A brief appraisal of the accessible criticism on John James Osborne (1929-1994) reveals that his theatrical harvest has generated a remarkable response not only in favour, but also against his treatment of themes, vision of life and his art as a playwright. But it is also a fact that the playwright has not been accorded the amount of critical thought and acknowledgment that he deserves for altering the contents and contours of the post-war British theatre. Nobody can help being surprised the fact that only a few full-length studies have been carried out on his plays since his emergence on the British stage about fifty years ago. Barring the studies carried out by critics such as Ronald Hayman, John Russell Taylor, Martin Banham, Alan Carter, Simon Trussler, Harold Ferrar, Patricia D. Denison and Luc Gilleman, the bulk of the studies on the dramatist, nevertheless, exists in the shape of articles and critical reviews, presents only the lopsided view of his art and vision as a playwright. The entire collection of the existing criticism on the playwright is restricted only to a few aspects such as themes of alienation, nostalgia, frustration, vulnerability, anger at and dissent against British Establishment, use of language and temper and tone of the central character. What is more, the critics have circumscribed their area of assessment only to the examination of his early major plays such as *Look Back in Anger* (1957) and *The Entertainer* (1957), thereby failing to perceive almost outright the import of his later plays such as *Inadmissible Evidence* (1965), *Time Present* (1968), *Hotel in Amsterdam* (1968), *West of Suez* (1971), *Very Like a Whale* (1971), *Watch It Come Down* (1975), *The End of Me Old Cigar* (1975) and *Dejavu* (1991).

It is manifest that the available criticism suffers from imbalances as well as distortions in evaluating the wide-ranging sweep of his subject matter and vision of life. The common predilection of the evaluators to interpret his plays by applying either psychological or biographical approach has sidetracked them from drawing some ingenuous and unprejudiced assessment of his dramatic art and vision. Equally lopsided are the studies of the critics who have accomplished a rather one-
dimensional investigation of either one aspect of social concerns or the other in his dramatic constructs. Above and beyond, the critics get preoccupied to attest Osborne as an angry playwright. This penchant came into being with the production of his play, *Look Back in Anger*, which indisputably positioned him at the "head of the angry young-men movement" in the British theatre. As an upshot of these misinterpretations, Osborne has been grouped among the "men of the left" like Colin Wilson and John Braine who exulted in "denouncing the middle class."^2

Critics like Simon Trussler, Harry Blamires, Milton Shulman, Eric Keown, John Barker, Benedict Nightingale and John Gassner find that the vitriol of his protagonists is directionless, irrational and pointless. Trussler discerns Osborne as "an ad hoc playwright, with no predetermined sense of direction."^3 Blamires observes that *Look Back in Anger* is a play in which "rebelliousness and disillusionment shout themselves hoarse for no reason at all in the person of Jimmy Porter."^4 It is alleged that Jimmy lacks both steadfast convictions and unified targets. Shulman attacks the play, saying: "It aims at being a despairing cry but achieves only the stature of a self-pitying snivel." Nevertheless, he admits that "Mr. Osborne has a dazzling aptitude for provoking and stimulating dialogue, and he draws characters with firm convincing strokes."^5 But the critic fails to perceive "real motivation behind Porter’s bitterness" and calls him a "pugnacious bore."^6 Going along the same lines, Keown observes: "Jimmy Porter draws liberally on the vocabulary of the intestines and laces his tirades with the steamier epithets of the tripe butcher."^7 Barker comments that *Look Back in Anger* "is intense, angry, feverish, undisciplined. It is even crazy. But it is young, young, young."^8 Nightingale is of the view that Osborne’s fuming tirades against the social order are uncorroborated and "nostalgic, reactionary or blimpish."^9 Gassner feels that *Look Back in Anger* is "limited by the nihilism of its author."^10 But these critics fail to perceive "the fundamental truth about society and individual"^11 that this play illustrates. This preoccupation with the critics to look at Osborne’s plays merely as angry productions by an angry man has resulted in some disingenuous conclusions about his skill and sincerity as a dramatist.

Similarly, Osborne’s plays are often branded as "misanthropic"^12 condemnation of the Establishment, and he is labelled as a "magnificent hater"^13
"raging against light." Looking at him along the same lines. Charles Spencer arrives at the conclusion that Osborne suffers from an unrelieved "negativity of his vision." No doubt, "Osborne strikes viciously against the society, but he does so from a basis of love for the individual to whom life is not complicated by poses and attitudes, class-consciousness or intellectual snobbery." John Mortimer observes that though Osborne was often "cantankerous, pugnacious, and unfair, his aggressiveness was rarely merely negative, and his anger was in defense of old values of courage and honour." To discuss Osborne as a writer of angry plays has become so reductive and clichéd that it has blinded these critics to his prime concern with human values. Osborne's "tireless advocacy of old humanitarian values" has been overlooked by many of the critics. Evidently, the critics have failed to establish any correlation between the anger of his protagonists and the multifaceted socio-economic conditions of which they are the inevitable products.

This excessive preoccupation of the critics with the theme of anger has constrained them to 'overpsychologize' his plays. Critics like Cecil Wilson, Derek Granger, Harold Ferrar, M.D. Faber, George E. Wellwarth, Patrick Gibbs, Philip Hope-Wallace and Simon Trussler have attempted to interpret Osborne's plays in the light of different psychological theories. Wilson presents Jimmy as "a young neurotic full of intellectual frustration...lives like pigs and furiously finds the whole world out of steps except himself." Going further, Granger describes Jimmy as "mean, arrogant, self-pitying, cruelly abusive and so utterly disposed to feel injured that he hardly permits himself two consecutive moments of civility." Wellwarth considers Osborne as a writer who deals more with the psychological rather than sociological factors which shape the psyche of his characters like Jimmy: "Jimmy Porter's rantings are always the natural outcome of his psychotic state." He concludes that "Jimmy Porter's self-conscious orations are the vertibliest sophomoric pille." Ferrar holds the view that "Osborne's power has always been psychological, the revelation of an intensifying anguish over a short period of time" and that he "is superb in his dramatizations of the psychological configurations of modern sexuality." He observes that Jimmy is afflicted with "narcissism, paranoia, sado-masochism, and escapist nostalgia for maternalism and the womb," spewing out "his boundless fury
on everything either in his sight or dredged up from an astounding data bank of antipathies." Applying the Freudian theory, Ferrar draws the conclusion that Pamela in *Time Present* is "locked into an Electra relationship with an omnipotent, idealized, dead father whose grip on her psyche is so powerful that she cannot sustain any living connection." He has attempted to situate Osborne's plays within the straitjackets of the psychological theories by drawing on a number of psychological concepts. Faber also looks at Osborne's dramatis personae strictly within the framework of psychoanalytic theories, thereby ignoring their immediate socio-economic backgrounds. He observes that Jimmy has problems whose ultimate origin lies in the stresses of the oral stage. He refers to "Jimmy's fear of abandonment, of being separated from the mother surrogate and from the nourishment she is required to provide." Gibbs observes that Jimmy is "something of a sadist and very much an exhibitionist," and he "should have gone to a psychiatrist rather than have come to a dramatist." Wallace also calls Jimmy "a spoilt and neurotic bore who badly needed the attention of an analyst." Trussler comes out with the analysis that Osborne in his plays creates "neurotic" and "his single attempt is to set such neurotic within a normal environment." He finds that all of Osborne's protagonists including Jimmy, Archie, Maitland and Pamela are mistaken with "the atrophying effects of rationalized nostalgia." He further points out that "Osborne has never mastered the episodic style...adapted it to his own purposes of conceiving a fuller social context for a single character." Talking of Osborne's themes in the context of the questions he had raised about the lives of ordinary working people in his essay, "They Call It Cricket," Trussler remarks that "Osborne has never really tried to investigate" the questions he raises in his plays. He holds the view that Osborne's evasion of political and social issues is the direct outcome of his "limitation of artistic range rather than a shrugging-off responsibility." But the critics fail to perceive what Charles Marwoitwitz observes: "Osborne is one of the committed writers who really writes out of convictions—-that is social and humanist conviction."}

But we should not infer that the criticism on Osborne is utterly negligible, insular, irrelevant and superficial. All these psychological interpretations undoubtedly add new dimensions to the studies on Osborne as well as his characters. However,
there is no denying the fact that their assessments impart obscurity more than explaining the primary concerns of the playwright, for their studies are chiefly centered on the principal characters, largely the protagonists, thereby relegating to the background the role of the other characters in the realization of maturity of themes and vision of the artist. The critics have more or less overlooked the complexity and tension that is an inevitable outcome of the interaction of the different characters with one another and with their immediate surroundings. Moreover, their application of the extra-literary parametres has led the readers to overlook the socio-literary aspects of Osborne’s art. These psychological studies examine his characters in a kind of social vacuity, inevitably undermining the implication of the prevalent socio-economic conditions which play a vital role in shaping the psyche of his characters.

Similarly, this asymmetrical and parochial treatment of his characters is also perceptible even in the studies of those scholars who apply the biographical approach to look at Osborne’s plays. They look to his personal life and experiences to look at his themes and characters. But they are not solely responsible for this tendency of lopsidedness, even the playwright himself has encouraged this tendency by hinting at some striking resemblances between his characters and their counterparts in his own life. A substantial body of critical and popular opinion has subscribed to the view that Jimmy is a self-portrait of Osborne. Jimmy shares the same kind of anger as Osborne, has sprung from a similar socio-economic background, and has seen his father die in the prime of life from a similar disease. Osborne married Pamela Lane in the teeth of relentless opposition from her family. The first catastrophe of the marriage was the loss of an unborn child. The problems created by Alison’s mother for Jimmy are similar to those faced by Osborne when he courted Pamela Lane and married her much against her parents’ wishes. As Osborne writes, “Mr. and Mrs. Lane were much coarser characters than Alison’s mother and father, but their tactics were similar.” In his autobiography, A Better Class of Person, Osborne describes that his parents “saw little of each other.” The unhappy married life of Osborne’s parents finds resemblance in Jimmy’s parents where the mother marries “a feverish failure of a man.” He further reveals that the character of Billy Rice in The Entertainer is a “part-portrait of my grandfather,” William Crawford Grove. Osborne’s own assertion
that "his work tends to have a prophetic relationship with his own life" has supplied hints to the critics like Claire Armistead to expound the father-daughter relationship in *Inadmissible Evidence*. Armistead remarks that "the sex-mad solicitor (Maitland) dismisses his teenage daughter in much the same way as Osborne was later to abandon his daughter Nolan." But Melvyn Bragg finds Osborne "a soft spoken, rather shy and perfectly courteous man."

Ronald Hayman comes out with the conclusion that with his protagonists such as Jimmy Porter, Archie Rice and Bill Maitland, Osborne succeeded brilliantly by "pumping his own attitudes and phobias directly into the character." Luc Gilleman observes that Osborne’s "works are deeply, and often confusingly autobiographical, and carefully cultivated his image as an artist, effectively turning himself into his own major work of art." But these critics have failed to recognize the artistic objectivity which dramatizes the complexity of his characters and themes. The reason these critics are inclined to establish identity between him and his protagonists in such a way that it prevents them from making a true assessment of other characters and what they stand for. A close study of Osborne’s plays unquestionably establishes the fact that his protagonists are not only commendable characters, but they have also certain failings. They are fully drawn and individuals, and there are many significant aspects of their personalities which one has no reason to attribute to the creator.

Apart from the diminution of Osborne’s plays to a study of a particular character, almost always the protagonist, the biographical critics also fail to look at his outlook in a broader and right prospective. Critics like Valerie Grove and Wallace link up the playwright’s portrayal of women with his personal experiences and establish that he paints his women characters with dark shades owing to his distasteful experiences with his girls, mothers and wives. Grove has taken him to be a "much-married misogynist," and Wallace finds him "a women hater." The labels put on the playwright are certainly comprehensible, as a host of women characters in his dramatic world have not been presented positively. These critics tend to relate this negative portrayal of women to his personal experiences. But they fail to appreciate the significance of his portrayal of women like Mrs. Tanner, Mrs. Elliot and Jean Rice. Osborne’s positive attitude to women is presented in the description of his
maternal grandmother, Adelina Rowena Grove with a sense of regard. "Almost every working day of life, she has got up at 5 O' clock to go out to work, to walk down what has almost seemed to me to be the most hideous and coldest street in London." Osborne's approbation and idolization of the woman who has the inborn dignity comes out in his words: "She'd put her head down, hold on to her hat and PUSH." His affirmative description of women is also perceptible in The End of Me Old Cigar where they "usually emphasize responsiveness toward male desire, empathy with male performance anxiety, and a trusting willingness to reveal lack of self-confidence." The critics have failed to relate Osborne's treatment of women to the fast-changing socio-economic and ethical environment of the times. Almost all the leading writers in the post-war period responded to the changing scenario of human relationships, mainly the challenge to the authority of man both as father and husband. Osborne's rendering of women in his dramatic world should be viewed as response to these larger questions of relationships in the contemporary society.

It is comprehensible that the lack of acceptable critical focus on the sociological aspect of Osborne's plays does not, nonetheless, mean that his social themes and concerns have not been perceived at all. In fact, there are several critics who have attempted to establish relationships between his dramatic harvest and the social realities of his times. It is the playwright's skill and sincerity to arrest precisely the mood and the spirit of his times, especially of the disillusioned young generation, that credited him with a prominent place among the playwrights of the post-war period. Consequently, it leads us to identify Jimmy Porter as a voice of the disenchanted youth of the post-war decade. Stephen Lacey asserts: "To read Jimmy Porter as a representative of social type...is not simply to respond to the particular arguments of the play but to recognize that within realist drama the central protagonist embodies values, attitudes and a social experience that are not his or hers alone." Scholars like Kenneth Tynan, Kenneth Allsop, David H. Karraflalt, Alan Carter and John Russell Taylor have attempted to look at some of Osborne's social themes and concerns, but a close examination of their studies unmistakably establishes the fact that they too have failed to deal extensively and penetratingly with the wide range of social issues, particularly familial ones, which Osborne consistently
highlights in his plays. But it does not mean that they have made no contribution towards the understanding of his vision and art. Kenneth Tynan's eulogy of *Look Back in Anger* acted as the best counter-action to the negative criticism that had hailed the production of Osborne's first angry play. Tynan remarked:

That the play needs changes I do not deny: it is twenty minutes too long, and not even Mr. Haigh's bravura could blind me to the painful whimsy of the final reconciliation. I agree that *Look Back in Anger* is likely to remain a minority taste. What matters, however, is the size of the minority. I estimate it at roughly 6,733,000, which is the number of people in this country between the ages of twenty and thirty. And this figure will doubtless be swelled by refugees from other age-groups who are curious to know precisely what the contemporary young pup is thinking and feeling....It is the best young play of its decade.  

Tynan's review helped establish Osborne indisputably a major playwright who "had the cheek to be highly articulate on a whole variety of subjects, including the sex war, the class war, and war itself."  

No doubt, he makes a relevant analysis of the social, economic, ethical and political issues as highlighted by Osborne in this play, but it is too pithy an analysis to reveal a broader view of the playwright's familial concerns.

Allsop lays emphasis on socialism of the drama of the fifties, but fails to analyze this theme in the context of family in Osborne's plays. Primarily, he, rather heavily, dwells on the element of protest and emotionalism and describes Osborne as "romantic and sentimental about the Ordinary People." It clearly establishes the fact that the critic has assuredly overlooked the dimensions and dynamics of potent tension and conflict, the overriding features of the fast-changing family life in the post-war British society, which have been realistically dramatized by Osborne. Irrefutably, Allsop's *Angry Decade* is a significant study on the drama of the fifties, but it fails to appreciate the familial concerns of Osborne as a playwright.

Karrafalt purports to study the social themes in Osborne's plays, but circumscribes his discussion to the theme of anger and anxiety of the protagonists and their desperate efforts to surmount the feelings of isolation. He fails to examine such substantial issues as class-conflict, failure of the Welfare State, loosening of sexual morality, gender-conflict, onslaughts of materialism on human values, besmirched
role of religious institutions and generation gap in the context of the institution of family which form the very warp and woof of Osborne's plays.

Carter made a noteworthy contribution to a positive view of Osborne's plays by examining his technique, themes and his vision as a dramatist. Certainly, he touches upon the social themes of class, politics and religion, but fails to discuss these issues in the context of family. Conceivably, the reason is that he holds the view that Osborne's main strength lies in his ability to give "lessons in feeling" in his plays. His prime focus, therefore, is not on what he regards as nonessential and particular "social or political issues." He holds the view that Osborne's subject matter is "highly personal," because he is "very much concerned with the imaginative suffering, which is by its nature is a solitary experience...and the questions he poses are seldom rational or even logically directed" He further remarks that Osborne "rarely develops any of these attacks or reasons them out." It is often alleged that Osborne's plays are a conglomeration of ideas, but these are rarely fully developed, sometimes resulting in thematic inconsistency or vagueness. But the theatre, as Osborne points out, "is not a schoolroom. It is not a place for discussion and examination; if there are any lessons to be taught, they should be lessons in feeling."

Taylor relates Jimmy's annoyance to the fiasco of the Welfare State by situating Look Back in Anger in the background of educational, social and political system of the fifties. Though his study supplies us with an informative background of Osborne's themes in Look Back in Anger, he fails to find the impact of socio-economic, political and ethical issues on the intra-familial relationships of the various characters. Neither he attempts to discern the class-conflict which ruins the prospects of marital harmony between Jimmy and Alison nor does he attempt to examine such a vital thematic facet of this play as the misalliance of the Church, the education system, the political system and the Press to preserve and protect the ethos and hegemony of the upper classes.

The preceding review attests the fact that the available criticism on Osborne is fraught with discrepancies, fissures, misrepresentations and shortfalls in the assessment of his principal themes and concerns. It substantiates the point that the critics have apparently failed to acknowledge the immense value that Osborne
attaches to the social significance of his art. This pitfall has resulted in the tendency to underestimate his perception of the current issues and his ability to look at them judiciously as a dramatist. Furthermore, they have perceived that the playwright is lacking in a wide range of subject matter and concerns. None of these critics have duly acknowledged the broad canvas of his dramatic art which accommodates a multiplicity of themes and characters. The allegation that the anger of Osborne’s protagonists is directionless, misplaced, improper, irrational and purposeless is also the upshot of the failure of these critics in probing the complex interaction between his characters and their immediate social backgrounds. It appears that the shortsightedness of these critics has apparently distracted his readers from acknowledging the full humanity and complexity of his different characters. Their assessment of Osborne as a misanthropic writer without any positive vision seems to be the inevitable outcome of such unjustifiable critical verdicts.

It is more than conspicuous that these critics have paid only a passing critical attention to Osborne’s emphasis on crucial familial concerns in his plays. The dramatic import of the playwright has been somewhat sidetracked by his contemporaries. The over-enthusiastic labels of ‘Angry Young Man’ and ‘inaugurator’ of the Post-War British Drama have relegated to the background the essence of the playwright’s serious dramatic purpose. Due critical attention has not been paid to the prime concerns of the playwright; rather he has been projected as a defender of the breast-beating messiahs of the mid-century Britain. None of the critics have made a detailed study of the various aspects of the post-war British society, particularly the playwright’s familial concerns, which consistently underlie his plays, and have influenced his dramatic art in myriad ways. The critics have failed to appreciate fully the value he appends to the institution of family as a significant unit of society. Osborne’s familial concerns are manifest in the following lines:

Nobody can be very interested in my contribution to a problem like the kind of houses people should have built for them, the kind of school they should send their children to, or the pensions they should be able to look forward to. But there are other questions to be asked—how to people live inside those houses? What is their relationship with one another, and with their children....What are the things that are important to them, that make them care, give them hope and anxiety.61
But the critics have failed to perceive Osborne's serious view of the family and an adequate cause or solution of the sufferings of the protagonists linked to family in his plays. All these imbalances and somewhat misleading interpretations of Osborne's plays necessitate an in-depth study of his plays in the context of institution of the family, its evolution into different modes and types and also the factors responsible for its dissolution.

A brief analysis of Osborne's plays suggests that a detailed and an in-depth examination of his familial concerns can yield new insights into the mind and art of this major playwright of the post-war period. It can also enable us to appreciate the range and scope of the familial issues which he dealt with in his dramatic constructs. Besides, it can also provide us with a more balanced perspective on his art and authenticity to present the contemporary familial state of affairs impinging on the characters in a realistic manner. Osborne's concern with dramatization of truth and human values can emerge more strikingly than has, so far, been recognized by his critics if the forces behind his social criticism in the plays are examined critically. It can also help us arrive at a more balanced critical estimate and judgement about his contribution to the development of the British theatre and his distinct place as a dramatist in relation to his fellow playwrights, particularly in terms of familial concerns. A detailed study of this topic, therefore, will help remove the imbalances and distortions in the available criticism of the playwright's themes, concerns, vision and achievement.

Family is a basic social group united through bonds of kinship or marriage, present in all societies. Ideally, the family provides its members with protection, companionship and security. The institution of family has always played a significant role in every quarter of human life. A close-knit family provides emotional and psychological security, particularly through the warmth, love and companionship that living together generates between the spouses, and, in turn, between them and their children. Gerald Handel asserts that the institution of family has been "at once a significant source of individuality and the expression of the most binding ties of social life." Family provides children a long period of care rendered by a limited number of individuals with whom they develop relations of intimacy if they were to grow as
normal human beings capable of playing adult roles. It also provides humanitarian functions such as caring of the sick and the disabled. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines it as:

The family is everywhere identifiable as a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. Included in the personnel which make it up are adults of both sexes, at least two of them maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and are one or more offspring or adopted children....The family is defined technically as a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood or adoption consisting a single household, interacting with each other in their respective social positions of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister, who share, create and maintain a common culture.63

Family is not an isolated social organization; it is an integral part of the larger social organization, i.e. society. Its existence or extinction squarely relies on the life or death of the society of which it is an indivisible part. There is a mutual interacting and supportive relationship between the family and the society. When societal norms are being disrupted, or are changing rapidly, the family authority also gets weaker. The power of family can be measured by the efficacy with which it carries out the functions which are vital for the continuation of a society in the sense that the society would collapse if they were not performed. C.C. Harris remarks: “Stable, ordered society in which conflict is reduced to minimum is only possible if it is rooted in stable and ordered families. The more stable the society, the more stable the family structure, the less will be the personal stress.”64 The family permits an individual to develop love and security and capacity to trust others. Only in the family environment, one’s social tenderness is aroused and developed and with these develops the capacity to take on responsibility for others. Berger and Berger comment: “A person who has developed no family bonds will have a very hard time developing any larger loyalties in the later life.”65 The family ought to be an abode of love and trust. German ethologist Eibl-Eibesfeldt asserts: “The human community is based on love and trust: and both are evolved through the family.”66 In an impersonal world, the family is an oasis of intimacy where we find close personal ties, emotional warmth, sense of belonging and security.

In the family setting, an individual finds a secure base which enhances his sense of identity and from which he can savour, and appraise new experiences. Giving
and receiving of affection provides scope for the development of individual personality. As Mary Farmer observes:

In fact, the family fulfills all their needs of the individual. With the greater of permanency, emotional security and gratification within the family can compensate for the trials and anxieties of modern life, all competitiveness and impersonality of many external relationships, all of which may be sources of feelings of personal insecurity and of inner strength.

A child can grow into healthy adulthood if he or she is brought up in a congenial family environment. If the child is reared in a broken home, he is likely to develop into cheerless personality. The child brought up without a mother and father figure will be incapable of the role identification in the absence of not learning its gender identity properly.

Family's closest association is with the supporting institution of marriage, which formalizes and regularizes the relationship between members of a family. The institution of marriage is central to the idea of family in most of the societies. Marriage is defined as a voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others; that is voluntary, permanent, and strictly monogamous. Marriage is a socially recognized and approved union between individuals, who commit to one another with the expectations of a stable and lasting intimate relationship. C.C. Harris writes: "Marriage involves however not merely a commitment to another person, but a sexual commitment. It also involves an acceptance of social responsibility for the rearing and maintenance of the children of the union." Marriage is the licensing not of sexual intercourse, but of parenthood. The family provides a legitimate outlet for the sexual urge. Mary Farmer writes:

Stable and recognized sex relationships have psychological importance.... Stability in sex relationships lessens the likelihood that men will dissipate their energies in sexual competition.... For both sexes emotional security and warmth are important. They can be found in good marriage relationships.

Marriage is society’s way of sanctioning and controlling adult sexual behaviour. It fixes responsibility for sex and makes order out of what otherwise would be chaos. It orders satisfaction of sexual and emotional needs and legalizes parenthood. Barrett and Macintosh assert that "marriage dignifies privileges and romanticizes the couple."
This concept of family has undergone a transformation in the twentieth century (owing to several factors) and Osborne's plays facilitate a comprehensive analysis and discussion of this transformation. Since the Industrial Revolution there has been a tendency towards a family of fewer members. The nuclear family has become typical of the modern age. In the twentieth century, urbanization, commercialization, general improvement in life and decline in birth rate and death rate have also contributed to this transition. The cult of individualism has led to an individual towards alienation and isolation. Progress in the field of science and technology has diminished the importance of reproductive function of the family. Legal reforms have aided couples to resort to divorce at the slightest provocation. In the face of socio-economic changes, the family has lost its functions to other social institutions such as school, legal system, technology and the Welfare State. Apart from this, war has also contributed to the process of disintegration of family. Death and destruction are not only on the warfront, but in the minds of people also. Psychological frustration is one of the products of the war.

Even a cursory study of Osborne's plays reveals that the institution of family has been losing its nurturing values in the face of the devastating influences of the outside world. Sex has lost its glamour due to extreme commercialization, and in turn marriage has lost its sanctity. Parent-child relationship, which seems to be an obsessive theme with Osborne, is explored in depth and detail. Parents are not keenly solicitous that their children grow healthy, wealthy and wise. They seem not be in conciliatory mood. The children fight the parents with intense anger and frustration. Children are no longer the connecting links between parents, and most often they are unwelcome guests who stay on till they can stand on their own. Aversion of the couples to having children is directly or indirectly; and covertly or overtly expressed in almost all his plays. The playwright primarily deals with the familial issues such as marital incompatibility, gender-conflict, promiscuity, adultery, homosexuality, shotgun marriage, abortion, divorce, remarriage, co-habitation, parental deprivation, generation gap, alienation and isolation. In his plays, family relationships are characterized by such life-denying features as mistrust, unresponsiveness, egocentricity, irresponsibility, insecurity, falsehood, revulsion, anxiety, frustration,
callousness and insensitivity. All these disruptive forces are sapping the human virtues such as love, trust, compassion, solidarity, vitality, peace, security, tolerance, acceptance, commitment, responsibility, reciprocity and belongingness which make the family alive to the needs of an individual. His protagonists suffer from frustration which seems to be stemming from the broken homes where they are deprived of either paternal love or maternal love or both. In 1957, Osborne wrote: “I don’t like the kind of society in this country I find myself. I like it less and less.” It is this society that he dramatizes in the microcosm of the family in his plays. The playwright’s primary concern is to censure the life-denying forces which have crept into the institution of family. His concerns with positive human values become evident from the way he lays bare the malaise afflicting almost every kind of family relationship in the ever-changing contemporary society.

A critical analysis of the familial concerns in Osborne’s plays reveals that he predominantly deals with the life-denying features of the present-day family with a considerable authority and insight. This implies that the playwright had gathered a very close view of the institution of family, examined it critically and dealt with it sympathetically and artistically in his plays. The way he carries out this job indicates that his life, sensitivity and thoughts were immensely shaped by his interactions with the familial environment of which he himself had been a part. In his early age, Osborne underwent a stock of hardships and suffered privations in the miserable living conditions of his lower middle class. He spent his early childhood trapped in the unwholesome atmosphere where his parents were always at the loggerheads. He empathized neither with the quarrelsome mother, nor with the chilly father, perceiving life-denying features in both. He was initiated into the knowledge of conflicts and tensions in the areas of familial relationships by bitterness and dissensions between his parents who “seldom took” him “out together” giving him little experience of “social contact.” He spent most of his childhood years both in the third-rate sanatoria and at home with almost lifeless environment sick with a devastating kind of rheumatic fever and “blooming fainting fits.” He spent hours watching his father die without receiving any moral support from his mother and grandmother, who never mourned her son’s death. He witnessed his mother’s lack of
compassion for his dying father and later her disgust for his corpse. These bitter experiences made him painfully conscious of how one, deprived of human warmth, feels sick like a dying patient who "needed attention or the kiss of life." In his later life, series of betrayal at the hands of women made him sensitive to the institution of family. These experiences seemed to have gone a long way in shaping Osborne's attitude towards the institution of family. He not only examines critically the institution of family but also goes further and dramatizes with equal insights the multifaceted and ever changing scenario of intra-familial relationships. He focuses a special attention on the marital and parent-child relationships in his dramatic constructs. Osborne's treatment of familial issues certainly acquires a great complexity and realism when he suggests that they are influenced by the factors like class-consciousness, sexual laxity, the emergence of the new woman threatening man-woman relationships and cancerous hold of materialism on modern man.

It is generally suggested that Brittan has been a highly class-conscious society. In the post-war Britain, a multitude of social measures were pressed into service to create a just and egalitarian society. It was taken for granted that the rising income level, the redistribution of educational opportunities, the spread of home ownership and marketing for mass consumption of material and cultural elements were progressively blurring the traditional class-cleavages. The Mass Education Act of 1944 accelerated the process of bringing education to the lower strata. The newly-educated working-class youth could envision their chances of upward social mobility. But, in fact, British society was still manifestly divided into two hostile camps---the governing and the governed class. Still the capitalist framework continued to be the principal determinant of social-disparities. The education system still continued to uphold the interests of the upper classes. It was based on the social status, not on individual ability and aptitude. Moreover, the educated working-class youth could not break through the fortification around the top jobs which were held in reserve for the upper-class university graduates. At the higher places, Public School and Oxbridge backgrounds continued to dominate. Kenneth Roberts remarks: "The propertied classes continue to be strongly represented in key positions in politics, business and public administration." The working-class children were hugely traumatized by the
fact that the Welfare State had failed to move the jarred gates of the compartmentalized British society. L.C.B. Seaman observes: “The 1944 Act perpetuated the marked division of the English into two wholly different societies.”

The entire system of education was used to create consensus on the legitimacy of the existing order of things among those who had to occupy a position of command and decision. It was the class system itself that hindered the advancement of able and talented working-class children in Britain. Eventually, it generated a feeling of despair and despondency among them, which was manifested in their reactionary mood of defiance and protest against the values of an obsolete social structure. It finds a ready echo and reverberation in the literature of the post-war period.

A critical examination of Osborne’s plays reveals the fact that he was deeply cognizant of class-differences in British society and their oxidizing impact on the life of sensitive individuals, particularly on those who emerged from the lower rungs of the society. The playwright portrays how the lower and middle-class people, who had been promised a just and egalitarian society with equitable distribution of educational and economic opportunities, felt embittered with the deep-rooted class structure in British society. He seems to resent the way the ruling classes perpetuate their place of power and privileges by cleverly manipulating the education system and the welfare policies. As a humanist, Osborne’s sympathy with the ordinary, the deprived and the dispossessed people is strikingly evident in the way he castigates the upper classes for their greed, conceitedness, hypocrisy and snobbishness. He brings out forcefully the anger and frustration that the rigid class system generates in the minds of the masses that no longer hold the prosperous and privileged classes as indispensable and invulnerable. Osborne’s plays are not restricted only to the depiction of the class-consciousness, shaping the attitude of his characters towards the Establishment, but also dramatize the damage it does to the psychological make-up of the individuals, influencing such vital quarters as the marital and familial relationships. Lack of love, faith, acceptance, attachment, honour, loyalty and conscientiousness in social relations also finds reflections on familial relations. The playwright highlights the problem of social disharmony impinging on familial harmony.
In Look Back in Anger, we find a great lack of love and loyalty; devotion and dedication; trust and tolerance; acknowledgement and appreciation and hilarity and harmony in the marital life of Jimmy Porter, a working class boy, and Alison Redfern, an upper-class girl. Jimmy marries Alison with a view to ascend the social ladder, but he is rejected by the class of Alison. Though he is a university graduate, he ends up running a sweet stall, finding no suitable channel to utilize his education and aptitude. Disillusioned and disenchanted in life, he wages a verbal war against the upper classes through his wife. The ceaseless verbal skirmishes lead to marital disharmony between them. In The Entertainer, the family of vaudevillians desperately attempt to enjoy a higher status, but to no avail. Conscious of their miserable plight and its causes, they wage a verbal war against the ruling class for draining the public money in the Suez War. Failed to lead a dignified life, they get disillusioned with the Welfare State. Disenchantment breeds in them anxiety, mistrust, fear, insecurity and despair which frustrate the prospects of familial harmony. In Inadmissible Evidence, Bill Maitland, an ordinary barrister, faces discrimination at the hands of the Law Society. At home too, he is despised by the rich in-laws for his comparatively low status. Acutely conscious of this indiscrimination, he runs after wine and women to get relief from the pangs of humiliation, but all this leads to his downfall as a head of family as well as a barrister. In the end, he loses healthy contact and communication with his family. In Time Present, Pamela, an educated stage actress, wishes to ascend the ladder of social hierarchy, but trapped in the adverse circumstances she can do nothing except that of pouring venom on the ruling class, education system and economic policies. Disgusted and disillusioned in life, she loses not only healthy interaction with her family, but also abhors even the idea of marriage.

Not only the lower classes, but women also, in all cultures, had been victims of oppression and domination. Custom, law and religion discriminated against women, considering them as second-rate citizens. In fact, they were no more than the chattels of their husbands. But in the first half of the twentieth century, spread of education for girls, ideological influences of Marx, Freud and Darwin, gaining of social, economic, political and property rights and war experiences put women on the path of liberation from her traditional role. In the post-war period, spread of mass
education, unprecedented growth of urbanization, establishment of lighter industries and emergence of the corporate sector have provided women with greater scopes of employment. Advancement in the realms of medical sciences and technology has brought out dramatic changes in her lifestyle. The social legislations such as The Legal Aid Act, The Abortion Act, the Divorce Reform Act, The Guardianship Act, The Equal Pay Act and The Sex Discrimination Act have quickened the pace of the emancipation of woman. The sexual revolution of the 1960s has liberated woman from the constraints of the Victorian ideology with its oppressive double standard. Her traditional passive sexual role has given way to a more assertive sexual behaviour. The new woman is inclined to stay away from inflexible matrimony to enjoy freer and more realistic ways of living. Gummer remarks: “She, like her brothers, is much more independent of her home and family and she even feels less responsible for the welfare of the aged parents as the community takes over more of that role.” The more rational and specialized methods of education, the development of effective means of contraception, the legalization of the abortion and new productive technologies have helped dispel the myth of maternal instincts. Undeniably, emancipation has put woman on more equal footing with man, liberating her from the conservative fetters and social taboos. It has provided her sense of dignity, individuality, self-respect and self-worth, but it has brought in its tail ruins of the conventional patterns of family life.

A close look at the plays of Osborne shows that he is not merely concerned with the depiction of emancipation of woman in the post-war Britain; rather he dramatizes its impact on the conventional patterns of marriage and family. Osborne’s purpose is not to censure the new woman and eulogize man, but to dramatize the truth. It implies that his heartfelt concern is to dispense justice to children. He views woman as an embodiment of love, generosity, tolerance, vitality, compassion and tenderness. He becomes very critical of woman when she ceases to be an embodiment of love and tenderness, and also when she gives more importance to materialistic things than maternal instincts. Whenever a woman breaks out of her conventional supporting role, he regards her with suspicion. He seems to be very critical of institutional care of children, as he does not find it a healthy substitute for maternal love and care. His
rendering of women in his dramatic world should be viewed as response to the larger questions of intra-familial relationships in the contemporary world. In the dramatic world of Osborne, the new woman no longer gives primacy to emotional and psychological fulfilment through her role as wife and mother. The educated woman refuses to surrender her individuality to her husband. The independent woman refuses to live with an adulterous husband. The career-conscious woman seeks divorce in order to devote fully to her profession and pursuits for self-actualization. Her new role directly conflicts with her traditional role as wife and mother. Individual decisions to work outside of the home have crucially contributed to the problem of providing adequate care for children because with the emergence of nuclear form of family, children are left in the impersonal hands to grow into emotional cripples.

In Look Back in Anger, Alison, the educated girl, marries Jimmy despite a strong opposition from her family, and leaves him when she finds him unbearable. Contrary to the wishes of her husband, she never surrenders her individuality to him. Another liberated woman, Helena, the stage actress, does not go to wedlock for the sake of her career. She establishes physical relations with Jimmy, but never allows him to encroach upon her individuality and freedom. In The Entertainer, Jean Rice, the career-conscious girl, breaks off her engagement with her fiancé, Graham Todd to maintain her individuality by pursuing career. Jean's mother leaves her husband for his adulterous behaviour. In Inadmissible Evidence, Anna can not bear with her adulterous husband and lives almost alone on her own. Their daughter, Jane, the careerist, does not like to stay with them, finding indifferent to her pursuits. In Time Present, Edith, the educated woman, leaves her husband, finding him at odds with her needs and wishes. Pamela, the stage actress, remains single for the sake of her career. She wishes to be a mother, but at the same time, she hates to rearing children, considering them as an extra burden on her purse. Her friend Constance leaves her husband and little son to devote fully to her career as politician. In Very Like a Whale, Barbara divorces Jock Mellor to pursue an independent career. She lives alone on her own, leaving her son in a hostel to grow into an egocentric adult. In Watch It Come Down, Marion divorces Ben, finding him indifferent to her wifely needs. To win bread, she leaves her little daughter with a nanny to grow into an emotionally crippled
adult. Another independent woman, Jo co-habits with an old man, Glen and has no interest in marriage and maternity. In *The End of Me Old Cigar*, a group of divorced or estranged women runs a sex racket to expose hollowness and hypocrisy of the big pillars of the society. The purpose of this mission is to force man to recognize woman's powers and potentialities. In the plays of the seventies, some women seem to be trapped in the conventional marriage, for example, Jock Mellor's present wife in *Very Like a Whale* and Ben's wife, Sally in *Watch It Come Down*, but they make household atmosphere unbearable with their ceaseless bitchiness, realizing that their needs and wishes are being overlooked.

Not only the class-conflict and the gender-conflict, but the liberal attitude to sex also contributed to the dissolution of familial ties in the post-war Britain. In the twentieth century, discoveries in the field of psychology, socio-economic changes, social approval of sex education, progress in the field of medical sciences and technology, emergence of the cult of pleasure-seeking, destruction of the conventional beliefs and taboos about sex relations led to hassle-free attitude to love and sex. The liberal approach to sex in tune with the spirit of the times also owed to the loss of religious faith and moral values. Over and above, the liberal social legislations such as *The Abolishment of Capital Punishment Act*, *The Homosexual Act*, and *The Abortion Reform Act* have remarkably affected the institution of family. Widespread use of contraceptives, legally recognized abortion, easier divorce, some mitigation of society’s legalized antagonism to homosexuals and declining familial control, or growing individual freedom have inexorably put the feckless at risk. The legalization of abortion has enabled individuals to avoid the personal consequences of sex. Advancement in the field of science and technology has made it possible for couples to decide if and when they want to have children, diminishing the importance of reproductive function of the family. The sixties has represented a watershed in the modern British history in that it has posed a serious threat to complacency and filled the youth with a mood of rebellion. The period was marked by an incessant struggle for self-expression, self-assertion, and liberation. For them freedom meant enjoyment of free sex, money, travel and drugs. The cultural revolution of the 1960s was spreading general acceptance of the notion that marriage was not necessary for life.
C.C. Harris comments that "the need to marry in order to obtain the opportunity for 
sexual expression within the context of a stable relationship disappears...the entry 
into a stable sexual relationship no longer requires simultaneous acceptance of 
responsibility for its issue." With no moral principles to guide man's conduct, sexual 
promiscuity and moral laxity are widespread. With the sexual revolution, there is an 
upward march of illegitimacy and pre-bridal, or pre-nuptial pregnancies. The liberated 
pursuit of sexual gratification has endangered the stability of marriage and thereby the 
stability of family.

A close study of Osborne's plays reveals that his concern is not only to depict 
the slackening of sexual morality in the post-war Britain, but also to dramatize its 
devastating impact on the institutions of marriage and family. He dramatizes how sex 
divested of love, commitment, honesty, involvement and responsibility fractures 
marital bonds, inducing frustration and boredom in the partners. He also depicts how 
the inhibited sex under the duress of conventions frustrates the prospects of marital 
harmony. He seems to emphasize liberalization of sex mores, but not to the extent of 
vulgarity and obscenity as we find in the post-war period. He also shows how sexual 
incompatibility between the husband and the wife leads to sexual frustration which 
makes them lose interest in the family affairs. He also portrays how premarital or 
extramarital sex, homosexuality and lesbianism hit very hard at the roots of family. 
The way he unveils the destructive manifestations of sex in the post-war Britain 
underlies his view of a responsible and wholesome sex. He seems to be very critical 
of the sex based on lust, dishonesty, hypocrisy and selfishness. He seems to suggest 
that sex with commitment, love, honesty, mutual trust, reciprocity and responsibility 
goes a long way in shaping marital ties.

In Look Back in Anger, it is the repression of sexuality that leads to sexual 
frustration between Jimmy and Alison. Frustrated with Jimmy, Alison gets infatuated 
with Cliff. On the other, hand, Jimmy establishes sex relations with Helena. But in 
both cases, the relations do not go a long way as they are devoid of any commitment 
and genuine feelings towards one another. In The Entertainer, it is Archie's 
adulterous behaviour that not only causes separation from his former wife, but also 
contributes to the strained relations with his present wife, Phoebe. Presently, he is
having affairs with a young girl half of his age. For these sexual forays, he gets almost cut off from his family life. In *Inadmissible Evidence*, it is Bill Maitland's endless affairs not only contribute to his tragic life, but also increases his frustration as lawyer. The rotten state of affairs is highlighted through the divorce cases he receives. All the cases are on the grounds of sexual frustration, infidelity, adultery and sexual cruelty. In *Time Present*, Pamela, the unmarried girl in her early thirties, establishes sex relations with men, but is averse to marriage and motherhood. Without betraying any sense of regret and repentance she gets her pregnancy aborted. Her friend, Constance, the separated woman, feels no inhibition in having sex with her lover even in the presence of others. Moreover, both the girls seem to be in lesbian relations, as they stay together for no other reason. Pamela’s mother Edith divorced her husband twenty years ago for flirting with young actresses. In *Very Like a Whale*, Sir Jock Mellor, the divorcee, suffers from an acute sexual frustration. His incompatibility with his wife causes household atmosphere unbearable. In *Watch It Come Town*, Ben Prosser establishes sex relations with his former wife even after having married Sally. Besides, he gets infatuated with his sister-in-law, Shirley and a young girl Jo, another inmate of the house. Sally keeps a homosexual servant-cum-lover, Raymond, and yearns to play with the body of Jo who cohabits with a homosexual, Glen. In *The End of Me Old Cigar*, a sexually frustrated middle-aged divorced woman runs a sex racket to have an absolute freedom in the matter of sexual relations.

All these permissive traits allied with unprecedented growth of wealth, advancement of technology, growth of knowledge, decadence of religious faith and cult of individualism have led to breakdown of the relations based on feelings and instincts. Under the industrialization, the family has changed from being a unit of production to being a unit of consumption, with the far-reaching consequences for its bonds and values. The sacredness of familial ties based on the principles of respect, responsibility and tolerance for each other has been eroded by the onslaughts of the process of urbanization and commercialization of modern life. Diversities in the towns in the forms of occupation, race, cultural background, and other beliefs have given birth to impersonal and superficial social contacts. Gummer comments:
The sheer size of our cities creates loneliness and the pressure put upon our citizens to complete the material possessions has already destroyed the concept of the extended family and is now busy pulling the nuclear family of parents and young children apart as women rush out to work to earn enough to keep up with the Jones.79

Under the liberalization, sons have become contractual partners of their fathers, and are no longer bound to live in the parental household. Berger and Berger remark: "The parental control over the future of the children is generally attenuated; it now rests on the relatively feeble pillars of personal affection."80 The growth of knowledge in all fields has undermined traditional religious authority, and the primacy of the family as the spiritual fountainhead of morality is endangered by the decline of religion. The emergence of post-war welfare measures has directly caused family breakdown. Various cultural changes under the Welfare State have eroded traditional ethic of personal responsibility. The growing number of isolated and elderly people is an eloquent witness of the neglect by adult children of their duties towards their parents. The liberal social legislations such as the Abortion Act have undermined the reproductive function of the family. The rising divorce rate demonstrates that spouses are putting personal satisfaction before marital and parental duty. The increasing rate of abortion is the eloquent witness of the selfishness and callousness of the spouses.

The cult of materialism, without a secure moral order, generates a culture of possessive individualism in which concern for others is subordinated to calculations of self-interest. Lamanna and Riedman comment: "Too much individualism and too little familialism are destroying the institution of family. The family is a major source of stability; we are disturbed when it is disturbed....Because of familialism, home is sometimes considered as the place where you can scratch anywhere you itch."81 Man's utility is assessed in terms of money and economic productivity; the basic human being in him stands subordinated to his social employability. Cardinal virtues like love, friendship, compassion, fellow feelings and tolerance have no place in the broken structure of feelings that the family has become. As the world apparently progresses towards a more clamorous materialism, the family disintegrates because of non-availability of moral bonds or traditional feelings of genuine human quality.
A close examination of Osborne's plays reveals that the institution of family has been losing its humanistic dimensions in the face of the onslaughts of materialistic pursuits. The way the playwright highlights the life-denying forces suggests that the cardinal virtues of compassion, love, pity, reciprocity, responsiveness, solidarity, tenderness and trust are essential for happy and healthy familial relationships. Osborne relates family or society to the individual and keeps the view that unless the individual learns to make himself "a better class of person," the family can not guarantee itself a meaningful existence. In an article, Osborne writes: "A man is indifferent to his own pain and sorrow is nearly always indifferent to the pain and sorrow of others and for a very good reason—-he can not feel. This is part of our sickness. We can’t feel." In general, man’s alienation arises when a living human being is besieged with forces—specially the social ones—hostile to his basic interests in terms of his survival and growth. Osborne has done a yeoman’s job in transcribing the complicated facets of British life in legible terms. He responds to the British reality and arrests it in his dramatic constructs.

In *Look Back in Anger*, Jimmy’s wounded father, lying in the hospital, needs moral support, but he finds the members of his family insensitive to his sufferings. Jimmy is immensely despised by his mother-in-law for his lower socio-economic status. Jimmy’s friend, Hugh Tanner, seeking comfortable life abroad, leaves his aged and ailing mother alone to meet a painful death. Jimmy’s wife, Alison refuses to see the dying woman. In *The Entertainer*, Archie Rice is not only booed by the audience at the hall, but also hated by his family. At home, he faces ire of the members of his family, failing to meet their materialistic needs. Not only Archie, but his father, Billy Rice also falls victim to apathy of the second and third generation, as he is no longer valuable in terms of money. Archie’s elder son, Mick meets a tragic death in the Suez War for the sake of the materialistic pursuits of the ruling class. His younger son, Frank is made to suffer in the prison for six months for his disobedience of the conscription orders, though he has been a sickly boy since childhood. Moreover, all the family members are locked in the shells of their selfishness, disregarding the human needs of one another. In *Inadmissible Evidence*, Bill Maitland aspires for love and friendship from his family and colleagues, but he gets frustrated with their
indifference, as he has become insignificant in the eyes of the acquisitive society. Anticipating his downfall, all the members of his family and staff turn their back on him. In *Time Present*, Edith leaves her husband, Gideon Orme with the little daughter when he ceases to be an earning hand. Pamela meets apathy of the audience, though she is good at serious stage acting. Pamela’s friend, Constance deprives her little son of love and care to seek comfortable life in politics. In *Very Like a Whale*, Sir Jock Mellor, though very rich, suffers from corroding boredom and loneliness. His father lives a secluded life with his dogs and television. In *Watch It Come Down*, Ben Prosser fails to get love and warmth from his family. His wife, Sally, wearing the goggles of materialism, disregards his human needs. She uses filthy words for her mother-in-law who lives a secluded life upstairs with her cats and television. In *The End of Me Old Cigar*, a group of separated women stoops so low that they run a sex racket to live a life full of freedom from man and the established order.

In the dramatic world of Osborne, the family is in continuous decline and dissolution. The older form of extended family is nowhere visible. Strangely enough, the sense of belongingness is conspicuously lacking even in the extended families in the plays under study. In *The Entertainer*, all the members of the Rice family are strangers to each other. In *Watch It Come Down*, the sexually frustrated husband seduces his sister-in-law, and the wife abuses her mother-in-law. The generation gap continues as strong as ever in the extended families. Between Billy Rice and Archie in *The Entertainer*, Ben Prosser, Maitland and his father in *Inadmissible Evidence* and Ben Prosser and his mother in *Watch It Come Down*, there exists a gulf which seems forever unbridgeable. The isolation of the aged is another major problem in the post-war British society. Since all the grown up children leave their parental household and make their home elsewhere, the aged parents are forced to live in ‘empty nest families.’ Hugh’s mother in *Look Back in Anger*, the father of Bill Maitland in *Inadmissible Evidence*, Sir Jock’s father in *Very like a Whale* and the mother of Ben Prosser in *Watch It Come Down* live in isolation. The advancement in the field of medicine has increased the average life span of man, resulted in the isolation and gloominess of old age. The old people are not treated as grand old men and women, but as mere nincompoops. This is the plight of Billy Rice in *The Entertainer*. Lack of
respect for the old age remains characteristic of the young generation. Even in the nuclear families, where both the parents are busy with their work, or no time to spare for the children, the children are forced into solitude and loneliness as in *Very like a Whale*, *The End of Me Old Cigar*, and *Dejavu*. In *Very Like a Whale*, the son of Jock Mellor feels so much suffocated in the company of his father that he wishes to escape his father as soon as possible. In *The End of Me Old Cigar*, Isobel Sands talks about her children who scare the parents, forcing the parents to avoid the children as far as possible. In *Dejavu*, the son and the daughter develop into unhealthy adults. They hate their father so much that they leave him for ever.

Osborne’s portrayal of family in its disjointed form does not mean that he proposes to demolish it, or intends to invent some alternative to it, but he suggests cleansing the family of the ills that have crept into it. He is not against the institution of family, but he is against the ills, which are eating into the very vitals of this institution. As a humanist, the playwright does not seek to destroy the moral or social order, but to create one which will give back to him a belief in humanity. His attitude to the family is conspicuous in the way he portrays the anti-life forces fracturing the familial bonds. The way he treats the anti-family forces underlies his view that a close-knit and loving family is essential for a healthy existence. He seems to support or share the concept of family which provides an individual with a haven for overall development of his personality. As a humanist, his vision is positive, constructive and conducive. As an idealist, he dreams of the world 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 in hilarious moments of others.

The second chapter analyzes the dynamics and dimensions of class-consciousness impinging on the relationships in the context of family. It further examines the problems arising out of the intense feelings of class-consciousness. It also establishes Osborne’s view towards this chronic social problem.

The third chapter discusses the factors behind woman’s departure from home and hearth. It further critically examines the familial issues which emerge out in the wake of her new role. It also reveals the playwright’s attitude towards the new woman.
The fourth chapter explores the theme of sex in the context of family. It further examines the familial problems generated by the hedonistic attitude to sex. It also constitutes the dramatist's view of sex in shaping marital ties.

The fifth chapter probes the causes of fragmentation of familial ties in the face of materialistic onslaughts. It further analyzes the issues appeared in the wake of the material progress. It also suggests his attitude towards the family in the grip of material progress.

The last chapter (sixth) sums up the study with the playwright's view towards this premier institution. It also justifies his contribution, achievement and position in the evolution of Post-War British drama.
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