The foregoing analysis of Osborne's plays reveals that he extensively and penetratively deals with the contemporary familial situation on a broad canvas. It indicates that he has skillfully probed the causes and consequences of the breakdown of familial relations in the post-war British society. The way he lays bare the malaise afflicting the intra-family relationships implies that he attaches a great meaning to the institution of family as a vital unit of society. His plays primarily deal with such familial and socio-cultural issues as marital disharmony, gender-conflict, promiscuity, adultery, homosexuality, abortion, divorce, remarriage, co-habitation, parental deprivation, generation gap, estrangement and seclusion. In his plays, family relationships are characterized by such life-denying features as anxiety, capriciousness, disgust, distrust, discontent, insensitivity mendacity and self-absorption. All these detrimental traits are undermining the life-giving virtues such as belongingness, commitment, compassion, security, solidarity, trust, tolerance, reciprocity, responsibility which make the family alive to the needs of an individual. Osborne's dramatis personae suffer from frustration which stems from the broken homes where they are deprived of either paternal love or maternal love or both. In the dramatic world of the playwright, family has been losing its nurturing character in the face of the distressing influences of the outside world. Marriage and sex have been losing sanctity in the wake of speedy commercialization and mechanization of social life. Generation gap is creating emotional void between parents and children. The children fight the parents with intense anger and frustration. Children are no longer the connecting links between parents, and most often they are treated as unwelcome guests. An aversion of parents to having children is directly or indirectly; and covertly or overtly expressed in almost all his plays. In the dramatic world of Osborne, the family as an institution is losing its moorings in the face of multifarious social changes that appeared in Britain in particular and the world in general in the wake of the Second World War.
Osborne dramatizes the issue of class-conflict impinging on the institution of family. He shows how the feelings of class-consciousness are eating into the very vitals of society and in that of family. In his plays, the newly educated working-class youth try to ascend the ladder of social hierarchy through education, job and marriage with upper-class girls, but find themselves stuck in the class in which they were born. Still they are facing discrimination in the allocation of jobs at the higher places. They feel embittered finding that the governing classes are still enjoying the position of power and privileges by manipulating the political system, economic policies, education system, the Media, the Church, the legal system and technological advancement. They get disillusioned with the Welfare State which promised them a just and equalitarian society. Osborne's protagonists like Jimmy, Archie, Jean, Maitland and Pamela vehemently denounce the ruling class for its overtly and covertly negative attitude amounting to inhumanity to the lesser beings. Their criticism is not pointless and irrational, but it is positive one in the sense that it underlies the virtues of love, tolerance, trust, spontaneity and brotherhood to restore the social harmony. The playwright further provides us with a more balanced perspective on the behavioural patterns of his characters, as their actions and thoughts appear to be deeply influenced by their constant interactions with their immediate cultural contexts. He dramatizes skillfully and convincingly the impact of corroding class-conflict upon the various aspects of individual's life and his relations with people around him. His works are a powerful expression of the conflicts, tensions and contradictions generated in the psyche of the working-class intelligentsia by the presumptuousness, snobbishness, insensitivity and hypocrisy of the ruling classes. He further shows how their mood of resentment and bitterness puts adverse effect on their intra-familial relationships. Temperamental incompatibility between the spouses from different cultural backgrounds almost always leads to sexual incompatibility and frustration. Besides, this study also attempts to enable us to gain a more critical insight into the playwright's vision of life and the values which shape and govern his characters. The playwright has dealt with this theme perceptively and forcefully in his plays displaying a clear and deep understanding of the class-issues and their impact on the social, cultural, economic and political life of the contemporary society. His
treatment of the theme of class-consciousness reveals his aversion to arrogance, hypocrisy, snobbery and apathy towards human beings, and underlies his vision of a better world. The playwright demonstrates a remarkable capacity for dramatizing the dilemma and the sense of inadequacy felt by the working-class youth in post-war period, especially in the fifties. His protagonists wage a verbal war against the society, and beneath their rebellion, it is possible to discover the genuine concerns about the defeated and the humiliated, and has some claim to be considered as a humanist.

Apart from the subject of class-conflict, Osborne also highlights the issue of the new woman altering the conventional patterns of marriage and family. In the post-war period, drastic socio-economic changes and education enabled the woman to challenge the patriarchal authority; the liberal social laws liberating her from unwanted pregnancy strained marital relations and the double standard of the Victorian morality only quickened the pace of her emancipation. No doubt, it has provided her self-respect, dignity, grace and scopes to cultivate her natural faculties, but, at the same time, it has brought in its tail certain problems. With the fast disappearance of joint-families, wholesome substitute has not appeared to provide balanced and healthy upbringing to children. The new woman does not yield to the wishes and whims of her husband. She tries to upkeep her individuality and freedom even at the cost of marital harmony. She does not tolerate sexual cruelty and exploitation at the hands of the male partner. She refuses to bear with an adulterous husband. The emancipated woman of the late sixties and the seventies displays her aversion to marriage, maternity, motherhood and family life, as these roles curtail her freedom and individuality. When she comes to realize that her husband is indifferent to her wifely needs, she does not show any inhibition in turning to others for emotional support. Even the economically dependent wife tries to prevail over her husband and forces him to adopt her lifestyle, and when he refuses to comply with her dictates, she comes out with violent outburst against him. This gender-conflict not only deprives her children of love and care, but deprives her of conjugal harmony as well. Her new role directly falls into clash with her traditional role. For the sake of self-advancement or self-actualization she forgoes or forsakes her customary roles. This transformation has made her more pragmatic towards her needs and aspirations.
The career-conscious woman finds it very hard to comply with the traditional duties and obligations. For the sake of career, she resorts to abortion. It does not only put adverse effect on her motherhood, but also demean the reproductive function of family. He also highlights the issue of divorce, putting an adverse impact on the further relations of the spouses and the tender psyche of the children. Osborne highlights the problem of children suffering from an intense emotional insecurity in the absence of balanced parental love and care. As a result, they not only lose interest in their parents, but also fail to develop any healthy relations in the wider world. The playwright suggests that the marital relationship can be source of enduring fulfillment and happiness to the partners if it is rooted in genuine feelings of love, commitment, responsibility, trust and tolerance based on recognition and appreciation of the individual differences of each other.

The playwright also brings to light the effects of the cult of liberalism on the conventional codes and mores of sex. It has given birth to the cult of hedonism with a devastating impact on the institution of family, thereby leaving behind colossal rubble of broken homes. He highlights the problems of lesbianism, homosexuality and non-marital sex rendering the institution of marriage inconsequential and redundant. He shows how sexual incompatibility breeds frustration in the partners which leads to estrangement and divorce. He also highlights the issue of abortion, discarding the role of sex in the reproduction. In his plays, sex is divested of commitment, responsibility, love, trust, compatibility, honesty and tolerance has become a means of recreation, not of procreation. Sexual relations within wedlock or without are characterized by mistrust, incompatibility, hatred, dryness, non-involvement and frustration. All these factors lead to disillusionment and disenchantment, breeding sexual frustration in the spouses or sex partners. Sexual frustration causes marital disharmony between the spouses in the form of incessant fights and quarrels, separation, coldness, mistrust, divorce and so on. It is the sexual frustration in his characters that leaves behind broken homes with children suffering from emotional insecurity. The way loveless lust leads to sexual frustration and incompatibility underlines the necessity of a wholesome and honest sex in forging strong marital ties. Osborne is equally critical of the conventional sexual morality that emphasizes the repression and suppression of sexuality. He has always been a lifelong
satirist of prigs and puritans, whether of the Left or the Right. He is very critical of hypocrisy, affectation, dishonesty and pretensions in sex. By highlighting the nasty and messy nature of sex, the playwright emphasizes the need of sane and sound sex based on love, spontaneity, commitment, honesty and responsibility to forge meaningful and lasting marital relationships.

The playwright dramatizes also the impact of materialistic attitude of modern man on his intra-family relationships. His plays depict how the institution of family has been losing its humanistic dimensions in the face of growing cult of materialism. An individual has become so insensitive that he ceases to be a feeling creature. His plays show how insensitivity, inhumanity, deadness and dryness mar the familial relationships. The couples give preference to their selfish ends rather than to the well-being of each other. They resort to divorce to get their aspirations or needs materialized, relegating to the background the needs and wishes of the children. The aged people, ceasing to be earning hands, live in a complete isolation and meet tragic end in the absence of any emotional and moral support from the members of family. Young sons leave their ailing and helpless parents to seek materialistic pursuits in the alien lands. He also shows how children are left in the impersonal hands to grow into egocentric beings. He shows how materialistic pursuits lead to severance of familial bonds based on emotions and feelings. Parents give more importance to personal satisfaction than to their duties towards family and society. Children, finding the value system of their parents useless, are compelled to creation of their value system, resultanty going against the wishes of their parents.

In the dramatic world of Osborne, no family seems to be happy: be it an extended or nuclear or single-parent family. In these families, the aged people live an alienated and isolated life, as the younger generation shows no love and respect for them. Under the prevailing socio-economic conditions, they are perceived as burden on the purse of family. His plays speak volumes of the pains and privations of the aged in the post-war British society. In the nuclear families, the situation is no better. The spouses locked into continuous verbal war ignore the needs of the children. After growing up, the children do not extend love and respect to their parents. The situation is the worst in the case of single-parent families where children have no emotional
links with one of the parents and even the single parent becomes incapable, on account of job etc, of providing due amount of emotional support. His plays reveal that lack of human love, trust, understanding, tolerance, involvement, compassion, sympathy and belongingness has led to the breakdown of communication in the modern family. So to speak, home, no longer a haven of love, liveliness, truth and reality, is on the verge of collapse owing to onslaughts from the outside world. It clearly establishes that he has faithfully and artistically depicted the predicament of society and also of the family---in a multi-dimensional view---in the post-war Britain. Osborne suggests that the virtues of love, loyalty, reciprocity and tenderness can go a long way in shaping the familial ties.

Osborne's dramatization of the disjointed forms of family in his plays does not mean that he has lost all hopes of its rejuvenation. His criticism is simply not for the sake of criticism; behind his anger there is "a strong desire to establish a better world." The way he projects the anti-life forces underlies his broad vision and faith in the human values such as compassion, love, responsiveness, tolerance and trust. Behind his criticism of the contemporary family lies his serious view of rejuvenating the positive human values of love, compassion, trust, tenderness, tolerance and compatibility which could make the world better and happier. He seems to consider the institution of family as a source of love, trust, individuality and freedom. Family, which for him, is the nucleus of society and serves as the bedrock for his concept of a home embodying the ideas of love, honour, identity, safety, security and loyalty. As humanist, his vision is positive and constructive. "What Osborne seeks is not to destroy the moral or social order, but to create one which will give back to him a belief in humanity." He intends to give "lessons in feeling" meant to recoup us from the malady that breeds anger and disillusionment and through his characters he succeeds in his efforts "to make people feel." It is evident from the way his dramatis personae, in the end, come to understand the value of relationships based on genuine feelings of love, trust, reciprocity, understanding and compassion. By dramatizing the effects of emotional atrophy and self-centredness of the people of his times, he underlies the significance of the value of caring for each other and of the human concerns. The way the playwright highlights the anti-family forces indicates that he
realizes the necessity of “a close knit and loving family” for a healthy existence. He suggests that stable family ties can go a long way in shaping the individual and the society. He views the world as a place where individuals are linked to one another in an amiable way, where they not only share one another’s woes and worries, but also participate and celebrate the hilarious moments of others. The vigour and power of the playwright’s criticism of familial and personal malaise testify to the genuineness and truth of his vision of humanity relevant for the society he projected and society we live in today and will also remain relevant in the near future, i.e. till our philosophical and ethical parameters and paradigms undergo a vertical change.

The way Osborne arrests the mood and spirit of the post-war generation reveals his distinctive contribution to the evolution of post-war British theatre. It reveals the fact that he imparted a new direction and dimension to British drama by bringing the lived realities of contemporary life on the stage not only in substance, but also in sensitivity. This transformation in the British theatre took place with the staging of his play, Look Back in Anger at the Royal Court Theatre in 1956. This play exemplified a reaction to the affected drawing-room comedies of Noel Coward, Terrence Rattigan and others, which dominated the West End Stage in the early 1950s. These playwrights remained concerned about an affluent bourgeoisie at play in the drawing rooms of their country homes, or sections of the upper-middle class comfortable in suburbia fully “immersed in traditional middle class or upper middle class subjects.” Moreover, the tepid drawing room comedies painted a derogatory and ludicrous picture of working class characters to provide a comic relief to the audience which largely came from the prosperous classes. The verse plays of Christopher Fry and T.S. Eliot were mainly concerned with religious themes, thereby refusing to respond to the fast changing socio-economic conditions in the post-war Britain. Moreover, the pre-Osborne theatre had been a complete failure in arresting the mood and the spirit of the post-war British generation, as it being complacent, parochial and lopsided in its treatment of the post-war socio-economic, political and ethical subjects substantially influencing the lives of Britons. The plays of Sean O’Casey, W.H. Auden and Isherwood in the twenties and thirties were more akin to German Expressionism than to English social realities.
Osborne and the writers who followed him were looking at the working class or the lower middle class people who were struggling for their existence in bedsits or terraces. "The break was in part a break towards realism, a revolt against orthodox middle class drama." Osborne kicked off the revolution by rejecting the theatre of decorum of his immediate predecessors in whose hands British drama was divested of contemporary realities, and the real troubling issues were being swept under the carpet. It was Look Back in Anger which ushered in a new era of dealing with the hitherto avoided issues like class-conflict, emancipation of woman, moral laxity, generation gap and growing impact of materialistic forces on the minds of the ordinary Britons. This play "marks the real breakthrough of the new wave drama into the British theatre." In real terms, the play was a kicking against consensus of the pre-Osborne playwrights. Osborne’s drama is "completely faithful to contemporary social reality." As a playwright, Osborne, unlike Terence Rattigan and J.B. Priestly, viewed theatre not as a means of providing urbane and polished entertainment; but he regarded theatre primarily as an instrument to expose social ills. Osborne declared his love for the theatre as a weapon: "I love the theatre more than ever because I know that it is what I always dreamed it might be: a weapon. I am sure that it can be one of the decisive weapons of our times." He categorically states that his purpose as an artist is not to put forth a dogma or a political programme, he is concerned only with presenting "an attitude to truth and liberty" in his own medium. The new theatre "offers a vital dynamic to ordinary people, that breaks down class barriers, and all many obstacles set in the way of feeling." It was Osborne who unshackled the British theatre from the demure and somewhat stifling literary atmosphere of the drama following the Second World War. Osborne’s plays left "as a heritage an honest and alive theatre in place of romance and illusion." The playwright’s stagecraft to treat the complex socio-economic, political and ethical realities of his time has led to widening the range and scope of themes and concerns on the stage.
REFERENCES


2. Ibid., p. 24.


