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1.1 Indian Drama

India has one of the oldest and largest literary contributions in the world literature. Due to the cultural diversities, India has a large number of languages that are used for writing different genres of literature. Sanskrit language is said to be the language of the early literature. In fact, Sanskrit is not the only language that plays a role in literature and life, but common people use a number of languages such as Prakrit and Pali. In fact, traditions always affect literature. Hindu traditions cover a large part of Indian culture, so several great literary works such as V edas, Ramayana and Mahabharata reflect these traditions. Besides, Indian literature moved to another direction under the influence of colonialism. English language influences a number of writers who start using it in their writing, and some of them become well versed too in English.

Drama is one of the genres of literature that appear in the sphere of Indian literature from the early period. It is considered as the powerful field in literature. It is a reflection of life. Moreover, it is associated with the inner consciousness of human being. The beginning of Indian drama can be dated back to the Vedic period. It developed naturally even before the Greek drama. Therefore, Indian drama has its own theory. It is a distinctive phenomenon in the world literature. It is believed that the beginning of Indian drama took place in the 4th century B C. The extant of Bharata’s Natyashastra confirms it. The Natyashastra is regarded as the first attempt to present drama in a systematic manner. This work preserves the nature and characteristics of Indian drama. The Indian drama before this
work cannot be said of having all the technical and contextual requirements. The Indian drama before it was in fragments. The ancient drama followed Natyashastra in every detail such as the selection of the characters, plot and construction of the stage setting. Commenting on the nature and scope of ancient Indian drama, the noted historian A.L. Basham observes:

The origin of Indian theatre is still obscure. It is certain, however that even in the Vedic period dramatic performances of some kind were given, and passing references in early resources point to the enactment at festivals of religious legends, perhaps only in dance and mime. (Basham 434-435)

Indian theatre has a long history. It started in ancient times with the performance of the religious tales at homes or in the places of public worship. According to Indian critics, the Hindu drama was the product of native genius. It was neither a borrowing nor an imitation. The starting point of the Indian drama may be described as purely native. In other words, there is no real evidence for any influence of Greek examples on the Indian drama at any stage of its progress. The origin of it was religious. In fact, any search about the origin of Indian drama leads directly to the Sanskrit drama as the first stage.

1.2 Modern Indian Drama

Indian drama was reborn with a new form and content under the influence of British colonizers. In fact, India’s rich heritage of drama and the exposure to western classics are the impetus that leads to the strong rebirth of the new drama. During the British rule, translations of Sanskrit plays as well as western classics such as Shakespeare’s plays were the significant feature of this era. The translation of Indian drama into English language has achieved a significant growth technically and thematically in the modern decades. It can be said that the British helped in bringing the theatre of India into the direct contact with the western theatre. At the
In the beginning, British rulers consolidated the idea of establishing theatre in some states such as Bengal, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. After that, some thriving metropolises such as Bombay, Calcutta and Madras started introducing their own theatre model, which was based on the London model. Due to the new investment policy, the new theatre arisen and the audiences had to pay for a show. The British support the establishment of theatre for the sake of providing their soldiers and citizens entertainment. The ruler hoped that entertainment will help soldiers to adjust themselves in India and will lead citizens to accept the existence of British in their country.

Devendra Raj Ankur wrote an essay explaining the use of traditional elements in modern Indian drama. In the beginning, he illustrates that, the issue of using traditional elements in modern Indian drama is a matter of discussion, and he refers to different points of views; one opinion says that there is no relevance of the traditional elements in the modern drama because the traditional elements are basically motivated by religious themes. Whereas, the other opinion says that traditional theatre is not only about religion but also include other elements such as social criticism as it is highlighted in modern and contemporary theatres. He states that the social criticism has always been an important and essential element of the traditional theatre.

The first element that attracts the modern playwrights is the relation between the audience and the actors. The live presentation before the audiences helped both the stakeholders in having complete communication. The actor and the audience could become one. Such dramatic device is found in the modern plays also.

The preliminaries are the second traditional elements in the modern Indian drama. Traditional preliminaries refer to the ‘prayer singing’ with music. They introduce the play with some introduction to prepare the
audience for the main actions. Sutradhar is one of these preliminaries in the modern drama. The modern playwrights improved his role. In addition to his role of introducing the plot in the beginning, he has been given another role in the modern play to raise the important issues that constitute the fabric of the play. Thus, he played the role of a discussant or initiator of discussion.

The third traditional feature that is used in the modern drama is of the stage. Like traditional forms, some playwrights use a bare stage and through the speeches and movements of their characters, they suggest the background of the scene. Such a manner gives the audience freedom to fly with their imagination to think about the speeches of the characters; on the other hand, it pays an attention to the action of the play. In fact, such a stage helps one to view life without so much effort.

Style is the fourth traditional feature that is found in the modern Indian drama. The plot of the play is unfolded through the day-to-day realistic acting and the actions through music, dance, mask and half curtains. These elements have been used in the modern play, as well. Besides, the mythical source of the ancient play is used in the modern ones. The modern play used the device of half-curtains to show that its plot has been taken from a mythical source. On the other hand, like traditional play, the modern play hugely emphasises on the actors.

Theatre, since long, is a weapon to achieve social and political reforms in any society. It has been used as an effective tool for social change. In short, it can be said that theatre became a place wherein improvement and development of society and aesthetics took place. Similarly, drama in India has been used for creating social, political and economical changes. It has been effectively used as an instrument of non-violent struggle against the British rule. Some radical theatre groups started performances at street corners. The Street Theatre aimed to
establish political awareness in the society. It was an important device to make people aware of the contemporary issues. Such issues made the Street Theatre a great success. The Street Theatre aimed at creating changes in the audience thoughts and beliefs by direct contact with the performers. In fact, it is an effective way to create a sense of responsibility about any change in society. Through drama, the social, political and cultural changes that society undergoes are reflected. It can be said that the study of drama would help us to restructure the history of the societal issues. It also helps us to understand the past with its problems. The theatrical revisit to the past also benefits us in making our present and future amicable for all. Indian playwrights adapted themes from history and used them as tools not only for political messages but also for personal and psychological issues.

Mohan Rakesh was considered as the first modern playwright in Hindi, who changed the landscape of Hindi theatres as Tendulkar did in Marathi, Badal Sircar in Bengali, and Girish Karnad in Kannada. Initially they were influenced by western theatre, in structure and content. They followed the techniques of Ibsen and Brecht, but soon they returned to roots and found both content and forms giving birth to the movement called ‘Theatres of the Roots’. They attempted to decolonize Indian theatre and free it from the shadow of the western theatre. In other words, they searched for the liberation from the western theatre, returned to their roots, and organized a new theatre. However, some critics believe that Indian playwrights did not succeed in creating an independent dramatic convention, which would suit the Indian environment.

1.3 The Pre-Independence Era

Indian English drama came into existence with the work of Krishna Mohan Benerjee entitled The Persecuted’ in 1813. However, the real beginning was with the work of Michael Madhusudan Dutt entitled Is this
called Civilisation? in 1871. There were some great writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, T. P. Kailasam etc. in the pre-independence era who contributed to the flourishing and development of Indian English drama. The first significant Indian dramatists in English were Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo.

Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. Primarily, he wrote in Bengali and all his plays were translated into English and other regional languages. He created a unique combination between conventionality and modernity in his plays. He was considered as mediator between Eastern and Western civilisations. Diana Devlin says:

.....The philosopher, writer and teacher Rabindranath Tagore set out to unify Indian and European traditions creating plays which have been described as a mixture of Bangali folk drama and Western medieval mystery plays. (qtd. In Shukla 4)

Rabindranath Tagore is a social critic. Through his plays he wrote against the contemporary social evils. The outdated customs and traditions he exposed vigorously. He even did not hesitate to criticize religion that spoke against humanity. He attacks all useless conventions that held back the progress of human being. The play Achalayatan focuses on the importance of self discovery. It emphasizes that a true religion is constituted by the principle of love for all. According to the playwright love for humanity without discrimination should be the essence of every religion. Through his writings, the writer emphasizes that the discovery of the self is the solution for all ills in life. The discovery of the self leads one to discovery of the universe. It teaches man how to live amicably with the world around. Such harmonious relationship among the human beings paves the ways for co-existence and progress. Love has the power to enlarge the mind of a person and it helps in developing a bonding with everything around is the audible massage in his works. Love for the universe and society can lead us to understand the higher purpose of life.
The play Chitra (1913) depicts the picture of modern Indian woman. He expresses the conception of true love. The play emphasizes on the importance of spiritual love than that of physical one. With it, there appear other themes like romance and spirituality. The playwright also focuses on the issues related to woman. He portrays two aspects of the personality of a woman; the first one enables her to overcome the hurdles in life whereas the other seems to shatter her when she is under the influence of her emotion. The woman protagonist appears to be a blend of positive and negative qualities.

Red Oleanders (1924) is a play about the characteristics in human nature such as evil, goodness, greed and human sympathy. The play also focuses on the contemporary political issue and the evils of economical disparity. The alien rulers of India have been presented as the oppressors whereas the natives have been depicted as the oppressed. The play also centres on the heroic struggle Indian waged against the colonizers and capitalism. The Post Office (1912) focuses on the innocent emotional world of a child affected by an incurable disease. The child seems to be swinging in two worlds of hope and despair. It portrays the conformation between the world of innocence represented by the child and the real world around. The hope of the child that a physician would come and cure him ultimately ends in despair.

In short, it can be said that the plays of Tagore embrace almost all human concerns and aspirations. The portrayal of life in its myriad colours has been presented remarkably. He also focuses on human bondage and human relationships of all kinds. The exploration of the human mind is subtle. No aspects related to human life misses from his observant eyes. It is, therefore, the history of Indian drama cannot be understood without making a reference to him.
Sri Aurobindo is another notable figure in the gallery of Indian English playwrights who wrote five complete blank verse plays and six incomplete dramas. His complete plays are Perseus the Deliverer, Vasavadutta, Rodoguna, The Viziers of Bassora and Eric. His incomplete plays are The Witch of Ilini, Ahab and Esarhaddon, The Maid and the Mill, The House of Brut, The Birth of Sin and Prince of Edur. The outstanding feature of Sri Aurobindo’s plays is that they depict the different cultures and countries in different periods, dealing with variety of characters, moods and sentiments. Perseus the Deliverer is stranded on the ancient Greek myth of Perseus. Vasavadutta is a romantic tale of ancient India. Rodoguna is a Syrian romance. The Viziers of Bassora is a romantic comedy, which portrays the days of the great Haroun-al-Rashid. Eric is a romance of Scandinavia about love and war between the children of Odin and Thor. He uses a variety of themes. There is a universal exposure in the content of Sri Aurobindo’s dramatic work. Sri Aurobindo followed Elizabethan drama in terms of plot construction and characterisation and no doubt he was also influenced by the Sanskrit playwrights like Bhasa, Kalidas and Bhavabhuti as stated by Dr. K. R. S. Iyengar. He maintains balanced between the modern and traditional techniques in his writing.

Another prominent playwright was T. P. Kailasam who was considered as the father of modern drama in Kannada. He wrote plays in English and Kannada. His English plays such as ‘The Burden’ (1933), ‘Keechaka’ (1949) ‘The Purpose’ (1944) etc. are considered to be worth considering dramatic voice on the Indian literary scene. The Purpose is more complex in its conception and execution than the plays followed. The later plays are concerned with the psychological conflict of an individual and the destiny he confronts. Keechaka is a play that based on the legendary story borrowed from Vyasa’s Mahabharata. The Protagonist of the play has been given a different fringe character by the author in this play. It is portrayed as a villain in a Vyasa’s Mahabharata but Kailasam
has presented him as a much-misunderstood character. All his plays are based on various myths from the two epics of India—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. G. S. Amur remarks that, "A talented actor who appeared in the amateur as well as the professional stage, he brought to the writing of drama on intimate knowledge of the theatre. It is for this reason that his plays whether in Kannada or English have a uniform technical excellence." (qtd. In Shukla 5)

The plays of Rabindranth Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and T.P. Kailasam are essentially lyrical, allegorical and symbolic. Theses playwrights wrote English dramas not so much for the stage as for being read. Their plays are about what life should be rather than what it is.

Bharati Sarabhai is another important name in this era. She wrote two plays The well of the People (1943) which is a symbolic play. It is inspired by a real story. The second play is Two Women (1952) in prose. It reflects the conflict between traditional and modernity. The concept that God is within, is conveyed through her play The well of the people. The same idea is expressed in Two Women in another way. She attempts to combine the ancient religion of Indian and the new culture. Her plays focus on the fact that God can be found everywhere. Sarabhi treats her themes in relation to the Indian tradition. The blend of material and the spiritual is focused. In short, Sarabhai is considered as the tremendous dramatist who contributes to the evolution and development of Indian English drama.

J.N. Lobo Prabhu was considered as the last great name in this era. Out of the dozen plays which he wrote only two plays were published in this period. They were Mother of the New India (1944) and Death Abdicates (1945).
1.4 The Post-Independence Era

In the post-independence era, the most creative playwright Asif Currimbhoy wrote and published more than 30 plays dealing with several kinds of subject matters. He highlighted several issues in his writings like social problems, East West encounter and history and contemporary politics. He was considered as the most prolific Indian English dramatist of the post-independence era. According to many critics, no one among the modern Indian English playwrights has won widespread international recognition as Asif Currimbhoy did. His plays have successfully been staged at American Universities and many other places abroad, and demonstrated sophisticated creativity of Indian drama in English.

Pratap Sharma is one of a few significant contemporary playwrights who contributed to the development of Indian English drama. However, he could not stage his two plays in his country but he successfully staged them abroad.

Girish Karnad is considered as one of the most outstanding Indian playwrights. His achievements have obtained widespread appreciation nationally and internationally. His contribution to Indian English drama is huge. Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar were considered as the most representative of contemporary Indian drama.

In the post-independence drama, there is a combination of traditional and British culture. As a result of this, a new social milieu emerges. The society projected, therefore, appears to be having a new form in terms of thinking and action. The inhabitants of such a society seem passing through a phase of change. They are neither modern nor traditional. There appears a shift in focus. The world of erstwhile kings and gods has been replaced by the common person’s problems and aspirations. Therefore, the modern plays are not about great heroes and gods, but they portray the life of common people. Besides, the playwrights
adapted the themes of the ancient plays. The realistic and naturalistic presentation was the feature of the modern theatre in India. In the beginning, Bengali, Tamil and Marathi were the languages for the most dramatic works, but later some languages such as Kannada, Gujarati, Hindi, Oriya, Urdu and English adopted to be the languages of writing. Widespread translations of regional plays into English have created a connection between West and East, North and South. Indian English playwrights like Asif Currimhoy, Pratap Sharma, Nissim Ezekiel, Girish Karnad and Mahesh Dattani, Vijay Tendulkar and others attempted to mix the western norms with the Indian tradition. Therefore, they have to face and balance between the attractions of western styles of thought and their own tradition. They paved the way for successful balancing of the traditional forms and western sensibility. Since the beginning, Punjabi theatre was realistic and more than romantic. The Punjabi playwrights dealt with realistic social problems. They have been effectively influenced by the major trends in modern western drama. They aim to depict their perception of reality through the modern dramatic movements such as - realism, naturalism, symbolism, expressionism and theatre of the absurd.

Karnad through his writing is able to make the audience go beyond clime and culture boundaries. His aim is to build up a better future for the man and the country. He attempts to make the audience understand what is going around them and to react to the environment which they are living in. Though Karnad wrote only ten plays, he is considered as a milestone in the history of Indian theatre. He portrays women struggling with the unjust norms of the patriarchal society. They struggle to achieve what they lack but they end up with death or disaster. They remain passive participants and puppets in the hands of the patriarchs. The position of woman is subordinate because of the social and cultural norms. It has adversely affected her psyche. There is a conflict between body and mind. Karnad deals in his plays with the inequality and imbalance in the
relationship of man and women. Besides, he depicts woman in the stereotyped roles. Indian playwrights seem to have been greatly influenced by the western playwright such as Brecht, G. B. Shaw, Ibsen, Eliot, Backett and others. Among the post-independence playwrights who have occupied a unique place in the arena of theatrical art are Mohan Rakesh in Hindi, Badal Sircar in Bengali, Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi and Girish Karnad in Kannada.

Indian English drama can be studies into two contexts. There are plays, which are originally written in the regional languages and afterward are translated by the playwrights themselves or by other translators into English. On the other hand, there are plays, which are written in English. But unlike other genres of literature English drama doesn’t make a noteworthy success in the post-independence era. Primarily, the modern theatre was established for the middle and upper classes, however after independence it acquired the general public status. Under British rule many new ideas, values, morals were spread among the Indian masses, moreover, Indian writers were exposed to English literature. The spreading of new education also changed the native mind. The Indian English drama was the result of this interaction. Even the social life and culture in India was largely influenced by the British culture.

However, there was unsatisfactory growth in the achievement of Indian English drama. In fact, drama cannot develop and flourish in the absence of its adequate theatre. Therefore, Indian English drama has not obtained sufficient output in term of quantity or quality. There are many reasons that are attributed to its slow growth. After independence, not much attention was given to the performance of English plays comparing to the importance given to the regional languages theatres. A few English plays were being staged yearly in big cities. If Indian playwrights want to stage their plays in English they don’t have facilities to get them staged in
a real theatre. The lack of adequate theatrical facilities was one problem. Commenting on this factor R. K. Dhawan says:

It is a well-known fact that the real success of a play can be tested on stage. A playwright needs a living theatre to put his work on acid test, evaluate its total effect on the audience and thereby get a chance to improve upon his performance. This handicap has not allowed him to pursue playwriting in a systematic and comprehensive way. (qtd. In Shukla 8)

Drama means a direct, live contact with its audience who are from different levels masses, literate and illiterate as well. It can be said that the success of any dramatic work depends on how it stages and the reaction of its audience. English being the second language, it was spoken by the elite class in Indian society. The common people don’t understand it and don’t accept it as a medium of communication since it is not their natural language for communication. Ram Sharma remarks on this aspect; thus:

Any play written in India in English has an inherent disadvantage in the sense that it is not very often staged. Stage worthiness being a basic test for a play,.....? most of the plays written in English do not fulfil this requirement. (qtd. In Shukla 8)

Moreover, the slow development of Indian drama in English may be due to the Indian dramatists’ inability of depicting all the Indian tradition and historical heritage in English. Due to this there could not establish a communication between the stage and the spectators. This lack of communication ultimately resulted in no communication or miscommunication among the stakeholders. Thus, the audiences remained unconvinced. Due to that, the Indian drama in English might have failed in achieving the exact impact on the audience. Language is not a barrier in dramatic communication. Since the thought can be expressed through gestures. In this context, M.K. Naik remarks:
In making his Indian characters speak in English the playwright need therefore have no qualms at all. Let him first create living characters in live situations, and the language will take care of itself. (qtd. in Kumar 18)

The focus on the action rather than the language should be the chief concern in the dramatic design. It seems that Indian dramatists themselves are partially responsible for it. They have to reconsider their performance. They must overcome all difficulties and challenges for a better future for Indian drama in English.

1.5 Vijay Tendulkar

Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar was born on 6 January 1928 in Kolhapur, Maharashtra. In his childhood, he was interested in watching western plays, which shaped his inspiration for writing. He was a writer, journalist and social commentator. He began writing at the early age of his life. He wrote more than twenty-eight full-length dramas, twenty-four one-act plays and more than ten plays for children. He is well recognised for his television writings and literal and political essays. In addition to this, he wrote several novels and short stories. However, he found himself comfortable in writing play. Most of his plays have been translated into English and other Indian languages. He puts all his feelings sincerely. It fetched him relief and happiness in writing. His works are treated par with the works of Tennessee William and Tom Stoppard. He is one of the most important playwrights who changed the form and style of Indian drama. He bridged the gap between traditional and modern theatre. The main themes of his works are violence, love and sex. Through his works, he tries to prove that violence is an inseparable part of the life of human beings. He believes that violence is something that exists everywhere and it should be depicted in all its forms.

Tendulkar is considered as one of the most well known playwrights in Marathi who took the Marathi drama overseas. He wrote one of the
most wonderful plays, which captured the imagination of the world. Ghashiram Kotwal is considered as one of the longest running plays in the history of Indian theatre. In this play, Tendulkar exposes the hollowness of the patriarchal morality. He combined Marathi folk performance and contemporary theatrical techniques to produce Ghashiram Kotwal. Its more than six thousand shows have been performed in India and abroad. His plays were a reflection of his surroundings. While depicting the reality he never cared of the consequences. He wrote fearlessly. Though his plays created much upheaval among the society, he continued writing. He believes that change is inevitable. The old values need to be replaced by the new one to continue life in a smooth way. Silence! The Court is in Session, Gidhade, Sakharam Binder, Kanyadan, Ghashiram Kotwal, Kamala, An Island called Man and Encounter in Umbugland are the most important plays since they present different social realities. Sakharam Binder is a play that discusses the hypocrisy of the society. The play Encounter in Umbugland presents the evils prevalent in the political field. It also comments on the behaviour of the politician with the citizens. For their petty benefits, they can go to any extent. Kanyadan is about the inter-caste marriage and its sequences. To some extent the play A Friend’s Story deals with theme of mental deformity. The Vulture (Gidhade) is a play, which depicts family issues. At the same time, it portrays the evil inherent in human nature and shows how the innocent people suffer in life. His play An Island called Men sets him apart from the previous Marathi playwrights. After the publication of this play, he becomes a well-known playwright in Indian theatrical world. The play depicts the issues of the middle class with the conflict between the individual and society. The issues related to contemporary time find sufficient space in this play. Ghashiram Kotwal created a great convulsion and paved way for debate and discussion. It depicts how material things like sex, greed, power and money influence human being. It makes him disillusioned, dehumanised and confused. In
this play, the playwright represents a unique combination of history, politics, and myths. The contemporary reality finds expression through it. This is how past and present are interlinked. In one of his interviews about the play, Tendulkar says:

This is not a historical play. It is a story, in prose, verse, music and dance set in a historical era. Ghashiram are creations of socio-political forces which know no barriers of time and place. Although based on a historical legend, I have no intention of commentary on the morals or lack of them, of the Peshwa, Nana Phadnavis or Ghashiram. The moral of this story, if there is any, may be looked for elsewhere. (qtd in Prasad 1)

Tendulkar believes that the theatre can change the bad world into good one. The essential aim of the theatre is to educate people and make them aware of the current problems. The writer highlights the importance of the theatre and especially for children. He asserts to make theatre for children. In his writing, he focused on some difficulties, dilemma, suffering, confusion, violence and alienation as themes in his plays. To make his plays effective he uses many techniques like song, dance and dialogue to convey his massage. He tried to reflect the life, surrounding him in his writing. He exposes the hypocrisy and moral emptiness in the traditional Indian middle-class society. He highlights the physical sufferings and mental pains, which come as a result of man’s conflict within him and with his world. He depicts the failure of modern man to understand himself and adjust in the society. The purpose is to make the people conscious of their own problems and not to suggest any remedy like Bretch. The plays of Tendulkar are thought-provoking. They make the audience involve in the action and try to find out solution. He portrays all complexities of modern man. He depicts these complexities through using jerky and half-finished dialogues. By using such techniques, he compels his audience to understand what is beyond and between lines. He depicts a variety of themes ranging from individual problems to the
general problems. The dramatist attempts to speak through different characters. Every character has its own way of thinking and speaking. So there is a variety of opinions on a certain issue. To create a consciousness of the spoken words, a colloquial language is often used. The author uses devices to depict complexity in an effective ways, such as irony, pun, rhetorical figures, tropes... etc. An abusive language also has been used if the situation demands. This makes the play more real and very close to life. The dramatist uses ‘body language’, ‘gesture’ and silence ‘to express the characters effectively. His characters are his mouth –pieces. All these variations play a major role in making the content rich and complex. The function of modern theatre is to instruct and to please simultaneously.

All these things can be achieved by using various techniques such as scenes, lighting, colours and costumes, singing... etc. They are used to create the appropriate mood and to strengthen the dramatic atmosphere and offer a comment on the situation. In other words, the modern dramatists attempt to develop theatre as an object for instruction rather than just a place of entertainment. As a result the audience becomes able to build their own observation and arrive at conclusions on issues related his/ her life.

Silence! The Court is in Session, which is translated into English by Priya Adulrk depicts the suppression of woman in India. Through it, Tendulkar exposes the issue of ill-treatment to woman based on gender discrimination. It is as a protest against injustice and inequality meted out to woman. The central character in this play goes beyond the social norms and becomes rebellious. The play encourages woman to stand firmly against any injustice.

A woman who follows the set patriarchal values she would be accepted by the society in general. This is what the women protagonists of Tendulkar show. The clash becomes inevitable at the moment when
woman refuting the imposed self wishes to act as per her will and pleasure. The conflict, therefore, arises among the real self and performed self. It shows that how the implicit and explicit social norms construct the person's identity. It is seen that there is a kind of duplicity in the identities of most of the people. These aspects are evident in all the works of the playwright. The aim is to make the audience/reader aware of the social reality. He has selected proper images and symbols, which are highly suggestive. He used music to make the play fresh from the beginning to the end. It is considered as a perfect blend of Marathi folk forms. Besides, he is one of the most distinguished Indian dramatists who deal with gender inequality and social issues. He effectively depicts the contemporary issues like gender inequality, social issues, power politics and violence. He focuses on the dark sides of human being and highlights them effectively. The aim is to bring changes in the way of thinking and behaving in the Indian society. The pro-society approach of his dramatic design has earned him reputation. This significant place occupied by the dramatist has been aptly summed up by Arundhati Banerjee that,

Vijay Tendulkar has been in the vanguard of not just Marathi but Indian theatre for almost forty years. Beginning his career as a dramatist in the mid-fifties, this prolific writer has twenty-eight full length plays, twenty-four one act plays, and eleven children's dramas to his credit, a good number of which have been translated and produced in Major Indian languages. His 'Silence! The Court is in Session' earned him a place among leading playwrights in the late sixties while his Ghashiram Kotwal won him international fame in the mid seventies. Winner of several national and international awards and fellowships, he is both a venerated and a controversial figure in the country's theatre scene. To discuss such a figure and his equally well-known works, most of which have generated so much intellectual debate and controversy, one requires a temporal distance- a separation in time- to be able to understand and evaluate them in clear perspective. The intervening years, since the plays were written, provide us with that advantage. (qtd.in Siddiqui 1-2)
Thus, in short Vijay Tendulkar a bold playwright on account of his themes handled in the select plays. The primary concern remains the exposure of the arrogant patriarchy and its ills on woman. The concluding tone of his plays is to make woman aware of her rights as a person.

1.6 British Drama - Introduction

In 55 B C, the Romans under the leadership of Julius Caesar invaded England, and made it a part of their kingdom. Habitually, colonists imposed their institutions and traditions on their colonies. Like colonists, the Romans attempted to modify Britain for their settlement by introducing many things. John C. Coldewey highlights that Romans have introduced various institutions in colonial Britannia. He says

Within two or three generations the Romans had successfully imported an elaborate network of institutions to serve colonial Britannia: not only military but social-political, economic, religious and ceremonial, signalling utter change in every arena of life. They developed markets, farms, Villas, bath, vineyards, systems of transportation and communication, and they brought a new rule of laws. (Coldewey 6)

The Roman invaders brought drama with them to England. The Roman theatre was used to introduce pantomimes and mock naval battles. The fall of the Roman Empire led to the collapse of the theatre, as well. Church demonstrated a strong opposition to the Roman mimes and led to a decision of closing all theatres. In course of time, the church started dictating art. It became a censor board and thereby decided what people should read and see. In order to make people religion-friendly, it promoted works propagating religion. They highlight the role of church in popularizing some mysteries among people to eradicate the Roman mimes.
1.7 Modern British Drama

The British drama passed through two important phases: The ‘Renaissance’ that lasted from 16th to early 17th century. It was the first period that paved the way for the dominance of drama in the country and the second phase that took place in the age of George Bernard Shaw. In the first phase, renowned playwrights like William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Johnson and John Webster produced plays based on various themes such as history and monarchy. The genres they composed their plays were historical comic and tragic.

Then, there appeared the new drama on the literary horizon. In the eighteenth century, the novels were more popular than the other genres of literature. In the nineteenth century, the writing of plays was confined to the poets only. Their plays are called closet plays because they were written for reading only and not for performing on a stage. During this period, puritans closed English theatres for their own religious purposes as well as for ideological reasons. After the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, the theatres were reopened in London. Then the growth of play continued to flourish in the country with the support of Prince Charles II. The Restoration age gave rise to the inclusion of new genres in drama like Restoration comedy and heroism. During this period, sexual explicitness was the highlight of the comic plays.

At the mid of the nineteenth century, the British theatre dominated by the intellectuals who can contributed in restoring the glory of the theatre. Kashi Kumar Karan notes that the British theatre receives some importance after the arrival of the French companies. Consequently, the number of theatres increased, and critics like Mathew Arnold underlines that the theatre should have some “conduct and religion, expansion, intellect, and knowledge, beauty, social life and manners.” (qtd.in Kumar Kashi 17). On the other hand, people started coming to theatre in large
number. The constant improvement of the value of drama led to increase the number of the audience day by day.

The modern drama started prevailing broadly from the late nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. It focused on presenting the realities of life and borrowing themes from the ordinary life. The reflection on people’s sufferings and discussion on various issues were the traits of the drama of this age. In this period, British drama was influenced by the writings of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen who “brought to the theatre the realistic drama of ideas dealing principally with domestic problems and social relationships.” (Kumar Kashi 17) George Bernard Shaw (Ireland) was another foreign playwright, who contributed in enriching modern drama. After settling in London, Bernard Shaw produced a large number of plays. Most of his plays were performed on the stage also worked as a dramatic reviewer in some magazines.

1.7.1 Realism

The British literature witnessed the emergence of literary movements that invaded all its genres included drama. Realism was the foremost movement in art and literature, which took place during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It began as a way of making theatre more useful to society than it was before. It is called realism because it illustrated figures and objects from the real life. In fact, the purposes of realism were to give a realistic representation of life and people. During this period, depression had spread all over the world. The playwrights corresponding to the contemporary reality focused their attention on it. Thus, the theatrical realism turned out to be a political tool. It helped in changing the human perception of the world. Moreover, the works of Comte, Marx, Darwin, and Freud caused radical changes in politics. Their works opened the door for a type of theatre that would be different from
what had been before. Moreover, the attempts for reforming political systems caused various ways of thinking. For instance, revolutions in Europe in 1848 showed that there was a desire for political, social and economic change. The rulers afraid of the awakened masses began focusing on schemes pro-people. This change in the perspective of the ruler is the result of the change brought out by the theatre.

On the other hand, the technological advances encouraged by industry and trade led to an increased belief that science could solve human problems. There seems to be a rejection of romantic and pragmatic reign. Thus, theatre artists searched for new ways for declaring a rapidly changing world. Most of the realist texts were about the development of the common person. He has also been presented as the struggler and conqueror. At the same time, these developments obviously had an impact on the artists of the time, whose aim was to portray social reality. Their plays reflected a harsh picture of rural poverty. Thus, they were a mirror to society.

Through such realistic plays, theatre played a vital role in influencing the public opinion. It was as a rebellion against the romantic forms of drama in the 19th century stage. It aims at putting on stage what could be observed in ordinary life. The realistic play is remarkable because of portraying real characters in everyday situations. A peep into the history would show that the ancient literature focused on the world of the gods, kings, queen...etc, but the new drama broke these conventions by depicting middle–class, working men and women, and giving them usual names that present them as the real people. Therefore, the purpose of realistic drama was to portray real life as realistically as possible.

Realism in literature is an approach that attempts to describe life without idealisation. It is often associated with the literary movement in 19th century in France. It had largely been concerned with the
commonplaces of everyday life of the middle and lower classes. The character is portrayed as a product of the social factors and environment. Realism attempts to express the dramatist's vision of reality. In fact, realism and expressionism are two dominant approaches of drama in the twentieth century. Whereas, realism focused on the external details of everyday life, expressionism focused on the mind and feelings. In fact, realism remains one of the dominant styles of representation today. The plays focusing on the social issues were termed as problem plays since they were mirror to the particular society.

Andre Antoine, a French dramatist, was one of the first dramatists who attempted to produce realistic views of life on the stage. Besides, he established the 'Theatre of Libre' in Paris. The theatre encouraged the new plays and those, which had been rejected on account of their subject matters or forms. In fact, the theatre was used to show performance of realistic plays. The playwrights like Ibsen, Chekhov, and Shaw were the early predominant writers of this technique.

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) is considered as the father of the modern realistic drama. His plays gave birth to the modern movement in drama. He dealt with unconventional subjects and attacked outdated values by using realistic dialogue and characters with psychological depth on the stage. Ibsen's themes changed the way of modern drama and maintained relevance and influence on the later realistic writers. Ibsen's A Doll 's House (1879) was the play that made him well-known all over Europe. It was about a woman who left her husband and her children to find a new life for herself. She walked away to look for self-respect. Ibsen created social drama that shocked the theatre going public of the western world. The dramatist put the central dilemmas of women's freedom in an oppressive and corrupt bourgeois setting. It was a story of emancipating woman from the traditions of society.
Ibsen also wrote famous plays such as *Ghosts* (1881) that dealt with the concept of the sins of the father transferring to the son and resulting in syphilis. *Hedda Gabler* (1890) is about a powerful woman wasted her life attempting to escape from her boredom with society. George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), the Irish playwright, was one of the most successful writers of the early 20th century. He modernized British drama. He made fun of society’s notion and argued for better changing societies. Through his writings, he attacked the hypocrisy of the society. Besides, he used his talents to advance the cause of Fabian socialism, and he battled for women’s suffrage and equal rights. On the other hand, he attacked the arrogance of the medical profession and the hypocrisy of the clergy.

Shaw changed the dramatic form from entertainment to didacticism. He regards drama as the presentation in a parable of the conflict between man’s will and his environment. He was an outspoken member of the Fabian society that was committed to social reform and considered by many as subversive. He challenged the morality of his bourgeois audience. For instance, *Arms and Man* (1894) was Shaw’s first somewhat successful play. In this play, Shaw makes fun of the idealism of love and war. *Candida* (1897) introduced a progression of powerful women protagonist. *Pygmalion* (1913) is one of the most popular plays of Shaw. The female characters in his plays are individuals and some sympathetic and some not. Shaw doesn’t make fun of women, and he never presents them as ridiculous comic types. In general, Shaw points out that the dramatist should deal with social issues.

1.7.2 Naturalism

Naturalism was a literary movement that began in the late nineteenth century. It suggested the involvement of environment, heredity and social conditions in shaping the human character. The term Naturalism was coined and may have been used in this sense by Emile
Zola, as an influential writer. He sought a new idea to convince the readers of something new and more modern in his writing. He argued that his improvement in writing was the creation of characters and plots based on the scientific method. He was a vital contributor towards the development of naturalism. He did much to develop this theory. Even though Zola had written one apparently naturalistic play, Therese Raquin (1873) which was regarded as a recognizable example of naturalism, some other well-known writers also are associated with naturalism such as Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, and Jack London.

In fact, although, naturalism is resulting from realism, it gave more accurate picture of life than realism. It suggested that social conditions, heredity, and environment had inevitable force in shaping human character. According to Zola, human behaviours are the product of the environment, which is created by the society. He argued that a change in society must take place in order to influence human behaviour. In fact, the naturalistic writing frequently held that human fates were determined by heredity and environment. In addition, the social forces beyond the human being’s control also had been reflected.

Moreover, naturalism was concerned with the direct observation to the relationship between nature and man. It referred to the social idea that human beings are purely the product of environment. In the naturalist view, there were two forces, which determine the human being’s life. They are heredity and environment. Heredity includes hunger, sexuality and accumulative drive, whereas, environment includes family, class and social situation. They believed that human being’s personality and expectation in life emerged because of the interplay between those two forces. Such way of thinking was used in various realistic and non-realistic plays.
Naturalism showed that natural forces predetermined a person’s decision. Through reading the naturalist stories, a strong sense came to mind assuring that nature was not affected by human struggle. The naturalistic writers portrayed the fate of the characters as something that had been predetermined by definite factors, and he or she could do nothing to change it.

The naturalistic writers were deeply influenced by the theory of evolution by Charles Darwin. The works were to expose the dark harshness of life including poverty, racism, disease, corruption, prostitution...etc. They sought to depict the philosophical problem traditionally and how they can be solved by suitably naturalistic methods. In fact, naturalistic writers were repeatedly criticized for focusing on human vice and misery. Naturalism argued that human being’s heredity and social environment had inescapable forces in shaping human destiny. It attempted to determine scientifically the underling forces, which influenced the actions.

Johan August Strindberg was a Swedish playwright. In his plays The Father (1887), Miss Julie (1888) and Creditors (1889) he created naturalistic dramas that build on the establishment events of Henrik Ibsen. In Miss Julie, characterisation replaced plot as the predominant element and the determining role of heredity, and the environment on the characters was emphasised. In these three plays, he highlights the conflict between the sexes. All these plays were written totally as a revolt against contemporary social conventions. He combined the techniques of dramatic naturalism with his own conception of psychology. In this way, he inaugurated a new movement in European drama. In addition, these plays demonstrated the influence of the ideas of Zola and Nietzsche. In fact, Ibsen was a writer who introduced strong female characters where the emphasis on female characters was something new on theatre. He highlights the ideology of the Women’s Movement through his plays in
which the female characters views are given equal influence to those of men.

1.7.3 Symbolism

Symbolism is another literary movement that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. It was a new kind of self-awareness and self-reflection among theatre artists. The thought of symbolism was used first by Jean Morea in France in 1886. It began as a reaction against Realism and Naturalism. This rejection initiated by symbolism and would expand into what might be called anti-realist theatre. Such anti-realist theatre did not reject reality but improved it with symbols and metaphors. It deconstructed and reconstructed topics through language, scenery, lighting, and finally used the theatre's own theatrically clearly. According to Rober Cohen, symbolism's rejection of realism gave rise to an era of 'ism' that assumed a new social and political significance. Such 'isms' have created much of the theatrical language, which used deliberately as stylisation in new dramatic formats. Though the artists possessed the power to create their own universe, the readers could not share this emotion directly. Consequently, symbols were necessary to express everything they experienced in life. The symbolist writers did not describe thing directly. However, they used one thing to express other. Therefore, symbolism is a way of representing the evoked emotion by things, and it is the simple substitution of one idea by another. Moreover, it is suggestive rather than demonstrative. In fact, it emerged as a requirement for a fundamentally different kind of acting.

Symbolism refers to three significant phases that play significant roles in the development of literary modernism. Firstly, it refers to the France movement during the first half of the nineteenth century. Secondly, it denotes its immediate sources in French poetry beginning in the 1850.
Finally, it indicates to the influence of these two phases on European and American literatures throughout the 20th century.

Symbolism as a chronic type of art spread all over the history of literature. The literary culture of the symbolist movement was an energetic one. It is believed that symbolism becomes an entirely European literary movement, from Hungary to Portugal. It involved in diversity, flexibility and collective action. From the dramatists’ perspective, symbolism was considered a reaction against the plays that personified naturalism and realism in the theatre. It can be achieved through characters, colours, movements, costumes and props. In the symbolist plays the dialogue and style of acting was highly stylised and anti-realism.

A symbol implies a greater meaning than the literal one. It is usually used to represent something other than what it is at face value. Through symbols, the artist can represent the deeper meaning of the material things. In fact, the symbolists believe that the objective world was not through reality rather, just reflection of the absolute one. From their point of views, the true realities of nature can be supposed by the work of art. The symbolist writers explore their thought through images and metaphors. By using such symbols, they express the inner realities of human experience that cannot be directly perceived, but they evoke a spiritual world beyond the five senses through an associational technique that connects things in the material world with their correspondences in the spiritual world. This movement spread rapidly and affected every aspect of theatrical production. It made the diverse qualities and perspectives within anti-realist theatre apparent, through redefining the importance and function of language, reconstructing stage imagery by using metaphorical scenery and lighting, as well. Symbolists tried to discover a visual language that represented the soul. The forms were decorative, artificial, romantic, simple and classic.
This movement began in France by Charles Baudelaire and in England by W. B. Yeats. The important writers of this movement were the Russian poet Alexander Alexandrovich Blok (1880-1921), the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) and the German poet Stefan George (1868-1933)...etc. In literature, the style had its beginning from the publication of Les fleurs du mal (The Flowers of Evil) in 1857 by Charles Baudelaire.

Charles Baudelaire was one of the greatest poets of the 19th century who influenced the era of poetic symbolism. To him, all things have symbolic value. His thought is somehow associated with the Neo-Platonism of Emanuel Swedenborg. His works focus on the relationship between spirit and matter. He believes that the material world was an imperfect image of an ideal one. In his poems, he showed how poetic language operates in creating symbolic value and how the poem itself acquires the status of a symbol. It is believed that symbolism is as old as theatre itself.

W. B. Yeats is branded as one of those dramatists who extensively used symbols in their works. He attempted to overcome realism and move beyond the limitations of symbolism. His use of symbols is considered as “a way of thought and a means of arriving at imaginative truth in his work.” (Bushrui & Prentki 27) Suheil Badi Bushrui and Tim Prentki define three main features of all his symbols:

Firstly they enable him to combine a directness of style or verbal simplicity with a meaning that would be too complex to express by any other means that avoided syntactical difficulty. Secondly, they enable the poet to invoke a wide range of traditional references which increase the frame of reference of the poem without loss of focus. Thirdly, and most important of all for a poet of Yeast's
temperament, they supply the means by which he was able to fuse the movements of his intellect with those of his imagination into a concrete image. (Bushuri & Prentki 27)

Each dramatist uses symbols on his own approach. Yeats explains his approach,

Day after day I have sat in my chair turning a symbol over in my mind, exploring all its details, defining and again defining its elements, testing my conventions and those of others by its unity, attempting to substitute particulars for an abstraction like that of algebra. (qtd. in Bushri & Prentki 30)

In his play Hawk’s Well, one act play, Yeats used a symbolised and stylised form. He himself emphasised that he “invented a form of drama, distinguished, indirect, and symbolic, and having no need of mob or press to pay its way an aristocratic form.” (qtd. in Styan 64)

Yeat’s success is difficult to measure. He exploited symbols that embody the relationship between the spiritual and material worlds. In fact, some of his symbols are too obscure for even a select audience to experience one emotion from them. Symbolist imagery attempts to reveal hidden analogies and explains what is beyond the real one.

It is noted that the most prominent influential symbolist dramatists are not those whose origins are British, but those who are foreigners. The Irish dramatist, W. B. Yeats and the Norwegian Ibsen had used symbols in their plays. Ibsen who was a realistic dramatist cleverly applied some symbols to decorate his plays. His play A Doll’s House was the second play in which Ibsen used a symbolic style. He portrayed many appearances in the play as mere facades of deception. These images restated the theme that external appearances were never what they seem. He employed recurring symbols to emphasise the role of deception in A Doll’s House. By using symbolism, Ibsen effectively portrayed that appearances were often
deceiving. He creatively provided precognition into the unattainable images of society in his masterpiece.

1.7.4 Expressionism

Theatre is a mirror that reflects the social, political, and ethical circumstances of the age. It is also a subject for many debates and clashes of ideas. Twentieth century theatre depicted a period of immense changes within the theatrical culture, and it witnessed changes because of the scientific development and new discoveries. Thus, the situation was suitable for the appearance of new ways of thinking and new views about life. However, there was a vast need to express these changes in literature in general and in theatre particularly. At the same time, there was a need for dethroning realism and presenting a new technique, which was not realistic, for expressing the internal life of people. Therefore, Expressionism emerged as an important movement in the early years of 20th century as a revolt against the principles of realism and naturalism. Dowling says “the form consciously rebelled against the old mimesis of naturalism” (Dowling 588). Precisely, in 1910, expressionism highly developed in the works of some German dramatists, and then exported to America and Britain. Although, the term is applied first to German dramatists such as Kaiser, and Toller, Strindberg is branded as the ancestor of the expressionists.

J. W. Syed mentions three literary and intellectual influences that ushered the emergence of expressionism; firstly, the work of August Strindberg who produced expressionistic works years before forming the expressionistic school of playwrights, secondly, the influence of the works of psychoanalysts such as Freud and Jung and finally, the influence of Marxism on some expressionist writers. He assures that expressionists, like other playwrights dealt with Marxian concepts of the conflict of the social classes, which was one of these concepts that were the centre of their
works. Likewise, Freudianism was another movement from which expressionist borrowed some thoughts such as the role of ‘subconscious life in determining human motivation and action.

In general, expressionist writers’ aims differed from others aims. They aimed to express the dehumanizing aspects of 20th century technological society. Besides, they sought to reveal the psychological reality of characters instead of recording external events. In their revealing to the hidden reality, they broke the barriers of the surface reality to find the deeper reality that lies beneath and beyond it. They changed the form into content by using visual reality to explain the forces hidden beyond it. Although, this movement did not survive long, it succeeded to produce a free form of writing in modern theatre.

The expressionists freely merged reality and super-reality to create a type of individual characterisation expressing the basic problem of modern society such as bourgeois morality, sex and war. They focused on individual perspective that had been classified as a reaction to positivism. In fact, the expressionists attempted to expose what they feel rather than what they see only. In other words, they tried to visualise the invisible world. The expressionists applied some expressionistic techniques such as lighting effects and sound effects to express the emotional effects of the characters on stage.

The expressionism existed in Britain for two reasons. The first reason is the immigration of Irish playwrights such as Sean O’Casey whose melodramatic plays were expressionist. The travels undertaken by some British intellectuals to Germany rather than Paris are the second reason. When they came back, they explained the expressionism to the public through some plays such as W. H. Auden’s and Christopher Isherwood’s The Dog. J. M. Ritchie regards the role of W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood in presenting expressionism to English theatre is
unimportant because of other writers who translated some expressionistic German works into English, and then introduced to public. He highlights the role of Ashley Dukes who translated George Kaiser’s From Morning till Midnight, Toller’s Machine Wreckers and Toller’s The Swallow Book, Toller’s prison diary. In fact, the expressionism came not only to British theatre through translation but also to poets and to other writers. According to Ritchie, Eugene Jolas translated many expressionist works of different poets and produced them to public in the magazine named Transition.

Harold Pinter was one of the British playwrights who exploited the expressionism in their plays. In this plays Mountain Language (1988), Party Time (1991) and Ashes to Ashes (1996), he merged some expressionistic aspects. In most of his plays, he did not use a pure style but a mixed one. He is regarded as a bit absurdist and a bit expressionistic and “In his unique style he has introduced another level to which the actor must rise to meet the needs of the script. He has entertained, terrified, caused laughter, but, most of all, Harold Printer has prompted thought.” (Stine 10) In his play Old Times (1971), he integrated the absurd elements and some elements of expressionism. The play included a dream quality that ushered the audience thinking whether they are watching a real thing or a dream. If the dream quality is the expression element, the perception of the dream as a nightmare is the absurd quality.

In brief, expressionism started and developed in the early decade of the twentieth century. It developed and became a modern movement in German and then moved to Britain, other European countries and USA. It emerged as a reaction against some modern movements such as realism and naturalism. Later, in Britain, the elements of expressionism mingled with the elements of absurdity.

1.7.5 Absurdity
The absurd theatre is another movement that emerged as a reaction against the old methods of culture and literature. In fact, the idea of the absurd is not new but it roots in the history of human beings. Absurdity in life is primordial and not the invention of the theatre. With the beginning of life, man is struggling against it to find a solution. The efforts are aimed at a meaningful life and human being’s interrelationship with the universe. It is an eternal struggle between the two. Thus, the absurdity is not the product of any one factor but it generates through the inevitable dependency. Albert Camus, in his famous essay The Myth of Sisyphus, highlights that:

...the absurd is not in man (if such a metaphor could have a meaning) nor in the world, but in their presence together. For the moment, it is the only bond uniting them. If I wish to limit myself to facts, I know what man wants, I know what the world offers him, and now I can say that I also know what links them. I have no need to dig deeper. A single certainty is enough for the seeker. He simply has to drive all the consequences from it. (Albert 462)

Camus emphasises on the relationship between man and the nature around him, and he believes that the absurd comes out due to this relationship. He states:

The experiences called to mind here were born in the desert that we must not leave behind...... At this point of his effort man stands face to face with the irrational. He feels within him his longing for happiness and for reason. The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world. (Albert 164)

Moreover, a philosophy includes a wide series of perspectives that involve an effort to find or define, express or exclude the natural meanings of anything including human existence. It is believed that the existence of human being must be quite absurd; it came from nothing so it must end in nothingness. Camus described the human condition as absurd, thus:
A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world.... On the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and light, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity. (qtd. in Bloom 117)

As a movement, absurdity began by the end of the 19th century, and it became a significant movement in the early decades of the 20th century. However, the Second World War along with its effects forced this movement to decline. From the mid of this century, the world witnessed some development in all aspects of life includes literature. Hence, absurdity re-appeared as one of the most vital movements that applied to a specific type of realistic drama. It emphasised on the absurdity of human existence and meaningless life of human being by using disjoined, repetitions, meaningless dialogue, confusing situation and its plot had no logical and realistic development. The concept of the theatre of the absurd was famously first coined by the British Scholar Martin Esslin in 1961. He states that the theatre of absurd is not accepted directly, but it:

..strives to express its sense of the senselessness of the human condition and the inadequacy of the rational approach by the open abandonment of rational devices and discursive thought (...) the Theatre of the Absurd has renounced arguing about the absurdity of the human condition; it merely presents it in being- that is, in terms of concrete stage images. (Martin 29)

Esslin’s statement included Beckett’s works and those of Slawomir Morzek, Eugene Lonesco, Harold Pinter, Jean Genet, Gunter Grass and Edward Albee amongst others.

The theatre of the absurd partially led human beings to understand the real meaning of life. On the other hand, it is applied to a group of plays that represent the illogical actions, meaningless conversation and
unrealistic plots. These plays all have unusual action, language, behaviour and structure that are abnormal and sometimes cannot be explained in the theatre of Absurd. Esslin, in his book The Theatre of Absurd, makes a very important comparison between the traditional plays and the absurd plays. He asserts,

If a good play must have a cleverly constructed story, these have no story or plot to speak of; if a good play is judged by subtlety of characterisation and motivation, these are often without recognizable character and present the audience with almost mechanical puppets; if a good play has to have a fully explained theme, which is neatly exposed and finally solved, these have neither a beginning nor an end; if a good play is to hold up the mirror to nature and portray the manners and mannerism of the age in finely observed sketches, these seem to be reflections of dreams and nightmares; if a good play relies on witty repartee and pointed dialogue, these often consist of incoherent babblings. (qtd. in Gavins 21)

However, absurdist schools discover the basic nature of the absurd, how to make the individual aware of it and how should react in different circumstances. The absurd drama helps to express the helplessness and uselessness of a world that seem meaningless and purposeless. The language, which used in theses plays is represented as a weak form of communication. Words fail to express the essence of human experience and unable to go beyond its surface. The primary element of the absurd play is the absence of the true development of the characters. There is no real character in the play. The structure has circular meaning because the end is as similar to its beginning. In fact, the play is endless and benefits less. Practically, the absurdist playwrights cannot illustrate any philosophical conclusions about the worldview of the text.

These plays have attracted the attention of the audience as well as critics in many decades since everything on the stage is a symbol of irrationality that designed to surprise and shock the audience. On the
other hand, it depicts an existentialist point of view of the outside world and forces its audience to consider the meaning of their existence in a world. It helps to reshape man's questions, re-identify his feelings of loneliness, fear and trembling, guide them to be more controlled and realise the apprehensible meaning of their life. The absurd play aims to bring its audience closer to reality, and this will help them to understand their own meaning of life.

Absurdist playwrights like Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Eugene Ionesco, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, Edward Albee, and Harold Pinter ... etc mad the real beginning of this movement. In fact, Waiting of Godot by Samuel Beckett and Look Back in Anger by John Osborne were considered as turning points in the history of British modern drama. They began to restore the English theatre and achieved a huge success. John Osborne and other writers had achieved a great success in Brittan. They were named as 'Angry Young Men' because they tried to create their own world. There was a revolution against tradition, conventions and oppression. On the other hand, Samuel Beckett highlights the failure of man to overcome the difficulties in his plays. The Theatre of the Absurd depicts the failure of man without giving a solution. Besides, it should be able to express what language fails putting it into words. Absurdist believes that the true battle is within the human being.

The influence of the theatre of absurd appeared late in the British theatre. John Elsom regards the performance of The Ascent of F 6 in 1937 as the early emergence of some features of the absurdist drama. In fact, the play “was mainly a rational allegory” (John 105), but it reflects some thoughts of absurdity. However, the emergence of the absurdist drama in Britain began in the early fifties. The early plays reflected the influence of “radio comedy shows, particularly the Goons” (John 105) Harold Pinter is one of the masters of the theatre of the absurd in this period. According to H. Aliakbari and Dr. F. Pourgiv, Pinter’s main concern is to function
absurd “as means of getting into the reality” (Pourgiv 1) Pinter believes that all aspects of life, including the tragic scenes, have a comic side. In an interview, Pinter proclaims that “Everything is funny; the greatest earnest is funny; even tragedy is funny. And I think what I try to do in my plays is to get to this recognizable reality of the absurdity of what we do and how we behave and how we speak.” (qtd. in Nilsen & Ralp 395)

Each critic has his own justification for classifying Pinter as an absurd dramatist. For example, Philip Hope–Wallace considers his plays absurd since they are amusing as well as meaningless. He states that, “These Pinter pieces, variously amusing according to taste, and often fraught with that fashionable commodity menace, are not really ‘about’ anything.” (qtd. in Scott 197)

Harold Pinter produced a variety of plays that are classified as absurdist plays such as The Dumb Waiter, The Room, The Birthday Party and The Caretaker. These plays include various aspects of absurdity such as the use of funny language as well as funny characters. Some of his characters cannot use the language. On the other hand, the language of his characters has lost some of its aspects. Besides, his plays do not reveal any massage.

Martin Esslin (1964) regards Pinter in his book, The Theatre of the Absurd as “one of the most promising exponents of the theatre of the absurd... in the English speaking world.” (qtd. in Pourgiv 2) Besides, Martin classifies Printer’s works as absurdist regarding the absurdist conventions that include all human conditions.

1.8 Caryl Churchill

Caryl Churchill was born in 1938. She studied English literature in the Oxford University. She started her career as a radio dramatist. She wrote for radio. During that time, radio was the suitable place for female playwrights. She wrote several scripts for BBC radio. It encouraged her and produced her short plays such as The Ants, Lovesick and Abortive, The
Jude’s Wife was televised by BBC in 1972. However, she realised that television work was insufficient to express her views. She believes that theatre is the place where one feels free to write without the pressure of politics. Downstairs (1958), Having a Wonderful Time (1960) and Easy Death (1962) were her earliest plays which were performed by Oxford-based theatrical groups. Her works with the Royal Court Theatre helped her a lot in her journey. She was labelled as the first lady who holds the position of resident dramatist. She deals with the strong views on feminism and exploitation. Her plays highlight woman’s issues such as sexual politics, social, economic and political oppression and exploitation in private and public places. The audiences feel a sense of mystery in her writing. Owners, two acts play was her first professional play staged at the Royal Court Theatre. The feminist climate of the 1970s influenced Churchill’s temperament as a feminist writer. Discovering the social and sexual inequalities of woman and trying to find ways for her independence is the central concern in her plays. Parallel to this runs the theme of gender politics practised by the patriarchal society and its impact on woman.

Woman is silenced by circumstance of gender, race and class. A change in these circumstances could bring up woman with all her potentials. In 1970s when feminism was the buzzword, the theatre perspective also changed accordingly. Women writers wrote boldly on issues concerning woman. The will, hope and aspiration repressed so far find candid expression. The patriarchal politics in the name of sexuality of a person runs through the plays of Caryl Churchill. In addition, she also brings gender concerns as the theme in her plays. For example in Vinegar Tom and Light Shining in Buckinghamshire, Churchill dramatizes the economic and social condition of England in seventeenth century. She shows how poor women are branded as witches. The production of these plays brought her into a feminist theatre community. Woman is made the weakest member of the society and therefore the women characters in
these plays sought their freedom from the oppressive social norms. They chose to live according to their desires and not the way their mothers did in the past. There is a journey of struggle from silence to speech. They are the new and awakened women struggling for their rights. The character becomes able to take her own decision to be independent. Initiation for independence on the part of the woman subjugated is essential, since action bears consequence; whether it is positive or negative. Such an action in course of time may prove the validity/invalidity of the stand taken by the individual in the past. The peaceful and accommodative growth of a society is, thus, facilitated. This idea has been discussed in the plays of Churchill in question. Her play Objection to Sex and Violence (1974) echoes these concerns in a convincing way. Cloud Nine deals with sexual politics won her an Obie Award in 1982. The Joint Stock Theatre group staged it in 1979. The play highlights the co relationship between colonialism and sexual oppression. She won another Obie award for the best play with Top Girls. Churchill asserts that the changes of woman’s position are artificial if it makes woman behaves as per the dictates of patriarchy. The women protagonist of Churchill seem to challenge the patriarchal oppressive structures in the beginning but at the end seem to be compromising with the cultural trappings such as motherhood, wifehood and the image of superwoman. It shows how the female characters try to free themselves arbitrarily.

The era in which Churchill lived and wrote was not friendly for a woman writer. She had to face many obstacles within and without. At the close of the twentieth century, the climate became somehow friendly for women playwrights. The importance and relevance of her works lies in her handling of the womanist issues in a hostile environment. There is a sense of challenge in her writing. She wants to highlight the dynamic relation between authority and sexual identity. In her plays, there is a dramatic explanation of the relationship of man and women.
In Serious Money the struggle between morals and money power is highlighted. It is the reflection of the financial situation in Britain that time. Though a feminist dramatist writes the play, it is not feminist. It is including male roles more than female. The play is not feminist but politics. It deals with the issues like capitalism. She shows in her plays how women are born, grow in patriarchal society and how they continually reborn. In her play, Soft Cops she highlights the soft methods of power, schools, hospital and social workers. Churchill ends her plays with a central unanswered question. This kind of ending encourages the audience to think about the answers.
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