CHAPTER THREE
THE NEW WOMAN AND FAMILY

Class-consciousness, however a macro concept might be, is not enough to understand the dynamics of the transformation in the family, because Osborne's women characters are shaped by yet another set of influences variously given numerous titles, (pertaining to the liberation of women) but here taken up under the title the new woman. It is an unalterable fact that woman, all over the world, throughout history and in all cultures, has been a victim of oppression and male domination. Socially, she was made unequal with man, and economically dependent on him; biologically, she was considered as a symbol of sex; and religiously a source of temptation. Custom, law and religion discriminated against woman, considering her a non-person. Barbara Ryan observes: “The law was a powerful restraining force on the emancipation of women, but an equally strong was the religious principles which maintained wives’ rightful subordination to their husbands.”¹ The anatomists and biologists, making the scientific differentiation between man and woman, held that woman to be less reasonable than man, more ruled by emotions and also incapable of making decisions. Even the education designed her to look after man, bear and rear children and upkeep the stability of home.

Several scholars and commentators exhibited blatant discrimination against woman by misinterpreting and ignoring, or twisting Plato’s views on her and her role in governance. Jean Jacques Rousseau, one of the leading prophets of equality and liberty, said: “Woman is specially made for man’s delight.”² The codified rules of Hinduism, popularly known as Manusmiriti argued: “Men must make their women dependent day and night,” because, as they maintained: “a woman is not fit for independence.”³ The orthodox tradition of “Hindu Law regards women as inherently incompetent to hold property.”⁴ The author of The Arthasashtra, Kautilya aka Chanakya desired the women to have the qualities to “serve a man as a mother in the
hours of dawn...as a sister during the day...and a perfect mistress to please him sexually when the day turns into night."\textsuperscript{5} He also keeps the view that "duplicity...coquetry, deception, greed, profligacy, and quarrelsomeness are the natural characteristics of a woman."\textsuperscript{6}

These negative and discriminatory attitudes towards woman led to overlook her productive, nurturing and physical functions in evolving social values and attitudes. Hannah Gavron comments: "The role of woman was conceived to be one of subservience to her husband, the master and ruler of the family. The subjection of woman in psychological terms went even deeper than the economic and legal facts might suggest."\textsuperscript{7} Society expected nothing from her but to be "in youth an adored darling and in mature years a loved wife."\textsuperscript{8} Once she got married, her husband had complete possession over the property; in fact she was no more than the chattel of her husband. Mc Gregor observed: "Outside the family married women had the same legal status as children and lunatics, within it they were their husbands' inferiors. By marrying they moved from dependence on fathers and male relatives to dependence on husbands."\textsuperscript{9} It was a rather difficult task for woman to come out of this traditionally prescribed role, but she was deeply influenced by the socio-economic changes that appeared in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. Furthermore, the American and French Revolutions proclaimed the equality of all men and, by implication, women too. It excited the Englishwoman, Mary Wollstonecraft to publish her seminal work, \textit{Vindication of the Rights of Women} (1792), which expressed the principles of feminism.

In 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 woman on the path of liberation from her traditional role. In the post-war period, the \textit{Legal Aid Act of 1948}, the \textit{Abortion Act of 1965}, the \textit{Divorce Reform Act of 1969}, the \textit{Guardianship Act of 1973}, the \textit{Equal Pay Act of 1973} and the \textit{Sex Discrimination Act of 1975} have added new dimensions to the emancipation of woman. Besides, increasing demand for female labour in the service sector, technological development, general increase in the life-expectancy, fall in birth rate
and increase in leisure have brought out woman from the domestic sphere. The growth of female employment owes greatly to the machinery which has superseded the work of man. This work requires no muscular strength, but only flexibility of fingers. The increase of the school leaving age, mass education and wider social changes deprived the labour market of juveniles. Resultantly, in one way or the other, the economy almost came to depend on women, and increasingly on married women. Jonathan Hollowell records this change as:

In the context of technological change that has made house work easier, contraception more effective and pregnancy and childbirth much safer, they have added ambitions in respect of paid employment. At the same time, better employment prospects and social entitlements to state benefits have facilitated social change.¹⁰

Advancement in the realms of medical sciences and technology has brought out dramatic changes in woman's life style. Medicine has technicalized the love of mother and child, at the same time as it has set up a structure of services for mother and child which emphasizes surveillance, not caring. Ronald Fletcher remarks: "Women now enter marriage on a completely voluntary basis and on equal footing with their male partners... that many women no longer wish to be confined to a life of child-bearing, and domesticity."¹¹ Her traditional passive sexual role has given way to more assertive sexual behaviour. She is no longer used for breeding purposes or for the satisfaction of male desire. With the spread of birth control and the growth of female independence, it has become fashionable to insist that both male and female must be assured of total sexual gratification within their marriage.

These socio-economic and ethical changes have put woman on a more equal footing with man, liberating her from the social taboos and conventional fetters. It has provided her much-delayed sense of dignity, individuality, self-respect and self-worth. The employment of women is, in itself, a progressive development. It is the prior condition to the liberation of women from the narrow confines of hearth and home, and their full and free development as human beings and indispensable members of society. With this, the established notion of male's supremacy over female has been challenged. No longer are women, at least in the advanced capitalist
countries, content to be kept in ignorance and to submit passively to the traditional role of ‘Kirche, Kücher and Kinder’ (Church, Kitchen and Children).

As far as Osborne’s attitude to woman is concerned, it is often understood to be negative by most of the critics. They take him for a sadist, anti-feminist, closet homosexual and misogynist, but they fail to look at his attitude towards woman from a broader and correct prospective. The drastic socio-economic and ethical changes in the post-war period have brought out radical changes in her behaviour, attitude, sensibility, thought process and lifestyle in relation to the institution of family. The playwright responds to these changes sensitively and portrays them faithfully and artistically in his dramatic constructs. He dramatizes women characters challenging the long-established patterns of the institution of family. He portrays his female characters assuming new roles, discarding the traditional roles as girls, mothers and wives. Osborne seems to be very critical of women when they give more importance to materialistic instincts than maternal ones. He seems to be very critical of the institutional care of children, as he does not find it a healthy substitute of maternal love and care. Whenever a woman breaks out of her customary, or conventional supporting role, Osborne regards her with suspicion. To him, a strident woman may seem mannish, but has only assimilated what is mean in men. In a preachy Daily Mail piece, entitled “What’s Gone Wrong with Women?” he puts it: “gleaming with the colours of male arrogance (woman) becomes an iron butterfly.”\(^1\) To him these “iron butterflies” are with harsh and ungenerous motherhood. Luc Gilleman observes that in Osborne’s value system, “the masculine constitutes the larger category that encompasses the feminine; whereas woman may find it hard to express herself in the masculine ways without losing her femininity and becoming an “iron butterfly.”\(^1\) In the dramatic world of Osborne, “gender pertains to a value system rather than to biological sex.”\(^1\) Feminine and masculine are terms that summarize a complementary number of positive and negative qualities that provide the necessary polarized tension around which an argument can be built. The playwright dramatizes the new woman altering the long-established patterns of family in the plays discussed under.
In the post-war decade, we perceive a dash of revolt in the educated woman against the cramping social codes and conventions. She tries to assert her freedom and individuality while taking important decisions of her life. In *Look Back in Anger*, Alison, the educated girl from the upper middle class, falls in love with Jimmy's bright looks and renders all the barriers of class and conventions inconsequential by marrying him. On the part of Alison, it is an act of unshackling herself from the cramping conventions at her home where she finds it difficult to express her emotions in the desired way. Though she faces a strong opposition from her parents who fight tooth and nail to avert the marriage, she does not budge even an inch from her stand. On the part of her parents, it amounts to rebellion, which is evident in their reaction: "Well, the howl of outrage and astonishment went up from the family, and that did it." Primarily, Alison marries Jimmy to live an independent life full of fun and fervour, disregarding, for the time being, the material comforts to which she has hitherto become accustomed. But in the face of day-to-day oddities of life, Alison soon comes to realize that there is "not much social life" (p.65) with Jimmy. She, now, seems to regret her decision: "Well, after Jimmy and I were married, we'd no money---about eight pounds ten in actual fact---and no home. He didn't have even a job" (p.42). It implies that she has now come to realize the significance of economic security that she has hitherto enjoyed with her parents. She comes to know that economic insecurity is more important than emotional security. Primarily, she seems to be swayed by her emotions in exercising her freedom, but with the passage of time, she comes to realize the practical aspects of her life. In the dramatic world of Osborne, the married woman, trapped in matrimony, feels restive with her husband with poor social and financial background.

The playwright highlights, through Alison, another dimension of the educated woman's behavioural pattern that she tries to protect and preserve her self, resisting to the authoritarian attitude of her husband. Jimmy asks Alison for a complete allegiance to his viewpoint in all respects, but she refuses to submit to him: "I can't bring myself to feel the way he does about things," (p.42) perceiving that he intends to reduce her to a nonentity by seeking an unquestioning allegiance to him in all quarters of life. Finding her indifferent to his concerns and convictions, Jimmy comes out with verbal
assaults against her and everything that she represents. In the beginning, she seems to be tolerant with his unbecoming behaviour, but, gradually, she begins to counter his taunts and tirades by either adopting a posture of silence or verbal retaliation. The few times she braves a response, it is met with anger and derision. She refuses to signal her agreement, as she knows that he will think that she is simply trying to appease him. Alison tells Cliff: “I knew just what he meant” (p.28). This is why, most of the time she remains silent, keeping him at bay. Alison’s behavioural pattern and thought process give the impression that the educated woman no longer believes in the myth of self-sacrifice, or self-effacement. She considers her self and identity above all her relations---familial or social ones.

The way Alison looks at the needs and demands of Jimmy may be perceived as the indication of acceptance and tolerance---this may also imply a superior scorn towards the raucous and rough conduct of her husband. Martin Banham, though, contends: “Alison’s tolerance of him seems rather like...patronage with which society has given him a white tile education, pretensions to usefulness and then denied him an effective role.” At another level, Alison’s quietness may simply signify lack of life, spirit and personality. She may simply be a “Lady Pusillanimous,” (p.21) and her tranquility seems to be that of a quiescent beauty. Jimmy finds Alison “a refined sort of butcher” (p.24) despite her physical exquisiteness. Jimmy tells Helena: “My wife...Sweet and sticky on the outside, and sink your teeth in it, all white, messy and disgusting” (p.49). But the problem with Jimmy is that Alison is not what he is looking for. In a peculiar way, he seeks love, warmth and generosity from her, but finds frostiness, superciliousness and unresponsiveness. Anne Karpf puts it: “The overwhelming impression is now one of rampant misogyny and pervasive sexism.” But the critic has failed to determine the impact of fast-changing socio-economic and ethical conditions on their relationships. The playwright attributes this transformation to the socio-economic and ethical scenario of the post-war period which brings about drastic changes in the attitude of woman in particular and of society in general towards the authority.
Alison's attitude to Jimmy's authority can be viewed in her perceptible apathy and aloofness to his needs and demands. Jimmy, time and again, tries to haul out response from Alison in respect of certain issues, but she, most of the time, prefers keeping mum to responding to him in the way he desires, because his queries to her seem to be inconsequential and irrational. She is essentially a quiet, well-bred person who refuses to submit to his authoritarian attitude. Katherine J. Worth talks of "Alison's withdrawing behind a façade of detached indifference." The more she remains silent, the more he becomes furious like a wounded lion. Alison, however, has a good reason to pull back into herself. If Jimmy urges her to respond, it is not so much to hear her thoughts as to take the soundings of his own being. Kenneth Allsop observes that it is "her quiescence that drives him to an almost insane pitch of frustrated loathing." Alan Carter thinks that "it is her lack of response and affection towards Jimmy which causes him to treat her so badly." Wayland Young, though, sides up with Alison, describing Jimmy as "an objectionable young man who constantly tyrannizes his wife." The critic feels himself strengthened in his opinion about them by Helena's advice to Alison: "Listen to me. You've got to fight him, or get out. Otherwise, he will kill you" (p.47). But in this context, the observation of Luc Gilleman is pertinent: "It is her way of resisting him and of saving her selfhood."

Alison's consciousness of selfhood is perceptible in the way she goes on with her wishes, ignoring the concerns and conviction of Jimmy. On the whole, Alison refuses to come to terms with Jimmy and his lifestyle; rather she goes on her own ways, furthering his bitterness and bile. She continues her ironing work despite his appeal to stop all this: "Well I'm sorry, but can't just stop everything because you want to listen to music" (p.22). Also, she articulates her revulsion to his tooting of the trumpet by calling it a "damned trumpet" (p.41). She receives Helena in the face of his angry opposition to the latter. Jimmy is so much exasperated with the Church that even ringing of the bells infuriates him, but Alison accompanies Helena to church against his wishes. Alison's concept of autonomy gets reflected in the way she goes by her own desires and dictates, leaving him fretting and fuming at each and every thing that pinches him profoundly. In the post-war decade, the educated woman does not believe in the myth of an ideal wife.
Alison does not adore Jimmy as the sole source of her lifeline or emotional support. When she comes to realize that her husband is indifferent to her wifely concerns and needs, she does not display any inhibition while turning to Cliff for emotional support. Alison keeps no faith in the traditional rights of woman: "I gave up believing in the divine rights of marriage long ago. Even before I met Jimmy" (p.89). Sexually frustrated, she does not submit to the desires of her husband, and refuses to entertain him: "Well, you’ll have to wait till the proper time" (p.33). The new woman does not let her husband disregard her needs and wishes. Whenever he does so, she finds him intolerable and incompatible. It not only creates emotional void between them, but also makes family environment tense. Osborne suggests that mutual trust and tolerance can go a long way in shaping the marital ties between the diametrically opposite husband and wife.

Still another dimension of the new woman is reflected in the attitude of Alison when she becomes pregnant. She does not share the fact with her husband, thinking that he will feel obliged by looking after her and the baby. Moreover, for her, pregnancy is "a bit of shock," (p. 28) as she does not like to have a baby, may be on the personal or financial grounds. Alison tells Cliff: "It's always been out of question. What with---this place, and. no money, and oh---everything. He resented it. I know. What can I do?" (p.29). She seems to be holding the view the baby will not only curtail her freedom, but also put an extra burden on her purse. Suffering from economic insecurity, she demeans her maternal instincts. Though she does not like to have a baby, she can't get it aborted, as abortion in the fifties was illegal. But Jimmy thinks that Alison, having enjoyed an easy life before the marriage, is averse to carrying out familial duties and responsibilities. Viewing her casual attitude to life, Jimmy snubs Alison:

"It's no good trying to fool yourself about love. You can’t fall into it like a soft job, without dirtying up your hands...If you can't bear the thought of messing up your nice, clean soul...you'd better give up the whole idea of life, and become a saint....Because you'll never make it as a human being. It's either in this world or the next. (pp.93-94)"
With the passage of time, the communication gap between them increases so much that Alison refuses to share Jimmy's agonies—real or imaginary, staying indifferent and irresponsible to his anguish and anxiety. Fed up with Jimmy's tirades, she feels suffocated and tries to escape the situation, but finds it hard to take a step to leave the "madhouse." (p.47) thinking that after leaving him she will find it difficult to settle her life on her own. It will be extremely difficult for her to cope up with the inevitable exigencies of the lone life that she is supposed to live after separation from her husband. As for her parents, she has already turned hostile to them, and now dare not look into their eyes to seek the needed financial help to start her life afresh. But Helena persuades her against Jimmy's indecorous attitude and behaviour: "You've got to make up your mind what you're going to do. You're going to have a baby, and you've a few responsibility. Before, it was different—there was only yourself at stake. But you can't go on living in this way any longer" (p.46).

Alison, exhorted by Helena, makes up her mind to leave Jimmy at any cost whether her decision destroys the prospects of her own welfare or welfare of the baby in her womb, though her father Colonel Redfern tries to draw her attention to the inevitability of her decision: "This's a big step you're taking. You've made your mind to come back with me? Is that really you want?" (p.68). But she finds it thorny to live with Jimmy according to his terms. Alison confides to Redfern: "Some people do actually marry for revenge. People like Jimmy anyway. Or perhaps he should have been another Shelley, and can't understand now why I'm not another Mary, and you're not William Godwin. He thinks he's got sort of genius for love and friendship--on his own terms" (p.67).

Alison tries to liberate herself from the authoritarian husband, but fails to gather courage to do so without the help of Helena. It should not be taken to mean that she readily surrenders her individuality to her husband's point of view. She reacts to the verbal assaults of Jimmy in her own way by maintaining, most of the time, her quietness which acts as a weapon to counter Jimmy's improper and insulting behaviour. Like her mother and friend, Helena she does not go violent, but her silence is more effective and piercing than their violence. In the last, she seems to surrender
to her husband, but it is only for emotional support, not to acquiesce to his ideas and ideology. As Patricia A. Denison writes: “Alison’s return to Jimmy is not merely demeaning, because she recovers a mode of action and control along a new mode of access to more positive aspects of Jimmy.” Broadly speaking, one facet of emancipation maintaining her individuality—is the most significant dimension of the woman-family relationship in Look Back in Anger.

The liberated woman in the fifties gives more importance to her freedom and career than the social and familial duties. This dimension of the new woman is portrayed through the character of Helena Charles. She, the stage actress, goes a step ahead of Alison. She does enter into wedlock for the sake of her career, but does not feel hesitation and inhibition in establishing sex relations with Jimmy. At no stage, however, does she allow her values to be questioned by him. She believes all along that her love is sinful, “utterly wrong.” (p.89) as she tells Alison, and she comes to realize, in the end, that Alison has “all the rights,” (p.88) and will have to come back. Helena says: “I still believe in right and wrong! Not even the months in this madhouse have stopped me doing that. Even though everything I have done is wrong” (p.89). John Russell Brown rightly observes: “Whereas Jimmy lives at war with the conventions, and believes that sincerity alone can govern human relationships, Helena is equally true that the ‘book of the rules’ is necessary to sanity.” In the post-war period, the new woman, be dependent or independent, does not let her husband or man invade her individuality.

In the post-war Britain, the educated girl refuses to go by the concerns and conventions of her family. No longer tied to home and family, she finds a true meaning of her life in the freedom of job or career. She gives more importance to her career than marriage. Jean Rice in The Entertainer lives by herself in London away from her family, and does not even embrace the idea of being dependent on her family or others for aid or advancement in life. She demonstrates her freedom by smoking cigarettes, consuming beer or gin and taking independent decisions keeping in view her future prospects. Jean breaks off her engagement with her fiancé, Graham Todd after a minor dispute with him. In response to a query, Jean tells Phoebe: “We’d a
slight disagreement. Nothing more, that's all.” Jean sheds off inhibition and hesitation of Alison and goes extremely against the wishes of her fiancé. She can be described as an independent woman rather than the adored darling of male supremacy. The playwright, through the role of Jean, presents the educated woman busting the myth of romantic love, or courtship.

In the dramatic world of the playwright, the educated girl wishes to liberate herself economically from her family and wants to pursue a career to establish her identity and individuality. Jean, being a talented girl, wants to become a successful woman on her own. Her grandfather, Billy Rice commends her for lofty ideas and higher ideals: “You’re a good girl, Jean. You’ll get somewhere. You’ll not like the lot in this house. You’ll do something for yourself.”(p.20). Jean gives more importance to her vocation than family relationships and responsibilities; whereas her fiancé wishes to confine her to domesticity. But she finds it rather difficult to cope up with the domineering attitude of her fiancé who not only overlooks her potentialities, but also tries to impinge upon her individuality. Jean tells Phoebe “That was more or less Graham’s feeling about it…he put it a bit differently. It all started over something. I wanted to do, and then… lot of things. All kinds of bitterness—things I didn’t ever know existed” (p.28). It is obvious that Jean does not perceive chances of an independent and meaningful life in the rigid matrimony with Graham. The career-conscious woman forgoes or forsakes her traditional role as wife to find meaning and significance of her life in the outer world but the new role not only deprives her of conjugal love, but also undermines the reproductive function of the family.

Jean undertakes the challenging assignment of teaching art to “a gang of moronic teenagers” (p.28) in order to demonstrate her ability and aptitude, though it is not a money-spinning enterprise: “But… something made me want to have a go at it. There wasn’t any money in it. Just a few shillings for a few nights a week” (p.28). It is obvious that she prefers the difficulties of an authentic survival to a dishonest compromise. She continues to work at this assignment even despite all the discouragements and oppositions:
The Club leader thought that I was mad, and so did Graham...I fought those kids back....Most of time I have loathed that I didn't, but I did. I hated them, but think I was getting somewhere. And now Graham wants me to marry him....He doesn't want me to try something for myself. He does not want me to threaten him, or his world, he doesn't want me to succeed. (p.29)

Jean prefers building up her career to getting herself tied to the rigid matrimony: “...I refused him. Then it all came out---Trafalgar Square and everything” (p.29). Her father, Archie Rice makes satiric comments on her decision: “Well, I would have thought engagement were a bit suburban for intellectuals like you anyone. You’ll be getting a motor-cycle and side-car next” (p.38). Against the comments her father, Jean retorts: “I’m not upset and I haven’t made a decision about anything yet....Never mind about me” (p.39). It is obvious that she does not let anybody interfere in her personal or professional matters, but this attitude is not devoid of negative repercussions on love, trust and understanding which provide a strong foundation to a healthy existence.

The practical-minded girl does not like to be adored as darling under the male authority. This view of the educated girl is reflected in the attitude of Jean that she refuses to be swayed by the seemingly emotional appeal of Graham. He approaches her with an apology, but she has already made up her mind to reject him: “I’m so sorry. Graham....I told you I’d really made up my mind before I left. I can’t marry you, and I don’t want to any more” (p.80). Despite that Graham yet again tries to woo her by offering prospects of a bright future: “Oh, this is just rubbish.... I’ve got a quite decent career lined up. We would have everything we want. Come back with me. Jean”(p.84). But she is determined not to back away from her stand: “It’s your background and you were brought up in it, but there are better, more worthwhile things in life” (p.84). It is distinct that Jean’s relations with Graham are based purely on physical plane for the sake of companionship. Katharine J. Worth remarks that Jean perpetuates “relationships on a purely physical level.”26 No romantic scales undo her vision. But in the end, she undergoes a sea transformation in her attitude and behaviour and decides to stay with her family to look after her step-mother in the declining years. Katharine J. Worth comments: “The tragic events of the play, Billy’s death, killing of Mick, Bring home to Jean the primary importance of right feeling:
she expresses her need for it by breaking with her fiancé.” Jean refuses to commit emotional suicide by returning to Graham. It signifies that she, at last, realizes the need of family life to have a sustained emotional support.

In this play, Osborne also highlights through Phoebe the predicament of a woman trapped in the conventional matrimony. Phoebe, discontented with her lot, wishes to get rid of the life of penury and problems, but finds it tough to get relieved of drudgery with her husband’s paltry income as music-hall comedian. She, weary of miserable life, seems to lose interest in her husband. Phoebe tells Jean: “I’m just sick of being with down and outs, I’m sick of it, and people like him” (p.40). However, she knows that her husband is running after women, she poses to be unconcerned with his anomalous behaviour: “And if I mention the women, it was just because the same thing with them. It’s never bothered me, that, so much. It’s never a great deal to me, not when I was young” (p.47). Her problems are compounded by a social fact of the single motherhood being considered as a stigma in the fifties. Confined to the traditional matrimony, she gets more frustrated and most often behaves unusually: “She usually becomes distracted and depressed. sitting on the edge of her chair, twisting her fingers around her hair” (p.25). It is evident that she gets so much frustrated with her lot that she turns into a difficult person.

Phoebe becomes restless in the company of other members of family while no one seems to be interested in her oft-repeated things. She yearns to enjoy life to the full, but the life with her husband does not seem to promise her to get her desires materialized: “I do not want always to have to work. I mean you want a bit of life before it’s all over. It takes the gilt off if you know you’ve got to go on till they carry you out in a box” (p.40). Jean tries to console her: “Things have been tough. But be sensible, you’ve got to keep on,” (p.48) but she reacts sharply: “Don’t tell me to be sensible, Jean” (p.48). Phoebe’s continuous lamenting over her lot or longing for comfortable life makes the domestic environment unbearable and uncomely. About her temperament, Billy tells Jean: “...still if she stays in she only gets irritable. And I can’t stand rows. Not any more. No use arguing with Phoebe anyway” (p.16). Disgruntled with the existing lifestyle, she resorts to heavy drinking and creates
uncomely scenes under the influence of gin or beer. Her mind is often obsessed with real or imaginary fears and concerns that prevent her from concentrating on the family affairs. The woman of the post-war period yearns to lead a comfortable life. If it is not possible with her husband, she feels discomfort that prevents her from engaging in any meaningful activity and healthy interaction with other members of her family.

Still another woman, in this play, is Jean's mother, or Archie’s former wife who refuses to cope up with the adulterous husband and leaves him in a huff having caught him up in bed with another woman, Phoebe. Archie tells Jean: “You’d....Your mother walked out, she walked out just like that” (p.70). Being a woman of strong convictions and principles, she never excuses Archie for his double-crossing conduct and sexual exploits. She gets so much shocked that she dies a few months later. Archie tells Jean: “She was what you'd call a person of—a person of principle. She knew how people should behave, and there were no two things about it. She never forgave me my any way” (p.70). It is presented as obvious that a woman of moral convictions can not tolerate sexual transgression on the part of her husband. We also feel that Jean in a way extends the concept of maintaining woman's individuality a step farther from Alison's stage when she leaves her fiancé on this count. Phoebe remains trapped and is unable to assert her individuality though she tries to make Archie give due consideration to her needs. Jean's mother, given her age and time, takes quite a radical step to leave Archie.

In the sixties, sexual revolution has brought out spectacular changes in the behaviour and attitude of British woman. It has liberated woman from the constraints of the Victorian ideology with its oppressive double standard in which non-marital sex was alright for man and not for woman. Man can no longer assume, with the active support of the respectable society, that his mate would stay loyal and virtuous in both deed and appearance, and the married state has weakened by the death of this assumption. Young married women have begun to underplay the traditional role of perspective pillars of decorous society to assume a new role as leaders of fashion and makers of new patterns of social behaviour. As Janet Roebuck observes:
A woman was no longer expected to be chaperoned everywhere but could now move around freely, alone or in the company of either of a male or male friends. In this easier social atmosphere, some daring women began to smoke publicly to symbolize this new independence and fashion echoed the prevailing mood with less cumbersome clothings and necklines.

In the sixties, besides sexual revolution, the rapid technological advancement and a host of liberal social legislations have brought about dramatic changes in the attitude and behaviour of British woman towards marriage and family. She has become more and more discreet and vocal in the expression of sexuality and selection of career. But at the same time she seems to be least interested in carrying out her traditional duties. Moreover, most of the social and cultural movements during this period fed the anti-family mood. Feminists like Shulamith Firestone and Juliet Mitchell and the radical social scientists like Barington Moore suggested that the family should be given a decent burial. The radical psychiatrist, R.D. Laing was also eager to proceed with the burial. The family is “a nest of oppression and pathology” to them. This mood of rebellion can be viewed in the way she asserts her freedom and individuality in the selection of career and articulation of sexuality. If she is compelled to have sexual union, it amounts to sexual harassment, and such behaviour on the part of her husband is “inordinate and revolting” to her. Besides, she wants to get maximum sexual satisfaction without surrendering individuality to her husband.

The playwright responded to these changes sensitively and treated them artistically and faithfully in his plays. In *Inadmissible Evidence*, Anna Maitland refuses to cope up with the adulterous behaviour of her husband, Bill Maitland who keeps a mistress and a number of casual female lovers—married, engaged and single. Peeved with the sexual indiscretions of her husband, she lives independently and carries out her programmes without seeking any sort of help and support from him. She makes arrangements on her own for the celebrations of their daughter’s birthday weekend. Maitland remarks: “Anna’s fixed some crazy do for the entire weekend for the girl’s birthday” (p.33). Moreover, she seems to be indulged in seemingly status-enhancing pursuits, disregarding family affairs. Maitland wonders: “Why else should she arrange this daft junket? She does not like the kids’ chums any more than I do. It’ll all jazz and noise and black leathers and sour teenage squalor and necking”
The new woman of the sixties prefers enjoying social life to staying at home with an unsocial husband. She becomes more and more conscious of self-esteem and self-image. If she finds that her husband is tarnishing her image and neglecting her needs, she does not think twice to abandon him to have self-fulfilment or self-perpetuation.

The woman of the mid-sixties goes on her own ways to make the most of her life, least bothered of what her husband and others think about her pursuits of self-interest or self-perpetuation. She finds home or family diametrically opposite to her notion of freedom. In this play, Anna evinces a keen interest in the pop music and noisy celebrations that she holds as matter of social prestige. She despises her husband for his declining social and professional image. She is so much absorbed in the seemingly status-enhancing pursuits that she becomes oblivious of the needs of her children. Maitland tells Hudson: “I do not think Anna is quite as absorbed in her children as yours. I mean, she has not turned their growing up into some protracted act of holy communion that’ll end up with an empty chalice and hot flashes when she’s fifty” (p.42). It is obvious that both the husband and the wife are poles apart in their lifestyles, tastes and temperaments. These differences not only create sexual incompatibility between them, but also make them oblivious of their joint responsibility of minding the children.

In the face of parental conflict, children deprived of due amount of love and care suffer from emotional insecurity that puts an undesirable effect on their sensibility. Jane, the daughter, poses to be too mature and self-sufficient to need his presence or help in carrying out her pursuits. Maitland tells Hudson: “...Anyway, too old and too sophisticated and too unhampered by anything in particular need my presence at her birthday for two whole days” (p.33). Besides, she considers it as a matter of disgrace to accept him as a father at home or in the public. She tries to avoid him, especially when she is surrounded by her friends. It is not only the daughter, but the son also develops into an egocentric adult, losing interest in his parents and concerns of adult life. He behaves like a stoic as and when Maitland meets him in the hostel where the latter stays against the wishes of the former. Maitland tells Hudson:
"...Do you know that the boy actually wanted to go away to boarding school. I told him he was crazy. But he could not wait. He writes dull and beady letters all about house matches and photographic societies....It is like having a priest in the family" (p.41). Thus, gender-conflict not only leads to marital disharmony, but puts an adverse impact on the growth of children. Osborne highlights the problem of childcare in the face of parental conflict or estrangement. The play suggests that mutual trust and tolerance between the husband and wife can go a long way in creating a congenial environment at home where children may grow healthily.

In the dramatic world of Osborne it is not only the wife, but the mistress is also conscious of her rights. In her social relations, she is largely governed by reason, not by passion. She gives more importance to the financial position of her lover than his emotions and concerns. She does not believe in the myth of romantic love, and has become more assertive and practical in her approach to life and needs. She ceases to be an embodiment of coyness, comfort, delicacy, romance and tenderness. Maitland's mistress, Liz has "an immaculate idea of her rights as mistress" (p.35). She enjoys sex with Maitland, but she does not feel bound to him through thick and thin. Primarily, Maitland gets involved with her with a purpose to make her share his pains and privations, but, with the passage of time, he finds her more and more exacting. Instead of enjoying her company in real terms, he feels uneasy with her uncaring attitude. Confronted with dryness, rudeness, and suffocation, he comes to recognize that "mistresses are less tolerant than wives...they're also less patronizing but totally without generosity" (p.65). It is obvious that Maitland, at last, comes to realize the importance of stable marital ties.

In the sixties, with the sexual revolution, the British woman has become more assertive and more vocal in the expression of her sexuality, losing all the inhibitions of her counterpart in the fifties. Like a traditional girl, Maitland's receptionist, Joy does not believe in the notion: "You lose a man's respect, you lose your own sense of respect and all that load of rubbish" (p.72) for asking him for sex. For her "to make admission" about sex "is no shame" (p.72). Expression of sexuality is another dimension of the behavioural pattern of the new woman. Joy enjoys sex with Maitland

In the sixties, the professional woman does not consider marriage to be necessary to have pleasures of sex. She seems to be averse to any commitment to marriage and family. Moreover, she does not consider it as a serious matter to be pregnant before marriage. Maitland’s secretary, Shirley, though unmarried, does not display any inhibition while establishing physical relations with him. She is engaged, but marriage has “always been the idea” (p.47) only a notion, but the free pursuit of sex denounces the significance and sanctity of the institution of marriage. It is evident that her new-found freedom is devoid of commitment and responsibility towards the family. Unbridled freedom of sexual expression hits very hard at the roots of the institution of family. Through Joy and Shirley the playwright dramatizes the new woman denouncing the role of marriage for sex and children.

The emancipated woman of the sixties refuses to tolerate the adulterous behaviour and cruelty of her husband. This view of the woman is vividly portrayed in the lawsuits of divorce that Maitland, as a barrister, entertains. Most of the suits are petitioned by the aggrieved women who seem to have been forfeited of their sexual autonomy. They seek divorce primarily on the grounds of infidelity, sexual cruelty and mental harassment, sadism, aversion to sex, etc. They have resolved to dispense with the men once they loved because they can no longer put up with their demands for affection, assurance and attainment of sexual fulfillment. Mrs. Rose seeks divorce on the grounds of cruelty and excess of sexual demands on the part of her husband. Mrs. Garnsey, the next petitioner, grudges that the dilapidated position of her husband is depriving her of due and dignified status. Garnsey makes a deposition to Maitland: “I know everyone’s drawing from him.... Now: I’m doing the same thing....I can’t bear to see him rejected and laughed at and scorned behind his back and ignored--- And now it’s me. I’ve got to leave of him” (p.55). Not only that, but she also anticipates her future secured in “maintenance and alimony” (p.54) that she claims in the suit. She declines to admit that she is the sole source of his present predicament:
“Well, I disappoint him. But no more than he disappoints himself” (p.55). The Divorce Act has made provisions of alimony to woman in case of separation, but at the same time it has made her less responsive and less responsible towards the institutions of marriage and family.

Mrs. Tonks, another client, indicts that her husband is “a man of excessive sexual appetite,” (p.78) but the husband, in the counter-argument, contends that she considers sex to be “nasty and messy” thing and abhors to “have another child” (p.80) even though the Marriage Council has advised her to bear another baby to ward off the marital relations from further deterioration. Another client, Mrs. Anderson articulates her umbrage that he has spoiled her life by lusting after “mistresses all over London”(p.84) during his office tours. Instead of rotting away at home with a sexually starved husband, she prefers to undertake “elocution and dancing” (p.82) as career, but the husband strongly opposes her new role. Moreover, she relies on “National Assistance” (p.85) for subsistence. She further complains that “the defendant has given me housekeeping a short period of about a fortnight....He slept in another room for a few weeks, but he used to cry quite often and it kept me awake” (p.82). She feels aversion to housekeeping even for a short period, if it conflicts with her notion of freedom. Even more, she can not tolerate any disturbance from her husband. But, in the end, having undergone the ordeal of the lone life, she seems to realize the lapses on her part: “I wish I could have done better. That I could go back”(p.88). It is evident that the pangs of emotional insecurity propel her to seek relief in the stable marital life. The way Anderson realizes her lapses signifies that she has after all come to understand the significance of stable marital life. The playwright suggests that love, faithfulness, trust and understanding can go a long way in shaping marital bonds.

It is crystal clear that the new woman challenges the male supremacy and his domineering attitude. She finds wifehood and motherhood contrary to her freedom to pursue career or enjoy life to the full. Moreover, the new woman refuses to bear with the adulterous or sexually demanding husband. For her, sex against her wishes is tantamount to harassment, cruelty, and offence. Whenever she thinks that her husband is averse to her satisfaction, she does not hesitate to leave him to get meaningful
opportunities to find life. She is no longer committed to a single man to realize her biological needs. Under the Welfare State, the provision of financial assistance to a single or separated woman seems to prompt the incidents of separation and divorce. But her new behaviour smacks of selfishness to the extent that she does not think beyond her freedom and physical needs. Moreover, her husband is averse to submit to her wishes and whims. As a result, there ensues a gender-conflict which often leads to an unhealthy environment where children feel emotionally insecure.

In the late sixties, the liberal social and legislative reforms have provided woman with greater freedom to exercise her free will in respect of career and selection or rejection of spouse, but it has also brought in its tail the divorce boom. E.A. Johns observes: “There has been a noticeable move away from rigid, closed and predetermined patterns of husband-wife relationship towards looser, open, more pragmatic life styles.” 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 her to dispel the myth of the maternal instinct. In the context of woman’s emancipation, Carol Pearson and Katherine Pope describe four societal myths—“the myth of sex differences, the myth of virginity, the myth of romantic love, and the myth of self-sacrifice,” which exist no more as powerful factors in the post-war period. Woman is no longer tied to the biological function of reproduction in the same way once she was. As Christie Davies writes:

Under these circumstances the basic female role in society, that of producing children, is devalued the very process for which women were once praised and valued is now seen as a threat to mankind. Giving birth is seen as an activity to be controlled and prevented rather than freely and joyfully indulged in, as a result, the very significance of a woman’s life is threatened and challenged, her status and security eroded.

It is evident that the British woman has achieved freedom from the unwanted pregnancy and incompatible marriage. In the wake of the liberal social legislations, there have appeared dramatic changes in the institutions of marriage and family. On the one hand, women have had the long-awaited freedom, and, on the other, the liberal social laws and changed socio-economic and ethical scenario have boosted the growth of broken homes with emotionally starved children. In Time Present, Pamela,
the stage actress, displays her aversion to the institutions of marriage and family. The reason behind her disinclination to rearing children and upkeep familial relationships is not only the liberal laws, but the socio-economic forces also contribute to the secluded life that she is compelled to live. She aspires to climb up the steps of the professional ladder to lead a dignified life which comes at the first place in the priorities of her life. Despite her famous actor-father in the background, she fails to succeed as an actress on her own terms. Edith tells Pauline: “Still Pamela hasn’t done too badly. Having a famous father may not have always helped her. It’s hard to tell.”

It seems that he has done very little to train her mind in the way she may pace up with the time and become a successful actress in the eyes of the world. Edith tells Pauline: “I could never make out what he really wanted for Pamela...when I said she ought to get a good degree and a profession, he wasn’t too keen on that either. Still she might have spent fifteen years or so, like I did, training her mind to end up washing nappies and getting up coal” (pp.15-16).

Presently, Pamela is out of job, partly because of her sense of self-respect, or partly because of the changed cultural scenario. Being a serious actress, she develops no taste and temperament for the currently emerged and much sought after “rave” programmes where people dance to fast electronic music and often take drugs. She holds that such parties provide nothing, but din and noise, and obscenity and vulgarity in abundance. But another actress, Abigail stoops to that point to achieve pleasure and popularity in life. Pamela makes herself almost a recluse, finding no consequential and deferential role, on her own terms, as actress. Behind her stoicism, equally influential is maternal deprivation which appears to have engendered in her so much aversion to marriage and family that she turns into a difficult person.

Presently, Pamela shares a flat with a divorcee friend of hers, Constance and leads a carefree life, drinking heavily and sleeping too much even in the day time. Even though she is in her early thirties, she is still a spinster, but she is understood to be in lesbian relations with Constance. Pamela is a fervent supporter of feminism; in her the feminist propensities characterized by an aversion to marriage and motherhood and a tinge of lesbianism. Lesbianism is quite normally allied with the
Women's Liberation Movement. Feminists insist on the "right of women to determine their own sexuality." Extremes zealots go far as to assert that a woman can find emotional and sexual fulfillment only in relationship with another woman, but it has its own risk: "Despite the Sex Discrimination Act, to be lesbian entails the risk of losing your job, alternating family and friends and, if you are a mother, losing the custody of your children in the event of separation and divorce, since your sexuality seen as abnormal".

In the post-war period, especially in the late sixties, women express freedom of sexuality in the form of lesbianism. No doubt, they find emotional support in this relationship, but it is divested of any commitment and responsibility towards family. It deprives her not only of reproductive functions, but also denies her a healthy substitute for the opposite sex. With this new role, woman tends to behave like man and loses the virtues of tenderness and tolerance. Lesbianism delivers a great blow not only to the institution of family, but also to the healthy emotional fulfilment of the individual. It is against this context that a study of Pamela's character becomes a revelation of the new woman in her dramatic context.

In the dramatic world of the playwright, the emancipated woman finds rearing children not only irksome, but also an extra burden on her purse. Pamela does not find it an interesting affair to look after children. She attributes this disinclination and disinterestedness to the socio-economic and cultural conditions. Pamela tells Constance: "I couldn't afford a child in a property owning democracy. I'd have to have loads of nannies....But I'd have to be always working to pay for the nannies, and that wouldn't work at all" (p.39). She does not mind having a son, but she may not be able to look after him on account of her dwindling career as an actress: "I wouldn't mind having a son. Except I couldn't look after it" (p.39). But it does not imply that she discards her maternal instincts. Pamela tells Murray: "...At least I've not dried like an old prune after all. You've proved that..." (p.65). The new woman seems to be so selfish that she does not think it her moral duty to bring up children. It does not seem to be out of context to quote here E.A. Johns, who highlights the socio-economic factors that prompt a woman to seek work, discarding her family duties:
In the majority of the cases, wives go out to work principally to provide “extras” for the family and for the hose. In addition many women enjoy the independence derived from spending their own money, though nearly in every case they stress the vital importance of the children’s welfare. Such motives and feelings are relatively classless in their impact, given the fact that under modern conditions it is virtually impossible to establish a home on the basis of the husband’s income alone.77

The woman of the sixties refuses to cope with an unfaithful and exploitative sex partner. When she comes to know that he is no longer faithful to her, she loses no time in discarding him. Besides, she does not like to be sexually and socially exploited at the hands of man. Pamela establishes physical relationships with Murray, but leaves him for ever for his feebleness, fickleness and infidelity. She holds that a feeble and unfaithful person like Murray can neither be a good friend nor a life partner. The conversation between Pamela and Murray establishes the fact:

Pamela: Do what you like. If you do, you’re more feeble than I thought.
Murray: You think I’m a feeble man?
Pamela: Oh, yes. Don’t you? (pp.61-62)

The modern woman has succeeded in demolishing her traditional image as a mere sex-object and a means of enjoyment for males. Pamela, with the passage of time, gets disillusioned with males and masculinity for their exploitative nature. To her, they use women as toys to play with, and try “to fix up”(p.44) them and mould them in such a way that they could go by their wishes and whims. She develops so much hatred towards man that she refuses to accompany Murray to parties: “I’ve been meeting interesting people for years” (p.44). She further tells him: “...I owe you no confidence” (p.63). Moreover, she can not afford to be romantic which is evident in the following conversation:

Murray : I do love.
Pamela : Well, even you do...
Murray : What’s it?
Pamela : What is what?
Murray : Haven’t you got anything to say to me?
Pamela : No, Murray. Not Really. We’ve had a good time together, because we’ve hardly been together...
Murray: We could be...
Pamela: Well, we won’t be.... (p.63)
The new woman displays abhorrence even to the idea of being dependent on man to meet her personal expenses; rather she prefers the difficulties of an authentic existence to strike any deceitful conciliation with him. Although Pamela is confronted with pecuniary constrictions, she manages to uphold such a facade that it becomes difficult to suspect her monetary distress. To keep up the veneer she consumes costly wine—Champagne or Dom Perignon. Though she can not afford any money to pay for the ‘Ladies Service,’ she abominates to borrow it from Murray. Pamela tells Murray: “You will lend it to me. No. you wouldn’t. I will borrow it from Bernard. I owe him enough already, but never mind” (p.64). In the last, Pamela, disillusioned with man and his ways, resolves to accompany her homosexual friend, Bernard to France to refresh her life, finding him selfless and compassionate friend. Pamela tells Constance: “...My nice coloured gentleman will be back soon. You’ll like him. He’s frightfully new Statesman. Nice though. Fastidious” (p.67). Murray tries to persuade her to change her mind, but she gives him a curt reply: “I’m not getting out of anything that’s necessarily happened. I’m just getting back to where I used to live, such as it was. Not very much. But I can warm it up after a day or two” (pp.61-62). It is evident that Pamela suffers from emotional insecurity, finding no sustained relationship out of wedlock and family. The way she gets frustrated underlines the significance of stable familial ties for a persistent emotional support.

In the post-war period, the tremendously increased number of full-time working mothers demonstrate that they give more importance to their career than love and care of their children. Individual decisions to work outside the home produce the problem of providing adequate care for children. Greif and Munter comment: “Each career requires a separate major commitment outside the marriage and that dictates crucial trade offs in the marriage as well as in the kind of family life that is then possible.” It, though, is not free from what Mary Farmer suggests: “The obvious pressures of her double role may make her less sensitive to her child’s needs, unable or even unwilling to notice signs of latent stress.” As a result, children suffer from sense of insecurity which acts as a great hindrance in their development as healthy beings. Myrdal and Klein suggest: “Love and security are essential to the
growth of a harmonious personality.\textsuperscript{40} Changing demographic structure and re-housing schemes have restricted the availability of the grandmothers, who are regarded by health visitors and others as the most satisfying minders of young children. If they are left in the care and custody of strangers while the parents are at work, they are tortured with emotional insecurity. As Mary Farmer comments:

The maternal deprivation puts the stunning effects on the personalities of the children.\textsuperscript{41} The separation of infant or a young child from its mother or reliable mother substitute to any length of time prospects....The affectionless personality, unloving and unlovable, afraid to give or receive affection. In extreme cases when a young child lacks opportunities throughout his life in forming or sustaining close personal relationships.\textsuperscript{41}

But, on the other hand, the new feminists, along the Marxist lines, hold that the family is a repressive bourgeois institution. J.B. Elshtain comments: “The family, as a socio-economic unit, is oppressive to its members. Women are especially oppressed by the family.”\textsuperscript{42} Pearson and Pope claim that “twentieth century literature about the female heroes focuses on the discovery by the hero that the conventional role will both destroy her and make her destroyer.”\textsuperscript{43} They perceive that women behave as weaklings because of the existing social order and attitudes, but “the two important disabilities—muscle and motherhood—are biological, not the consequence of a repressive male plot.”\textsuperscript{44} To the opponents of the feminist movement, “a woman’s nature is most fully realized through marriage and motherhood.”\textsuperscript{45} In the starting, the feminists were anti-family, but the feminists of 1980s were pro-family. Some of the earlier feminists such as Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer have appeared to change their attitude by retreating from sexual politics. Juliet Mitchell asserts: “To oppose the family, and to deny men their connection with women, is to deny our own need for connectedness—which is dangerously close to the uncaring male response to the spectre of the aggrieved feminist in his midst”\textsuperscript{46} has been admitted by the feminists.

In the dramatic world of Osborne, the British woman of the late sixties cannot be taken to be an embodiment of love and sacrifice and a figure of tenderness in the traditional sense. The professional woman finds family life contrary to her freedom and individuality. Moreover, she perceives domesticity as an activity that involves
both economic and emotional exploitation. In Time Present, Constance M.P. abandons her marital life for the sake of career as politician. Being a progressive woman, she does not like her husband to obstruct her career. Constance tells Pamela: “He’s got rigid standards. Besides, that’s not what I need” (p.37). The temperamental incompatibility between them leads to sexual frustration which prepares grounds for their divorce. Moreover, she finds bearing and rearing children “like feeling freshly looted each time” (p.39). She keeps the view that man thinks of woman only as a sex object, and wants to keep her within the bounds of sexual activities, letting her off further her career. Constance tells Pamela: “It’s like the way men look at one. Patting you on head if you show sign of being bright, and picking you up and putting you down in their way” (p.37).

For the sake of freedom of self-perpetuation, Constance not only divorces her husband, but also deprives her son of maternal love and care. Deeply engrossed in her political pursuits, she can afford little time to see to the concerns of her son. In the absence of due amount of love and care in the custody of the father, he develops into an egocentric being. She meets him “twice a week,” but does not “often enjoy it much” (p.39). It is evident that maternal deprivation puts a deadening impact on the psyche and sensibility of a child. The playwright highlights the problem of childcare in the face of divorce. Deprived of conjugal and filial love, Constance turns to Pamela and Murray to seek relief in lesbianism and extramarital sex respectively. It is evident that the liberated woman, suffering from emotional insecurity in the face of divorce, finds relief in lesbianism or extramarital sex, but the new relation hits very hard at the roots of the family.

Yet another dimension of the family is unfolded, in this play, in case of Pamela’s mother, Edith who is a highly qualified lady, but fails to pursue any career while staying in the rigid matrimony. To Edith, it is only wastage of education and talent of a woman if she is bounded to marriage: “Of course I can think of is training a woman to the top of her potential and then just off loading her into marriage when she probably at her most useful. Probably at the heights of her powers”(p.16). It is obvious that she regrets her decision of marriage with Gideon Orme. The conflict
between career and wifely duties leads to her separation from the actor-husband who seems to be indifferent to the household duties. After the separation, Edith marries another man to make her life smooth-going, but she finds it difficult to supervise all the children from both the first and the second marriage: “Perhaps it’s just the old problem of remarrying and having more children. Something happens. It’s difficult with the other child” (p.20). After the second marriage, Edith finds it difficult to supervise Pamela in terms of maternal love and care. As a result of a long maternal deprivation, Pamela becomes egocentric and reclusive. In the course of twenty years, long association with male only makes her simply averse to maternal instincts and wifely duties.

The playwright highlights the problem of childcare in the face of divorce or remarriage. It seems difficult for a mother in the second marriage to provide healthy upbringing to all children. Remarriage, which brings with it the problem of adjustment, often also implies that a child experiences at least a temporary span of living with a single parent, which can involve intense emotional stress and material deprivation. Remarriage is fraught with many problems for all the affected parties. Children from one of the marriages are deprived of maternal or paternal love and care. If she stays single after her divorce from the first husband, she has to face the difficulty of carrying out two assignments at the same time. In order to win bread she has to leave her children in impersonal hands to grow into unhealthy beings. Both the tasks require full time commitment which is not possible for a single woman.

The new woman prefers personal pursuits to maternal instincts and family responsibilities. In The Right Prospectus, Mrs. Newbold has a clear outlook on life, opinions of her own and a great ability to adapt herself to the environment. She trivializes the maternal instincts, which society expects from her: “Don’t tell me. When I think of it---nannies, rooms, trying to get away from them.” She intends to join a public school in her middle age. Her pregnancy can be seen as the last attempt by her husband to upset her plans, but, she is, true to her name the new bold woman who wins her way. She tries to put all considerations like wifely duties and maternal instincts subservient to education, career and freedom.
The successful woman in the seventies bids farewell to wifely duties and family responsibilities in order to pursue career or business. In *Very Like a Whale*, Barbara divorces her husband, Jock Mellor to go ahead with her business on her own, because with the husband she finds it very hard to look after the business properly. Unshackled from marriage and male hegemony, she earns fame and fortune in America by establishing "big magazine business." But in this separation, not only the spouses are deprived of conjugal love, but the son by them also of filial love. The boy, suffering from emotional insecurity, loses interest in the parents and joyful activities. Jock meets the son in the hotel room, but the meeting proves dull and dry: "Jock's son is seated opposite him in silence. He is about sixteen, good looking, long haired. Jock is looking out of window at the glum-looking car-parking lot"(p.47). They are "longing to disengage" (p.48) from each other as early as possible. Jock meets her former wife, Barbara in America, and makes an offer for truce. Both seem to regret their rash decision of divorce. They talk about the things of their happy past. In the end, they realize the need of each other. The following conversation reveals their inclination to have reunion:

Jock Mellor : ...Look, shall we have a truce and that drink.
Barbara : Let's. (p.49)

Another dimension of the new woman in the seventies is that she wishes to enjoy life to the full. When she comes to realize that her spouse is averse to her wishes and whims, she does not hesitate to go bitchy against him. In this play, Lady Mellor, the non-careerist, intends to enjoy social life by having interaction with dignitaries at posh parties, because she finds it impossible to lead a lively social life with her seemingly unsocial husband. Jock sarcastically remarks: "...Well, nothing is more lonely than thought of seventy or eighty people about to ring your door bell" (p.13). Apart from this, the spouses are diametrically opposite to each other in terms of tastes and temperaments. His aversion to her assertion of individuality is despicable and irritating to her. He detests the party held at his home in the wake of the award of "Export King" bestowed on him for contribution to technological advancement. In respect of entertaining his wife's guests, he makes sarcastic remarks: "I'll welcome your unwelcome guests. See if I can't pour a martini down her great front," and
makes fun of her dress: “An aggressive, gaudy, big-arsed, damn-you-you-can’t-do-me-down, I’m-a-woman trouser suit” (p. 15). He does not feel impelled to go by her all and sundry wishes:

Jock : I hate these things. You actually enjoy them.
L. Mellor : I like to see a few people.
Jock : People!
L. Mellor : Are you going?
Jock : Well, it’s all pretty vulgar. (p. 14)

Jock asks her to introduce herself as “Mrs.” to the guests, but she dislikes to be called “Mrs.,” as the word conceals her identity; rather she likes to be called “lady.” The following conversation reveals what they think of each other:

Jock : Poor old thing. You can still call yourself Mrs.
L. Mellor: Then they won’t know who I am. I’m part of you, remember? Me. Part of the package... (p. 14)

Jock often overlooks her wishes, thinking them crazy and insignificant, but she tries to force him to pay heed to her needs. When she thinks that her wishes are being disregarded, she goes bitchy against him. Her bitchiness is reflected in the following conversation:

L. Mellor : You enjoy these silences, don’t you?
Jock : What?
Lady Mellor: Don’t pretend you’re deaf...How long is this one going to last?
Jock : There’s not much talk about it there? By now?
Lady Mellor : Why isn’t there? There should be.
Jock : Should. Yes should (She goes over to him and sits on the bed. (p. 26)

In the dramatic world of Osborne, the woman of the seventies, though financially dependent, can not afford to be ignored by her husband. Perceiving that her husband is disinclined to her wifely needs and aspirations, she goes bitchy to the extent that makes the family environment tense and tiresome, putting an adverse impact on the sensibility of the children.

Again, the new woman, trapped in the traditional marriage, desires to live life to the full. Moreover, she refuses not only to cope up with her incompatible husband, but also adopts an aggressive and bitchy stance against him. In Watch It Come Down,
it is Sally, the flopped novelist, who seems to be locked into the incompatible marriage with Ben Prosser. She, suffering from professional frustration, seeks relief from her husband, but he seems to be indifferent to her needs. Finding him highly incompatible, she develops distaste for him. Sally tells Raymond: “Do you know what fun is any more? I used to think I did. It’s rusted up. By people like Ben. All seriousness and newspapers. No frivolity. Not honest, easy, unthinking frivolity. How to be frivolous and impress everyone….I don’t think I ever liked him”49 Moreover, she feels suffocated amidst the dull and dry atmosphere, perceiving that “there’s not much life in the land” (p.17). Dissatisfied and disgruntled, she turns to her homosexual servant-cum-friend, Raymond to enjoy social life, but that is despicable to her husband. Sally tells Ben: “We might even dress up and go to London. Would you hate it, Ben? Your wife with a pouf? After all, I’m leaving you with yours. Only he’s more distinguished than mine.” (p.31). She develops an aversion to the place where her life goes rusted. Sally tells Raymond: “…Ending up in a self-conscious tarted up. Unlikely homes Supplement Railway Station! A caravan would be better. Intimate living. Nothing to do” (pp.11-12).

But Ben is not solely accountable for the repugnant mood of Sally. The problem with Sally is that she becomes so callous and selfish in respect of her demands that she ceases to be responsive and responsible towards her familial duties. Ben tells Sally: “You only accept love. You can’t respond to it…”(p.14). Disillusioned and disgusted with Ben, Sally gets infatuated with Jo: “…We’ll dress in what we want, go where we like think of each other as well as the rest. You are so near. Dear. Don’t let this chance slide. It won’t occur again. Other lives are not the same”(p.45). In the expression of her sexual freedom, she goes to the extent that she even starts hating male bodies, which is reflected in her conversation with Jo: “…I really do love you. I’m tired of the bodies of men. They’ve gone through my life and I’m just like a, oh, closed line, service discontinued. We would go on for as we like…” (p.45). Not only that, but also she displays her distaste for children: “…thanks heaven we’ll have no children, Jo. Jo and Sally—our own offspring”(p.46). In the dramatic world of Osborne, the new woman perceives chances of solace and security in lesbianism, discarding man as the only source of emotional security in her life.
Sally’s sexual frustration becomes so intense that she is bent upon killing him. Ben bursts out: “She’s killed me. She’s killed everything long ago” (p.42). Sally gets so much disgusted with Ben that she adopts an aggressive mood against him. Many times they come to blows over petty disputes. Sally’s violent stance against her husband is reflected in this line: “If you had my balls, I’d have kicked them into the siding” (p.48). Sally is in lesbian relations with Jo, but detests her husband’s extramarital affairs with his ex-wife, Marion. Sally rebukes Marion on the telephone: “Do come down if your runty little legs will stand....And, oh yes, fuck him if you like. In my bed. I doubt if I shall have to watch the spectacle. But there will be others. Goodbye…”(p.34).

But, in the end, she comes to realize the need of Ben when the latter is leaving the world for ever: “Oh. Ben. Don’t go. Don’t leave me. We all. The few of us, need one another”(p.57). It reveals that she comes to realize the value of love, involvement, mutual need and trust for lasting and happy life. Osborne highlights the problem of temperamental incompatibility between the husband and the wife, fracturing marital ties. The playwright suggests that temperamental incompatibilities between spouses can be rendered inconsequential if they come forward with love and loyalty to appreciate the needs of each other.

Another lady, in this play, Marion divorced Ben many years ago, finding him sexually incompatible. She did not think it necessary to go for another marriage for the sake of emotional exchange and sexual pleasure. She left the little daughter with a nanny to look after her, and went out to work in order to manage her family affairs. But now, suffering from an intense emotional insecurity, she establishes physical relations with Ben even after the divorce, disregarding the needs of the little daughter. In the absence of harmonious parental love and care, the daughter has become so much self-centred that she loses interest in her parents. Ben meets the daughter in a hotel, but the meeting turns out cheerless and suffocating: “...we said less and less. I wanted her to go. She wanted to go....I left her at home and we neither of us said a word; just held hands....Isn’t that despicable? How could I face her? (p.38). A divorced woman with a child or children finds it difficult to manage home affairs
along with rearing children healthily. Children brought up in the impersonal hands undermine their personal relations. The playwright highlights the problem of childcare in the single-parent family in the wake of divorce.

In the last, Marion having undergone the ordeal of lone life comes to realize the efficacy of marital harmony. It seems that she divorced Ben in some weak moments, but now likes to reunite with him to have a sustained emotional support and security. Lack of mutual trust led to their divorce and the consequences followed it. Marion regrets her rash decision: “We should have trusted each other. Instead of going our ways. Blindly. Hoping. You can’t hope any longer. Oh, Ben. Come now. Before they all come back and she starts smashing the place up. And I get scared and run. And you give up....Let’s go now. Give ourselves a chance” (p.53). Osborne suggests that love and loyalty can restore harmony to marital life.

The third woman character in the play is Jo who co-habits with her aged lover, Glen. She looks after him happily and seems to be in deep love with him, but she finds him sexually deviant. She does not display her sexual frustration with Glen, though it becomes clear in her sexual perversion. Emotionally she seems to be attached to Glen, but moves to Ben and Sally for sexual satisfaction. She becomes ready to elope with Sally, but the sudden death of Glen breaks her internally. The emotional void created in Jo by the death of Glen makes her so much depressed that she commits suicide by throwing herself before a running train. In the post-war period, the growing trend of live-in relationships discards the significance of family. The fourth woman, Sally’s sister, Shirley is revolutionary by temperament. She whiles away her time in painting pictures. She likes to lead an independent life without burdens of social obligations and responsibilities. Shirley tells Ben: “I know what you think of me. But perhaps you all think too much of personal relationships. One, two, three, four…”(p.35). In the post-war period, cohabitation and single-hood also deliver a heavy blow to the institution of family.

In the seventies, during the second wave of feminism, the new woman in the dramatic world of Osborne intends to get herself unshackled from all man-made conventions and stereotyped ideas, finding marriage, motherhood and masculinity as
great impediment in the realization of her individuality. In *The End of Me Old Cigar*, Lady Regine, the divorcée of several times, is set to bring about revolution in the society to overthrow the age-old regime of man by exposing his hollowness and hypocrisy to the world. The play is a forceful stab at the battle of sexes. In this play, “women, instead of withholding the sex from powerful men, offer them their sexual services in order to discredit them afterwards.” A caricature of feminist hysteria, Lady Regine Frimly intends to lead a revolt for womanhood. For this purpose, she has transformed her country house into a brothel and has recruited women friends as high class prostitutes. Regine cries passionately: “We’re the girls’ Jesuits. Give us a girl for the rest of her grooming, her indoctrination, and I will make her first a whore and then her whole self, her self for life. The prick is just where it is. The cunt is where the heart lies.” In order to topple the man-made world by exposing his pitiful sexual antics, she has equipped her rooms with two way mirrors and cameras.

The traditional concept of woman as subservient to man is challenged in this play. In spite of the satirical undertone that Osborne deliberately cultivates and the final betrayal, the women characters try to present a strong case against the “inexhaustible crop of regrets” they have been forced to reap. Stella, the journalist, remarks: “... we’d had more leisure than most to paint, sing, play the piano, writes poetry, verses, novels, music. What did we get the Brontes and the Ivy Benson Band. That not women invented steam and God but US” (p.24). Jog Fienberg, another member, cries in exasperation: “The mother-home-maker-secretary kind is still what they want, and they won’t believe we’re not” (p.31). The new woman of the seventies finds hearth and home contrary to her notion of freedom. She finds man and manliness as a great obstacle in the realization of her power and potentialities.

Regine does not consider femininity as weakness. She holds the view that woman is so much powerful that she can make or mar the world: “Vulgar and sublime as only woman can achieve. She renounces the thing she loves the most: Octavian, orders, her life, her heart, to go to his bride” (p.12). Regine holds the notion that man is not perfect without woman in any field: “Men invented bordellos, but women perfected the running of them” (p.23). But her ire is that her powers have not been
recognized by man. She hates not only the exploitative and authoritarian nature of man, but also detests imitation of man by woman. She digs a satire at the Shakespearean heroines for imitating men: "...Everyone knows Rosalind and Viola are an oafish Elizabethan's hairy idea of what they want a woman to be poor imitation of men..." (p.13). In order to topple the man-made regime she intends to use the films as "valuable evidence, bombshells, the key to revolution!" (p.15): Her aim is not to bring out social equality, but "social DISHARMONY" (p.25).

The emancipated woman of the seventies displays a great aversion to domesticity, religion, sexual morality and traditions for depriving her of the due place in the world. She hates to undertake domesticity, as it involves not only sexual exploitation, but also economic exploitation of woman. Regine wants her family chores be considered as an economic activity: "As far as women's rights are concerned, you're just a titled show off who needs a good properly paid job to work like the rest of ordinary nine-to-five housewives" (p.15).

Not only domesticity, but the religion also encourages man to exploit powers of woman. She holds the view that man has made the religion and uses it as instrument to exploit woman's power and potentialities. Stella expresses her strong aversion to the Church and religion for propagating innocence of young boys, which is evident in her sardonic remarks to Regine: "I hate these angelic little, well bruised dirty little devils Church propaganda for the innocence of man in his youth." (p.15). Regine mocks at man for his weaknesses and dirty habits: "The Vicar's wife...wants to sack the coir boys and use girls. She says the boys just pick their noses and play with themselves under their shirt little surplices. She says they're so stained the church can't keep up with the laundry bills" (pp.15-16).

In the dramatic world of the playwright, the liberated woman wants to build a regime of women with a new outlook on sexual morality. She holds the view that the conventional sexual morality helps man to exploit woman to his whims and wishes. Hitherto woman’s sexuality has been misused, mocked at and mutilated by man. She, no longer tied to the man-made sexual mores, wants to have full freedom in the area of sex, and likes to establish sex relations with both man and woman. She no longer
wants to be adored as a symbol of sex by man. Now she wants to seduce him with a purpose to establish her own domain. Regine cries: “Oh, some sort of frolicsome revolution or simple old shit hitting the world’s fan I have run this ‘establishment’ if that’s the word, to have enticed almost every man in England” (p.20).

Regine intends to sweep off all the man-friendly ideas and ideology; and creed and conventions, as they are root cause of discrimination against woman. She intends to invent new ideas and ideology free from the influence of man. She keeps the conviction that man and his ideas are vague, arbitrary and discriminatory which help him in mocking at woman. Regine mocks at Stan, her unmarried life partner-cum agent for his vagueness: “He doesn’t talk a lot but when he does I often don’t understand him at all. He even uses ones he doesn’t understand” (p.18).

The new woman does not believe in the myth that man is the mainstay in the development of human society. To her, the role of woman has not only been overlooked, but also relegated to the background. Regine expresses an immense faith in the powers and potentialities of woman: “Remember, think of us. US. Women. Half the world. That rocked the cradle could bring down the chop for all time, or long enough” (p.20). Though she is the real builder of the society, she is taken to be parasite on man. On the other hand, man entirely relies on her efforts for initiation and development in any field. She mockingly uses the phrases “the pillar of the society” and “paragons of public life” (p.21) to expose his hollowness, hypocrisy and ugliness. She holds that in reality he is ‘the killer of the society’ and ‘dragon of public life’.

Regine is very much enthusiastic and hopeful about the positive outcome of her mission: “Well, that flag (of man) won’t fly much higher. It’s coming down in all its tatters and tyranny. We will be the mast, the mast of women, flying our flag” (p.23). She picks up fresh girls with new outlook on sexuality in particular and on society in general, opposed to the conventional sexual morality, to make it a grand success. Regine thinks that these girls can prove a great help in initiating revolution against male hegemony: “They will, they’ll have to. You know the way it’s going. And in such a short time. The star is in the firmament. And it shines for us. The revolution will come. There we’ll see” (p.21). She calls upon the women-participants
to acknowledge and apply their powers and potentialities to pull down the male hegemony. Her purpose behind this revolutionary idea is to create a real domain of woman by abolishing the mythical world of man. Regine tells the women participants: "...a new World waits for us! And we were the crack troops, who blew up the idea of world itself and what they once called mankind. Womankind!" (p.35). She thinks that it is possible only when woman succeeds in unsexing man. With the help of the films on all the important pillars of the society made at the establishment, she intends to mock at him by making pornography. To her, man is hollow and lifeless creature: "They are hollow, empty wooden horses all dressed up or undressed with nowhere in the universe to go. No Troy to infiltrate let alone penetrate"(p.22). Stella abhors even the idea of marriage with man. She asserts that “marriage needs re-phrasing,”(p.25) as she is fed with male supremacy. She is echoing the words of Betty Friedan:

In the second stage of the struggle that is changing everyone's life, men's and women's needs converge. There are conscious choices now; for men as well as women---to set up their lives in such a way as to achieve a more equitable balance between success in work and gratification in personal life.52

Regine intends to create a new world order where woman is the sole ruler of her kingdom. This new world will be her paradise free from man’s ugliness. To her, man is the main impediment in the way of regaining the lost paradise. Regine tells Stella: "We'll make our own paradise. Our own kind of man. And remakes God’s bad job on the whole unfortunate incident. We will multiply. We have already. That's what it meant" (p.27). But in the end, her plans are thwarted by the trickery of Stan who flees with the films, adding more regrets to a host of regrets as hitherto harvested by her. Besides, the pair of Len and Isobel comes out as good friends contrary to her plans. Isobel, a lonely house wife locked into a loveless marriage and Len, a disarmingly incompetent and quasi-impotent man, fall in love. What brings them together is a willingness to expose their insecurities and uncertainties to one another. They confront the wonder of gender difference:

Len : ... You can never be a man, you know.
Isobel : You can never be a woman. Isn't it sublime? (p.44)
In this play, Osborne demonstrates that love can unexpectedly bloom in the most extraordinary places, such as in a brothel, but what is essential is mutual trust, a willingness to reveal the nakedness of one's very being.

The foregoing discussion reveals that the educated woman refuses to surrender her freedom and individuality to her husband. She refuses to be adored under the male hegemony, and does not believe in the myth of an ideal wife and devoted mother; rather she adopts more practical approach to life and needs. She seems to be more governed by reason and less by emotions. She no longer tolerates cruelty any sorts of at the hands of her husband. When she thinks that he is averse to her individuality or wifely needs, she displays no hesitation in discarding him. In this gender-conflict, the worst sufferers are children. The emancipated woman refuses to bind her to marriage, maternity and motherhood, as she finds no meaningful life in her traditional role as wife and mother. A career-conscious woman discards her familial duties and responsibilities for the sake of her profession, as she gives more importance to her career than her role as wife and mother. She deprives her children of maternal love and care to devote to their profession. Deprived of consistent maternal love and care, they grow into unhealthy beings. The divorced women leave their children into impersonal hands to earn money to manage the household affairs, but the children, suffering from intense emotional insecurity, develop into unhealthy adults. In case of remarriage, it becomes rather difficult for a woman to provide adequate love and care to the children from both the marriages. In the beginning, the emancipated woman leaves home to pursue an independent career and enjoy life without taking any responsibility towards her family, but in the end, she comes back home, realizing the importance of stable family life. Osborne in his plays charts various contours of the new role of woman and the way they determine the familial issues since the ingredients of emancipation alter the structure of the family and the familial roles of the characters. Various shades and stages of the women in the second half of the twentieth century, particularly through the mid-fifties to the late seventies are reflected clearly and beautifully in the plays staged since 1956. Between Alison and Regine lies the kaleidoscopic range of the women characters reflective of various factors and dimensions---psychological, social and ethical.
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6 Ibid., pp. 3-4.


14 Ibid., p. 11.

15 John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger* (1957; rpt. London: Faber & Faber, 1983), p. 45. Subsequent references to this play are to this edition and page numbers appear parenthetically within the text.


22 Gillemann, p. 54.


25 John Osborne, *The Entertainer* (1957; rpt. London: Faber & Faber, 1987), p. 27. Subsequent references to this play are to this edition and page numbers appear parenthetically within the text.

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34 John Osborne, *Time Present* (London: Faber & Faber, 1968), p. 16. Subsequent references to this play are to this edition and page numbers appear parenthetically within the text.


37 Johns, p. 84.


41 Farmer, p. 102.


43 Pearson and Pope, p. 106.

44 Farmer, p. 94.


48 John Osborne, *Very Like A Whale* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), p. 48. Subsequent references to this play are to this edition and page numbers appear parenthetically within the text.

49 John Osborne, *Watch It Come Down*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), p. 11. Subsequent references to this play are to this edition and page numbers appear parenthetically within the text.


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