarity can be traced in the female characters of *The Trilogy*, Ada, Beatie and Sarah. It is their tenacity of purpose. Sarah grows old but refuses to give up, Beatie changes her whole self to get Ronnie, Ada leaves society and city to prove the substantiality of her ideology. Unlike Beatie and Sarah, Ada is an introvert and thinks that language and words are insufficient. She says, "Because language isn't enough. Because we talk about one thing and you hear another that's why"(*ITAJ*164). She believes in works more than words. She even doesn't want to explain her faith. She wishes to prove it and expectantly looks forward, "Not words. At least something more than just words." But in her silent faith she has the determination, patience and perseverance to pursue Dave and his plans. She is the source of Dave's energy and stamina; she never lets him down. She hates talks and speeches and accuses Libby Dobson of doing everything with words instead of engaging in practical efforts. Her sharp sensitivity and self-dignity is hurt when Libby Dobson condemns women for being mean, greedy and superficial. She says, "I suddenly feel unclean"(*ITAJ*185). Her sense of honesty does not spare even her loving husband, when he is caught up with the lino and is justly accused of stealing. It insults her ego. She reproaches Dave, "You bring the habits of factory life with you? What got into you?"(*IATJ*185) She warns him working as his conscience, "By Christ Dave – your ideas have got some pretty big leak in places haven't they?"

Ada does not give up. A stubbornness to continue and see the end drives her, "Well we'll have to afford it. I'm not giving up. We'll eat less, we'll buy less, we'll do something but I'm not going away from all this"(*ITAJ*187). Criticism of her husband's faults does not mean desertion. She pledges to follow him, shares his pains, sides him in distress and shame. Thus she accepts him as an ordinary human being, not as a superman. She has a deep spring of love in her heart but cannot express herself and knows her incapacity. Her father's sickness disturbs her, she feels guilty; her mother's care and anxiety move her, she

feels pity but cannot put her feelings into words. She is able to criticise and assess herself like other Wesker characters; she confesses to Dave:

> But perhaps I didn't tell him I loved him. Useless bloody things words are. .... Everybody says I'm cold and hard, people want you to cry and gush over them. ... Sometimes she used to sit up late with me while I wrote to you in Ceylon and she used to chatter away and then -- fall asleep. ... And everytime she did that and I looked at her face it was so sweet, so indescribably sweet that I'd cry. ... But yet I find it difficult to talk to her!(*ITAJ*194)

She knows her strength and its inheritance. Her confidence and boldness is typical of Wesker's women. She accepts the Norfolk life as a challenge. She proudly declares, "My mother is a strong woman. She was born to survive every battle that faces her....I'm also strong. I shall survive every battle that faces me too, and this place means survival for me"(*ITAJ*195). The vitality and life-force that exhilerates her are rooted in her sense of reality. She never allows life to slip off her grip, knowing that little pieces contain spring of happiness, for life is a compilation of everyday trifles. Her words express her perception that "completeness" is a vague word, "The kind of life we lived couldn't be a whole philosophy. .... Whose life was ever a complete statement?"(*ITAJ*215) In writing about her Glenda Leeming and Simon Trussler must have observed the rigidity and boldness of her character when they comment, "Ada is if anything the more inflexibly idealistic of the two."[1]

From two definite male points of view women characters are created in *TVOGC*. They are seen exclusively in relation to the protagonist, denying themselves any role to play, something not very usual of Wesker after portraying such three characters in *The Trilogy*. Confined in the role of supporting characters in marital and extra marital relationship, here the women manifest a peculiar tendency of the playwright; he makes a clear demarcation between women's role as wife and as friend and fellow fighter. In Andy's life, after marriage, Jessie's role is that of typical house-wife. She just looks after the household, shares his bed, gives birth to, and brings up, children. As long as they were lovers Andy and Jessie shared their feelings, enjoyed talking together about Andy's dreams, visited places of their choice. In the Cathedral Andy tells her of his dreams, as if in a trance.

[1] Leeming and Trussler, p. 86.

But Andy is a self-centred man in spite of all his desires to build something bigger and greater than life. Obsessed with his own dreams, he never shows any curiosity to know Jessie as a person. Even in the tender moments of closeness, he talks to Jessie of his own wishes and ambitions only, overlooking Jessie the woman, the beloved. It anticipates the husband Andy and fixes Jessie's role as the conventional wife, cornered and suppressed. Silently she swallows all these whims and peevish fastidiousnesses of her husband. Yet she loves him, and feels sorry for his restless mind, for his intense urge to realize his dreams. She cheers him up, inspires him, animates him with zeal and vigour when depression encroaches upon him. Even his praises are a kind of underestimation when he says, "Who wants a girl more complicated than you ? You're simple like a cottage loaf and pure-smelling like a rose"(*TVOGC*136). Yet she goes on pursuing him with patience, tolerance and sympathy. But this doesnot mean that she is blunt or dumb. This underlying disregard hurts her ego and self dignity. She instantly reacts, "You don't think me foolish by any chance? I mean I'd not be happy knowing we were married just 'cos we've been together these years. You wouldn't marry anyone you thought a fool"(*TVOGC*136).

Andy does that, and though her keen sense of dignity does not allow herself to be undermined, she becomes a victim of situation. Like Phoebe she is filled with pity for her husband when the hostile, external world attacks him. Unlike Phoebe, she is not totally alien to this male world. She has the competence and ability to pierce into it. Once she moved around with Andy, shared his thoughts and dreams. Andy's typical male ego now keeps her away from it. Her mortified self bursts out at moments against Andy's cruelty and coldness. She warns him against pouring down all his grudges of working life at home, "Andrew Cobham, as the years go on it gets harder and harder to live with you. I'll not have you grunting and storming through this house because you're building a building you don't want to build. You, with a screaming and snapping head above what you are, is more than I can bear"(*TVOGC*177).

This rebellious voice rises higher and higher exposing the maltreated, insulted woman, demanding the dignity of a human being. This is something Wesker's women fight for. Jessie politely admits her inferior intellect but refuses to be treated like an inferior

creature. All her complains reveal Andy the tyrant and Andy the master, who behaves like a feudal lord using the wife as a "serf" , while preaching socialism and equality.

Jessie's revolt manifests her long concealed discontent against the downtrodden, beastly life she is compelled to live under marital obligations. Reverse to her pre-marital days it is a crude exposition of the differences between dream and reality. At the sametime it unveils the contradiction and hypocrisy hidden in human nature, sometines unknown to one's ownself. Perhaps Andy himself is not aware of the irrelevance of his own behaviour. Just because Jessie is devoted to him, he enslaves her forgetting his own principles of equality. But this man gives up to Kate, the intruder, who has invaded his life and has been dominating his creative activities like an undeclared authority. In a sense the role of Kate and Jessie can be compared with that of Helena and Alison in *LBA*. Helena also intrudes into, and establishes herself in, the Porter household easily after Alison's departure. But Kate targets Andy the creator, the artist. She solely aims at his working life and successfully carries on with her expedition. The way Andy yeilds to her strong will is an affirmation of his intense desire to be conquered and a deep need for a companionship, equal and challenging. Both of them are proud, self conscious, arrogant and stubborn, matching each other. It also explains the failure of relationship with Jessie. Jessie's submissive, sacrificing, humble nature cannot cope with the possessive and self-centred Andy. Kate ruthlessly usurped Jessie from Andy's heart, denying her even the sympathy and compassion one deserves in sickness. The way she reproaches Andy for being absent in weekly meeting owing to his wife's illness suggests that she is cruel and crude. Though she has the boldness and strength of a man, she is not free from meanness and jealousy of which women are particularly accused of. Her attitude to Jessie expresses her intense desire to deprive her of all the rights of a wife. She misses no chance to humiliate Jessie:

> Stoney:Why isn't she with us? She was part of us, once. Why does she stay in the kitchen?
> Kate(impatiently):Yes, where is your housekeeper? Why isn't your housekeeper asked to contribute to the discussions?(*TVOGC*168)

Kate's hold on Andy's life, the capability and talent she devotes and spends for Andy's work surprise us. We get inqusitive to know why she did not drive this energy to create something of her own. Ultimately all her enthusiastic efforts over Andy's project

seem to appear an wastage of her own intellect and potentialities as the relationship, particulerly for her, proves fruitless, maturing into nothing worldly. Jessie's dreams of a happy home breaks to pieces, and Kate gets no home of her own. Her life remains barren despite her potentiliaties. Jessie's assessment of their relationship, "You've damaged yourselves now, haven't you? Both of you, for all the time." rings a pathetic consequence of three wasted lives. In their criticism of the play Trussler and Leeming reasonably find it difficult to understand why such a bright young women would not pursue her own career, rather spend it up for "a clever male acquiantance."[1] It remains really an enigma because in other Wesker plays we see just the reverse, women trying to assert existence of their own. The two critics observe Kate's treatment of Jessie, as an expression of her jealousy and ruthlessness too. Thus the trio forms a complicated relationship exposing some of the traits of human nature which are usually thought to be inexplicable.

In this ambitious work, Wesker deliberately keeps his female characters somewhat behind the curtain, revealing parts only, not the whole. It puzzles us when we see them in the earlier plays as strong but simple to understand. Might it be that the playwright wanted a deviation?

The mystery of Kate and Jessie reaches its climax in Beatrice's character in the *FS*. The courage and boldness of the women in the former plays turn into a kind of possessiveness to devour the male-ego. The openness, the commitment, the loving care of maternal heart are changed into a kind of physical lethergy. In the first scene Beatrice remains motionless and reticent, almost mute. Unlike the over-sensitive, over-active women of the *Trilogy* and other plays, who dedicate their life to the family or society, she remains non-responsive, almost blunt and still. Her withdrawal from life to inertia and indolence amounts to a kind of denial of life. Wesker deliberately portrays Beatrice's passivity. He admits:

> I wanted to recreate the feeling of a woman who hasn't the energy to do anything, I actually *have* her doing nothing. I could have had her moving around and pottering and she could have exuded lethergy and ennui and despair, and it seems to me that the critics should have understood that I simply

[1] Leeming and Trussler, p. 121.

> didn't want to go through that fussy business. So the lethergy was represented by her remaining in chair and Adam doing all the movement.[1]

In earlier plays we meet women in their social surroundings, but here she is away from locality, away from social life, with a man, with whom she is supposed to be in love. Their age and situation indicate that love can no more be an exciting and ecstatic experience for them. Haunted by the past and its failures they will ever be threatened with doubt and suspicion. Still somewhere in them lurks a feeble hope to live, to built a home again.

The typical woman peeps through Beatrice when she starts to be active in the Spring after a long winter of inactivity and silence. She buys crockery and cutlery for their yet-unbuilt home and is afraid of Adam getting angry at her extravagance *(FS*82). We remember how Ibsen's Nora loved to buy household goods and to spend lavishly. Nora's indulgence to extravagance is a feminine feature that gave Torvald a scope to display his capacity to afford money, gratifying his male ego of the bread-winner. Ibsen emphasised Nora's feminine weaknesses, so that while looking back she could detect the self deceptions and realize the futilities of this material and worldly longings and belongings. In Wesker's play Beatrice's shoppings demonstrate her as a woman who is ordinary and conventional, but at the same time to Adam it signifies their desire to build a home(*FS*82).

Her interest in clothes thus may suggest that, feminine weaknesses apart, she is trying to come back to life and is desirous of making an attempt to forget the past. Together they plan their new home. With the authority of a landlady, Beatrice decides the colour of the wall, furniture, and the like. But she is too practical to forget the past, too alert to be over-enthusiastic about the future. The awareness of a blind invisible force, controlling human life restrains her from being too positive. Fearing to look forward she warns Adam, "Perhaps we should raise just our glasses and not tempt fate" (*FS*83). Her barrenness may be seen as a consequent inertia of the life she lived with her husband and lover. It is the reflection of her inability to create. We remember Kate's remaining unmarried in *TVOGC*. Kate makes a tragic figure at the end, secluded and lonely, with a life wasted on things she cannot claim to be her own.

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[1] *On File*, p. 29.

Kate's and Beatrice's not being mother accounts for the female possessiveness that often frightens their male counterparts with its ruthlessness. Kate's reproaches of Andy for his absence in the meeting due to his wife's illness has a kind of similarity with Beatrice's mocking Adam for keeping his son's photograph in the Chritsmas card. The beauty of a child's innocent face or a father's tender feeling can move her very little. For her, keeping the child's picture in a Christmas card is bad taste. She condemns the father in the man, dismissing his filial affection as an overexposition of paternal feelings. Wesker perhaps considers her sterillity as a sign of her inner hollowness and also of her inability to respond to the tender feminine instincts. For him, it is also an evidence of her incapacity to rise above her ownself.

In Sarah, Beatie, Ada or Jessie we see a tendency to devote their life for others, be it children or husband or lover. In Beatrice no trace of this self-sacrificing attitude projects an image of self-centred, dominating and mean woman. Adam is afraid of her strong possessiveness. Already embittered by past experiences, her jealous looks and words penetrated into his privacy and make him panicky. A weary Adam classifies women's love into two kinds:

> The women whose love is around you, keeping it's distance lest the heat of it burns you; and out of that warmth you emerge, slowly, confidently, as sure as the seed in her womb. And the women whose love is an oppressive sun burning the air around you till you can't breathe and drying every drop of moisture from your lips till you cant speak; and she has a passion no part of which relates to any living man nor any living man could share.(*FS*93)

In Wesker's plays these two kinds of women are presented to show the playwright's sense of awareness and knowledge of women's psychology. Beatrice's love is of the oppressive and suffocating kind which hardens and narrows the world instead of extending a loving touch to aching hearts. Her confession that she did not go to see her ailing father because she wanted to stay with her lover, displays a cruel and selfish woman and an ungrateful daughter. When Adam earnestly longs to care, love and heal, wants to enjoy being needful, she pronouces to be in need to be healed, "And I need to be healed. I've destroyed a marriage and failed a lover -- I need to be healed"(*FS*85). It is a desire to posses her man wholeheartedly, sparing him not even a space to breathe. She admits, "I

couldn't bear to see the shadow of another person fall on him. Even hearing him talk to someone else on the phone about ways to mend the world' was enough to make prickles of the hair on my neck"(*FS*88). She is cruel towards her lover's children too; she confesses that she could not even bear the demands they made on him. She dismisses all their complains, calling it artfullness.

Ridiculing all the attempts and commitments of her lover for a better world, she mockingly calls him "leader of the man." Politics has no appeal to her, love means snatching away a person from the world he is in, uprooting him from the origin. Her love thus aims at the soul of man, deadening the inner spirit. Somewhat practical in concept, she fails to materialize her efforts to be passionate in love. Adam infuriates her when he confides his feelings and pains of past love. She warns, "Not one thought should you be thinking that is not directed at me." Adam's observation that she wants "passionate lies" hints at her lack of maturity and wisdom, her incapability to accept life as it is. Her love lacks generosity though she herself looks for generosity, majesty and courage in man. She says, "All my life I've looked for peace and majesty, for a man who was unafraid and generous; generous and not petty. I can't bear little man: mean, apologetic, timid men, men who mock themselvs and sneer at others, who delight in downfall and dare nothing"(*FS*98).

Her speech expresses the eternal desire to have something beyond reach. It is an expression of the imaginative self of a woman since her adolescence, desiring the man who is not real, a blending of her dreams and imagination. The image of this man will be in her heart for ever and all her supposed lovers will fail to make her happy as she would go on measuring them against the standard she has imaginatively set up. Beatrice has her pains and suffering. Men have disappointed her, frustated her. Her lover had treated her cruelly. She knows the ways of men and can no more retain her faith. At the end, the bitter cynical woman expresses herself with an offer of making peace of make-believe, "Let's make up. Like children. Let's do something silly. Climb a tree with me. Look at the moon with me. Like children, let's make up"(*FS*109). These words are her vision of reality too. She is wise to understand that happiness and love between a man and a woman is as transitory as life itself, and that it is only in fantasy like retreating to childhood days that one can take refuge.

But their failure shows that the relationship won't endure the make-believe game of childhood. Brittle as human beings are, all their attempts will end in mortal despair, songs will turn into wails, bodies will turn cold. Lonely, deserted man and woman will go on counting days with all his or her private pains. With the same sense of pain and sorrow Osborne ends his *LBA*.

Though *The Friends* deal with human concern with the cosmic order, Wesker celebrates in it the feminine strength and its reviving spirit once again. Here among the confused, bewildered and withdrawn middle-aged men, women finally arouse a thirst for life. They bring these men back from resignation to a kind of acceptance. With their positivism and endless source of energy they win over the morbidity and despair besetting them.

A sense of mortality and futility pervades the play from the beginning. Consequently the characters are panicstricken. Their desperate need to get away from this horror make them book-worms like Manfred, pervert like Crispin or obesessesed like Roland. Only Macey, the outsider, remains sane and healthy. This disorder is a reflection of the cosmic disorder where Esther, the dying woman, appears to be the only sound and lively creature. Monica Mannheimer in her study justly comments on this two contrary states represented by two groups:

> Dramatically the theme is brought out through the contrast between the radically opposite attitudes to life represented by Esther on the one hand and the rest of the friends on the other. The prevailing mood among the friends is one of despair and inertia caused by a general feeling of disillusionment and personal failure. .... Against the background of so much misery and bewilderment the dying Esther paradoxically appears as the only one who is trully alive and her triuphant declaration of her joy in life stands out as an admirable alternative to the defeatism of the others:'I can't tell you how much I cherish everything. I know there's a lot that's obscene and ugly but [...] I've always had the capacity not to be oppressed [...] .... Some one is always rising up, taking wing and behind him he pulls the rest of us; and I want to be there for every moment, every second. Why should I want to die from all that'.[1]

Esther's jubilant, exuberant voice and irresistible, invincible spirit charm us. Even death's dark shadows cannot shatter her inexhaustiblle energy and vivacity. Like Sarah, she

[1] Mannheimer, pp.111-112.

is aware of the realities, as Monica has pointed out; but she refueses to be conquered by them. Instead she conquers death by infusing her own vigour and enthusiasm in these defeated, exhausted men and becomes a cult when her body is ritualistically set among these terrified people to make them accept death as a normal every-day fact, "Thus seated, the others are forced to accept the presence of the dead among them. Slowly they relax and one by one kiss her cheek"(*F*126). Then they return back to life, resuming their everyday jobs.

It is Esther who finds out the difference between man and woman, their analysis and evaluation of history and human struggle. She declares women as revolutionaries who review human civilization with all its suffering, struggles and achievements of the past while men are concerned with the present only (*F*106). She can see through the discontent and agitation lurking around the whole of the third world and identify its causes. She says, "The third world, Macey. We're all frightened of it. Our parents left us a heritage of colonial and racial bitterness and the third world hated them and is going to make us pay for it, and so we're all frightened"(*F*106). She proves by her death that, "Women are natural revolutionaries. ... Men are only ever rebels, their angers are negative, tiny. Like students, a kind of boyish energy"(*F*106).

The change women bring in life is never destructive or disastrous. It is always for creation or revival of something better. Amidst bitter hostilities and absurdities, they cherish and nourish life, fight against despair and disintegration, refuse anything negative or annihilating. Tendency to self criticism proves their intention to correct and improve. Simone, a neglected, isolated girl, silently nurses and serves these sick people. Excluded subtly for her class position, she is bold to utter the truth. She feels a life in the young people who come to their shop. Macey's rejection of these youth surprises her. She understands Macey's annoyance. Macey says, "they are still susceptible to loudmouthed culture and political fraudulence. They'll never produce anything, not this time around. Have to abandon hope this decade. An uncomfortable lot. It irritates me." Simone detects the reason of this irritation and comments, "What's irritating about the young is that we're not"(*F*92).

Wesker's women's intense urge to tend men, comfort and console them in their misery is present in Simone too. She could not care less when she sees Crispin suffering. If Crispin is unable to appreciate it, it is his failure, as it has been with other Wesker men. Ronnie also fails to reciprocate love. Simone's agony to see Crispin's derailment is humane, "I couldn't keep it to myself all the time. I thought I could give him strength"(*F*99). She has a keen longing to be useful. But her friends avoid her for her class superiority. The feeling of unwantedness torment her. Her injured sense of dignity bursts out, "You dont know what its like to talk and not to be heard; to offer and not to be taken; to be full and not needed ...They'll use me, drink with me, tolerate my company, but not need -- not really need me. I feel so useless and rejected, so dismissed"(*F*111).

Even among these friends, class consciousness is keen and acute. Women provoke and approve of it. Simone's resentment blames the class disparity for her isolation, "I haven't got any less feelings because I come from an upper-class family"(*F*118). Tessa, another woman admits that this gap is not to be bridged, "My father is a railwayman and your's is company director and nothing can change that"(*F*118).

Ultimately it is Simone, the neglected, cornered woman who takes up the unfinished job of Esther and reconciles these drifting men and women restoring them to life. She reawakens their deadly souls by her belief in order, made of discordant elements, "Tell them order is not uniformity or sameness. Tell them you can make order out of different things"(*F*121). Her brave utterance defies all evil and destructive elements threatening life and good sense. "I stand for liberty and love and the sharing between all men of the good things this good earth and man's ingenuity can give. Now shoot me for that," she says (*F125)*. Only Wesker's women can be so vocal, so positive, so courageous. Neither old age nor mortal sickness, not even death could frighten them to shrink back from life.

We meet another Sarah in *The Old Ones*, who is strong and confident like her namesake, the Sarah of the *Trilogy*. She stands quite contrary to her young educated daughter, Rosa, who is cofused, hesitant and weak, a failure in marriage as well as in career. Their age gap and mental distance reflect their generations. The confusion, disorder and alienation of the modern world is causing Rosa suffer from the dilemma of mal-

adjustment and indecision. She is the only young woman in the play, but her experience had made her older than her age.

Other women besides Sarah, Garda, Millie, Teressa, all are nostalgic, decripit, apprenhensive of death. Decay and senility have seized them with terrible fear of infirmity and mortality. Losing youth, memory, friends, relatives, they are almost like pieces of ruins; but one thing keeps them up: their refusal to resign. Millie mixes up past and present, but goes on doing her everyday jobs, like shopping, tea-making, telephoning, ignoring her solitary life. Teressa tries to employ herself into the task of translation. Gerda looks after her old, almost lunatic husband and brother-in-law. Herself a victim of oldage, she conceals all her troubles and nurses these two men. The care, concern and patience she shows for her husband make us forget her own age.

No matter how distressed and depressed these men and women are, somehow they are fighting the deformity and inertia creeping over them. Sarah is able to unite these disintegrated and drifting people to bring back to look forward, however bitter and hard life may seem to be. She stands to embody the strength and maturity to accept life as it is. Wesker himself pays his homage to Sarah, admitting that she is a recreation of his long line of aunts and a loving image of his own mother whom he always places at the centre of his life:

> I suppose it's as simple as that I had an enormous admiration for my mother and her cronies, her band of extra ordinary old ladies. Sarah is the still centre, surrounded by these extra ordinary people who find all sorts of ways to survive and carry on. ... I'm full of admiration for all the relatives, aunts, and uncles, who are mixed into the play -- a very extra ordinary mixture of tough personalities who were good and vivid and seemed to make significant patterns.[1]

If we think of it, this statement is nothing short of a veritable reversal of Osborne's experiences and conclusion about his mother as well as aunts and uncles. It would not be irrelevant to quote Osborne's comments on his family on both the sides in this respect, "The Osbornes and the Groves, with their common mistrust and carping, suspicious spirits, were neither close-knitted nor comfortable. The grudge that was their birth right they pursued

[1] *On File p.* 33.

with passionate despondency to the grave."[1] The comment explains his attitude to women, old or young, which rather expressed itself in the plays.

Sonia in *LLOBP* presents a completely different woman from those women we have met so far. Living in an world of her own imagination and fantasy, she is just opposite to what she appears to be, "matronly, a large self-assured presence." Her imaginary conversation with her husband in her letters unfolds the mystery of a girl's growth to womanhood. It is the same old but thrilling story of girl-in-love, the merging of her own identity with the lover and husband in conjugal union. She surrenders her whole self to her husband's ideals and views. Even her religion she submitted to his non-conformity. Happiness in married life does not make her regret that surrender.

She remembers everyday details of their united life, first love-making, first row, first living apart. In fact she is living in these memories although moving in reality. Her loss of faith makes her transformation complete. Brought up with religious faith, she was teased by Victor, the non-believer, who slowly convinced her of the futility of religious faith. Then the war snatched it away for good. She informs Victor, "Besides, there was the war and all of them soldiers being gassed and slaughtered and then it happened to my brother Stan so I couldn't much believe in God. But I missed him. I don't mind telling you I missed God"(*LLOBP*208).

In a woman's conception of religion, God tends to be replaced by her man, whom she takes up as "Lord"or "master". Beatrice in her tenderest moment calls Adam, "Lord". Sonia too admits her transfer of allegiance from God to her husband. In course of time, her love, loyalty and fidelity are aimed at the man she loves. She confides, "Couln't talk or argue much or write but I grew from God to you"(*LLOBP*108). This confusion of husband or lover with God might have been working behind the expression of the conception of God as "He", an authoritative, controlling power. In *The Entertainer*, Jean refuses to believe in God, because of the male authority he symbolizes.

[1] Osborne, *A Better Class* , p. 80.

Sonia is perhaps the most romantic character Wesker created. Obsessed with her relationship with Victor, she builds up a world of her own with dreams of youthful days. Her reminescences of past days are lyrical:

> You took me and you shaped me and you gave me form. ... You needed only to be in the house and I felt my life and the lives of the children I cherished could never go wrong. ... They have confidence and pity and daring in them. And in me there are flowers. Blossoming all the time. Explosions of colour and energy. .... In me is you. All you've given me. I've been a white sheet, a large white canvass and you've drawn the world upon me, given outline to what was mysterious and frightening in me. ....You are my rock my hero my love.(*LLOBP*231)

Alienation from reality because of her obsessed love is the irony of her fate too. She does not know that her husband is dying. When she wakes up from her trance and reality clutches her with its claw, suddenly she feels, she is a "mad old woman". Still, as if in a drowsy state, she romanticizes death, imagining it as a glorious end to life, "And with this blinding light will come an ending to all pain. The body's pain the heart's pain the pain in your soul"(*LLOBP*234).

Sonia is Wesker's unique creation in whom he reconciles some apparent paradoxes in an artistic way. This middle-aged "matronly" woman, the "large and self-assured" housewife, devoted to her domestic duties, never gives us any impression that she could write such letters at her age, with children grown up, husband mortally sick. Dwelling in a world of nostalgia, Sonia is what she doesnot appear to be. Wesker himself says, "Sonia's leters are unexpected. They must surprise us. It must not seem possible that such a woman could be writing them. This dichotomy is central to the play and should be emphasised."[1] Wesker unveils the hidden- self of a woman whom we know and meet in our everyday life but fail to take note of because of her ordinaryness and mediocrity.

Kate stands apart as a practical, dignified and confident girl amidst the chaos and muddle, created by the self-declared humanitarian industrialist Louis Litvanov in *The Wedding Feast*. She understands each and every gesture and movement of her boss-cum-lover and can analyse them from an absolutely practical, impartial viewpoint. She once

[1] Notes On Letters, *Wesker vol* 3, p. 235.

planned to run away with him, but did not, as it is against her nature to do anything that hurts her and other's dignity. She scrutinizes Louis's schemes whth suspicion and warns him against impending failure.

Like other Wesker women, she is wise and socially conscious. The awareness of class-disparity and impossibilities of their union make her maintaim a respectable distance from Louis despite her weakness. We know that she is right when she calls herself "pragmatic", "straddling two worlds". She never allows herself to be taken away by false hopes or pride. Through her strong hold on Louis, she controlls him, but never crosses her limits nor allows Louis to cross his. Her last words to Louis after his humiliation reveals her grasp of reality. "Now Louis ... Perhaps you'll listen to me from now on. Just give them the rate for their work and the sweet *illusion* that they're equal to any man. Stop pretending it's a reality. And don't be kind or ashamed of or apolegetic for your money," she warns him(*WF*178).

Herself a workingclass girl, she is not blind to the class-character of her own people, and is aware of the fact that should they get any opportunity, these oppressed would turn tyrants, which is a tendency latent in human nature itself. She is free from all her false hopes and illusions. Her political background cannot derail her. Maintaining her own class identity she works as a go-between the upper and the working class, the employer and the employee, yet remains dignified.

In *The Merchant*, Wesker challenges not only Shakespeare's concept of the Jew, he also criticises the great dramatist's concept of the Jewess and presents Jessica as one of the new liberated self-conscious woman, full of dignity and self-respect. She asserts herself successfully and demands her rights as an individual.

Usually Shakespeare's women are strong, assertive and individualistic, not inferior to their male counterparts; often stronger, sharper and more ambitious. But in their capability, sense of respect and individualism, Wesker's Portia and Jessica, even the maid Nerissa, are the moral cousins of the modern woman whom Henrick Ibsen celebrates and Simone de Beauvoir and Bertrand Russell greet.

Wesker affirms the originality of the play in *Distinctions*. "*The Merchant*, though an original play -- *not* an adaptation, and not in verse -- is nevertheless based on the same three stories which Shakespeare used for his play, *The Merchant of Venice*",[1] says he, adding that among "many themes which are locked into the play" one is, "male/female relationship, and the place of women in society."[2] These themes give the play new dimensions. In the ultimate analysis despite his pity for the Jew, Shakespeare condemns Shylock, makes him an object of pity, appreciates Antonio, praises Bassanio, glorifies Portia and belittles Jessica. Jessica is a simple and less-than-ordinary girl in Shakespeare, who is ashamed of her Jewish birth and redeems herself into the blind love of Christian Lorenzo. The harmony of a Christian marriage ends the play with the unity, security and restoration of a typical romantic comedy with a fairy tale ending. Wesker's *The Mrechant* is a product of a modern dramatist, living in the age of socialism, feminism and individualism. Michael Scott comments, "Wesker's *Merchant* is no fairy tale, no commedia dell'arte nor is it a sentimentalised tragedy. Rather it is a statement of the discord that evolves when men of positive values are persecuted merely because they exist in or near a society of prejudice and ignorance".[3]

We see Bassanio fails in the role of a progressive, liberal and unprejudiced man. Suffering from intense male-chauvinism he can neither assert his own intellectual superiority, nor appreciate Portia's. Rather he shrinks back from the fear of her blooming talent. His voice sounds like that of a weak, scared man's, feebly assuring himself when Glaziano reproaches him for thinking of bed only, with such an intellect at his side, "It shall be cherished, but not spoilt. I shall turn to it but not let it rule"(*M*266).

His male desire to control the wife also testifies to his narrow and conservative outlook; he thinks woman to be inferior and unequal. Lagging behind his time, he defies the demands of the age, while Portia, with her curiosity and eagerness is growing and increasing every day. She is not ignorant of the fact that today's truth might prove wrong tomorrow. She says, "*I* grow. Why can't they? What *I* thought yesterday might be wrong

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[1] Wesker, *Distinctions* , p. 259.
[2] Wesker, *Distinctions*, p. 270.
[3] Scott, p. 57.

today. What should I do? Stand by my yesterdays because *I* have made them? I made today as well. And tomorrow, that I'll make too, and all my days, as my intelligence demands"(*M*263). The sharp contrast between a confident, promising, potential lady and a confused, shaky, frightened man is evident from their attitudes expressed in their words. Yet we cannot fail to appreciate Bassanio for recognising and acknowledging Portia's virtues, though, at the same time, his reasons for fear can be felt:

> Well, not beautiful perhaps, but -- striking, vivid. Compelling. Intelligent eyes, mobile features -- handsome. In fact, if I must be blunt, determination and strength of will give her face a masculine aspect. She's feminine to the extent that she doesn't deny her sex, yet misleadeng because she doesn't cultivate, exploit, abuse it. (*M*211)

The man in him is unable to accept her growth beyond the woman. A subtle desire to see or make her "a woman" works there too as if otherwise his manhood cannot be asserted. Nevertheless, Portia, the "new-woman", pronounces her existence proudly, defying the age-old shackles of morality, religion and society:

> I feel I-am-the-new -woman-and-they -know-me- not! For centuries the Church has kept me confortably comforting and cooking and pleasing and patient. And now -- Portia is no longer patient. Yes, she can spin, weave, sew. Give her meat and drink -- she can dress them. Show her flax and wool -- she can make you clothes. But -- Portia reads! Plato and Aristotle, Ovid and Catallus, all in the original! Latin, Greek, Hebrew-- (*M*197)

This Portia has crossed the periphery of four walls and spread out her thirsty mind to the corners of the world to know the unknown, to reveal the mystery of the universe. She is no more the bundle of obedience and allegiance sacrificing her body and soul to domestic felicity. She wants to know and play her own role in this world of vast human activities. She has the competence, ability, and intellect to penetrate into all the arenas. In her own words, "She has observed, judged, organized and -- crept out of the kitchen. Knowledge of love and corruption and evil may have lost her sweet innocence but -- the fireside choir rocks without her now, and what she will do is a mystery. Portia is a new woman"(*M*197).

Ordinary as Bassanio is, he cannot estimate and appreciate her. Nor can he match and cope with her extra-ordinary life-force. Perhaps her birth accounts for the vitality and endless energy she carries. Her mother was a peasant woman and she has inherited her zeal

and liveliness of which she is proud. "Perhaps that's my real inheritance, Nerissa: father's marriage to a peasant. My energy is her's," she says(*M*196). Again we see the typical Weskerian celebration of motherhood as the source of hope and vigour that exalts one's heart above the everyday triffles. She goes on striving for worldly as well as spiritual betterment, offering help to others in their need.

Overlooking her health and riches, caring less for her own beauty, she equips herself to counter the world with her intelligence and brain. The legacy of wealth and education she got from her father enriched her soul, comforted her life but the zeal to enjoy she inherited from her mother. She says, "My mother taught love ripens on the mind, is made of passions, laughter, all the minutiae of living *shared* rather than surmised"(*M*236). Thus, whereas Shakespeare's Portia is pre-occupied with the thought of making a correct-match and marry and please Bassanio, Wesker's Portia feels a new vibration of life within. She wants to use her potentialities. She is aware that "There are such stirrings in me. Such untried intellect. Such marvellous loves and wisdom". She thinks, "I could found cities with my strengths"(*M*237). She reasonably fears that marriage might obstruct her attempts and therefore, is not eager to accept it as the only goal. She asserts, "I should be his mistress only. That gives him no holds over me then. As his wife the State chains me"(*M*236-7).

In *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare's Isabella does not dare to rise against the society which imposes the system of dowry on the girls; Wesker'a Portia identifies the state as the tyrant making marriage a handcuff for woman. She affirms that women have something more to do beyond the marital duties. Christopher Innes, sounds right in his opinion when he finds Shaw's influence on Portia in *The Merchant*, and indicates to the implied racism in Shakespeare's play. He says, "There is a clear Shavian echo in his characterization of Portia who introduces herself with 'I-am-the-new-woman-and -they-know-me- not!' Wesker's play is a point by point reversal of its source, justified as 'accurately reflecting historical reality' which was the opposite of Shakespeare's 'racist fantasy' ".[1]

[1] Innes, p. 120.

Portia consoles Nerissa, gives her shelter and pledges to build her in her own image. She assures her maid, "I'll have you educated and protect from the miseries of an ill-choesn marriage"(*M*196). Jessica, who in Shakespeare is a gentle, timid, submissive girl, ashamed of her own birth and past, becomes the arrogant, stubborn girl in Wesker who looks at her heritage with pride. No inferiority complex afflicts her heart like her predecessor's. Shakespeare's Jessica is unhappy with her life and wants to get rid of it at any cost. She seeks salvation in conversion, and becomes the wife of a gentile. Her aim in life targets that much, "I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a christian"(*Merchant of Venice* act3, sc5). She appears rather colourless and pale with no feature of her own to identify distinctively while Wesker's Jessica, from the beginning stands firm, resolute, and exclusive. She is a down-to-earth, worldly-wise girl who doesnot want to be absorbed in books like her father or Portia. Jessica is annoyed with her father's passion for books, and wants to grow and spread herself beyond the books. She has the desire to see life with open eyes, to enjoy the colour, smell, and taste of every drop of it. She is dissatisfied with the present state in her father's house, "Oh, I respect scholarship, but there is a world outside the covers of a book, isn't there? Men don't always behave as the philosophers fear, do they? I have the sayings and warnings of sages ringing in my ears so loudly, that music, which I adore above all things, can hardly make sense in my head any more"(*M*201).

To her, this vast world with all its mystery is much more thrilling and alluring than the cold silent words in books. She is critical of her father. But her resentment is not Shakespesre's Jessica's. Shakespeare's Jessica is ashamed of her Jewish descendence and blames her father for this shameful identity which secludes her from her friends and lover. Wesker's Jessica on the other hand, is critical of her father for his isolation from life, for his depriving himself and his daughter of the pleasures and mysteries of the world, for his misjudging people by their bookish knowledge. She says, "My father is an intellectual snob. .... My father's cruelty is to diminish whoever can't recall a name, a date, an event or argument"(*M*201-202).

She also resents his being too strict, too rigid in the codes of conduct. His imposed disciplines suffocate and stifle her. Shylock has provided her with everything she needs and

wanted to bring her up like a son. But he fails as a father. He falls short of patience, love and the paternal tenderness for which a child's soul craves. She grows arrogant and defiant. She feels deprived, suppressed and mal-treated as a daughter. From this feeling of self-bereavement, she becomes rebellious and questions her position in the household where her mother too, had been ill-treated. It is her revolt against the authority of her father which excludes fatherly care and anxiety from the duties of fatherly obligation. Shylock neither expresses nor exercises paternal love or affection. He reminds her that she is deprived of nothing she needed to grow up with. She furiously replies:

> Except the sweetness of feeling that this is *my* house and *my* roof also. ... debate this question: to whom does a house belong? Only the father? Not even the mother? And if not the children and the mother, then how must their relationship be described? As temporary occupants? As long- standing visitors? At what point is the child's right of movement and taste taken into consideration ? Does she only become whole when taken from the possession of her father to the possessiom of her husband?(*M*225)

Her insolence raises some basic questions of women's rights, the questions asked by Nora in *A Doll's House* for example, about the rights of women as individuals. Nora too expresses her doubts on books, "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 is found in books. I must think over things for myself and get to understand."[1]

So, in Wesker's *The Merchant*, we meet two women; one with her jest for books and knowledge, the other with her sense of reality and apathy for books. They desire for the same rights, women's emancipation from male domination. They feel their independent ego threatened by the male world in the form of filial and marital bond. Though Jessica hates books, she is already well-read and well-informed. Perhaps it contributed to the development of her indomitable spirit. Therefore it is no wonder that she would not be able to adjust with the mean, selfish, proud and vain Lorenzo, who undermines her. His narrow view of life and lack of confidence becomes oppressive after their elopement. Afraid of her free-spirit, he tries to be imposing lest she outgrows him. His own gentile birth he takes for

[1] Henrick Ibsen, *A Doll's House, The Lady From The Sea, The Wild Duck*, tran R. FArqueharson Sharp and Eleanor Marx-Aveling, London, Everyman,1910, reprint 1988, Act 111.

granted as a sign of superiority. He even does not show any decency to refrain from speaking ill of the father in front of the girl he is going to marry. It infuriates Jessica. She cannot remain indifferent to other's attitude to her and to her rights of respectability. Her protest speaks of her sense of morality too, when she appeals, "Please! Gentleman! Remember me! I'm raw! My rhythms still belong to the Ghetto. I cant slip so quickly from God to God like a whore"(*M*249).

Gradually she realizes the consequence of her deed as she discovers that man Lorenzo is mediocre, ordinary, empty and conceited, a man who thinks high of his own religion, society and himself and looks down upon others. He lacks tolerance, liberalism and sense of respect for other's which in turn makes one respectable. Sharp and intelligent as she is, Jessica can now easily understand her mistake. She admits that she thought his ignorance to be wisdom; she confesses, "I loved his questioning the wisdom of the age, his clamouring to give youth its voice, his contempt for what men wrote in books. His strength, his seriousness, his devotion. I loved, I suppose, escape from oppressive expectations"(*M*251-52). Her coming to senses from the trance of love bring a painful cognizance. It ends all her hopes for a future. Her statement to Portia rings a sad wail of broken dreams, "Now, I'm feeling his strength is arrogance, his seriousness is pedantry, his devotion is frenzy and I am confused and drained and without ground beneath my feet"(*M*252).

Though Portia cofidently takes the charge of Jessica and is determined to save her from an ill-chosen marriage, she becomes melancholic to foresee the gloomy future of her own conjugal life. Reality has disillusioned her too. She says, "I'll look after Jessica. My marriage is a parent's will, not her's, though. Mine can't be held back, her's, I will see, never takes place"(*M*265). She respects her father's will, accepts her fate, yet does not give up. Subtly and firmly, she hints to Bassanio, to his limits of rights and expectations, though she knows that the fire within her has been smothered by the predicament. Her words are painful sighs of an aching heart, "Bassanio will come to know his place, accept it, or leave it. I'm to be reckoned with, you know, not merely dutiful. Although, something in me has died struggling to grow up"(*M*265).

In *The Merchant*, therefore, the marriage bells do not overwhelm the girls with joy as they are aware of the complexities of human nature that obstruct the fairy-tale union of two lives. Michael Scott rightly puts it, "Wesker concludes with the bitterness of discontinuity. Jessica rejects Lorenzo and Portia determines that Bassanio will know his place in her home."[1] In Shakespeare, we recall, it is a scene of harmony and union with the affirmation of Christian marriage. Perhaps the twentieth-century playwright knows well that finding a solvent husband cannot be the only goal and aim to a modern woman. Rather marriage is as much a dilemma for her as-much-as it is a necessity. It puts her individuality, personality, freedom of speech, thought and action into question. For her the answer is not easy to find.

Different in theme and subject-matter, *Caritas* is set in the atmosphere of the fourteenth century. It tells the story of a young girl who volunteered to be an anchoress in a church in Norfolk. Her anguish, sufferings and torments in a solitary cell are dramatised in the play. Wesker himself says about his aim, "I don't want to enter into the psychology of the act or the girl. Something in the nature of the act -- consisting as it does of retreat, self sacrifice, and suffering -- is there in us all. I simply want to recreate an archetypal story."[2]

Here the decision of the girl might be seen from the socio-historical context. It was the period of supremacy of the Church. Even the personal lives of common men were controlled by the autocratic tyranny of the Church in conspiracy with the ruling aristocrats. The girl's option for a nun's life might be explained as an attempt to escape the worldly life which became a nightmare with the possible punishments of hellfire for the preaching of the priests. Religion was conceived only as a merciless doctrine of austerity and asceticism. To live honestly means denial of all worldly desires and delights. All human attempts for survival, and love for life, were condemned in the name of religion. Christine's terrible fear of life is expressed in her speech, "When you die your soul go to the terrors you've been afeared of all your life. You had no terrors then your soul's left in peace"(*C*52).

Afraid of the earthly life, she surrenders her soul to the divine power which she could never reach. Seclusion and withdrawal can not give her what she desires. She is

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[1] Scott, p. 57.
[2] *On File*, p. 42.

groping in the darkness. The obsession with mortification of flesh drives her mad. She reminds us of Isabella in *Measure for Measure*. Renunciation of the world is imposed on Christine by suggestion, by the terrible insecure position of the girls in society. But in isolation she becomes rebellious, subconsciously she praises the worldly life:

> It's my thoughts, father. I cant put my thoughts on him. .... new thoughts come (her legs move apart now) an' I can't turn them away' cos they're O so sweet. I'm naked. My body open to the sky, my skin in the grass, sun on my breasts. I feel cool wind bring me the smell of the hawthorn and the wild mint. An' I see birds sweepin' an' singin'. An' those clouds, those glorious, rollin' shapes, that sweet scent, that soft air -- thaas not the devil's forms, I say. Forgive me, father.(C58)

Like Isabella, she learns to praise life, the glory, beauty and attractions that lure men, though unlike Isabella, it does not end for her with the ringing of marriage bells. Still she finally proves that mortal man can find salvation only in facing life, not in retreating from it. Wesker emphasises this point as he has admitted in his diary. The austerity, asceticism and renunciation, chosen both by Isabella and Christine are caused by their frightening sense of insecurity and humiliation as women. This fear is evident in their desperate attempts to escape.

The world of *Measure for Measure* is hostile to women. They are almost pawns, bought and sold in marriage for dowry. Without dowry they have no value, no matter how deeply they are in love. Isabella's self-exile might be a protest to this mortification of her womanhood; a rejection of the physical world where women are only body and flesh. It is perhaps a search for security too, as the socio-economic values obviously fail to provide her that basic right even. Christine's declining her lover, thwarting the physical world can be seen in the same light.

Thus both the plays reflect an age in which women were denied recognition as individuals. It consequenly made them repellant to life. To take a famous example from history, we can refer to Joan of Ark. She was also a product of such a situation. Her sainthood, over-exhileration for religion might be seen as rebellion against the existing social order that suppressed women and denied them all human rights. Particularly these women find it difficult to accept this oppressive society because of their free and independent spirit. So they let it out in the other way. Wesker admits, "Christine, as I've

understood her, is a born free spirit, she thaught she wanted to be free of the body's need and demands so that she could fly away to God."[1]

Despite Wesker's strong protest, these ideas bring him near the champions of women's lib. The fifth volume of his plays contain five one-woman plays which confirm his deeper curiosity and interest in the women question. His knowledge of women's psychology and their problem in private as well as in public life culminates in this volume. Most of these plays expose women in misery. The rejected, deserted, abused women cry for the assertion of their dignity and womanhood.

Yardsale is a painful portrayal of loss of faith, happiness and youth. The middle-aged school teacher Stephanie feels cheated, deceived and jilted by her husband as well as by life. Her twentyfive years of married life becomes a question mark and she makes a tragic figure, with her husband gone, "after twenty five years, three children, drooping breasts, dreams of murder, loss of faith, loss of friends, a hysterectomy and a year of piles"(*Y*20). In her anger and desperation, she reveals the predicament of the lonely, deserted women in the this modern, mechanized world. No matter how independent and self-reliant she is, her life and world spin round one single person, a man, be it husband or be it lover. Her wailing reminds us of Euripides' Medea in her rage, when she finds out her husband's betrayal. Medea also felt that this act of treachery of one single person had stopped the course of her life, blinded her world. Her review of woman's life was:

> First of all we pay a great price to purchase a husband; and thus submit our bodies to a perpetual tyrant. And everything depends on whether our choice is good or bad -- for divorce is not honourable thing and we may not refuse to be married. And then a wife is plunged into a way of life and behaviour entirely new to her.[2]

Stephanie proves the veracity of Medea's words, "I've been a good woman, Sheldon. Faithful, patient, a companion, a friend and I laid on my back more times than I cared to for you, you know that? .... I opened my legs and thought about cooking the next

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[1] Wesker, *Distinctions* , p. 262.

[2] *Greek plays in Modern Translation*, ed by Dudly Filts, *Medea*, trans by Frederick Prokosch, NewYork, The Deal Press, 1947, p. 207.

days meal while you heaved and puffed and make all those absurd shrieks you informed me was passion"(*Y*14).

Medea's words suggest a picture of Stephanie in her shameful desolation, "And man who is disgusted at home, goes forth to put an end to his boredom and turns to a friend or companion of his age; while we at home continue to think of him and him only."[1] Stephanie in her obsessed mourning repeats Medea again, "A woman past her best, her three children grown up, disappeared into their own lives. I've invested in you my youth, my womanhood, the secrets of my body, my fund of love, friendship, wisdom and patience, and my investments should be showing return, damn it! I should be plucking the profits by now"(*Y*14).

Her husband goes away to find thrill and romance in a new affair, while she at home broods and broods on their past, gradually losing sanity. Medea's prophecy has a universal significance. Stephanie summerises Medea's estimate of woman's life. Both meet the same fate, both are deserted by husbands for another young girl. Time changes but life for the women remains the same, irrespective of whether she lives in ancient Greece or in the twentieth- century England, the countries boastful of their championship of democracy in the ancient and the modern age. The same misery, distress and humiliation plague women, when men betray them. Womem are not allowed to live and think independently even today; they were not allowed to do so in ancient Greece. Man was, as well as, is, always at the centre of a woman's life. His absence or presence makes life meaningless or meaningful for her.

Even in the modern western world, the status of a single woman is not honourable, least of all tolerable. In spite of all her competence and efficiency, woman is a commodity, her capacity to please man is the criterion to judge her merits. Stephanie can now see her price as a "thing". "You get tired of things. Even lovely things. I know. I had a husband got tired of me" she says knowingly (*Y*19). Wesker's socialist commitment does not fail to see the queer destiny of woman in a consumer society. The theme that consumerism, lust for new, exciting, and thrilling materials in everyday life turns woman into a commodity,

[1] Euripides, p. 207.

lies behind the play; wherein the discarded heroine discovers herself as nothing but an "used object displayed for sale", ultimately.

Betty Lemon presents the picture of lonely old woman who has nothing but a bundle of bitter memories for her company. To keep herself up she hangs a noose in her room and converses with it throughout the day, "From it she draws strength, determination, as though she has deliberately erected a confrontation with the ultimate in order to be challenged"(*WHBL*25). To her, every moment of life means fighting against infirmity, death and boredom and, "A glance at the noose gives resolve to face the day's battles with obstacles she's determined to overcome"(*WHBL*25).

What fills us with awe is her strong and firm tenacity not to surrender. In her conversation with herself she reveals the social hypocrisy and moral corruptions of the upper and ruling classes. Every word she utters expresses her intense hatred for her husband who was a socialist MP and led a dual life. The empty and false relationship she maintained with him makes her sufferings even more unbearable. Her crowning as the "Handicapped Woman of the Year" manifests the cruelty, audacity and brutality of the so-called social work in the fashionable upper-class. The underlying humiliation and insult make her furious. It is a blow to her old infirm existence given by society in the name of humanity. Her days are now only vivid recollections of past memories and all those are reminders of her victimisation by the social discrepancies as a girl-child or woman. Her mother once threw a pile of spoons at her when she refused to carry out an order given to her brother. Her husband ditched her, abused her and all through her life she suffered for her simplicity which is in fact foolishness in this cruel world. Each and every word she utters rings of cynicism, bitterness and agony of a life misspent and a of life unbearable now with its senility, infirmity and futility.

The next play, *The Mothers*, is a portrayal of four mothers -- an unmarried mother, a mother who never was, a failed mother, and the mother earth. The first mother Ruth is unmarried. She is a strong, independent, modern woman, brave enough to accept the challenges of a solitary life. She reminds us of Beatie, Jean, Esther, Kate, Ada, Portia, and Jessica. The male-dominated world that constantly intimidates women and threatens their free spirit is in fact fearful of their viability. She warns her daughter against this cowardly

male- world and wants her to be free and fearless . Her words are clear, "It's a hard world run by men who are frightened of women, and I'm going to make certain she's independent of them"(*M*39). She does not believe in man or marriage. Rather she thinks, "no one is indispensible"(*M*40).

Like other Wesker-women, Ruth too is aware of the reality and faces it bravely. She hates herself for the need she feels for a man in life despite her awareness of their meanness and selfishness. The maturity to admit the inconsistencies ruling herself does not deny the physical need she feels; it accepts her limitations as well. "No one is ever independent", she says(*M*41). She is Wesker's emphasis on the universal motherhood in woman. The mother in her rules supreme, "If I needed no one else I'd need *her*,The divine Brat"(*M*41). Like Phoebe in *The Entertainer*, Ruth is capable of self-criticism and can estimate herself correctly, "Who would've wanted to marry me? Plain graceless, difficult, clever. Impossible combination for a man to accept." Here she utters the very hard fact, which will get established in the later plays by the playwright, the fact that, clever and intelligent women are not desired and appreciated by men. We shall see that the more education women are getting, the more independence they are acquiring, the more lonelier they are becoming.

Ruth's decision to stay alone after getting a child before marriage is symptomatic of a great socio-moral change in the post-war world. In post-war period, marriage was gradually losing its religious and social sanctity. Moral laxity on the one hand and increasing demand for women's lib on the other, were diminishing the authority practised by the marital bond so long on the economic and socio-sexual life of man and woman, particularly on women. Consequently either marriages were breaking up or not taking place at all.

The fate of Osborne's Phoebe or Wesker's Sarah is not same as that of Beatie, Jean or Ruth. A gap of a generation has given Ruth courage enough to defy the moral codes and become a virgin mother. Still Wesker's sense of reality startles us, when we see that she cannot disregard the mother in her and is obliged to surrender to two basic human instincts, her physical need, and the dream of a woman, her goal and achievement, the child.

Naomi, the second character, was never a mother. The lonely and depressed Naomi craving for a human voice, arouses pity, with a past spent looking after an invalid mother and a sick sister, a present with unbearable pains of meaningless existence. Her laments over her life is full of whimpers, of endless complains against the injustices of the world. We notice with curiosity that these lonely, deserted woman, refuses to be pitied. Till the very end she retains self-dignity. " 'Remember you're a senior citizen,' he says. Humbug!I'm not a senior citizen, I'm a very dried-up tired old woman 'Are you a middle aged citizen?' I ask him. 'Do you call your children junior citizens? Young is young, old is old' I tell him.'Do not insult me'," she utters.(*Naomi*47)

Deborah is a happy and satisfied mother who loves and feels the completeness of her life. In this whole volume she is the only woman who feels that her occupation as a mother and housewife has fulfilled her with glory and honour. She is pleased and senses that she is needed, "I'm needed, wanted, depended upon. I glory in it, bathe in it, thrive on it!"(*FPM*53) For her, marriage is not a bondage indeed! She is a bright exception in this gallery of disheartened, disappointed women who long to be desired and depended upon.

In these four portraits of a mother, Wesker's obsession with motherhood is extensively demonstrated. One important thing to be noticed is that however disheartened and frustrated these women are in their personal life, they do not regret their motherhood, nor do they blame their children for their misfortunes. In their weariness they sigh over the gap they cannot bridge anymore, and it makes them all the more lonely and sad.

The third play, *The Mistress*, deals with the problem of a successful independent woman, who falls in love with a married man. She is thirty nine years old, voluptuous, energetic, efficient, talented, and famous. But the same sense of incompleteness, longing for love and to be loved, to care and to be cared for, choke her voice, which we hear in Bill Maitland's or Jock Mellor's voice in Osborne's plays. Like Bill, she also cries over the lost youth, "Oh I ache to be young again. I miss, I miss I so miss my days of blood and youth"(M74). This fear of losing youth is actually fear of the coming days, when she would be thwarted and dismissed like other old persons in the Western world. Here, the loss of youth means the loss of ability, capacity, and competence. In a capitalist society man is

valued by his capacity to serve. The moment he is unable to offer physical strength and service he is discarded like torn clothes.

This apprehension underlies all most all these plays. This volume offers a heart-rending picture of a darkening shadowy world that frightens women, who are nearing old age, and desperately trying to cling to youth. Samantha Milner's cry over spilled youth with her guilt-pricked conscience in a bewildered state, makes all her success, fame and position look absurd and vague. Annie Wobbler is not different from the women we met in the earlier plays. Three women named Anna or Annie expose themselves as a cleaner or part time tramp, a bright energetic young woman and a celebrity novelist. Stationed at different classes and reverse situations, these three women are struggling all alone with a deep and intense yearning for a human contact full of love, affection and understanding.

Annie Wobbler, the illeterate, ignorant woman, decieved and deprived all through her life, is a symbol of all exploited working women who are deserted by their own people in old age. Her appreciation of her mistress is the admiration of a simpleton who sees an unknown mysterious beauty in front, knowing that it is strange and beyond reach. Her sense of piousness is very practical, stemming from the experiences of her downtrodden life. "They don't do no Jew things ... Like I don't do no Christian things but I'm a Christian person all the same. .... I'm a sinner, madam. You're a sinner Annie Wobbler, your mother would be ashamed of you, so it's thank- your-lucky- star she's dead and gone, thank them," she says(*Annie Wobbler*84). Very matter of fact, she does have little time to brood on abstract things and analyse or dissect emotions.

Annie, the first-class honours graduate, faces a peculiar problem, typical for the educated, competent girls in modern society. Their qualifications and abilities are the greatest impediments in finding boy-friends and lovers. Men donot want women to be their equals in degrees and intellect, for they fear their own merits to be exposed. Women must either conceal or suppress their intellectual capacity or accept a solitary even if successful, life . By no means men would allow them to surpass or even be equal. The dilemma in Anna's life arises out of this hard reality, "The trouble is he's also clever. Difficult. He can be modest about his cleverness but I will have to hide mine, I can see. Why don't men like their women to be clever? They like them to be clever but not cleverer than them," she

knows(*AW*94). This problem is perhaps at the centre of almost all the conflicts in the man-woman relationship in post-war society. Jimmy's fear of Alison's non-responsiveness, Adam's fear of Beatrice's aggression, all are of the same nature. Their male instinct senses an expedition imminent and they shield themselves with over-alertness and offensiveness.

Annbella Wharton, the famous writer, a celebrity, faces another problem, the problem of adjustment. Her parents quarrelled and it made her restless, because she loved them both. She tries to exlpain her own situation, "Your parents quarelled and you loved them both and you've got a conflict raging inside you which is giving you complexes that'll destroy unless you have them seen to"(*AW*106). Her loneliness, tiredness and boredom is that of the modern man, living in mechanized society, the dehuminazation of which Marx was clear in seeing.

Thus we see that the emptiness and hollowness that creep in the modern mind do not spare Wesker's enthusiastic women too. Gradually in the later plays we come across bright, optismistic, lively women, loving, caring, and concerned with the world around, fading into lonely, bitter, helpless and tired individuals, withdrawn and frightened. The undefeated Sarah, the firm and resolute Ada, the overwhelmed, talkative Beatie, are replaced by the drooping, chattering and groping Stephanies, Betty Lemons and Annie Wobblers.

Maybe the playwright's own ageing up, growing attachment with life, increasing awareness of reality, have made him conscious of the dark shadows of despair hanging over the hopes of daylights, just as death haunts life. Here Wesker the artist overtakes Wesker the socialist, accepting life as it is, portraying it with all it's anguish, pain, and sufferings. Still, as "man cannot be defeated," Wesker's women too, cannot be conquered by the panic of death or the cruelty and injustice of society. They remain undefeated and unconquered in their struggle, no matter how hard they find the battle to be.

RELATIONSHIP : WITHIN AND BEYOND MARRIAGE

In his introduction to the adaptationn of Strindberg and Ibsen (*The Father and Hedda Gabler*),Osborne boldly declares:

> If anyone was to carry the Strindberg torch into the arena I was destined to be the undisputed chosen runner. I had never felt such propritery instincts for the work of another playwright, and, I was determined that if anyone were to become the keeper of that unpredictable flame, the task should be recklessly entrusted to me. I was Strindberg's Man in England.[1]

Ironically, Osborne proves himself to be more cynical and bitter than Strindberg, and earns the title of "churlish mysogynist," the adjective he uses for the hero, whom he has brought back on the stage, after almost forty years with same cynicism and bewilderment. Osborne's hatred for women exceeds all sense of decency, sparing neither the dead nor the living. Anthony Page, a one time collegue and associate, could not help "taking up the cudgels" on behalf of his friend and Osborne's ex-wife Jill Bennet, whom Osborne mercilessly and vindictively vilifies in his autobiography and thus raises a storm. Page vehemently reacts to Osborne's brutal attack on an once-married and now-dead wife. He writes:

> To have been married to John Osborne is like becoming a public wall on which accusations and crimes are scrawled. My dead friend Jill Bennet is one of these 'criminals' and I profoundly resent her being subjected to this grubby memorial. She is characterised as avaricious, talentless gorgon. The final sentiment expressed by John about her is regret that he 'was unable to look down upon her open coffin and drop a good large mess in her eye.'[2]

Osborne's hatred and cruelty surpasses his own idol and ideal Strindberg. Marking his differnces from Strindberg, Page justifies his remark. We are shocked to see the wide gap between them where Osborne so proudly claims to be alike. Strindberg once married an actress, Siri-Von-Essen, and suffered the consequence of a mismatched union. He too had a turmoiling and tortuous childhood for his mother's cold and loveless nature. But, as

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[1] *Strindberg's The Father and Ibsen's Hedda Gabler*, adapted by John Osborne, London, Faber, 1972, reprint 1989, p. xi.

[1] Anthony Page,"Inadmissible Evidence" *The Gurdian*, June 6-7, 1992, p. 13.

Anthony Page points out, even Strindberg, despite all his bitterness, failed to be as vindictive a husband as Osborne has proved himself to be. Page writes, "Strindberg, when he wrote about the misery of his married life with Siri Von Essen, was artistic enough to chart many stages from attraction to horror. Here we find nothing but unreasoning hatred and abuse."[1]

In this context, perhaps we could refer to another great dramatist of this century, Arthur Miller. He also once married a celebrity, a star of the movie, Marilyne Monroe. In his classic autobiography *Timebends*, his recollections of their days together, are just what is expected of a loving, respectful, mourning husband. Jill Bennet, too, committed suicide, like Marilyne. Osborne records his reaction after Jill's death, "Reading through the glib newspaper cant of today, it appears that only I know what should have been apparent even to the most crass journalist: that she was a woman so demoniacally possessed by Avarice that she died of it."[2]

Miller, on the other hand, remembers in his autobiography, "As I was coming to the end of writing of *After the Fall*, the horrifying news came that Marilyne had died, apparently of an overdose of sleeping pills."[3] His sigh could be heard when he writes:

> There are people so vivid in life that they seem not to disappear when they die and for many weeks I found myself having to come about and force myself to encounter the fact that Marilyne had ended. I realized that I still, even then, expected to meet her once more, somewhere, some time, and may be talk sensibly about all the foolishness we had been through -- in which case I would probably have fallen in love with her again.[4]

This is the tribute paid by a husband, and a man, loving and compassionate with the sensibility to accept another human being with all her human follies. Miller wants to intrude into the mysterious regions of an unhappy woman's psyche and know her troubles as a fellow human being which is precisely the place where Osborne fails.

Osborne's merciless whip on men arouses our curiosity about his family and background. In the early chapters we tried to reflect on his past. We know that his mother's

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[1] Page, p. 13.
[2] Osborne, *Almost A*, p. 255.
[3] Arthur Miller, *Timebends*, NewYork, Grove press, 1987, p. 531.
[4] *Miller*, p. 531.

cold behaviour, unemotional and speculative response, stormy conjugal life were among the reasons which make him malicious and rancorous. His family reminiscences confirmed that his mother Nelly Beatrice herself was a product of a home and parents who failed to offer her any love or attachment. Wesker, despite his poverty, deprivations, and alienation in Christian society could happily utter that he had enjoyed the East-End life, with all its odds, because of the close-knit Jewish family and the community feeling. The parents quarrelled, but his individual adoration saved him from cynicism. The warm loving aunts and grand parents nourished his love for life. So he was "able to survive the rows."[1]

Osborne's description of his family environment speaks of a deep sense of emptyness and absense of love. He was denied the nourishment that preconditions a child's healthy mental growth. He explains his mother's lack of warmth in cold calculative feedback of her family to all kinds of human relationship. He writes:

> The outlet for friendship or conviviality was narrow inspite of the drunken commiseration, endless ports and pints of beer and gin and Its. This may in part explain my mother's stillborn spontaneity and consistent calculation that affection had only to be bought or repaid in the commonest coinage. 'He doesnot owe you anything', or 'You don't owe him anything'. 'What's she ever done for you?' These were the entries that cooked the unemotional and filial books. They were chill words, flounting their loveless, inexorable impotence.[2]

This emotional deprivations drained Osborne's spontaneous joy of life, childlike innocence, and instinct trust on mankind, particularly on woman. Instead, hatred took possession of his heart. In the autobiographies, if the external world with all its hypocrisy and corruption became the target of his invectives, than women stood as another class to excite his anger unable to forgive even his own mother. Bernard Levin, in his tribute to Osborne after his death on the twentysixth of December 1994, exclaimed in *The Times*:

> But oh, he could hate. And *how* he could hate. Perhaps the hate was to drain off a rage that otherwise would boil over and issue in bodily violence. .... he hated. ... his mother, nor did he wait until she died to proclaim his hatred; indeed, his first volume of autobiography was studded with opportunities for cursing his mother, all of which opportunities he gladly took.[3]

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[1] Hayman, p. 4.
[2] Osborne, *A Better Class*, p. 19.
[3] Bernard Levin," How His Genius Struck Me" *The Times*, 27.12.94

Almost as a contrast, Wesker's serenity and satisfaction remind us repeatedly of his concept of ideal motherhood and happy marriage bond. Although his experience of marital relationship was, if not as bitter as Osborne's, at least not less bitter. The only difference in the experience of the two dramatists lies in this that some other factors helped Wesker to "survive the rows" while "the fatality of hatred" ate up Osborne's inner spirit. This dark gloom of his inner self loom large on the apparently bold, brave and dashing heroes in his plays.

Wesker's keen sensitivity could never free himself from the conflicting nature of male-female relationship. Rather his acceptance, "left it's mark" in the plays, as admitted by him to Ronald Hayman, in an interview:

> you can probably trace through all the plays the theme of the male-female relationship. It's obviously there between Sarah and Harry in *Chicken Soup*. It takes on a different form in *Roots*. In *Jerusalem* its not only there between Ada and Dave but Libby Dobson the cynic when he comes. .... In the *Four Seasons* it is the pure male- female battle. It's also there in the *Golden City*. So to this extent I'm conscious that their battles must have made impression. I don't know -- I may be preoccupied with the sex war because of my own experience.[1]

The series of marriges and innumerable extra-marital relationships recorded in the autobiographies in a way explain Osborne's casual attitude that culminates in the dismissal of women as full-grown individuals in the plays. It establishes the fact that finally he sees no one important but himself. Narcissism coupled with cynicism often seem to isolate him from his surroundings. In a way it derails him. He turns into the self-centred, jealous, cruel and unreedamably melancholic morose, revealed in the treatment of Jill Bennet and Nelly Beatrice.

Ronald C.Johnson and G.Mendinus, in their vast academic study of child psychology, stated, "children from happy home tend to be less negative than youngsters from the opposite type of home."[2] Wesker's feeling of warmth and security inspite of the rowing parents, and Osborne's depressing melancholia due to cold indifference of unhappy parents could be explained in terms of child psychology. For example, Mavis. Hetherington

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[1] Hayman, p. 4.

[2] Ronald C. Johnson, and Gene R Medinus, *ChildPsychology:Behaviour and Development*. third ed, Newyork , John Willey and Sons, p. 230.

and Ross D. Parke observe, "warmth and nurturance by parents are likely to be associated with security, low anxiety and self-esteem. Such attitudes and emotions are more likely to be conducive to learning than the high anxiety and tension associated with hostility or physical punishment in parents."[1]

Johnson and Mendinus hold that the child of unhappy parents, "showed more signs of emotional disturbance such as jealousy, fear, grumbling, nervousness and sulking and tenseness."[2] Osborne fails to free himself from the ill consequences of misalliance of his parents in his whole life. After forty years of staging *Look Back in Anger*, the British audience was startled to see the same hero back on the stage, only with a change of "a grey haired man of indeterminate age" but with the voice ringing in same sense of "mistrust, jealousy, fear, grubbing, sulking and tenseness."

Thus the psychologist's emphasis on poor adjustment capacity of children, their sense of insecurity, cropping up from insecure marital bond are true in Osborne's as well as his character's lives. Jimmy, Archie, Laurie, Bill, Jack, George, Pamela, all most all of his protagonists testify to it. All their words and deeds are tragic displays of their entrapped selves in a hostile world where they struggled alone. Michael Billington, the well known drama critic, points to this aspect of his plays and says, "Looking back through his plays, it is clear that his great strength is as a monologist, a strength which peaked in *Inadmissible Evidence* in which dialogue was brilliantly used as a technique for dramatising inner anguish."[3]

Osborne has always found the world against him, and the readers and the audience feel that he is against the world. His defence of old Jimmy in *Dejavu*, reflects his eternal enmity with the world. He says in author'note, "J.P.is a comic character. He generates energy but, also, like, say, Malvolio or Falstaff, an inescapable melancholy. He is a man of gentle susceptibilities, constantly goaded by a brutal coercive world"(Dvii)

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[1] E.Mavis. Hetherington and Ross D.Parke, *Child Psychology : A Contemporary View Point*, Second ed, McGraw Hill International Book Company, 1979, p. 431.
[2] Johnson and Mendinus, p. 230.
[3] Michael Billington,"The Return of The Churlish Mysogynist", *The Gurdian*, June 11, 1992.

It must, however, be admitted that his cynical, bitter and sceptic view of woman in real life is not so strongly expressed in his plays. In the plays his cruel indifference to women turns to a sense of pity mixed with a sense of adoration and appreciation. Here the artist surpasses the man in him. A kind of tolerant, humane acceptance gives his female characters qualities of tenderness and dignity, making the relationship infatuating, despite the conflicts deeply rooted. Somewhere in his heart he cherishes a desire to be loved by women truly, that makes him unable to dismiss them.

Therefore when we turn to his plays, his chasing woman one after another, seem to signify a search, a quest for something intensely desired but unattainable. Men and women in his plays want to be reciprocated in love, or even in hatred. They hate to be overlooked and ignored. Although they think it unmanly to express the need for love and refuse to admit this relationship as one vital fact of life, still in their demands from their counterparts they are more humane, sensitive, and vulnerable than their creator. For Wesker, this relationship is the decisive factor to determine the rise and fall, success and failure of the character's life. Thus, in their plays we notice some similarities as well as differences in relationship within marriage and beyond marriage.

RELATIONSHIP: WITHIN MARRIAGE

In Osborne's plays the disharmonies of marriage are portrayed in the dull, monotonous, often in hostile relationship of the aged and middle-aged couples like Jimmy and Alison's parents, Mr. and Mrs.Elliot, Archie and Phoebie, Bill and his wife, Jock and his wife, Louis and his wife. Alison's father does not approve of his wife's attempts to prevent his daughter's marriage. His criticism of his wife's actions justifies Jimmy's in a way. But he strongly asserts the view of marriage of the older generation. That justifies his not preventing his wife's actions despite his disapproval.

He does not believe in making a battlefield of married life. Mutual tolerance, respect and adjustment mean enduring qualilties for a couple. He does not like his daughter's attempt to communicate with them despite her husband's reluctance to maintain the relationship. He takes her to task for it. Young people's attitude to marriage hurt him.

He says to Alison, "I always believed that people married each other because they were in love. But apparently, that's too simple for young people now-a-days. They have to look about challenges and revenge"(*LBA*67). Osborne is unapologetic about his male point of view and explicitly intends to blacken the female characters like the mothers of Jimmy and Alison. Their lack of feeling together with their malice and revengefulness present a negative picture of women in general. The sufferings and miseries of men because of their wives reveal the tyrannical nature of women and frighten the audience provoking them to think that man and woman can never meet in a loving symathetic plain to share each other's life. Young peple feel that marriage is a social bondage imposed on them to keep together although discordant elements are latent in it. Jimmy revolts against all established orders. His complex attitude to marriage is reflected in his sarcastic remarks on Alison's virginity or chastity. Alison confides to Cliff that they had never slept together before marriage. Now Jimmy taunts her about her virginity and thinks it has defiled him (*LBA*30).

When Alison discloses her pregnancy to Cliff she expresses her feeling in an unusual manner. She could not welcome her approaching motherhood. She fears that Jimmy would not accept it. To her, "It was a bit of a shock" because, "After three years of married life I have to get caught out now"(*LBA*28-29). Yet it does not mean that they have no expectations from marriage. In fact it is the reverse. Too much of their expectations are frustrated by their human limitations. Characters in this play are replete with contradictiions and paradoxes. Jimmy and Alison love and need each other. Their intent desire to penetrate into the souls keep them apart because of their failure to overcome their class characteristics. Jimmy wants Alison to share his pains. In his crisis he could not help urging for her healing touch. When Hugh's mum dies he asks her to go with him, "I... need you... to come with me"(*LBA*62). Alison fails in her ordeal of love. Right at the moment when Jimmy has needed her, she declines to extend her supporting hands and demonstrates her belittling insolence towards his class. Alison could not rise above her limitations, nor could Jimmy suppress his yearnings. Katherine J Worth is right in noticing here the similarity between Osborne and Strindberg; she says:

> Like so many of Strindberg's characters, Jimmy seeks from women far more than he could ever hope to get from them, and when he is disappointed turns

> on them with savage resentment. Release from his tormenting consciousness is what he is after. Alison had seemed to offer him this when he first fell in love with her. He was drawn to her by what seemed her wonderful relaxation of spirit. .... His rage when he finds his mistake is irrational and unfair, yet at the same time, because it springs from so deep a need, it compels pity.[1]

Gestures like mockery at Alison's virginity does not signify total indifference to family values. Danny Penmann in his obituary on Osborne, reports that, Wesker, "after his death said that *Look Back in Anger* should not be understood so much for its anger but as a passionate plea for old fashioned values of loyalty, and friendship. 'What John cared about was basic human values' he said."[2] Wesker is right, for indeed what Jimmy actually demands is a kind of "allegiance" which in plain language mean conjugal fidelity. Alison tells Helena how ardently he wants her to be loyal not only to him but to everyone and everything related to him (*LBA*42). This demand of absolute obedience makes him imposing and insistent. He tries to dictate her likes and dislikes too. The more she expresses her inability to oblige him the more furious and violent he gets. Her mute and silent resistance challenges him, provokes his bullyings. Utimately Jimmy's aggressive attempts prove futile as Alison's strength lies in this apparent submissiveness. She is successful in resisting Jimmy's attempts to uproot her and replant her in his own milieu. The holy crusade in which Hugh has been his fellow fighter turns fruitless. His sense of inferiority and insecurity make him more aggressive. Alison's cocoon of reticence seems unbreakable. In their everyday battle Alison is the winner, though Jimmy is the invader. Osborne himself in his introduction to *The Collected Plays*, published in 1993, acknowleddges this fact. Calling Jimmy an "abortive loutish", Hamlet, "who has no Gertrude, Claudius, Polonius or Ophelia," he says to Emma Thompson, the player of Alison, "I tried to explain that it was she, not her husband, who was the most deadly bully. Her silence and her obdurate withdrawal were impregnable. The ironing board was not the plaything of her submission, but the bludgeon and shield which were impenetrable to all Jimmy's appeals to desperate oratory."[3]

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[1] J. Worth, pp. 105-106.
[2] Danny Penman, "Death Brings Tribute for angry Osborne", *The Independent*, 27th Dec,1994.
[3] Osborne, *Collected Plays* p. xii.

Their physical love usually has to be ended in the union of two bodies only, unable to penetrate deeper to touch the heart. Their inner hollowness reaches a stage when they could not even welcome a child that might have announced the advent of a new day for them. The prospect of another sunshine or another life rather frightens them; they shrink back. Alison hopelessly utters, "Tonight it might be all right – we'd make love. But later, we'd both lie awake, watching for the light to come through that little window, and dreading it"(*LBA*29).

This deadening feeling poisons their most intimate moments. They are the victims of so called mechanized civilization that Marx foretells, Blake apprehends, and Eliot portrays. The tiredness and boredom produced by the annihilating effects of war have paralysed the modern man's and woman's senses. Commercial rat-race has sucked up their lifeforce. All their efforts to build up a happy home bloom to a blighted flower about to wither away any monent. If ever Jimmy has wanted a child, ironically, it is to shock Alison, to wake her up from her "sleep of oblivion." He unhesitantly longs for a child to be born and dead, so that Alison bows down, admitting her defeat (*LBA*37). His fervent outburst against Alison's quiet resolve is from his alarming awareness to be usurped. She puts his manhood into question. He confesses his physical fear, "its not that she hasn't her own kind of passion"(*LBA*37). His inability to confront her passion reveals his physical and emotional inadequacy which he tries to conceal by these verbal assaults. Michelene Wandor notices this conflict and says, "Jimmy' s relationship with Alison presents us also with a potent example of one of the most important recurring images in the drama of this period: the love-hate relationship men have with the mother figure in which emotional dependence and resentment at such dependence and a desire to destroy, are all combined."[1]

Wandor, has not mistaken Jimmy's nature of love. We have noted before that Osborne's and Wesker's heroes suffer from a typical fear of female possessiveness. Their manhood seem to be threatened by the overwhelming personalities of their female counterparts. This fear spoiled the harmony and spontaneity of the relationship. Adam in *FS* is dreadful like Jimmy. Jimmy's words, "She has the passion of a python. She just

[1] *Wandor*, p. 14.

devours me the whole every time as if I were some over large rabbit"(*LBA*37), echo Adam's words, "What a woman in the making she was. Tongue like a whip. Will, like a great boulder; and intellligence, sharp like a frightened hawk. And I was to carry her scars for ever"(*FS*105). To both of them woman's passion has an animal quality which does not spare man.

The final reconciliation between Jimmy and Alison prove the strength of the marriage bond, no matter how fiercely Jimmy abuses it. Alison's coming back and Jimmy's acceptance of his bruised, broken wife are like attempts to revive the sacred vows of marriage and standby each other in woes and odds. Alison cherishes a feeling of dependence at her inner heart though as a modern girl she has lost faith in "divine right of marriage" long before she met Jimmy. Her reference to constitutional monarchy is indicative of political consciousness and a tragic foreboding of the post-war world, that everything constitutional and institutional are breaking down (*LBA*89). Jimmy makes a pitiful figure when Helena announces her departure. Only then he bursts out into a painful confession of the fact that towards women he had repeatedly turned for love, but they fell short of his need. He has wanted them as fellow friends, sufferer and sharers of life in "the pain of being alive"(*LBA*93). With these words Jimmy discloses his yearning soul and explains the grudges against Alison's so called adaptibility. He has wanted her to stirr in feeling and jump into his laps so that he could take the role of the husband, the saviour, the breadwinner, who could maintain her, shelter her, pat her, and console her. Her reticence dwarfs him, humiliates him, infuriates him. He shouts helplessly, "All this time, I have been married to this woman, this monument to nonattachment and suddenly I discover that there is actually a word that sums her up'...Pusillanimous' " (*LBA*21).

At last the shattered, smashed, and childless Alison gives Jimmy an opportunity for which he has been longing and looking so eagerly. Jimmy feels that aching with all her loss and suffering, this Alison is closer to him than the lively, happy Alison before marriage, with upper class serenity and security. He says that at first what attracted him to her was she "seemed to have a relaxation of spirit. I know that was what I wanted"(*LBA*94). In fact what he wanted was a suffering soul to identify with his own. He was confused, and afterwards discerns the mistake that it is not "relaxation of spirit." He feels strongly that

"In order to relax you've first got to sweat your guts out"(*LBA*95). Alison's loss of the child throws her into the mud and cracks the hard nut of neutrality she used to shield herself with. Now they find each other's ruined, naked selves looking for consolation. Jimmy could at long last play the long awaited role of a husband who could offer his needy, distressed wife, love, tenderness and comfort. G.Wilson Knight, the well known literary critic, points out this trait in Jimmy's nature and we feel him to be right in commenting, "His deepest instincts are nurse like, it is after he learns of his wife's loss of the child that he softens at the end. Jimmy Porter is a study in love; but however freely he may indulge himself he is not sexually at ease, nor content."[1]

To release this sense of discontent they revive the fantasy of bear and squirrel, indicating to the fact of dehumanization. The war has robbed man of his human qualities. For happiness and peace men have to take shelter into the selfbuilt caves of fantasy and oblivion like bears and squirrels.

Mr. and Mrs.Elliot in *EGD* remind us of Harry and Sarah in *The Trilogy*. The same strength and authority we notice in Mrs.Elliot while Mr.Elliot with his crippled personality resemble Harry. Mr.Elliot is baser and meaner. Unlike Harry he tries to assert his authority which makes him more ridiculous. He does not even arouse pity in the audience which Harry does. The basic difference between their relationship is that Sarah wants her husband to be active and to stand by her in all odds and ends. She wants him in the role of husband, caring, responsible and communicative while Mrs. Elliot has given up all her hopes and expectations. Mr.Elliot is nothing but a physical existence in her life whom she could not just dismiss. They are living in two worlds with a gulf of mistrust, malice and hatred in between. Mrs.Elliot warns her husband at the opening of the play against any attempt to execute his power in the household. His position in the house is that of a lodger (*EGD*27). This perhaps is a warning to the audience not to expect a loving couple on the stage. Mrs.Elliot takes her marriage for granted though she thinks Percy inferior, undignified. Ruth's decision to stay alone surprises her. She clings to the conventional idea of marriage, that means tolerance for the sake of social propriety. To think of anything

[1] G.Wilson Knight, "The Kitchen Sink," *Encounter*, Dec,1963, p. 50.

beyond marriage is rebellious to her. The same is the case with Archie and Phoebie in *The E.* Phoebie bears with Archie's flirting nature and thinks herself steady in life because she has somehow got married. At least she does not have to worry anymore for the shelter of a home though she earns her own livelihood. All her attempts to satisfy Archie have failed. His final comment about Phoebie is, "She may look sweet, but she's a very cold woman..Cold and stupid"*(E*59). The physical phase of their marriage is over, Phoebie accepts this fact calmly letting Archie chase other woman. There is now a sense of mutual pity, and dependence on the part of both, which factors sustain their relationship. It springs out of the compulsory cohabitation in everyday life where children and other common interests bind people together.

For Osborne, the family unit is very important. Even the most bohemian of his characters comes back to the family for shelter. Jimmy in his expression of feeling for Alison says about the nature of marriage, "Trouble is you get used to people. Even their trivialities become indispensible to you. Indispensible, and a little mysterious"(*LBA*33). Ruth deserts her lover but refuses to go on test with George. She says, "You can't go on being Bohemian at forty"(*EGD*65). Archie and Phoebie both try to give comfort to each other when they need. Phoebie wants Archie to be happy as she is aware of his troubles. Though she could not always reach him but her healing touch could be felt in her compassionate words, "I dont want Archie to be disappointed, that's all. On top of everything else. He's had enough of disappointments"(*E*44). Archie's assuring Phoebie not to get scared after their son Mick's death rings a feeling of affection too, "Poor old Phoebie, don't look so scared love... Don't look so scared love, Archie's drunk again"(E73). Her final appearance on the stage with Archie's hat and raincoat, Archie's following her, leave the audience with a strong conviction, that, after all man and woman need each other in their crisis and disasters as well as in joy and happiness. Like the dying out music-hall that Archie represents, the institution of marriage too seems to be under the constant threat of breaking down in the war-devastated society. Still Osborne retains some hope for this relationship as the cementing-bond avouched in the endurance and reliance of Jimmy and Alison, Archie and Phoebie.

Bill Maitland and his wife disappoint us. Maitland, the epitome of modern life with the chaos and confusion of post-war world, has isolated himself totally from all human contacts. He seeks salvation in physical union and earthly pleasures. Now the terrible sense of insecurity, loneliness and fear of being exhausted, are driving him towards insanity. Haunted by nightmares he goes on chasing one after another woman to retreat from his peaking tension. For him, sex is an escape. "No, its just that some people seem to use things like sex, for instance, as a place of escape, instead of objects, well in themselves"(*IA*35), says his managing clerk, Hudson, which is obviously true of Bill. His confusion with and annoyance at woman has reached a stage when he could make little difference between a married wife and an unmarried mistress. He finds both of them demanding, imposing, and devouring, not sparing a little bit of privacy of one's own. His wife Anna, friend Liz, or secretary Joy, all are trying to possess him. Their love gestures seem nothing but a kind of sickening thirst to suck up the life blood. His quest for love ultimately ends in a union of two bodies leaving him more lonely and exhausted. He sighs and wails, "I want to feel tender, I want to be comforting and encouraging and full of fun and future things and things like that. But all I feel is as if my head were bigger and bigger, spiked and falling off, like mace" (*IA*35). His casual affairs signify his lack of mental depth and inability to enter into a deep and lasting relationship. At the sametime a terrible fear of being exposed with his incapacity as man haunts him. Bill's mechanical relationship with the typist has a similarity with the affair of the typist and the clerk in the "WasteLand". Quick, indifferent, and loveless as they are, both have same nature and trait:

> The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast lights
> Her stove, and lays out food in tins.
> He the youngman carbuncular, arrives
> A small houseagent's clerk, with one bold stare,
> The time is now propitious, as he guesses
> The meal is now ended, she is bored and tired,
> Endevours to engage her in caresses,
> Which are still unresponded, if undesired
> She turns and looks a moment in the glass
> Hardly aware of her departed lover;
> She smoothes her hair with automatic hand
> And puts a record on the gramophone.

Bill seems hardly aware of his beloved's existence. There is little trace of any love or emotion in the whole affair except an obvious shade of physical lust. His secretary Joy's telling him, "You know what? I think they are all right I don't like you either" or Bill's acknowledgement of his insipid physical relations when he says to his mistress:

> When I leave you sometimes and I get in, deliberately, of course, about three or four a. m. and Anna's lying there in bed, pretending to be asleep. After making love to you and the drive back., I'm so tired and there's the following morning a couple of hours away only ... We both just lie there ... I can't remember one detail of what she looks like, not since I left this morning and we'd had the row about the weekend(*IA* 112).

expresses a tiring repetition of life where there is no touch of spontaneity. Marriage and physical relationship all are confused and have been made up into a mess like Bill's own life and career. Homosexuality, heterosexuality, perversion, marriage, divorce, all get mixed up in Bill's memory during his trial. Thus he epitomizes the culmination of inadequacy, barrenness, fear and isolation of man in the modern world. The turbulent disorder in his mental and physical life has taken him to the breaking point. Like Jimmy Porter's, his misery is caused by the coldness of dearest and nearest people. He mentions the illtreatment of his in-laws. He tells his daughter, "Your other grand parents can hardly bring themselves to acknowledge me. .... do you know when they write to your mother, they never ever mention me by name, love to Bill, how's Bill, nothing , not for ten years"(*IA* 102-103). Jimmy Porter too, accuses his wife and mother-in-law with in the same manner. He too, could not tolerate the indifference of his in-laws which in fact means total denial of his existence by them. The complain that Jimmy and Bill make, very subtly reveals a desire to be acknowledged, to be recognised not only as a human being, but as a person by those who are close to their heart and life. Alison's and Bill's wife's silence to their parents about their husbands, is in a way a violation of the marriage vow as far as their silence contains an intention to ignore their husbands' existence. It is as if a rejection of their relationship. The sharp reaction that Jimmy and Bill show in this reapect, is indicative of Osborne's intent desire to be received and accepted whole heartedly by their in-laws, no matter how explicitly his heroes condemn their social connections, or the institution that bind them together. The critic Carl Bode has found "a tinge of shame" in Alison's love for Jimmy when he refers to Alison's silence about her husband in her letter to her mother. He

seems right to think that neither Alison nor her mother mentions Jimmy in their letters, "For Jimmy is not a member of the lower class but something worse, a man who has tried but failed to become middleclass."[1] Bode thus stresses the class-point too in the domestic warfare which we find very much relevant to our analysis of the relationship.

Like all other Osborne heroes, Bill is also much-too obsessed with himself to be really concerned for others. Here we find a basic difference between Osborne and Wesker heroes. The Wesker heroes' concern for other people provide them with diversion from their own crisis. Bill's final parting with his mistress overpowers him with the feeling of futility of physical love along with the sense of a doom of their relationship. We agree with J.R.Brown when mentioning the last meeting between Bill and Liz, he says, "an explicit parting which both of them had expected and delayed throughout the encounter. A mutual acknlwledgement of pleasure in their love making is not enough to keep them together."[2] This same realizatioon makes Helena leave Jimmy. Osborne's men and women feel this truth at certain moments of their life.

We notice that marriage with all its merits survives the inconsistencies that troubles men and women in a gradually free and open society. The playwright's suspicion, doubt and distrust have not been able to severe this bond totally. In *Time Present*, Pamela, the only female protagonist in Osborne, defies it even with the budding of new life in her body. She dares to do it finally as she has the terrible experience of broken marriage. Before her, Helena, Ruth, Jean in Osborne's plays refuse to marry. But all of them are supporting characters. Pamela's unusual devotion to her father appears just contrary to the unbridgeable distance between Bill alnd his daughter's. Perhaps her adoration of her myth-like father obstructs the natural and spontaneous flow of emotion for another man as a lover or husband. Her wisdom lies in her capacity to review things impersonally. She could identify the problem of her parents. Her father adored actresses himself, being a cullt-like figure in the theatre. Moreover her mother had intellectual pursuits. It frightened her father. This fear of intellectual women is typically Osbornian, "He thought she was not only clever, but cleverer than him"(*TP*80).

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[1] Carl Bode "The Red brick Cinderella", *College English*, April 1959, Vol 20, No. 7, p.331
[2] Brown, *Theatre Language*, p. 156.

Pamela's mother with a background of two marriages appears quite mature and intelligent to see things clearly between herself and her first born child. Her sense of obligation to visit her ex-husband in his death-bed gives just a reverse picture of Osborne's own parents. Edith is able to show more compassion towards her husband and child than Nelly Beatrice, Osborne's own mother. The play also testifies to Osborne's self-contradiction on feminism. In his introduction to Strindberg's and Ibsen's adaptation, he refutes feminism and socialism. He says, "Feminism, like socialism havn't added much more to the pot of worldly literature and least of all to drama."[1]

Pamela could not praise everything done by women, though she is greeted as a feminist (in Osborne's plays) by many critics. She condemns lady writers and utters warning against being partial to them:

> You should always beware of lady writers. They hover and dart about like preying fish in a tank. They've their eyes on you and little tape recorders whining away behind their ears by way of breathing apparatus. Then they swallow you up whole and spew you up later, dead and distorted. Nothing has happened to you in the mean-time except that they turn you into waste material. Because the trouble with lady writers is they've usually no digestive juices.(*TP*58)

Her unbiased attitude stems from her stoical acceptance of life with no juvenile enthusiasm of an imaginary bright future. She lives on the ground of reality. In Osborne's plays the child left by it's mother could never be optimistic, nor could be any child of unhappy parents. Pamela's loneliness and inability to enter into a permanent relationship is the consequence of the mis-match of a man and a woman. She declines her mother's affectionate words. Her rejection is a subtle admonition to her mother for failing in her maternal commitments. Their dialogue reveal it:

> Edith:I'm concerned about you Pamela.
> Pamela:Well don't be. We've managed quite well without each other for about twenty years.
> Edith: It's not been easy.
> Pamela: I could n't have changed it.
> Edith : What's going to happen to you?
> Pamela : I shall go on as I have done for twenty nine years(*TP*58-59).

[1] Osborne, *Adaptation to*, p. x.

Pamela's relationship with Constance's boyfriend Murry is somewhat enigmatic. She surrendered to an impulsive moment in her life but did not bow down to the mistake for ever. She understands Murry's weakness and refuses to develop the relationship. Even conception does not change her decision. Pamela tells Murry of his faults openly :

> Pamela: Do what you like. If you do, you're more feeble than I thought.
> Murry: You think I'm feeble than? .... what do you mean: feeble?
> Pamela: Immature, I suppose. (*TP*62)

Mature and adult as she is, Pamela could foresee the bleak future of their union but does not renounce the transitory pleasure they had. She does not try to avoid the consequences of her action blaming Murry. Murry's simple confession that he does not understand her (*TP*64) is an expression of his injured male pride too. He is annoyed with her self-consciousness and sense of dignity. His male-chauvinist ego manifests itself when he reproaches her, saying, "All these gibes, and immaturity -- and your paternalist female ripeness"(*TP*64).

Pamela is straightforward about sex. She states, "Lust is o.k. by me. But not when its ambitious and gluttonous and avaricious. Then its vulgar. Very vulgar indeed"(*TP*66). In their free and unhesitant acceptance of sex, Osborne shows in his unmarried women, a sense of morality, unusual but not ignorable. He shows the gradual breaking down of the sex taboo but never forgets to remind themselves that free sex does not mean discarding of all moral values. Helena in *LBA* asserts this truth firmly after Alison's miscarriage; she leaves Jimmy with the sad feeling that only bed cannot unite two persons, living in two different worlds. Pamela's above mentioned dialogue defines vulgarity in sex and gives a new dimension to the physical relationship beyond marriage. Her rejection of marriage does not mean rejection of all moral values. She indicates that too much emphasis on sexual-morality often make people ignore other moral laxities which event are not less harmful.

Couples in *HA* are also victims of mutual distrust, boredom and emotional bankruptcy in their relationship. Marriage is not the uniting factor for them, nor could it give them the serenity and security they seek for. Their relationships are hasty, fleeting and transitory. It is full of heart throbbes to be caught out any moment, like their secret holiday trip. Osborne clarifies his belief in the marital commitments once again. Laurie still

feels guilty for leaving his first wife. He has accepted the reality and married again. But the change of alleigiance does not lessen his burden of guilt. Osborne's recurrent mother-theme is present in this play. Laurie could not love his mother and it is the reason enough to make him negative towards women. However he could recover himself ultimately from this mother-hatred. He says, "I think my mother *would* have put me off women for life. I mean just to think of swimming about inside that repulsive thing for nine months ... But I think when I was quite young I must have decided she was nothing to do with women at all. That's why the real thing was such an eternal surprise"(*HA*92).

In Laurie, as in other Osborne-heroes, there is a desire for something beyond the physical, for something romantic, abstract and sensitive. At a certain stage they are averse to physical love and want to touch the eternity even in human beings. Laurie says, "I'm too fat for pools and the pretty girls with their straps down and their long legs just make me long for something quite different. I always want someone to write me long, exhilarating love letters when I lie there with the others"(*HA*118).

Commercialization of the relationship and obsession with body are equally criticized by Osborne and Wesker. Laurie digs the past in order to hurt himself; remembering his first wife he says, "I wonder what my name even means to her. .... I imagine I was't very kind to her"(*TP*138). His present marriage with Margaret is obviously a record of tolerance and mutual adjustment. Both of them are aware of the absence of magnetic thrill in man-woman relationship. It proves that marriage is failing in many ways but could not be done away with. His sudden declaration of love for Annie and Annie's acknowledgement of her own hidden feeling asserts that mistakes and mismatches are frequent in marriages. Their love also validate the fact that love always does not include sex. This adult love has been tested by adverse experiences and they know that there exists something beyond body. Laurie's words, "We need other" express the depth and intensity of their emotion, knowing the impossibility of union. The play ends with a gloomy bleak picture of sadness, death and isolation.

In *Luther*, Osborne's historical hero finds salvation in the marital bond, in the domestic love of a nun. The rebellious leader of the Reformation movement is finally calmed down by the most feminine, ordinaty and homely Katie, who proves herself a

wonderful wife and housekeeper showing Osborne's conviction in the redeeming features of marriage and domestic felicity. Martin unhesitantly confessees his debt to Katie saying that beside God, it is Catherine who has protected him. Her embraces relieves him of the nightmares and pacifies his purturbed soul. Cynical and nonconformist Osborne here mixes up the love of God and love of woman in the challenging and rebellious Luther who once moved the wheels of history.

In the *Right Prospectus* Osborne's favourite fantasy element is brought forth to expose the conflict between the modern man and his world. Mr.and Mrs. Neobold, a middle-aged couple get themselves admitted into a public school to go back to the lively happy childhood days. They want to bring freshness in the monotony of life. But strict discipline and regimentation tire Mr.Neobold. Living apart from his wife, according to the custom, he could not adjust himself to the ruthless regulations. He is on the verge of breaking down. His wife on the other hand is not only well adjusted but is rather doing surprisingly well in the exams. Neobold's recollections of childhood memories help us to understand his inner disabilities. He is a victim of war. He couldnot pursue his study failing to meet up the expenses, and the world turned upside down. He missed his mother as she had to go out for a living to survive in the hardships of war-affected England. Ultimately this couple leave the school as Neobold could not stand it any longer. Despite her pleasant stay Mrs.Neobold consents to leave the campus with her bewildered husband. They have the understanding to penetrate into each other's problems. Like Osborne's other couples, they too unfold two determining traits of human nature. Men are more vulnerable and fragile than woman. Their predicament asserts the fact that coming out of the four walls of domestic life, women are proving themselves competent enough to face the so called working world dominated by male customs and values. But the women in the role of the wife is ever-ready to sacrifice her own personal success or pleasures for the sake of marital pledge which is not always equally reciprocated by their counterparts.

Osborne's plays show a gradual fall of the marital values and his later plays are chronicles of the boredom, monotony, coldness, and lack of communication intensifying in the relationship. *The West of Suez* describe married life, of four couples, none of whom could claim to be happy and satisfied. Frederica and her husband's dry conversation are

fruitless attempts to come into terms to incite some responsive feeling in each other. Their empty relationship discloses the distance between two persons, trying in vain to get into the heart of the other. Marriage has lost its sense of mystery and romantic thrill contained in the physical intimacy. Their speeches betray their mental and physical inertia:

> Ed:We are friends.
> Fre:Married - friends .
> Ed: Yes married - friends...(*WS*24)

This disintegration is a heritage handed down by the parents to their children. Osborne always warns against the mistake of thinking wrong marriages as isolated events. Frederica's lost cause is the flowing continuation of a stream in which a father celebrated his wife's death by enjoying a few brandies. Wyatt Gillman, Frederica's father, says about his disbelief in the continuance of the family although he thinks that it had its pleasures and he enjoyed them rather selfishly(*WS*77). His comments on the relationship between sexes now a days as "less pleasurable and less enduring" sounds ironic for his confession about his own married life. His words are symptomatic of the habitual negative attitude of the older about the younger. Osborne places this two contrary states to establish the fact that failed marriages produce incompatible children who fail to build up healthy relationship. He had his own experience.

The tragic doom on marriage falls more explicitly and intently on the Mellors couple in *Very Like A Whale*. Again we see a man with all his worldly success desperately trying to grasp a human soul and failing. His first wife was a careerist and the marriage failed. His second wife is not, yet the marriage is not working. Their conversation at night reveal the hatred, dislike and empathy bulging into the relationship. The cold and dry words mercilessly thrash each other out of intolerance and irritation. No trace of love, sympathy or even pity could be found out into the hearts of two persons living under the same roof. As if their entrapped selves are groaning to find some relief:

> LM: You are bored with me, aren't you?
> Jock: Yes...
> LM: How much
> .... Jock: Enough....
> LM: I hate you.
> Jock: I know.

.... LM: You want to get away from me.
Jock: Sort of. (*Very Like A Whale* pp 27, 29, 30)

In this rotten world emotional sterility has coiled up in the relationship and is smothering whatever there is good and tender in human nature. Osborne's comment on his own grandma's family, "Spontaneity was bad breath to them" suits these couples.

In comparison with Osborne's, Wesker's married couples are more loving and caring. Osborne wants to see the family as a unit. Ironically he had the reverse experience. His plays, we have noticed, exhibits the gradual decline of the family. His men and women helplessly watch their relationships disintegrating, but their pride and insolence keep them tight lipped to express the inner wail. Wesker's characters are more articulate about their feeling and his men often respond to the emotional outburst or demands of the women not considering it below their dignity. The stronger marriage bonds in Wesker plays seem to have a Jewish origin with faith in maternal authority. A sense of insecurity for being the minority might be working to keep the Wesker-people committed to each other. Their political inclination to the left also contributes to the conjugal fidelity and adds to its luxuriant growth.

The tie between Harry and Sarah seems to be loosening as the play reaches the end. It is Sarah's vigorous energy and sense of integration that has kept Harry standing on the ground. Lethergic, weakling, and introvert, Harry is not mean like Mr.Eliot. But his nature contains the seeds of failure. In Osborne's plays too, men are demanding about their marital rights but it is the women's self-effacing role that keeps the bond alive. Osborne's women are not always vocal and assertive like Wesker's women. Phoebie accepts her fate and seldom expresses any scorn or protests against Archie's whimsical behaviour. But Sarah does. She all the while goes on fighting Harry, trying to provoke him to a response, irrespective of it's nature.

The relationship between Sarah and Harry is not dull and empty, unlike that between Jock and his wife, or Bill and his. This couple represents the generation when dehumanization has not yet intruded upon conjugal relationship. Sarah is not indifferent or unconcerned. She is rather oversensitive and expects from people the way she feels and does for them. The rows between Harry and Sarah manifest a deep and sincere feeling on

Sarah's part and a pitiful incapability to respond on Harry's. Wesker in his interview to Ronald Hayman refers to the domestic quarrels between his parents but affirms that these has not made him cynical or negative for he has individual adoration for both. Harry and Sarah's quarrels are obviously reproduction of those of his parent's. Both their children, Ronnie and Ada love them devotedly. To Osborne's men and women this warmth is beyond imagination where there is such gap. Conjugal infidelity is not common and frequent in Wesker's couples. Sarah despite all her complains and discontents resents any such idea. She takes care of the old infirm Harry with the loyalty of a faithful wife.

The young married couple Ada and Dave stand for the ideal of mutual love, stability and constancy. Their happy and healthy married life defies all the charges of dehumanization and commercialization of the relationship, the fears of which troubled Dave. Dave's will to work out the belief in family integrity and Ada's pious pursuasion of it confirm that the modern world had not lost all the moral values still. They suffer, they survive and look forward with their love remaining unchanged. But it does not mean that they are without human weaknesses. They have their frailties too. The lino incident proves that. They accept these too. Against the hostilities of the world, they stand for outlasting forces of mutual affection and perseverance. They embody, at times, an awareness and commitment to the world and life, while Beatie' s sister and her husband represent the unaware, mute commoners for whom decency, honesty and morality are vague meaningless terms. Dave and Ada also show that mutual idealism could free men from trivialities, if they have any, while Libby Dobson's mismarriage show that a wrong partner could derail a man. Dave feels ashamed of his mistake and apologises to Ada. To keep himself respectable to Ada, he tries his best. Just contrary to it, Libby's idealism and fight for socialism are shattered and smashed by his greedy possessive wife. Libby's conception of woman is totally negative; he turns an unredeemed cynic. He says, "She's the kind that dirties you up. There was I sharing out my wealth and there was she -- always wanting to possess things, terrified of being on her own. She marries a man in order to have something to attach to herself, a possession!"(*ITAJ* 184) His view of woman grows out of a terrifying experience of his own fatal misalliance that makes Ada feel unclean. But it is also a reality. This kind of women exist and their devorous desire for worldly materials in fact are an

expression of their inner hollowness and inability to pursue anything noble. Libby's voice rings rather Osbornian when he cries against women for their lack of depth and sensitivity. He says justifying himself and warning Dave, "I think I hate women because they have no vision . Remember that, Davey -- they haven't really got vision -- only a sense of self-preservation, and you will get smaller and smaller and she will grow and grow and you will be able to explain nothing because everything else will be a foreign language to her"(*ITAJ*184) .

Michelene Wandor in her study mentions the similarity between Jimmy and Libby's cynicism. It might be a hint to the fact that like Jimmy, he too had been deprived of a happy home. Indicating to Libby's gentile birth, she says that he is not fortunate to enjoy the happy, warm Jewish family life where women are more vocal. She reasonably compares Harry to Libby and says, "He feels free to express his misoginy through words, while Harry retreats into silence, manifesting his unhappiness in past through physical symptoms. That Harry contains unexpressed rage is clear when we learn that he had to be put in a padded cell after a second stroke." [1]

Though almost of the same age, Beatie's parents show some obvious differences from Ronnie's. Mr.and Mrs. Bryant could not hide the disharmony dormant in their relationship unlike the Khans; but the selfishness, meanness and arrogance are not at all vocal in Harry as it is in Mr.Bryant. Mrs. Bryant's coarseness could not be concealed and Sarah's superiority could be sensed readily. Besides, the rows, the Kahns affirm their socio-political consciousness and a higher view of life. They succeed in handing over a more intellectual heritage to their children and that in turn is duly recognized by Beatie when she compares between her and Ronnie's mother.

TVOGC presents a middle-aged couple living in two solitary islands. Their pre-marital love, full of juvenile wonder and sensation as it was, ebbs into cruel apathy of adulthood in marriage. Here unlike the case of Dave and Ada there is an obvious difference between marital and pre-marital romance. Andy with his self-centredness, insolence and spitefulness towards women resembles more an Osborne-hero than the early

[1] Wandor, pp. 26-27.

Wesker-heroes like Ronnie and Dave or later Victor. They are too concerned, too understanding, and too sensitive to other people's emotional needs and problems, particularly to their wives or beloveds. In this play Wesker does not intensively focus on this relatiionship. His attention is drawn to the male world of works and ambitions, paying little heed to the personal everyday life. Otherwise utilizing the scopes to dramatize the Andy-Jessie conflict in more detail, he would have made Andy' s frustration more realistic and poignant. Ronald Hayman's comment on this issue seems pertinent to quote here, when refuting another critic, Ronald Bryden's view that Andy's failure has link with his failure in marriage, he says:

> As far as I can make out, the linkage is a very loose one, hinging on Wesker's view that a good marriage is integral to a good life, and a good life of the sort Andy dreams about turns out to be unattainable. In any case, the marriage is given only summary treatment though there are some very moving moments in which Jessie's protests at Andy's way of treating her as a mere housekeeper.[1]

It seems that Wesker's obsession with ideas often make him indifferent to very simple everyday details that would have made his portrayal of life more realistic.

Gerda and Emanuel in the *OO* once again prove that the moral obligations and spontaneous emotion blended together could bloom into a lasting passion in marriage. Caring and sharing in the infirmity of old-age make hardest days of life at least bearable if not enjoyable. Sixty-eight year old Gerda spends all her attention and energy for her husband and his nearly insane brother Boomy. She performs her duty with the pateint and affectionate perseverance of an indulgent mother. The way she chases them with their meal, comforts them in their distress and bears with their capricious whims, makes us forget that she is only two years younger and old enough to be taken care of. Gerda's love and constancy symbolize the reliance and dependence of marriage, particularly in old age. It more intensely exposes the generation gap in the failure of marriage of young Rosa and Martin. Pointing out the fact that the young people could not succeed in cherishing and nourishing this relationship for their intolerance, selfcentredness, and lack of sympathetic, and selfless consideration, the play states that too much of individualism is taking away the

[1] *Hayman*, p. 67.

spirit of self sacrifice and adjustment a marriage need to last. Thus man is becoming lonely. He is baffled to find the oddities of life too heavy to bear alone.

The same sense of tolerance and acceptance of man with all the human limitations is also the cause to continue the marital relation for Macey in the *F*. He is a mature man who used to examine the pros and cons of things before rejection. His idea of married life as an adjustment and acknowledgement of each other's faults, reveals a realistic view of life. He says:

Because each morning I wake up knowing that I don't love the woman at my side, and haven't done so for fifteen years --That defeats me ... No love -- no appetites, for nothing. .... She 's not a bad woman, ... everyone loves her -- except me; ... Because *I* had the capacity to grow and *she* didn't. She grew, true, but oneday she stopped and I went on ... But what I had to force myself to accept was that she was a reflection of *me*: I chose her. At one time in my life my entire capacity to love had focused on her. ... So I resent her because she makes me despise myself. She reminds me, everyday, that at one time in my life I'd wanted such small things.(*F* 113)

Macey's dissection of marriage with the realization of slow decline of the charms and mysteries while hatred and scorns piles up day by day disclose a terrible truth. His wise analysis makea him accept the facts Andy is incapable of admitting.

Perhaps the most loving, attached, and puzzling couple in Wesker is Sonia and Victor in *I.I.OBP*. Sonia's obsession with the past memories narrated in her love-letters baffle us. The motherly, middle-aged Sonia's recollection of early married life in each and every letter is enchanting and awe inspiring. Not less shocking is the subtle fact revealed about their present state. This couple with all their love and affections are living in two isolated islands with no bridge to connect. Sonia's self built cocoon of nostalgia prevents her from seeing through the reality, that, her husband is dying. Victor, eager to share his agonies finds himself encaged in a solitary cell. He dares not break the serenity of Sonia's self-contemplation, rather gropes for a consoling hand in Maurice, his friend. The massacre of marital-bliss falls on Sonia with her husband's death, when she suddenly wakes up from her trance and finds the hard reality strangling her. Sonia's letters remind us of the bear-

and-squirrel fantasy of Jimmy and Alison. Surprisingly we notice that Victor too at the end becomes nostalgic and retreats into past memories of married life.

In his later plays from the fourth volume, one could feel the fear of marriage creeping into women, who so long have been presenting its values. In the *Wedding Feast*, Kate refuses to marry Louis, though she has a soft corner for him and he has all the urgency. Like Jock Mellors, or Bill Maitland, Louis Litvanov is a successful industrialist. Worldly success couldnot save his home. It has been ruined by the alienation and indiffernece sowed in human heart by the capitalist structure of the social system.

Kate's fear of marriage might be justified by Louis's being married and her unwillingness to spoil other's happiness. But Jessica's and Portia's fear is purely for their desire to bloom into their ownselves, which they apprehend might be blown off by the suppressing nature of marriage.

Wesker's fifth volume shows the loosening grip of marriage. It'a values are ignored and scorned by the polygamic nature of men, while women humiliated and deprived, still hope it to survive, as they have no other goal to achieve. Yet inevitable social changes in the post-war world could not protect it, nor could it stimulate women to go on accepting the predetermined fate. Once these long preserved social norms and moralities are defied, the sense of shame or disgrace could no more hinder the derailment.

Stephanie's husband has left her on the excuse of "need to be able to surprise someone." Stephanie's last cry is that of a deserted wife, whose humiliation as a wife, as a woman, and, as an individual finds no consolation. Her past of absolute loyalty is now mocking at her marriage bond. To admit the reality, gradually as we find in Osborne's, as well as in Wesker's plays too, man-woman relation in marriage is turning into a kind of self-deception. Violation of the values like chastity, constancy, and fidelity are growing frequent. Women's increasing awareness makes them self-defending and averse to such bondage where society usually sides with man. Betty Lemon too is a victim of marriage where deception and hypocrisy had poisoned the most precious moments of her life. She is outspoken, intelligent and honest who charged her husband and his comrades with hypocritical and dishonest politics. She tells about her husband's deviations to other women

and utters the truth that she did not let her husband go unchallenged, so that, for him, it was, "Not easy to sleep beside a woman who bites the hand that feeds her"(*Betty*31). Thus she sarcastically justifies her husband's betrayal of her, for exposing his corrupt nature. Her married had life spoiled all her ambitions. She says, "That's what I wanted to be, my lords, ladies and gentlemen, not a writer, but a runner who won races. I was neither. I became a wife. To Sir James"(*Betty*33). Her married life gave her nothing but a sense of humiliation and deprivation which at the end of her life frustate her to senility and intolerable loneliness. Her cry, "What about those handicapped by the wrong relationship until death do them part. What about them?"(*Betty*33) echoes the tragic and desperate pining of an empty soul who has been cruelly and brutally exploited by an age old socio-religious institution. She tells us about the temperamental difference, about her emotional outburst, and her husband's cool, calculative nature. Ultimately the world rewarded him for his duplicity and her sufferings intensified. She laments for her own foolishness which she at times thought honesty:

> Sir James was. Trod carefully. Loved carefully. Carefully approved of and hated the right people, the charmed groups, the beloved causes. Not a hair or a word out of place, not a decibel above par. Me -- chased and screamed him around the globe, took emotional risks, asked unfashionable questions. Fatal! ... But to him they gave a knihgthood(*Betty*35).

Gender disparity in marriage usually makes woman suffer in the modern world as it had caused the same in other ages. Women are realising the consequences. This is evidently stressed by Wesker in this voume. Decline of social values in the long run relaxes the marriage bond and frees woman from the moral obligation to some extent. Casual attitude to sex and social acceptance of divorce are gradually removing her inhibitions. Economic emancipation gives her the courage to choose or reject for her own sake. In the extra-marital relationships in Wesker and Osborne's plays that unconvetional attitude to sex and morality is reflected. But it is not without its conflicts and afflictions suppressed inwardly of which these plays are documentations.

RELATIONSHIP BEYOND MARRIAGE

Ruth in Osborne's *EGD*, unable to respond to George's emotional claims, reminds him of their hopeless plight, "We're just two rather lost people -- nothing extra-ordinary. Anyway, I'm past the stage for casual affairs. ... You can't go on being Bohemian at forty"(*EGD* 65).

It is a realization of most of the Osborne women involved in relationships beyond marriage, at certain phase of their affairs. This feeling accompanies their deep insight and mature perspective of life. They do not look at their relationships merely as a means to satisfy their physical needs. It penetrates beyond their emotional perephery and inspires them to a more intent and earnest quest of their ownselves often at the cost of their love.

Osborne reveals a dark and gloomy picture of his own relationship with women as mother, beloved, or wives in his autobiography. But his women in the plays are pitiable and more positive. His men, despite all his own sympathy and bias appear rather blunt and thoughtless about their casual affairs. They could easily shift from one affair to another. Ruth leaves her lover. Still she could not accept George. But George, being a married man goes on pleading for Ruth's consent, while he seduces Josie. He agrees to marry Josie Though obviously he does not have any emotional rapport with her. The affair is simply like a reality of everyday meal or other domestic deeds one does to keep oneself alive. Osborne heroes are sensitive, impulsive and passionate. Still inconstancy does not prick their conscience as much as it does that of the women. Jimmy loves Alison, wants a reciprocation from her. Her disappearance, surprisingly makes little difference in the Porter household. We find no guilt conscience in his fast moving love-parade. Readily he fixes up with Helena. What ails him is the feeling for his not being able to do without women. His self-reproach is an outburst of bulging hatred within oneself for surrendering to one's momentary impulses, "Why , why, why, why, we do let these women bleed us to death?"(*LBA*84)

In their relationship Helena is the initiator. Jimmy tells her, "Right from that first night, you have always put out your hand to me first. As if you expected nothing, or worse than nothing, and didn't care"(*LBA*86). Despite Helena's aggressive advances, Jimmy

expresses his urge and need for love and comfort in a way (for her) that he had never done to Alison. Acknowledging the militant nature of their love, he utteres, "Either you're with me or against me"(*LBA*86). He appeals desperately, "Oh Helena -- ... don't let anything go wrong!"(*LBA*86) Aggressive, intruding, Helena shows her emotional depth in her capacity to feel guilty for usurping a wife from her legal rights. It establishes the fact that the modern girls with all their highbrow ideas of free-love are not utterly free from conscience. They prove that the practice of living together does not mean fulfilment of sex needs only. It is for them a refusal of the institution which with its imposing obligations often stiffle individuals. The harmony and spontaneity desired in the relationship might not always be present, and that in turn poison the expected roles. So they make a kind of experiment to go without marriage which does not mean going without conscience. Social obligations are rejected but Helena's departure proves that moral conscience is not at all discarded. It at the same time asserts the fact that it is not always the social norms that means morality; morality really lie in one's personal view of good and evil too.

It is only in the Cliff-Alison rapport that we find a friendly affinity where there is no conflict. It is a relationship full of amity between a man and a woman with no earthly demand or interest. It is a pure comradeship offering each other dependence, secrecy, and healing touch in need. Alison tells Cliff of her pregnancy first. For Alison he is the casement that brings fresh air and saves her from being stiffled into the suffocating air of the Porter household. She confides in him. He cares for her. He extends his hands, she grasps them eagerly. They have a kind of physical attachment but it never turns into lust or sex. It is just as much as it could be between a man and a woman including the normal, natural attraction of opposite sexes, denial of which might mean denial of nature. They hug, they embrace; in pain and suffering they try to hold each other. This physical attachment gives their relationship a modern dimension. Alison explains it to Helena, "It's just a relaxed, cheerful sort of thing, like being warm in bed. You're too comfortablle to bother about moving for the sake of some other pleasure"(*LBA*42).

The courage and maturity of Helena and Jean reach a higher stage in Pamela when she conceives but refuses to marry Murry. Not even the knowledge of pregnancy could make her submit to an institution she feels to be so utterly insufficient. She is not ready to

accept marriage as an yoke to turn her an instrument to plaugh the human seed only. She wants to make it an honourable contract granting her all human rights. She is aware of life, herself, and the world around her. She earns her own bread and can find her own way. In her attitude and courage she becomes the prototype of modern western woman who demands the rights of extra-marital relationship so long enjoyed by man alone. She wants to do it without the fear of social frowning and prick of conscience. At the same time she sticks to her rights to separation and rejects her lover as she is not afraid of stepping into this hostile male world all alone. Thus she proves the fact that in woman's struggle to reach man as the real friend and mate, the issue which is becoming stronger everyday is her right of separation. She claims equal share of right in her union as well as in separation.

Marriage is not only rejected, it is mocked at and satirised by Osborne in *The End of Me Old Cigar*, Len and Isobell are middle-aged man and woman who come to spend a weekend in a kind of modern "sex-shop", just to get away from the family, against whom they have lots of complaints. They want to free themselves from the cliche of every day life. Instability of faith, ignorance of aim, a shaky view of life, expose the anarchy they live by. Their conversation unfold the vacuam dwelling within themselves:

> Iso: Wouldn't it be hilarious if we fell in love...
> Len: That's what I was going to say... Are you married?
> Iso: yes
> Len: Children?
> Iso: Three. You?
> Len: Snap. Divorced. Three children.
> Iso: Snap.
> Len: But You 're still married.
> Iso:For the present .(*EMOC*430)

Hinting that she is married for the present Isobell actually expresses her doubt about the durability of marriage. It is a transitory affair now-a-days, no more containing those withstanding elements. This play sarcastically criticises marriage and sacred views of man- woman relationship. Jog, Regine, and Stella run this sort of brothel and invite couples, unknown to each other to spend the weekend. Thus they do the business. The rush of enthusiastic men and women prove that all slogans of chastity or purity of marriage are mere talks, leaving nothing uncorrupt. Here women could enjoy freedom only

deceiving men by the body. It is the harshest criticism that Osborne makes of marriage. He does it in a very casual manner. Osborne and Wesker share a common belief which is that, when the woman intend to emancipate herself, to assert her individual existence, she find it difficult to preserve the relationship with man as smooth and silky both within and beyond marriage. On the other hand, the man also find it difficult to adjust with this independent woman. Consecutively he wants to meet her at a level where they can communicate. Man has a fear of female possessiveness, yet can not resist the temptation of falling to the charm of such strong personality and intellectual companionship. Ronnie wants Betie to be thoughful, self-opinionated and sensitive. Their time together is in fact a kind of apprenticeship for Beatie. Ronnie succeeds as a teacher though he fails as a lover. *The Trilogy* presents two young couples to show the contrast between married and unmarried couples. While Ada and Dave could be described as successful married pair, the Beatie-Ronnie relationship is a failure in that sense of constancy, but they have a sort of success. Ronnie's personal failure does not obstruct him to exalt Beatie into a complete human being, bringing out her potentialities. Ronnie's disappearance during her emergence might have suggested that his further presence might cast a shadow on her independent growth and thus create impediments. Ronnie's sex morality is significant too in comparison with Beatie and her folk's. Beatie's sister was pregnant before her marriage. It mattered very little to them. Contrary to it, Ronnie felt it his responsibility to accept Beatie, once they had physical union. Beatie tells her sister that Ronnie had never verbally admitted his love, but once he had taken her, he felt it his responsibility to take care of her. Ronnie's background and sense of morality and propriety had taught him so. Somehow or other we could sense a moral conscience cherished by both Wesker and Osborne at the hidden core of their hearts which prevent them from painting happpy sketches of unmarried couples in their plays, no matter however revolutionary ideas they preach in personal life. Long preserved view of religious sanctity or whatever term is applied to it about marriage, might have been working in their subconscious mind.

Wesker's sense of reality in *TVOGC* shows just the reverse picture. Married Andy and Jessie fail in their partnership. Andy who slights Jessie the wife, submits to Kate, the

sharp, intelligent, and dominating woman and makes place for her in his mind as well as in actions for ever.

Rosalind Miles in her seminal work on the themes and functions of sex-difference in modern novels writes of Mary McCarthy, the wellknown critic, who studied the Angry literature, and comments on her, "Perhaps she dreams of the day when female characters in fiction are no longer so widely represented as points of development in man's growth and fulfilment, but as fully sentient and responsible being."[1] Viewed in the light of this comment, Osborne's female characters are, still serving in the secondary roles in relation to the formation of male characters. In his early plays, Wesker's women characters have been able to fulfill at least a part of Mary's dreams. Ada, Sarah, Beatie, Beatrice stand as full grown personalities compared with Alison, Phoebie, Ruth and Jean.

In the *FS*, we have one single couple Adam and Beatrice with memories of a blighted marriage, hoping for a new beginning, more possibly, beyond the marital bond. Their mature and adult outlook prevent them from being romantic and enthusiastic. Adam recognise the conflict inherent in the relation. He blames woman in general when he says, "Every time a woman raises her arms to the sun for the man she wants, a great battle cry goes up and the war is declared again"(*FS* 96). Jimmy tells Cliff about Alison in the same manner:

> I watch for her to do the same things every night. The way she jumps up on the bed, as if she were stamping on someone's face, and draws the curtains back with a great clatter, in that casually destructive way of hers. It's like someone launching a battle ship .... When you see a woman in front of her bedroom mirror, you realise what a refined sort of butcher she is(*LBA*24).

Adam is not married to Beatrice. Yet Jimmy and he have the same kind of experience of women as he is also a married man. For both Wesker and Osborne, women stand for power or class, against whom their men struggle. It is the struggle for mastery, for supremacy which had been man's right so long, and which he is so alert and eager to retain. Any stirr of consciousness in woman frightens him. Their men show a freak, a fear of female passion, and shrink back from such signs. Adam and Beatrice's efforts to love,

[1] Miles, p. 115.

ultimately turn into laments over their own past. They burst into malicious reproaces, blaming each other for the failure. Unable to resist, they become sour, their conversation bitter. Beatrice scolds Adam for his nostalgic sighs in which she could sense his dominating attempts:

> Beatrice : You see thing wanting her to see them, you think thoughts wanting her to share them -- go home.
> Adam : You failed two men and now you need to show that it wasn't your fault.
> Beatrice: Who can't be trusted with confessions, who?
> Adam: Oh you're righteous about betrayal now, are you?(*FS*108)

In the modern world with changing moral values and declining supremacy of marital rites, man and woman are getting attached beyond the marital bond. But the past could not be absolutely thwarted. The shadow of the past always hangs over the unsteady present to remind them of the gloom that might darken the future. Laurie and Annie in *HA* suffer for their past as do Adam and Beatrice in the *F*. Adam and Beatrice could achieve nothing from their past failures:

> Beatrice: Why didn't you love your wife?
> Adam: Why didn't *you* love hour husband?
> Beatrice: Why? There are no reasons. One day you just look at some one and realize you don't love them. No hate, no anger --
> Adam: Just guilt for being unable to feel what's expected and needed from you. You know, I can't think of anything I've done that I haven't felt guilty for (*FS*105).

Beatrice's message is as if repeated in Laurie's words:

> You live with some one for five, six years. And you began to feel you don't know them. Perhaps you didn't make the right kind of effort. You have to make choices, and adjustments, you have requirements to answer. Then you see someone you love through other eyes. First, one pair of eyes. Then another and more(*HA*139).

This awareness of some inexplicable cause is smashing all their eager endeavours with tragic doom. This typical modern disease infect their inner-selves; they suffer but they do not know why. They feel a vacuam but do not know how to fill it. This melancholia intrudes into their lives with a mysterious sense of inertia. H.Ribalow's comment, "Wesker is obviously trying to probe the psyches of contemporary man and woman in the civilized

world. He is wondering why an adult human relationship is so hard to achieve,"[1] is true for Osborne as well. Both of them try to crack the hard nut of the modern mind to see to the causes of the this internal haemorrage.

The Merchant has some streaks of much-discussed feminism. Its women, Portia, Nerissa, and Jessica at first find men's companionship pleasant. The thrill of first love makes them trust their lover's applauses. But acquiantance with reality soon terrify them. They find out the difference between love and marriage, lover and husband. Discovering the traits of male supremacy in the men they have chosen, their self dignity and sense of individuality are panic-stricken. Love and marriage do not carry the same excitement any more. Bassanio and Lorenzo are no more happy lovers. They are annoyed to see their women intellectually superior to them, with greater will power and self confidence. They are shaky and apprehensive of their roles as husbands. The playwright at the end comments, "Lorenzo turns angrily away from looking at Jessica, finally understanding he had lost her"(*M*265). Bassanio's feeble voice to assert his authority rings in contrast to Portia's bitter but self-assured tone and ends the play with a sad feeling of unbridgeable gap between man and woman. That the relationship between man and woman, within marriage or beyond, can not fulfill their lives, is evident in the plays but none of them deny their indispensibility in each other's life. The maiden mother in Wesker's *Four Portraits of Mother*, hopelessly condemns herself, "Full of consolation, masculine protectiveness, and suppressed fantasies. God! I hate them! (Pause) God! I need them. (Pause) I hate myself for needing them!"(*FPM*40) These lines are repeatitions of Jimmy's helpless wailing mentioned earlier. The same feeling, the same despair, though living in two different worlds in two different situations and positions, assert the truth that there are some basic human feelings in all ages, for all people.

FRIENDSHIP

Bacon's fomous words, "A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce"

[1] Ribalow, pp. 85-86.

prove true for both Osborne's and Wesker's characters. In their plays, friendship plays a significant outlet for characters, suffocated by the secrecy of private pains. Men and women need to be free of the load of everyday inconsistencies. Neither love nor marriage could be relied upon to lighten the burden, rather often overload them by the moral and social obligations. It is only in the tie of friendship that they seek to pacify their turmoiling heart. Friendship claims nothing in return, but serves men and women with free channels to outpour their supressed emotions. Montaigne too, in his famous essay marks this difference between friendship and marriage. "Concerning marriage," he says, "besides that it is a covenant which hath nothing free but the entrance, the continuance being forced and constrained, depending elsewhere than from our free will, and a match ordinarily concluded to other ends. A thousand strong knots are therein commonly to be unknit, able to break the web, and trouble the whole course of a lively affection; whereas in friendship there is no commerce or business depending on the same, but itself."[1]

The Clif-Jimmy relationship is like that. Jimmy pours down all his irksome rantings and ravings on Cliff. Cliff patiently bears with him without getting annoyed or irritated. He sides by him in his distress when Hugh's mother dies and Alison leaves. Alison fails to identify with her husband's loss, or even to offer him consolation in his mourning but Cliff does not. He offers his support and company to death-struck Jimmy, and stays by him. His presence abates the tension in the Porter household to some extent which has always been at a boiling point. He tells Helena, "This has always been a battle field but I'm pretty certain that if I hadn't been here, everything would have been over between these two long ago. I've been a no man's land between them"(*LBA*60). Acting as a common friend or confidante for both Jimmy and Alison, he serves to relieve them of the burden of their sufferings. Osborne's picture of comradeship is different in a way from Wesker's, as he has an usual tendency to turn these friendship to a physical level to either homosexuality or lesbianism. At least critics bring this charge very often. We remember the Gerald-Birkin encounter in Lawrence's *Women in Love*. Cliff and Jimmy engage themselves in a kind of grappling and hurt Alison. What Lawrence calls, "the problem of love and eternal

[1] Montaigne, *Essays*, "Of Frienship", trans, John Florio, London, Blackie and Son, n.d. pp. 100-101.

conjunction" between two men to draw them closer to share their feelings and intellectual upsurges, we could feel grope for in Osborne too. His men want to communicate. Their manliness, male-pride, and self-consciousness find women inadequate. It brings their male friends nearer. In classical Greece deep friendship between man and man was a common bond. It developed as a part of their culture which had a physical dimension. The Greeks made it an institution to enrich their progeny. Bestowing of the scholarship to their disciples, was an integral part of the scholar's pursuit of knowledge. G. L. Dickinson in his study *The Greek View of Life*, notes, "Their ideal was the development and education of the younger by the older man and in this view they were recognised and approved by custom and Law as an important factor in the state."[1] This friendship included romance, passion, and intellectual intercourse. Dickinson further explains, "Not only nor primarily the physical sense was touched but mainly and in chief the imagination and intellect."[2] The friendship of Achilles and Patroclus, Pylades and Orestes, Socrates and Alciabiades, Aristotle and Plato are some famous examples of it.

We have observed earlier in ancient Greece, women were denied all social and legal rights. They were confined in domestic duties of the house and in child bearing. Intellectual exercises were limited within a class of men only, excluding the huge number of slaves. So friendship between man and man was essential to let-out the ideas and thoughts produced by the scholars. In the modern world, the problem has shifted to some extent. Now it has become necessary to share one's view of life, and the increasing load of worries and anxieties. Jimmy's venting rage echoing within the four-walls of his one-room flat gets hold of Cliff as the patient listener and observer. His attacks on Alison are shared by Cliff. The physical relationship between them is adequate to comfort and heal one's injuries by a soft and tender touch, not exactly of sexual nature to derail in unnatural passion. Michelene Wandor rightly remarks on the effective physical presence of Cliff in the Porter family. She denies the charge of homo-sexuality and emphasises on the sexual tension between Alison and Jimmy when she says:

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[1] G.L.Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*, London, Methuen, 1941, p. 184.
[2] Dickinson, p. 185.

> Throughout the play it is interesting that the only apparently unfraught physical contact between characters (until the very end) is that between Jimmy and Cliff, who every so often rough-house together in an innocent, covertly homo-erotic way, and also between Cliff and Alison. Cliff is physical, cuddly and affectionate with Alison in a brotherly way and the contact between them is not sexual .... He is just there, asexual, necessary as a foil for the two sexual protagonists.[1]

In *Luther*, Staupitz and Martin form a kind of friendship which means an open discussion of Marin's inner conflicts and dilemmas that appeases his soul and leads him to a patient pursuasion of his goal.

Jock in *VLW* finds out Stephen, his school friend, to unfold himself when he is desperately looking for a mental refuge. Stephen advises him not to feel badly about anything. They recollect memories of past love. Talking to him, Jock feels relieved for the time being.

Explicit homosexuality ruins Redl. His fascination for male-friendship cosumates into real physical passion and brings the tragic doom of this bright, prospective, youngman. Osborne gives a piercing picture of Redl's inner conflicts when he becomes aware of his homo-sexuality. His relationship with women does not work. Nor does his relationship with men in the long run work. His love-life is full of treachery and suffering, shame and penitence. His friendship with men has been intervened by women and he charges them, curses them, hates them for it. He could not keep his men too. When after Stefan's marriage, Micha is engaged to a girl, he hopelessly utters, "Since Stefan I've let them go their own ways. If that's all, if that's the sum of it, if tha's what they want" (*APFM*88).

Underneath Redl's hatred for women, and also alienation of men's world from women's, lies a fear of female aggression. Redl confesses in choking voice the reason of his inability, when the countess presses him to stay with her, "But when you're badgering me and sitting on my head, and I can't breathe"(*APFM*50). We feel the truth in Wandor's remarks as she says about Redl's feeling of female-appearance as an intrusion into man's privacy. She says:

> He gets angry when women 'take away' men (usually by marriage), the idea being that women are dangerous because they intervene the male/male

[1] Wandor, p. 9.

> relationships. In the dramatic structure of the play, the critical change in Redl's behavior happens after he has had heterosexual contact with the countess, as if he has been violated by the outside world, represented here by women. [1]

Osborne's treatment of homosexuality thus includes a clash with female possessiveness and an attempt to make a clear cut division between the male-world and the female-world where women appears in the role of seducer, a role men are so apprehensive of.

In *Time Present*, where some critics sense an underlying theme of lesbianism, we see two friends Pamela and Constance sharing each other's pains, extending their compassionate and sympathetic hearts. They prove deficient as they have their own privacies to maintain, own problems to solve. Yet their concern for each other could not be overlooked. Constance could feel Pamela's loneliness and suppressed desires to be loved and cared for. She appeals to Pam to stay with her when Pamela announces her decision to leave. She knows, Pamela needs it. The sincerity in her voice could not be missed when she requests, "Darling please stay. You need love more than any one I've ever known. And looking after. We'll both do it"(*TP*72). Their long conversations relieve their hearts of the burdens they can not share with any man. Constance's adoration for Pamela is expressed in her comments, "Perhaps I've always wanted to be someone like you. .... I think you're a very serious person. And I pay you the respect due to a serious person and what they do"(*TP*37). Their friendly exchange of opinions and girlish conversations disclose their very personal thoughts and feelings hidden behind the guise of the conscious, independent, and modern woman who accept the challenges of the male world. Constance the MP, and Pamela the actress, resolve to go without any male protector or husband. They can identify their own weaknesses and the desires, subtly subdued behind their apparent strong looks. To Constance, who is separated from her husband, Pamela says, "You look so damned fragile sometimes. Someone should take you in his arms. Why doesn't that priggish, self-righteous husband come back and give you a cuddle or something. And own up he's been sleeping around himself for years and years"(*TP*37) Herself being a woman, she can feel the pining of Constance's heart, and knows where she feels so empty, though Constance

[1] Wandor, p. 17.

tries to protest saying she does not need it. Pamela affirms her own need too, when she says, "Oh come of it, Constance, that's what we all need -- love and friendship and a hot cuddle. And they really *are* on short supply"(*TP*37). Their friendship like that of Jimmy and Cliff outpours the emotional suffocations and gives them a healthy catharsis.

In Wesker's plays the relationship beyond marriage includes friendship between man and man, and man and woman, but homosexuality and lesbianism are not as conspicuous as in Osborne. Perhaps Wesker's positive outlook, stemming from a fairly pleasant childhood and happy conjugal life, makes him stay away from conceiving of any such diversions. He is aware of the conflicts and sufferings but is not interested in digging up the decadent elements. Osborne's unhealthy and unnatural environment might have pushed him to the forbidden things. From his childhood he had a peculiar curiosity about sex and this perhaps has turned to a kind of sex diversion in the plays. Moreover the antagonism man and woman feel towards each other in his plays is also responsible for this inclinations. Osborne's complicated view and attitude is reflected in these deviations while Wesker's outspoken and committed view takes up the natural courses only, overlooking the physical oddities.

In *Chips With Everything*, Chas looks up to Pip with an eager enthusiasm as his gurdian and guide. Pip's betrayal shocks him. It snatches away his faith in humanity. This treachery points out to innocent unware Chas the deep and wide chasm between the classes that he would never be able to fill up. At the same time like the effect Ronnie's jilting has on Beatie, it supplies him with a positive inspiration accompanying the pain of being discarded. Chas becomes articulate like Beatie. With open eyes he could see the world. It leaves the audience with a hope that from now on he would equip himself to face the world he has been able to comprehend at last.

Wesker in *The Friends* gives a new dimension to the characters, uprooting themselves from the conventional relationship of the family, placing in the circle of friends. This play, and Osborne's *Time Present* record an escape from normal life, and consequently are fraught with a kind of tension to be caught out any moment either by death or the boss. Ultimately death overpowers the characters in their attempts to escape depression and monotony. Both plays uphold the view of friendship in the modern world, where common

feelings of misery, boredom, and loneliness bring them together. They try to survive, clinging to each other's company. Human companionship and communication prove the most positive and exhilariting incentive to survive, in both plays.

Victor grasps at Maurice in his death bed because, Sonia, his wife, fails to come out of of her nostalgic world and side by him in the play *LLOBP*. Maurice's presence relieves Victor of the anguishing knowledge of approaching death, he so long had to swallow alone. Freeing himself from the torments of unexpressed pains, he could receive death calmly. He wants to be brave and heroic in his misery, and scorns to be pitied. Sonia's withdrawal refrains him from telling her of the poignant reality. Desperately he seeks to seize the assuring hands of a friend, to lean on someone intimate and close to heart. His urge to Maurice has the intensity and despair of a dying man, "Come again soon. Tomorrow, the day after. Leave the bloody students. Attend to me. I really need you, Maurice, lad"(*LLOBP*208).

What Cliff does for Jimmy, Maurice does for Victor; he lessens the burden of pain, patiently listening to the heart-rending utterances of a death-struck man. Victor begs. Maurice to render him this service only. At first he tries to keep the secret to himself and bear the burden bravely. But all his attempts to conceal the fear could not overcome the desire to talk to some one to share the pain; atleast to be assured by others that he is not the only one to die in this manner. He wants to pour out his feelings and to know that people suffer like him before. It would familiarise him with the idea of advancing fate and strengthen him to accept it. He eagerly asks Maurice if he knew someone whom he had watched to die like him. Then he makes Maurice tell him the incident of his mother's death. She too died of cancer. It seems as if Maurice is preparing himself for the imminent death and serves as the friend as well as pain-reliever.

It is evident from the above study that in all their attempts to secure a pleasant company within or beyond marriage or in friendship, Osborne's and Wesker's men and women are driven by a subtle but impending fear of being left alone. Almost all of them -- Jimmy, Pamela, Redl, Bill, Archie, Phoebie, Alison, Jock, Ronnie, Victor, Pip, Louis, Crispin, Macey, Manfred, Andy, all are terrified to see the shadow of loneliness hovering over them in a bleak, dark, hostile, and indifferent world. A desperate need for human

contact makes them look forward to these relationships. Osborne in his autobiography remembers how in his childhood his mother had kept him away from school to accompany her everywhere. It was because she was afraid of being lonely. He writes, "My mother for years kept me away from school as often as she dared on the pretext of my poor health; in reality it was because she was bored with being on her own and needed even my childish company."[1] These early days familiarised Osborne with the frightening feeling of loneliness. He had seen that his mother who failed to be a tender and loving maternal presence in his life would like to catch at the company of a small boy to drive her own loneliness. Wesker, as we mentioned earlier, believes that man has private pains and private problems. This private pain and dreams are property of his own solitary-self not to be shared by any one else. There the loneliness creeps in him with all its anguishes and agonies. Alan Carter in his study aptly says, "Osborne heroes are alone, and worse they know it. ... Repeatedly the heroes plead not to be left alone."[2]

Jimmy's loneliness drives him mad to break the frigidity of Alison's. The moment she has left home, he shifts to Helena, unable to stay alone. His panic in being left alone, is expressed when he says about the lonely old bear in the dark forest. He almost wails, "There's no warm pack, no herd to comfort him"(*LBA*94), though he tries to be strong and assures himself, "The heaviest, strongest creatures in this world seem to the loneliest. Like the old bear, following his own breath in the dark forest. ... That voice that cries out doesn't have to be a weakling's does it?"(*LBA94)*

The countess warns Redl against being lonely, but Redl overlooks her, saying, "So does everyone. Even if they don't know it"(*APFM*51). Bill knows his loneliness to be predestined, and senses it's inevitable approach, though Liz consoling him says that he could ring her always. He replies, as if he knows the doom, "But you won't be there"(*IE*114).

Constance and Pamela seek to get some warm companionship in each other as both are isolated, lonely figures facing the world. Constance tells Pamela of her surprise

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[1] Osborne, *Almost A* , p. 28.
[2] Carter, p. 128.

when she knew that Pamela was coming to stay with her. Pamela says, "Well: left behind by our chaps. It gave us something to talk about in the long unconnubial nights"(*TP*34).

Laurie in his loneliness wants to grasp the hands of Annie, and to be united to drive away this intolerable isolation. His voice betrays the tone of a forlorn spirit drooping over the clouds of grey and depressed sky when he imagines how K.L must be feeling, deserted by them. His tone is not of an enemy or rival, rather that of a fellow sufferer, "I simply hope tonight that you are alone -- I know you won't be. But I hope, at least, you will feel alone, alone as I feel it, without burdening our friends"(*HA*117).

Wesker-characters gradually step towards loneliness of which Harry is the forerunner. His sense of despair is infected in Ronnie and ruins this bright and prospective youth. He could succeed neither in friendship nor in love. Later on lonely men and women people around his plays gradually and the fifth volume presents a panoroma of solitary, deserted women.

Pip, Louis, Victor, Adam, Beatrice, Andy, all find themselves trapped in isolated prisoncells where all their dreams of a free world prove futile. Repeatedly, Peter talks of friendship between man and man. Adam hopelessly utters, "Because moments like these remind me that time passes and time passing reminds me of sadness and waste and neglect and suffering"(*FS*111). The final realization remains just as he has felt in the beginning, "All world is a fool and you're alone and suffering"(*FS*77).

In *The Friends*, it is the fear of loneliness and depression that pervert Crispin. He gets used to sleeping with old women. Ashamed of the exposition of his corrupt-self he uses dialects. He confesses his guilt:

> I sleep wi' owld ladies, me. I discovered one day they like me and they want me and I can gi' mesen to them. Owld passions I can drag from them, wi me lips and me hends and a lot of gentleness. ... But its like the glory of raising the dead to see red blood rise up in their faces and find their soft bones flutter wi' life. But they want to pay me and I takes the money and the pleasure on it turns o shame and disgust and I swear I'll not touch them again but I do. ...Unnatural passions. They take out guts from a man.(*F*116)

Intolerable boredom and monotony and a despairing state to find some variety in life ruin this man. His attempts to drive away loneliness, drive him away from normality,

from healthy desires. A terrible picture of modern man's withdrawal from life testifies to Wesker's penetrating vision of contemporary western life and its perversions.

Thus the pictures presented by Osborne and Wesker, in their final canvas, are that of alienated, isolated human beings crying in the wilderness, groping for some rays of light in the darkness. Only love or contact of another human being could save this fallen, strayed wayfarers. Russel speaks of the comradeship and fellow feeling between man and woman as only salvation when he defines marriage. To him:

> Love is something far more than desire for sexual intercourse; it is the principal means to escape from the loneliness which afflicts most men and women throughout the greater part of their lives. There is a deep seated fear in most people of the cold world and possible cruelty of the herd; there is a longing for affection ... Passionate mutual love while it lasts puts an end to this feeling.[1]

D. H.Lawrence marks this isolation at the root of the identity crisis of modern man. He warns against this withdrawal to one's ownself ignoring and rejecting the basic human contacts. It would not redeem him, rather strip his bare animal-self, snatching away his noble qualities. [2] Lawrence's prophetic vision could foresee that, despite all the inconsistencies and adversities latent in the relationship, man and woman would have to go back to themselves to find refuge, irrespective of the changes this alliance is undergoing. As perpetual as life it never ceases to flow and imbues human life with variety and diversity. Full of the wonders of discovery, the journey of men and women into themselves never stops as "The relationship is a life-long change and life-long travelling."[3] Osborne's and Wesker's men and women dramatize this journey in their plays.

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[1] Russell, p. 83.

[2] Lawrence says, "Modern man, however, have so nearly achieved this Nirvan-like condition of having no real human relationships at all, that they are beginning to wonder what they are and where they are." He also says,"This grand isolation, this reducing ourselves to our very elemental selves, is the greatest fraud of all". "We Need One Another",Phoenix, Ed,Edward D. Mcdonald, London, Heinmann, 1936, reprint, 1961, p. 189.

[3] Lawrence, p. 194.

CONCLUSION

Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* designates imagination as the soul of poetry. If imagination be the soul of poetry then we can say that conflict is the soul of drama. Drama primarily means action and dramatic action arises out of conflict between the characters as well as between incidents, and thus animates intense emotion in the audience relieving them of their own peaking-up tension. The very idea of drama ultimately, therefore, includes conflict as its essential part, and any study of drama confronts the truth that without conflict there can be documentation of events but no drama. We can say that man-woman relation in drama presents "a play within the play". Because the division between the two is primary and conflict between them is unavoidable. With its agonies and complexities, the modern age has contributed to the tension between the sexes. Conflict permeates the plays of Osborne and Wesker who see themselves as victims of war. Osborne in his autobiography says of the post-war England, "The country was tired, not merely from the sacrifice of two back-breaking wars but from the defeat and misery between them."[1] The men and women in the plays of both dramatists suffer, and are even driven towards death. Still ignorantly and unconsciously they fall a prey to the irresistible charms of life. They love but cannot come any closer, they unite but feel the gap widening, they attract each other but find invisible walls separating their conflicting egoes and creating prison-cells for themselves. Wesker's Ronny explodes in anger, "I stand here and a thousand different voices are murdering my mind"(*CSB*71); Jimmy bursts out against Alison's so called silence, "Nothing I could do would provoke her. Not if even I were to drop dead"(*LBA*19). We see that men and women in their plays are murdered by the conflicing voices of their own as well as the vioces of their lovers or beloveds or friends or partners or mistresses. They whole-heartedly want to rise up and shake the sloth off their life but an inner indolednce cripples them, and helplessly they are obliged to watch life slipping off their grip. To quote Osborne again, "If one word applied to

[1] Osborne, *Almost A*, p.3.

that post-war decade it was inertia. Enthusiasm there was not, in this climate of fatigue. Jimmy Porter was hurt because things had remained the same. Colonel Redfern grieved that everything had changed. They were both wrong, but that was hard to see at the time."[1]

In the war-raided British society of the fifties, with the ideas of morality and social values proving to be weaker than perhaps ever before, the man-woman relationship has been gradually taking a multi-dimensional form. From the domestic horizon of husband and wife, or the romantic realm of lover and beloved, the relationship has been widening itself. Since the early twentieth century, man and woman have been plucking up courage to take the risk of marriage-free co-partnership openly and that too without creating much of a social clamour. The idea of single parenthood has not been found to be unacceptable. The emotional monotheism that had hitherto kept woman loyal to the socio-religious institutions and tight-lipped about her personal likes and dislikes was no longer able to subdue her.

Various discordant elements have worked together to mould this basic and most complex of the human relationships. Rise of socialism has given both men and women the idea of equality; the world-wide aggression of capitalism has made it possible for men to use woman as commodity in the interest of commercial advancement. Simultaneously new emphasis on individualism has brought forth the conception of free woman to the foreground, to which the upsurge of feminism has been adding its force towards the removal of the dark shadow of gender-disparity. These and other changes in the external world were invisibly shaping and reshaping man's lives and views.

Nona Balakian, a recent critic commenting on the Angry Generation, points out this inward nature of the upheaval. Comparing Osborne's heroine with Ibsen's, she says, "Alison's revolt, if such it may be called, is directed inward. Like Nora, she

[1] Osborne, Almost A, p. 3.

has given up miracles in favour of life. But it is not on her doll's house that she expects to shut the door; it is on her old self -- on her romantic faith in her innocence."[1]

In our study we have found that "love" is not only the romantic attachment between a man and a woman. It is rather a means to recognize their own inner-selves. In a personal crisis what a man demands from his beloved or wife is shelter, comfort, and solace, as we have seen in Jimmy, Bill, Archie, Adam, Lois and Victor. At the same time his instinctive sense of authority and desire to see woman as subordinate or inferior hinders him from accepting woman as a fellow-mate. Nevertheless, at the core of his heart, man cherishes the dream of an ideal woman which stands in contrast to the real woman he meets in life. Often he idealizes an woman whom he had met or seen once in a life time. This woman is the source of life-force, vitality, energy and enthusiasm. She offers to the man the vigour and liveliness he badly needs to confront the despairs shadowing him. Despite Osborne's own cynical experiences about women, his men foster this ideal of womanhood and look for her in the women they meet. Jimmy, frustrated with Alison, remembers Madeline his calf-love who had "more animation in her little finger than you two put together." Archie who ignores Phoebie for being "cold", finds in the Negress' song "hope and strength" for the human race. To Laurie, Annie is the most "dashing .... romantic .... constant ...woman" for whom his thirsty mind yearns but whom he does not expect to get in life. Wesker's respect and admiration for women is explicit in his view of his own mother and sister, and his women are in most cases a mingling of the ideal and the real. In their struggles and perseverance, Sarah, Ada, Beatie, Sonia, Esther, Simone, Portia, Jessica are closer to life, but in their strength., courage, devotion, and determination they are sometimes more than real human beings. These women assert their superiority and make their men feel it, though it is not always easy for the men folk to reconcile themselves to such an idea. It is only unprejudiced men like Dave who can enjoy the comradeship an woman can offer, or an enthusiast like Ronnie who can play the role of a teacher more than a lover to transform his beloved from an ordinary and ignorant village girl to a self-aware individual. Thus, although no one could deny the indispensibility of

[1] Nona Balakian, "The Flight From Innocence: England's Newest Literary Generation", *Books Abroad,* Summer, 1959, vol 33, p. 261.

woman's existence and partnership, a silent and subtle tendency to undermine the woman as a person works in most of Osborne's men, in which respect some of Wesker's men are no exceptions, either.

On the other hand, through these conflicts and combats, love brings, particularly in the beloved's mind, a kind of self-awakening, making her response to life quick and piercing. Alison, like Nora, renounces to her old innocent-self. The loss of the child suddenly sets her amidst the cruel facts of life. She perceives the difference between dream and reality, refuses to be innocent and neutral anymore. A silent revolution in her inner-world has usurped the soft, tender, compliant girl that she was. Unlike Nora, she does not leave her home on a journey to the unknown; hers is rather a comeback to what Helena calls "a mad house". She accepts the challenges of living. In a sense it is true also of Osborne's Jean, Ruth and Pamela, and of Wesker's Beatie, Ada, Simone and Beatrice. At a certain stage of their life all of them say good-bye to their old entities. They take up new responsibilities with more seriousness and commitment than they had before. Their sense of reality makes them aware of their duties towards others as well as to their ownselves. In most cases while doing so they sever the bond with the past, be it the romantic-tie with the lover, or the legal union with the husband. Thus the Alison that comes back to Jimmy, is not the same person she was before the birth of the child whom Jimmy calls, "the monument of nonattachment"; nor is Jimmy, to whom she comes back, her, "young and frail" knight "in shining armour". In a way their reconciliation is a parting with their illusory past, and a stepping-down into present reality which is brutal but unavoidable. Through this transformation Alison pioneers a new generation who looks at the England of the fifties and onwards with an open eye, unhesitant to face tribulations. Here she and her fellow-beings -- Beatie, Jean, Pamela and Ruth -- stand in a row. At some poignant moments they all recognize their ownselves, as does Alison after the birth of her dead child. For Beatie the final realization after the desertion of her lover is her rebirth. Referring to Alison's deprived motherhood, Nona Balakian further says, "At that instant, it is as if Alison, like Ibsen's famous Nora, were transformed into a social reality, voicing a

England".[1] Jean in the *E* and Ruth in *EGD* decline their suitors. They decide to go alone. Jean takes up the responsibility of her family, an act in which even her father, an adult, terribly fails. Simone in *The Friends* brings back a host of people to life from a death-struck morbidity. Looking forward to a new life Beatrice in the *FS* tries to accept Adam. All of them depart from their old life, somehow or other. But that departure is not a withdrawal. For them it is a kind of metamorphosis. Their new life ensures for them an exaltation above narrow self-interests.

Helena in *LBA* says about Jimmy, "He wants one world and I want another, and lying in that bed won't ever change it"(*LBA*90). Jean says about her lover, "He doesn't want me to threaten him or his world, he doesn't want me to succeed"(*E*29). Cobham admits, "A man loves the world only when he loves himself"(*IVOGC*197). Obviously the perception of these two different worlds with their secrecy and personal sense of belonging draws a demarcation- line between man and woman. Despite their personal love and eagerness to be united, it is not possible for the two worlds to meet and merge into one. Besides, factors like subtle inward changes, transformed individual selves, dream of an extremely private life that considers any entry in one's personal life as an intrusion, in a way quicken this division. Not that these signs were not present in the past, only that time was not so propitious for them to take a full shape. We remember in Congreve's *The Way of the World,* Millament's demand for personal privacy in post-marital life which will allow her to have some moments of her own. She would not allow her husband to encroach upon those personal mometns when she will be alone with herself, enjoying the freedom of her own private world, no matter how transitory such moments may be. We recall how D. H. Lawrence in his typical exuberance marks this awareness in woman as a sign of decay of the "glorious past" of man. "For centuries," he says, "man has been the conquering hero, and woman has been merely the string to his bow, part of his accoutrement. Then woman was allowed to have a soul of her own, a separate soul. So the separating business started, with all the clamour of freedom and independence".[2] In a

[1] Balakian, p. 261.
[2] Lawrence," We Need", p. 191.

sense Jimmy Poter echoes these very words when he regrets the loss of the imperial world of his father-in-law. He concludes, "If you have no world of your own, its rather pleasant to regret the passing of some one else's"(*LBA*17). Though apparently there is no reference to male-female conflict in these words, as an anti-establishment young man, boiling with discontent, Jimmy in this self-contradictory statement admits that man is losing the world so long he had claimed to be his own. From his experience of reality, he can perceive that this world, for the loss of which he feels so dejected, has not been so pleasant for all; rather it had been ridden with injustice and oppression of the strong over the weak. Still, being the previleged class, even the rebels like Jimmy sigh for its loss. The typical man in him, like Lawrence in the lines above quoted, apprehends the world to be threatened by the external forces, of which as our study affirms, female aggression is one. His sorrow and fear, like those of Graham's in the *E*, contain the desire to retain his male authority. Sympathising with his father-in-law, Jimmy admits that man's world has an exploitative tendency, no matter how progressive and liberal one personally is, or how rebellious one feels against the order besetting him.

In the plays of the two playwrights under discussion, too, we observe this separation starting on the point of freedom and individuality. To this separation has been annexed a peculiar phenomenon. The external world with all its changes and hostilities threatens man. With his shaky beliefs and overwhelming doubts man cannot contend with this split world. They shirnk back. For their women the world is intolerable; which feeling forces them either to fight or desert. Wesker's Ruth, the unmarried mother, states rather casually, "It's a hard world run by men who are frightened of women"(*FPM*39). Jimmy, Harry, Ronny, Bill, George and even Luther are actually embodiments of this fear. In their vulnerabilty all most all of them are provoking their women to fight, and thus inviting their own inevitable doom or defeat. A fight does not bring people closer, it secludes. That must be the reason why Lawrence has spoken in ecstasy of sex as a great unifier. He thinks that it is only in periods of the collapse of instinctive life-assurance in man that sex becomes a great weapon to divide. The turbulent commotion prevailing in the post-war England bears testimony to the fact that it is indeed during this period of collapse, perhaps

isolation that should have driven them towards togetherness, man and woman find themselves unable to come closer. That is why lying in the same bed they dwell in two different worlds.

Marriage is failing, but not its values. It is not possible to condemn these values, nor could they be brushed aside. Harry and Sarah, Archie and Phoebie, Dave and Ada, despite all their complaints and limitations, strive in their own ways to provide mutual tolerance, security, and shelter to, and for, each other.

Extra-marital sex becomes a normal practice. It no longer creates any noise of social scandal, as it did even early in the century. Society now cares the least about it, though it cares much for marriage. The modern conception of marriage does not forbid the entrance of a third person in a man's or a woman's life. Besides marriage, other kinds of relationships are not unlikely to develop; relationahips that do not lend themselves to easy definitions. Even without the intrusion of an outsider the husband-wife relationship itself is complex enough to make life difficult for each other. It is not always necessary to invite the company of a third person to create disputes or increase difficulties. On the contrary the presence of the third person often relieves the lovers of their burden; releasing the tension growing up in the relation it pacifies them. Concurrently the modern outlook is practical and realistic enough to maintain that any relationship between man and woman would certainly contain some kind of physical attachment which attachment should be accepted as a reality. To deny this is to deny nature. Consequently, it is not always right to blame the other party for the failure of a marriage. The Cliff-Alison and the Andy-Kate friendships are cases in point. Though Kate is not friendly and sympathetic to Jessie, she is not at the root of the Jessie-Andy discord. It is Andy's own indifference and lack of respect which have widened the gap between them. Before Kate's entrance their conjugal life was not any happier. Neither is Cliff the bone of contention between Alison and Jimmy. Rather, his friendship is a shelter for Jimmy in his crisis, as well as a reliever for Alison because of his caring nature. These relationships prove that the presence of the third party does not always add fuel to the flame of domestic fire. Bertrand Russell we recall, supports friendship beyond the marital bond and says that where perfect understanding abounds the

presence of the third party does not or cannot disturb the serene placidity of love. He remarks:

> I think that where a marriage is fruitful and both parties to it are reasonable and decent, the expectation ought to be that it will be life-long, but not that it will exclude other sex-relations. A marriage which begins with passionate love and leads to children who are desired and loved ought to produce so deep a tie between a man and a woman that they will feel something infinetely precious in their companionship, even after sexual passion has decayed, and even if either or both feel sexual passion for someone else.[1]

Marriage is not to be accepted or needed only for children or procreation. Nor could children provide the needed guarantee of the permanence or security of marriage. The instinct of filial affection, does not, however, die down. The new generation of woman, rejecting marital obligations, could not totally reject the mother in them nor could they deny the feminine yearnings. Pamela's pregnancy gives her a test of her living womanhood. The virgin mother in Wesker's *Four Portraits of Mother* could do away with man, the mate, but could not do away with the child, "If I needed no one else I'd need her"(41). Ruth's reasons for not marrying, "Who would've wanted to marry me? Plain, graceless, difficult, clever. Impossible combination for a man to accept"(42), points an accusing finger to man's appreciation of the typical feminine qualities of beauty and docility. But Jessie's experience in the *TVOGC* proves that her being "simple like cottage loaf" and "pure smelling like a rose" could not guarantee her conjugal felicity. The dispute, however, is not as simple as that. It is much too subtle and complex to be defined or explained in general terms. Jimmy charges women with cruelty, saying that it is their imposing nature that destroys men, "When you see a woman in front of her bedroom mirror, you realize what a refined sort of butcher she is"(*LBA*24). Alison complains that her virginity insulted Jimmy and he wanted to uproot and replant her in his own class. Adam blames women for starting war against men; Beatrice suspects man's efforts to attend women as his attempts to extend his territory. Thus suspicion, mistrust and eagerness to enlarge one's authority work as the divider from which both of them try to keep aloof, and which in the long run keeps them aloof from each other.

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[1] Russell, p. 95.

Ruth asks her child not to demand a father, because a father has to be a man, and a man is some one who, "spends money on possessions, he takes up most of this space, you end up revolving around his needs and before you know it you are made to feel guilty for imprisoning him"(*FPOM* 40). Increasing dependence on the machine is dimininshing the significance of human presence in life. Left for living on his own, man is becoming lonelier. A growing sense of privacy and rejection of entrance of a person or a stranger as something indecent are factors making people intolerant of anything beyond their own personal likes. A constant presence of another person, be she or he the lover, husband, wife or mistress, is not always received cordially and is often considered an interference, and dismissed as undesirable. Ruth feels the need of a partner, but not all the time. Apprehension and intolerance have invaded the relationship with a deep-rooted and wide-spread influence. The couples in Osborne's and Wesker's plays, Alison-Jimmy, Archie-Phoebie, Sarah-Dave, Adam-Beatrice, Sonia-Victor do care for, and need, each other, and yet do not know how to overcome the barriers. Man and woman are aware of the inexplicable causes piling up between them. Their rages are filling them with burdening and depressing melancholia. They intently cry for the gradually-obliterating family values and community-feelings which they think could have saved them from this cold solitary self-exile. The security, warmth and dependence that the family-ties offer are not to be replaced by anything else. Wesker in his recollection of childhood (R.Hayman) praises the warm community-life that made up for the lack of money or affluence, and gave the poor child the human contact it needed for its blooming into healthy manhood. Osborne missed it, but he and his heroes feel the need of it. Gabriel Gersh in his essay on John Osborne says:

> His attitude seems to be that in the England of the past there existed a sense of community and human contact which the pressures of modern life are now rapidly obliterating. Jimmy Porter is vocal about the lack of brave causes; he feels equally starved of quiet human security.
>
> There is nothing abstract about this. Osborne is the one of the very few living dramatists with a real sense of community life: the warmth of the family scenes in *The Entertainer* is unparalleled in the postwar theater.[1]

[1] Gabriel Gersh, "The Theater of John Osborne", *Modern Drama*, September, 1967, vol 10, p. 142.

We recall the family scenes in Wesker's *The Trilogy*, the fellow-feeling and sharing of dreams and the pains, despite the rows by the cooks and waiters in *The Kitchen*. Another important point to be noticed is that it is not only the women who want to preserve the family values; in spite of their apperent indifference, men too need them . Even in the purely male- world of military discipline, they try to hold together with a real bond, as we find in *A Patriot for Me*, or in *Chips With Everything*. That no one can do away with human contact or human bond is the ultimate truth they feel. Gersh does not forget to mention it, "Among other things, *A Patriot for Me* is an attempt to recreate such a community: an army society holding its members together with a 'real bond' stronger than slogans that 'all men are brothers' " .[1] These words are true for Wesker too. In his *Chips With Everything* we find the RAF conscripts clinging together desperately in a crude, cruel and hostile world they have been thrown into.

From this community feeling stems their sense of social commitment. How far they succeed in realizing their commitments is not the question, really. It is their endeavours which count. We know their attempts have to be turned down by the antagonistic social system. Their commitment is towards the awakening of humanity in man. Jimmy is impatient to see the blunt inertia that makes people forget their existence. He wants people to stir into life with the pain of being alive. Archie laments over the "dead inert shod" of the face that could have split open with human warmth. In the same manner Beatie blames her family for not showing signs of their being alive. Both Wesker and Osborne resent their people's so-called serenity which to them is actually an incapacity to respond. They protest against the romantic glorification of the simplicity of the working class. To them it amounts to a kind of withdrawal. We are reminded of Goodman's comments mentioned earlier, "Wesker smashes all romantic illusion about the purity of rural life and exposes the meanness of people who keep aloof from ideas, who are concerned only with their digestions."[2]

Osborne's Jimmy, George, Archie, Bill, Wesker's Ronnie, Adam, Andrew, Victor are intellecually sharp. Belonging as they do to the working class, they elevate themselves

[1] Gersh, pp. 142-143.
[2] Goodman, p. 219.

to a higher level and clearly indicate the distinction that exists between the unconscious and the conscious. Both the playwrights say that they want to awaken their own people. They are open-eyed about their class weaknesses. They do not condemn their people nor do they desert them. "They could condemn the dull existence of the Bryants without condemning the Bryants but they remain human beings with pawky sense of humour and shrewd understanding of one another."[1] Marking this point about a similarity between these two dramatists, Carl Hare comments:

> Wesker agrees with Osborne on the necessity for social commitment, but he uses a different framework in which to express his attitude. In his plays individuals strive to break through the restrictive environment in which they find themselves and to 'become alive' to commit themselves actively to some point of view. Sometimes they succeed in doing so, but most of the time they fail because of the social system.[2]

Ruth in *Four Portraits of Mother* scolds herself, "I must be crazy. A skiing holiday! The world slips under my feet everyday, why should I wear ski's to help it!" Jimmy wails, "Our youth is slipping away. Do you know that?" This feeling of life and youth slipping away is a common feeling for Wesker's and Osborne's men and women; what keeps them up is their resolute decision to go along. An awareness of the futility and the concommitant firmness to continue the struggle redeem these men and women.

Osborne is antagonistic to religion as it stands for one of those powers of establishment against which he is voicing a protest in his plays. Wesker too is not a religious person. He is a socialist, a non-believer, and his Jewishness is something that lies beyond the conventional religious submission. It is particularly the community-feeling of the minority which helps him to identify himself with the suppressed, the mal-treated and the misunderstood, represented by the Jews of the world. He is unhesitant in his articulation about it, despite his firm socialist commitments.

In the later plays of the dramatists we notice a departure in outlook and response from those displayed in the plays written earlier. In Wesker's early plays the socialist

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[1] Michael Anderson, "Arnold Wesker: The :Last Humanist" , *New Theatre Magazine* , 1968, patr iii, Bristol, p. 5.

[2] Carl Hare, "Creativity and Commitment in Contemporary British Theatre", *Humanities Association Bulletin*, Spring, 1965, vol 16, p. 24.

conviction is vocally present in both man and woman. It often works as the unifying power between them. Somehow or other, it succeeds in keeping them together; even when this faith fails to unite, at least it leaves a positive effect on the loners like Beatie. But Wesker in his later plays is a man of the world bereft of the capacity to be surprised any more. The playwright's acquaintance with hard realities unfolds the world before us with such coarseness that it sometimes even refuses to drop the curtain of decency between vulgarity and truth. His fifth volume is the portrayal of pictures by an artist who seems totally derailed by hard facts. Stephanie, Bettie, Ruth, Anna, Miriam, none of them could be illuded anymore by either dreams or hopes. Their view of man has no scope or space for imagination. No glorification of manhood, not even a tolerably good idea of man's rationality or humanity could be traced out. Cynical to the extent of being man-haters, these women strip man to his animality and inferiority, which stripping is contrary to Wesker's own earlier concept of the relationship. No matter how much sympathy he feels for the women cause, his Anna sounds Osbornian in *Annie Wobbler* when she cries out, "The trouble is he's also clever. Difficult. He can be modest about his cleverness but I will have to hide mine, I can see. Why don't men like their women to be clever? They like them to be clever but not cleverer than them"(*Anna*94). This young first-class honours graduate is preparing for her date with a man whom she knows to be much inferior to her in learning and accomplishments, but who has the previlege of feeling superior only for being a man. She is getting dressed to meet the man, "But disturbing her sense of future is a fear of what she might be leaving behind, that she may not be what she feels she can be"(*Anna*92). Her open and free confession of physical facts, her rather shameless way of dressing up reveals the desperate situation she is in, despite her academic successes. Annabella Wharton, the celebrated middle-aged novelist writes about "A desperate, cold, lonely day when lonely women commit cold and desperate acts they regret"(*AW*100). She analyses her past and diagnoses the disease that impeded her spontaneous and healthy alliance with a man, "Your parents quarrelled and you loved them both and you've got a conflict raging inside you which is giving you complexes that'll destroy you unless you have them seen to"(*AW*106). She is able to recognize the root of the evil in conjugal life and with tragic experience of her own life behind her, she feels how one misalliance hands down its effects to the

generations and hinders the growth of youthful love. Osborne in his plays warns against this aftermath of mismatching.

While Wesker becomes bitter and cynical in his later plays, Osborne turns stoic and detached. It seems that his men have finally known the inefficacy of all these attempts to be responded to, and, therefore, they retreat into resignation. Jock Mellors and his wife live in two islands; Jock could in no way provoke his wife to commuicate. Ultimately he resigns to death. Both Ben Prosor and Wyatt Gilman embody the culminating distance and apathy intensifying between man and woman. Their lack of concern and care for each other, stands in reverse to the situation presented in Osborne's early plays. The earnest yearnings to come closer, the laments for inability to touch the inner self is no more to be found in these plays. Jimmy's and Bill's restless soul-searching expeditions, their angry and bewildered outrages are waning away in to callous indifference.

Osborne and Wesker differ from each other in their personal beliefs as well as outlook almost to the degree that their lives differ in antecedents and socio-religious backgrounds. At the same time, they display similarities where they stand for their generation and speak for its restlessness, pains, sufferings, anguishes and expectations. They portray their time with the piety of an atrist, and with the boldness of a rebellious youth, defiant of the hypocrisies of the world. In their early plays we notice a tone of optimism. In spite of all the frustrated anger of the protagonists, their articulate rage is full of youthful zeal and enthusiasm. Gradually their speeches turn into feeble utterances of the cynical non-believers as their creators age into experienced adults looking for consolation in retreats to the past or flights into fantasy. With all their hopes and withdrawals, they remain the voice of an age which has seen the destruction caused by war and they sing of man's indomitable spirit which at once defies the destruction and seeks to revive life among the ruins.

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