CHAPTER FIVE
MATERIALITIC PERSPECTIVE AND FAMILY

The broader social pursuits and concerns are also impinging on the family relationships, simply because family itself is a macro-cosmic society and whatever shapes the macro-society also shapes the influences, if not shapes the macro-cosmic society, i.e. family. By its very nature drama needs a context to create drama per se. This context is almost always provided by the dramatist by creating a society, of course, with emphasis on selected dimensions of society. In Osborne’s plays, society is always present and all the major facets of society are directly or indirectly; strongly or weakly and implicitly or explicitly remain present and shape the characters and more importantly family relationships. Hence, a study of Osborne’s plays from this viewpoint of social concerns becomes imperative for a more comprehensive understanding of his plays. An evaluation of the social trends has been taken up to study Osborne’s drama.

In the contemporary society, the unprecedented rate of industrial and technical changes has led to colossal disruption of the traditional society which fostered a sense of belonging and identity through family, church and village community. These transformations have withered the relationships based upon feelings and instincts, and have substituted with relations grounded in instrumental calculation. The utility of an individual is invariably assessed in terms of money and economic productivity; the basic human being in him stands subordinated to his social employability. The ‘bourgeois’ culture underlines monetary calculation and narrow pursuit of self-interest of the individual. Cardinal virtues such as broad-mindedness, closeness, compassion, goodwill, kindness, love and trust have no place in the defunct configuration of society which increasingly perceives money and wealth as cardinal virtues.

In the consumerist society, an individual is no more consecrated; his soulfulness is determined by the commodity value system practised by society. He is
morally nude, at best a robot, programmed by the society to execute, without feelings, the task of money making. As Erich Fromm comments:

We have become things and our neighbours have become things. The result is that we feel powerless and despise ourselves for our impotence. Since we do not trust our own powers. We have no faith in man, no faith in ourselves or in what our own powers can create. We have no conscience in the humanistic sense, since we don’t dare to trust our judgment....We are in the dark and keep up our courage because we hear everybody else whistle as we do.1

In the world of bountiful commodities, man seems to be locked into a spiral of ever-increasing accumulation as he seeks to attain an always intangible sense of contentment. Meanwhile, his genuine needs, embodying his basic instincts, are repressively disregarded in the one-dimensional world of commodities. Human wants in principle are limitless, and individuals who are slaves to their own unlimited desires can never realize contentment and happiness. Unless our demands and desires are somehow held in check, we must remain condemned for ever to chase an unattainable end. This, said Durkheim, is a recipe for unhappy individuals and morbid society: “To pursue a goal which is by definition unattainable is to condemn oneself to a state of perpetual unhappiness....The more one has, the more one wants, since satisfactions received only stimulate instead of filling needs.”2

Today, the ever-speeding machine of capital growth is perpetually revolutionizing our aspirations and expectations. The limited horizons of our forbearance have been blown apart, for the tempo of change is such that new norms and new patterns of expectation have no time to settle before they too are superseded. We do not know what we can demand or expect out of life, for the norms by which we live are in a constant flux. As a result, the concept of permanence has suffered a setback in all human relationships. The experience of perpetual change is almost certainly incompatible with any strong sense of an enduring order, or a stable sense of belonging, for it has disrupted settled patterns of sociability. The extended family as a single economic unit has been replaced by the more isolated nuclear or single-parent family. The emotional richness of familial relations has been replaced by a colder, more instrumental orientation to life. The cult of materialism without a secure moral order has generated a culture of possessive individualism in which concern for others is subordinated to pursuits of self-interest.
Besides, the immense growth of wealth and knowledge in the twentieth century has brought out a considerable confusion in the field of ideas and beliefs. The new thought of the time—whether its prophet was Marx or Freud or Einstein—seems to erode religious faith. The rise of the left is, in some measure, an indication of fall of Christianity. The hold of Christianity has started waning, but no code of thought or behaviour has taken place. The two new creeds of science and socialism have revealed their limitations, though continue to exert a great influence, they have not been able to win such general acceptance as had Christianity. John A.T. Robinson in his book, Honest to God deals with the spiritual malaise of the times at a more fundamental level. He shows a keen awareness of the religious doubts which assail the contemporary society. David Thompson remarked: "Agnosticism was fashionable, and the leaders of literary taste went in for debunking."

Thus, spiritual decadence has done unspeakable damage to man's being and self-esteem. Dostoyevsky said, "If God is dead, everything is allowed." Man has converted himself into a tool, not of God's will, but of the economic machine or the state. He has accepted the role of a tool, not for god but for industrial progress; he has worked and amassed money, but essentially not for his pleasure, but in order to save, to invest, to be successful. As Erich Fromm says:

Modern man lives according to the principal of self-denial and thinks in terms of self-interest. He believes that he is acting on behalf of his interest when actually his paramount concern is money and success; he deceives himself about the fact that his most important human potentialities remain unfulfilled... he loses himself in the process of seeking... best for him.

W.B. Yeats in his prophetic poem, "The Second Coming," records this transformation through the beautiful imagery of the 'falcon' and 'falconer', which imply that man has lost sight of his conscience and can no more hear its dictates, swept away by the powerful current of materialism. Yeats likens the soul-killing materialistic outlook to a 'rough beast' slumping towards Bethlehem to be born:

    Turning and turning in the widening gyre
    The falcon can not hear the falconer,
    Things fall apart; the centre can not hold
    Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
T.S. Eliot too in his poems “Sweeney Erect” and “Preludes” satirically protests against the gadget-ridden rootless materialism of common man, divested of numinous demeanour. His preferences and priorities guided by material considerations and exclusive social standards have led to the shameless erosion of human relationships. Modern society is impersonal because time and again we are tempted to think and behave in ways that deny our emotional needs to be cared for and to care for others. Lamanna and Riedman comment: “An impersonal society exaggerates the rational aspect of human being and tends to ignore people’s feelings and their need for affection and human contact.”

The more the world apparently progresses towards a clamorous materialism, the more the family disintegrates because of the non-availability of moral bonds or traditional genuine human feelings. Belongingness and intimacy provide basis for lasting intra-family relationships, and material goods are no substitute for emotional security. Ferdinand Tonnies asserts that “sentiments and motives draw people to each other, keep them together, and induce them to joint action.” But in the face of materialistic onslaughts, sentiments no longer constitute a binding force in familial relationships. As a result, the society remains a disjointed conglomerate of broken homes; the block of the new architecture of material affluence is the only reality fronting the eyes, the family inside having dried up. The war has witnessed the final disruption of the nicety of feelings—-the indispensable human values of love, kindness, solidarity, trust, forbearance and other milder feelings.

Over and above, the emergence of post-war welfare measures has directly contributed to the breakdown of family. These measures have made single parenthood viable option for most women by making provisions of financial assistance for the single parent of a child. The stigma of illegitimacy has been displaced by a range of welfare rights which underpin and normalize lifestyles which were previously deemed to be unacceptable. Various cultural changes associated with the extension of the Welfare State have eroded the traditional value of personal responsibility. The old Protestant work ethics has been eroded, and a new spirit of hedonism and narcissism, with an emphasis on immediate gratification, has grown up to fill the gap.
Angus comments: “In today’s world with or without its various philosophical concepts—man is bewildered—his moral, religious, political and social structures by which he illumined himself have collapsed.”

The erosion of stable marriages affects not only mature adults, but also their children. Illegitimacy rates, like divorce rates have been rising very fast. Rising divorce rates and the instability of relationships based upon cohabitation have also helped increase the number of people living on their own. In this connection, Peter Saunders comments are quite pertinent:

A society in which one marriage in three ends in divorce, in which cohabitation as an alternative to marriage is extremely unstable, in which nearly one child in three is born of parents who choose not to commit themselves to each other by means of marriage, and in which over a quarter of all households consist of people living on their own, looks increasingly like a society in which people are unwilling or unable to make binding and lasting emotional commitments to one another.

In this era of rapid and radical changes, familial relations are characterized by growing materialism and individualism. The growing distrust of authority and disintegration of community life have already accelerated the process of the superficialization of family relationships. The sacredness of familial ties based on the principles of respect, responsibility and tolerance for one another is being eroded by the onslaughts of the process of urbanization and commercialization of modern life. Death and destruction are not only at the war-front, but in the minds of people as well. The psychological frustration that characterizes the post-war era is largely the contribution of the war. Technology has perfected the art of mass slaughter, and the entire human race stands the risk of being wiped out from the face of the earth if another war is to follow. As Charles I. Glicksberg comments: “Modern man keenly feels his helplessness in this situation, he is incapable of preventing the fate—and yet it is of his own making—that is about to befall him.”

In the money-oriented society, life is being drained of love; there is only emptiness, desolation and frustration after love is gone. Traditional human values sink fast into insignificance, and the family succumbs to the general frustration that ravages all walks of life. As a result of all these developments, an extreme kind of
frustration has come to pervade all facets of life. There is emptiness inside the shell of material progress and luxury. Husbands and wives are often strangers to one another, and children have little communication with their parents and turn into rebels. Man finds himself an alien among strangers, and life becomes for him a long-term search for his lost identity. Erich Fromm remarks: "Man regresses to a receptive and marketing orientation and ceases to be productive...he loses his sense of self, becomes dependent on approval, hence tends to conform and yet feel insecure; he is dissatisfied, bored and anxious...." All the social evils and permissive traits are manifestations of his frustration, which often make the family bow down before the savage fury not merely of an individual in particular, but of times in general.

A close study 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. In his plays, family relations are qualified by indifference, hatred, jealousy, mistrust, selfishness, irresponsibility, non-reciprocity, deadness, despondency and insensitivity. Osborne has asserted that personal relationships "are things that are vital," and in the mishmash of relationships, he presents the degenerated phase of the family. This fragmentation of relationships condemning the individual to the pains of alienation informs almost every kind of relational pattern the playwright has treated in his dramatic world. In the contemporary era, one simply can not discern what another is feeling: we inhabit the world where such a presumed relationship has been confirmed to be an illusion. Osborne is also well acquainted with this reality while writing in his Notebook for 1955: "He suffers the realization: that there is no real communication with those we love most." The playwright relates the individual to society and holds the view that society can not assure itself of a meaningful existence unless the individual learns to make himself "a better class of person." The way the playwright treats the theme of materialism indicates that he diagnoses the present-day social malaise afflicting familial relationships. Going further he examines the socio-economic, ethical and religious conditions shaping the modes of behaviour and patterns of thought of man and woman towards each other in the contemporary society. He dramatizes the disappointment and despondency of a sensitive individual in the society that has become insensitive to the pains and privations of her or him.
Asha Kadyan comments: “What Osborne seeks to underline insistently is the pathetic absence of the ichor of human feelings and emotions from the life of modern man.”

The way the playwright dramatizes the disvalues such as egocentricity, insensitivity, irresponsibility and mistrust fracturing familial as well as social bonds informs us of his commitment to and concern with positive human values. In fact, the tension of intra-family relationships in the context of the fast-changing socio-economic and ethical values exemplified by the embryonic cult of individualism and materialism constitutes the very heart of his dramatic medium.

In the dramatic world of Osborne, the aged people are considered as great liability on the purse of family, and the values they embody are no longer meaningful in the face of fast-changing social scenario. In Look Back in Anger, Jimmy’s father was meted out cold and indifferent treatment by the members of family when he returned wounded from the Spanish War. In the thirties he joined, in good faith, the International Brigade that set out to rescue Spain from fascist domination. He returned, seriously wounded and defeated, to find that his idealistic efforts were greeted not with gratitude, but with doubt and suspicion. At this critical juncture of life he needed emotional and moral support from his family to get his mortal wounds healed up, but none of them came forward to render him the needed support; rather they got “embarrassed by the whole business. Embarrassed and irritated” and waited for him to die. They performed their duties by delivering him “a cheque every month, and hoped he’d get on with it quietly, without too much vulgar fuss” (p.58). The insensitivity on the part of his family made him suffer more from emotional wounds than physical ones. Jimmy was the sole person who witnessed his father dying by degrees: “For twelve months, I watched my father dying— I was ten years old....I was only who cared” (p.57). With the father, Jimmy too suffered while attending on him. He then felt a full force of his father’s disillusionment and defeat at an age when experiences gained formed a lasting impression:
Every time I sat on the edge of his bed, to listen to talking or reading to me, I had to fight back my tears. At the end of twelve months, I was veteran....I spent hour upon hour in that tiny bedroom. He would talk to me for hours, pouring out all that was left of life to one, lonely, bewildered little boy, who could barely understand half of what he said. All he could feel was the despise and bitterness, the sweet, sickly smell of a dying man. (p.58)

In his early life, Jimmy came face to face with a cruel world around him which made him know more about “betrayal” and “death” (p.58). Austin E. Quigley observes: “The death of Jimmy’s father provided an early personal encounter with a widely resisted public recognition of the appalling individual costs involved in national responsibilities or national ambitions of imperial scale.” It is conspicuous that the virtues of idealism, patriotism and valour have no place in the emaciated structure of the contemporary society. Intra-family relationships based on feelings and instincts are dying in the face of fast-changing moral and human values. This incident portrays how the genuine feelings of compassion, love, responsibility and trust are frozen to the lowest ebb and provides the dramatist an opportunity to castigate the callousness and dryness of the materialistic society.

The shabby and inhuman treatment meted out to the dying father has left an indelible impression on the tender psyche of Jimmy that haunts him throughout life, breeding in him feelings of anger, anguish and agitation against the heartlessness of the money-oriented society. To seek respite from the lacerating pain, he yearns “to hear warm, thrilling voice,” from his wife and friend, but neither of them comes forward to embalm his agonized heart, as they are too inert to “raise themselves out of their delicious sloth”(p.15). Finding them insensitive to his sufferings, Jimmy bursts out with the words: “Nobody thinks, nobody cares, No beliefs, no convictions and no enthusiasm” (p.17). Jimmy gives a clarion call to revive the sagging enthusiasm and dying spirit: “Let’s pretend that we’re human beings, and that we’re actually alive” (p.15). In the acquisitive society of the post-war period, an individual is too absorbed in his pursuits to have heart and time for the concerns of others.

It is obvious that the modern man is so much weighed down by the idea of material possessions that he ceases to be a feeling creature. Social recognition and relationships almost depend on the financial position that an individual holds. Money
prevails over the relations based on human or moral values. Our value system has come to be strictly governed by money and material possessions. This is exemplified when we view that Jimmy’s sufferings are furthered by his friend, Hugh Tanner who flees to some alien land, perhaps it is China or beyond to seek “the New Millennium,” (p.64) leaving his ailing and aged mother alone to suffer the pains and privations of old age, though the lady “worked very hard all her life, and spent most of it struggling to support her husband and her son” (p.46). Alison tells Helena: “Jimmy accused Hugh Tanner of giving up and he thought it was wrong of him to go off for ever, and leave his mother all on her own” (p.46). Jimmy suffers the agony of Mrs. Tanner because she had almost been a mother to him.

Once again, Jimmy watches a hapless and helpless human being meeting a tragic end. A desolate Jimmy shouts: “I have been watching someone I have very much going through the sordid process of dying. She was alone….Hugh’s mother was deprived and ignored old woman” (p.73). The tragedy leaves Jimmy a complete emotional wreck with nobody to recognize and embalm his wounds. Exasperated at the unconcerned stance of Alison, Jimmy bursts out with fury: “You Judas! You phlegm! She’s taking with her, and you’re so bloody feeble, you’ll let her do it” (p.59). He is pained to know that the innocent people are meted out injustice: “The wrong people dying, the wrong people going hungry, the wrong people being loved, the wrong people dying” (p.94). John Russell Taylor aptly observes: “Jimmy is the saint like witness to right values in a world gone wrong, the mouthpiece of protest for a dissatisfied generation.”18 Going further Alan Carter comments, “Osborne and Jimmy porter are very much idealists. There is feeling and love at the back of much that they say. There is concern for true values, not misplacement attachment or habit.”19 The playwright suggests that the spirit of love, compassion, commitment and involvement can rejuvenate the fragmented structure of intra-familial relations.

The fast-growing impact of the American materialistic culture is disrupting the relations based on love, compassion, commitment, responsibility and trust. Under the insidious impact of the consumerist culture, British society is no longer a safe haven to preserve human and moral values. Jimmy articulates his ire against the escalating pressure of the inhuman culture: “I must say it is pretty dreary living in the American
Age---unless you're American. Perhaps all our children will be American" (p.17). The phrase “the American Age” connotes ‘an age of materialism’ in which finer values such as love, fellow feeling and solidarity have been relegated to the background, and the fangs of callousness and selfishness have come to the fore in the intra-family relationships. It is evident in the attitude of Alison that she adopts towards Mrs. Tanner who is dying in London. She does not display even an iota of love and regard for the lady, though the lady loves her deeply. Jimmy rebukes Alison: “She’s fond of you. I can never understand why you’re so---distant with her” (p.34). He makes a moving appeal to her to accompany him to London to see the dying lady: “You’re coming with me, aren’t you? She has not got anyone else now. I...need you...to come with me” (p.62). But this emotional plea falls on her deaf ears. Her visit to church is the clear rejection of the concrete for the abstract. Jimmy is angry with Alison not only for her refusal to see the dying lady, but also for her indifference to the departed soul. Jimmy admonishes Alison: “You never even sent flowers to the funeral. Not a little bunch of flowers. You had to deny me that too” (p.94).

In this play, Osborne exemplifies another dimension of the family through the attitude of Alison’s mother, Mrs. Redfern towards Jimmy. Her attitude is the symbolic of the money-oriented society where marital alliances are more governed by money and material possessions and less by feelings and emotions. Mrs. Redfern refuses to accept Jimmy as son-in-law on account of his poor background. She stoops to the lowest level to rescue her daughter from “a young man without money, background or even looks” (p.52). Even after the marriage she does not desist from spoiling the residual prospects of marital harmony by making inroads into their married life, which is conspicuous in the continued correspondence with Alison: “She gets letters... from her mother. Letters on which I’m not mentioned at all because my name is dirty word” (p.36). Mrs. Redfern’s callous attitude is also reflected in the way she deprives Alison of the due amount of the share of money she ought to have got on the humanitarian grounds. Alison tells Helena: “I had a tiny bit coming in from a few shares I had left, but it hardly kept us. Mummy had made me sign everything else over to her, in trust, when she knew I was really going to marry Jimmy”(pp.43-44). For Mrs. Redfern money is dearer than that of happiness and well-being of her
daughter. Not only the mother, but the father is also least troubled about the miseries of Alison. He is too absorbed in his glorious past “dreaming of his days among the Indian Princes” (p.55) to have heart and time to alleviate her pecuniary hardships, though he is in a position to help her out.

In the post-war era, callousness and irresponsibility of the Welfare State and the ruling parties can be perceived in the way the dispossessed and the poor are deprived of due opportunities to utilize their talent and ability. The Welfare State has reduced the deprived to crippled ones, keeping them alive on the dole for doing nothing meaningful towards themselves and society, resultantly leaving them empty and frustrated. Jimmy is deeply shocked at the appalling conditions of the deprived and dispossessed, especially young ones, who are robbed of opportunities to utilize their energy and talent. Though Jimmy is a university graduate with ability and aptitude to run the nation, he ends up running a candy stall on a footpath. Based on materialistic values, the system is least perturbed at the human or national wastage produced by the anti-life forces such as exploitation, discrimination, insensitivity, scarcity and underemployment.

The politicians and the rich, engrossed in their selfish ends, become insensitive to the trials and tribulations of the masses. They masquerade as patriots and nationalists, but the mask underlies the ulterior motive and exploitative nature. Jimmy wages a verbal war through his politician-brother-in-law, Nigel against the practices of political hypocrisy, exploitation, insensitivity, inertia, deadness and despondency. Not only the politicians, but also the rich feel no compunction about exploiting the underprivileged in one way or the other. Deprived of means and money to own a house, Jimmy lives in a one-room flat on exorbitant rent. He knows that his landlady, Miss Drury may look like a “mild old gentlewoman,” but that she is in fact just “an old robber. She gets more than enough out of us for this place every week” (p.25). When we look at the play more intently, it is felt that greed for material possessions has made the rich insensitive and indifference to sorrows and sufferings, and pains and privations of the deprived and dispossessed section of society.
Not only the political class, but the Church has also become insensitive to human sufferings, losing its philanthropic spirit in the whirlwind of materialistic pursuits. It is no longer a force to bind human beings together in a harmonious social group based on genuine human and moral values. It fails to dispense justice through service to the aggrieved humanity; rather it employs the strategies of hypocrisy and propaganda in carrying out duties towards humanity. Jimmy gets so infuriated with the Church that he reacts fiercely even to ringing of the bells: “Oh hell! Now the bloody bells have started! Wrap it up, will you?” (p.25). It does not imply that he is anti-religion; rather he recognizes the need of true religion to provide succour to the distressed humanity. Jimmy’s invective “is a plea for more religion, not less, real religion, not the imitation we accept.”

Jimmy makes a dig at the Church:

Do you read about the woman who went to the mass meeting of a certain American evangelist at Earls Court? She went forward, to declare herself for love or whatever it is, and, in the rush of the convents to get to the front. She broke four ribs and got kicked in the head. She was yelling her head off in agony but with 50,000 people putting all they’d got into “onward Christian soldiers,” nobody even knew she was there. (p.14)

The way the clergy class deviates from the long-established role signifies that it is more interested in worldly and materialistic life than spiritual and human life. They way the Bishop of Bromley makes “a very moving appeal to all Christians to do all they can to assist in the manufacture of the H-Bomb”(p.13) indicates that the religious class has departed from its spiritual and philanthropic role. Jimmy vehemently criticizes the clergy class for its hypocrisy and insensitivity towards the moral and human issues. His attitude to religion and priests seems to be an echo of the playwright’s views. In his essay “They Call It Cricket” Osborne strongly condemns the Church for living by “the gospel of funk.” Osborne denounces the Church for repeatedly dodging “every moral issue that has been thrown at its head---poverty, unemployment, fascism, war, South Africa, the H-Bomb, and so on.” The playwright laments that there has never been “one outstanding moral issue on which the Church has taken a firm, unequivocal stand for simple, social decency, let alone for the Gospel.” He has no patience with the bishops whom he describes as “begwagged old perverts” and “wealthy theologians publicly turning their back on
The playwright castigates these men of religion for "playing another world game, like the politicians," making people realize that "the religion game was just as meaningless as the politics game." Osborne accused the Church "of moral bankruptcy. It is precisely on this...level that people live." Osborne's attempt is to expose the religious hypocrisy of the priestly class. It is evident that the Church and religious leaders are creating social disharmony. The playwright suggests that the modern world needs more or real religion to get rid of the prevailing inertness in human relationships.

Jimmy, embittered with the state of affairs, seeks response from Alison, but finds her unresponsive and indifferent to his concerns and convictions. Peeved at the icy stillness of her, he plays the jazz trumpet and listens to music to placate his aggrieved heart. He is of the view that the person "who doesn't like the real jazz hasn't feeling either for music or people" (p.48). Alison's frostiness to Jimmy is manifest in his version to Cliff: "...Nothing I could do would provoke her. Not even if I were to drop dead" (p.19). Besides the jazz, Jimmy evinces interest in Vaughn Williams's gig, which reveals that he is strongly patriotic. His penchant for the music is "something strong, something simple, something English,"(p.17) but Alison reveals repugnance for the same, as, to her, it not only frustrates the chances of her peaceful coil, but also distracts his attention from her genuine needs. Alison comes out very critical of the kind of music that he wishes to enjoy: "Well. I'm sorry....I can't just stop everything because you want to listen to music" (p.24). Jimmy curses Alison indecently, finding that she is cold, unresponsive and insensitive to his sufferings. The way he reprimands her outrages the dignity of love and of life itself: "If only something---something would happen to wake you out of your beauty sleep. If you could have a child, and it would die"(p.37). Arnold Wesker rightly observes that Jimmy-Alison relationship "fails because of the absence of generosity of spirit." The playwright suggests that the spirit of generosity and sensitivity can go a long way in shaping marital relations.

Alison, weary of Jimmy's invectives, asks him to stop yelling and let her have peace of mind, but he, instead of keeping mum, bursts out with the bile: "My heart is so full, I feel ill---and she wants peace" (p.59). Katherine J. Worth says: "Jimmy's
anger has deep roots. He is one to whom the miseries of the world are misery, and will not let him rest. He is capable of vicarious suffering, of living in other people's lives." Alison does not take any note of his tirades, but even this is too much for him. Jimmy laments: "But that girl there can twist your arm off with her silence. I've sat in the chair in the dark for hours. And, although she knows I'm feeling as low as now, she's turned over, and gone to sleep" (p.59). Martin Banham rightly observes: "Jimmy's demand to be heard is a reflection of his demand to be needed." In furious mood, Jimmy warns Alison:

Perhaps, one day, you want to come back. I shall wait for that day. I want to stand up in your tears, and splash about in them, and sing. I want to watch you grovel. I want to be there. I want to watch it...want to see your face rubbed in the mud—that's all I can hope for. There's nothing else I want any longer. (pp. 59-60)

Alison fails to recognize the human heart concealed behind the facade of cruelty and robustness that he is wearing. His criticism underlines a humanistic plea. His concern for Mrs. Tanner speaks volumes of his humanistic nature. He wishes to make Alison and others aware of the ills of the system that act as anti-life forces. His anger is rooted in the smugness and lethargy of the people around him. Be it tenderness or toughness, Jimmy's purpose is to awake Alison from complacency, lethargy and insensitivity. But she finding him unbearable leaves for her parental home where she undergoes a bitter experience of life—she has a miscarriage, and loses her power to conceive again. Alison, realizing the intensity of personal sufferings, comes back and confesses to Helena: "I'm afraid a sense of timing is one of the things I seem to have learnt from Jimmy. But it's something that can be in very bad taste....I felt like a criminal"(p.88).

In the end, they, once again, go back to their phoney world of bears and squirrels, "content, perhaps, never to really make it as successful human beings in a mundane futile world." He calls her "poor squirrels" and she calls him "poor bears" (p.119). They are like animals ensnared in "cruel steel traps" of materialism "lying about everywhere" (p.96). The game is no longer a mere escape from the past or an avoidance of the present, but a means of engaging the future through a painful but pleasurable "comic emphasis" (p.119) on the value of the divided perspectives that
they hold and ruefully acknowledge. Their mutual sympathy and individual differences are exhibited in the remarks: “Poor squirrels” and “poor bears.” Osborne suggests that the virtues of love, understanding, reciprocity and trust can establish true, happy home by crossing the individual differences. Love can save human beings from a devastating tragedy by conquering all the barriers of class, politics and religion. The way the playwright treats the complex theme of marital relationship between Jimmy and Alison indicates his ability to treat the question of marital relationships in a realistic and forceful manner.

Not only in the nuclear families but also in the extended families, relationships are characterized by anxiety, indifference, inertness, insecurity, intolerance, mistrust and tension. Strangely enough, the sense of belonging, which is supposed to be the advantage of the extended family, is conspicuously lacking in the members of the Rice family in *The Entertainer*. All the members are stray beings; no one placing enough confidence in another, their lives are characterized by aimlessness, frustration and depression. The cause of their frustration lies in the failure of their desperate attempts to lead a comfortable and dignified life. Alan Carter remarks that the play depicts “increase meaninglessness of life in mindless self-absorption” through the lower middle-class Rice family. Archie, the protagonist, sings to the audience: “We’re all out for old number one. Number one is the only one for me.” Robert Gorden remarks: “The song accompanied by the unfurling of the Union Jack equates the refusal of British politicians to give up their imperialist ambitions with the pretty greed of individuals like Archie.” Osborne, through Archie, attempts to denounce the greed of common man for materialistic pursuits.

In this play, Osborne highlights the problem of fragmentation of intra-familial relationships in the face of technological advancement in the post-war period. The playwright portrays how the traditional pursuits based on love, respect, trust and solidarity are dying rapidly in the face of technological advancement. The technological advancement is not only disrupting the settled patterns of occupations and traditions which have been a great source of sociability, but also fracturing the social and familial bonds rooted in belongingness, love, commitment, compassion and trust. Archie Rice, the music-hall artiste, wishes to be “Number One” through the
tradition which has been gasping for breath for a long time. In his note to the printed text, Osborne says: “The music hall is dying, and, with it, a significant part of England. Some of the heart of England has gone; something that once belonged to everyone, for this was truly a folk art” (p.7). Billy Rice tells Jean: “I keep telling him--it’s dead already....They don’t want real people any more....They don’t want human beings”(p.18). As a result, “Archie performs mechanically like a puppet in his own theatre.” The dismal setting projected in the opening scene is paradoxically represented in Archie’s song as a consequence of the need to hold on to respectability. But it is a poignant revelation of Archie’s “inability as a performer to express anything but loneliness and despair.”

In the post-war Britain, the decided downfall of the “truly a folk art”(p.7) owes to the collapse of the culture which embodies sensitivity, solidarity and spontaneity. Emergence of the new forms of entertainment like youth culture of pop songs seems to be promising the youngsters the kind of entertainment they need to satiate their newly acquired tastes. They evince least interest in the means of entertainment, which embody spontaneity of feelings; rather they show a keen interest in the non-human means of entertainment, the product of advanced technology, which provide them “a cheap thrill”(p.45). Archie tries to draw the attention of the audience: “Look at the stuff they sing. Look at the songs they sing!” “The Dark Town Strutters’ Ball,” “The Woodchoppers Ball,” “The Basin Street Ball”---it’s a lot of rubbish” (p.32). They prefer to spend their time and money on “jazz” programmes and “boogie-woogie” (p.17). The reason of their attraction towards these means of entertainment can be discerned in the words of Anthony Wood:

The wages of the young unmarried worker now gave him a spending power unknown to previous generations; this was to create a market for a new form of musical entertainment, steeped in adolescent fantasy, as glittering pop stars performed before their screaming audiences, and by 1959 teenagers accounted for 40 percent of the sale of records.

It is evident that the growth of affluence and advancement of technology has contributed to the decline of the music-hall popularity. Raymond Williams in The Long Revolution extends a slightly different view about the decline of this tradition: “The music hall was never the last vestige of living working class culture that was
finally destroyed by striptease shows, pop music, or television sitcoms. In constant transformation, the music hall in fact prepared the way for these contemporary forms of entertainment.”

These metamorphoses impinge upon the universe of Archie’s father, Billy Rice, rendering ludicrous his cheerful balancing act between taste and vulgarity. The reverberation of the past, manifest in Billy’s solemn song singing, risks being drowned in the clamour and craze of modernity, represented on stage by modern music, “the latest, the loudest, the worst” (p. 11). “Rock of Ages cleft for me/ Let me hide myself in thee” is not without good reason Billy’s preferred hymn. L.C.B. Seaman rightly observes:

In the 1950s, new technology, the slow disappearance of war-engendered austerities and the great increase in teenage incomes combined to wrench popular music away from its moorings in the harbor of yesterday’s memories. Jiving, twisting and rock ‘n’ rolling, the young were swept away from their elders in a deafening roar of over-amplified sound.

Amidst this cultural confusion Archie invests a good deal of money on his shows to magnetize the jaded audience; however he is not oblivious of the fact that the music-hall tradition is at the lowest ebb. He tries desperately to revive the sagging shows by providing a variety to the audience, but, as for returns, he gets less and less. He fails not only to provide his family comfortable life, but also fails to pay income tax for the last twenty years. In the face of tax evasion, he is haunted by throbbing anxiety fearing raids of the taxmen. At this critical juncture of life he needs emotional support, but the members of his family refuse to extend love and respect, mistrusting his capabilities and plans. His father Billy Rice, engrossed in the Edwardian days, desperately opposes his plans to seek fortunes in the dying tradition: “He’s going to come a cropper—-I’m afraid. And pretty soon too. He’s bitten off more than he can chew” (p. 19). His wife thinks that he is wasting money and efforts on the vocation which is no longer rewarding. She goes at him for making unpractical plans: “He’s a fool to himself. Always some big idea he’s got to make money” (p. 47). Though she embarrasses him with her exacting attitude, she does not hold herself responsible for his miseries: “He’s on his own here half the time. It is not my fault” (p. 25).
Archie, frustrated at the hall, returns home to seek relief from the members of his family, but fails to do so, finding everyone “absorbed and depressed” (p.25). Despite living together under the same roof, they get so much absorbed in their own world of concerns to pay heed to the genuine needs of one another. Archie finds his children “like the bloody music hall” (p.72) audience cold and indifferent to his pathetic plight. Martin Banham observes: “Archie’s relationship with his family tends to be an extension of that with his audience---treating them to a string of unfunny and inconsequential remarks, talking all the time to avoid the pain of silence, and smiling to cover the despair.” The present family, though it is an extended one, ceases to be a haven of comfort and relief from the anxiety and tension that Archie accumulates on the stage; rather it has become a source of anxiety and embarrassment. The way Osborne highlights the insensitivity and apathy of the modern family underscores the need of love, respect, trust and involvement in shaping of enduring familial ties.

In this play, the playwright highlights another feature of the post-war family. In the post-war era, the generation gap within family increases so much that the two generations find each other diametrically opposite in respect of their concerns and convictions. Economically self-reliant younger generation find the ideas and ideology; pursuits and professions; means and manners, and temper and tone of the elder generation conflicting with their notion of freedom. In this context, the words of Anthony Wood are quite apt:

The young people were reacting in their own way to the changed circumstances in which they were growing up... the young often at odds with their elders, whom they did not regard as their betters and whose warnings and admonitions they condemned as hypocritical... but for their parents it was a perplexing phenomenon which they watched with anger, with bewilderment and sometimes with a touch of envy.

Archie’s daughter, Jean, financially independent, seems to be hard at heart, as she feels no love and sympathy for her family. On the other hand, they treat her as if she is “from another planet or something”(p.62). Billy tells Jean that Phoebe “does not want to hear about your troubles” (p.47). She has her own problems, and when she is not concerned with them, she harshly accuses her father of “trying to escape the pain of being alive” (p.68). Archie’s son, Frank opts out of any kind of emotional
involvement in much the same way what he is a conscientious objector, and he concentrates on looking after “Number One.” He is not satisfied with less than “number one” in terms of worldly possessions.

The generation gap between the second and third generation is no less than the one between the first and second generation. Billy Rice, lost in the “good old days,” is least concerned about the well-being of the family; rather he is very critical of the irresponsible and boisterous life of the second and third generation. Oblivious of the present-day reality, he still believes in the dignified ways of Britain of the Edwardian days. He appears as a “character whose values and attitudes are quite consciously portrayed as incongruous with the surroundings in which he finds himself.” He does not find “much chance to talk to anyone” (p.21). In a satiric tone, Billy tells Jean: “I suppose you’ve no right to expect people to listen to you. Just because you’ve had your own life. It’s all over for you. Why should anyone listen to you?”(p.22). Nobody listens to him, nobody respects him and nobody talks to him. Whenever they talk to him, they talk in an irresponsible manner. Billy tells Frank: “That’s the trouble nowadays. Everybody’s too busy answering back and taking liberties” (p.78)

Billy is not only ignored, but is also mocked at, or humiliated by the members of his family. Archie’s wife, Phoebe is so much obsessed with the idea of materialistic life that she transcends all the limits of indecency while using discourteous words against Billy Rice for eating the cake that she has brought for Mick: “That bloody greedy old pig, as if he’d not had enough of everything already---he has to go and get his great fingers into it” (p.57). Archie derides Billy when the latter wishes to read the newspaper: “Well stoop yelling then. You’re like one of those television commercials….He’s quite well-read for an ignorant old pro” (p.36). Repudiating the concerns, counsels and convictions of his father, Archie goes ahead with his plans and keeps no scruples about using him with nude girls in his road shows to recoup the family fortune. Jean rebukes Archie: “You’re going to kill the old man just to save that no good, washed up tatty show of yours---”(p.82). But Archie retorts: “It’s not just to save that no-good, tatty show of mine. It’s to save your no-good, tatty dad from going to jail” (p.82). But whatever is the reason, Archie “morally murders his father by coaxing him back into grease paint” to save his degraded road shows. Martin
Banham comments: “He makes a complete prostitution of both personal and professional standards for the sake of some response from the audience.”

In this play, the playwright highlights still another feature of the modern family through the marital relationship of Archie and Phoebe. Their marital relations come to be governed more and more by money, less by emotions and feelings. With the meagre income as music-hall comedian, Archie fails to provide a comfortable life to his wife, Phoebe. On the other hand, Phoebe, obsessed with the idea of material life, fails to provide him emotional support. Archie finds her cold and indifferent to his needs: “She’s tired and she’s getting cold. She’s tired, and she’d tired of me” (p.55). Instead of assuaging his miseries, she multiplies them by her strange demands and desires. She needs to visit the cinema twice or thrice a week to while away her time. She is concerned more about her comforts than the wretched predicament of her husband. On the other hand, Archie is more concerned about his music hall programmes than the interests and tastes of his wife. Archie’s obsession with “Draught Bass” and women differ from that of hers with movies. As a whole, both, absorbed in their respective individual concerns, remain indifferent to the needs of each other. Simon Trusler rightly observes: “Archie and Phoebe maintain a sort of temperamental truce, but cross no physical boundaries towards one another.”

The way Phoebe behaves and thinks signifies that she is overwhelmed with the idea of leading a comfortable and luxurious life. Phoebe praises Archie’s brother, Bill for leading a life of plenty in Canada: “Now he’s really a big pot. He’s really a big pot. There’s no flies on brother Bill” (p.48). She also refers to her brother John and her niece, Clare who are making a fast buck in Toronto: “They started off in the restaurant business four years ago with five thousands dollars....Now they have got a hotel in Toronto, may be going to open another one....They want us to go out, and for Archie to manage the hotel in Ottawa” (p.67). By referring to these people she tries to tempt Archie to the kind of life that their relatives are relishing. But being averse to the “bloody pointless idea” (p.67) of making money in the alien country, Archie retorts: “What do I know about hotels? All I’ve lived in its digs” (p.67). Also, he turns down Bill’s invitation to escape the sordid existence, the taxmen and imprisonment. Archie tells Bill: “You know I’ve always thought I should go to jail. I should think it must be
quite interesting. Sure to meet someone I know” (p.85). Archie knows that well-dressed people like Bill are lacking in finer feelings of love and compassion:

There are plenty of these around—well dressed, assured, well educated, their emotional imaginative capacity so limited it is practically negligible. They have an all-defying inability to associate themselves with anyone in circumstances even slightly dissimilar to their own...if you can't recognize him, it's for one reason only! (p.83)

Archie’s failure to provide even basic material comforts to his wife becomes the source of her anxiety and abnormal behaviour and unusual habits. The dwindling fortunes of the family contribute to the discontentment and discord between them. Archie’s miserable failure puts a crushing impact on his emotional life and consequently he withdraws into himself becoming indifferent to the concerns of his family. Phoebe tells Jean: “He never tells me anything now, he just tells me not to worry, and says nothing”(p.45). Phoebe is too naïve and too much dazzled by money to comprehend and respond to the inner needs of Archie. Her emotional stability is disturbed and she often indulges in abstract thoughts and even sinks into fits of depression. The miasma of materialism drags the couple into the quagmire of emotional atrophy and despair. In frustration, Archie resorts to drinking and whoring, whereas Phoebe takes recourse to a world of alcoholism and movies to escape their sordid existence. To survive meaningfully, Archie is fighting against the adverse circumstances, but finds himself helpless. As John Russell Taylor says that “he is really the victim of the world around him.”45 Through Archie-phoebe relationships, the playwright portrays the role of money determining the marital relationships.

In this play, Osborne also highlights the recurring wars inducing anxiety, depression and insecurity in the masses. In the post-war decade, the ruling class resorts to militarism in the Middle East with materialistic motives, thereby disregarding the needs of the masses. Archie is upset at the insensitive and inhuman attitude of the ruling class towards the dispossessed. He is pained to realize that the politicians are too cold and cruel to feel pricks of conscience while thrusting young, innocent kids into the mouth of mortar for the sake of materialistic pursuits in the Middle East. His elder son Mick is fighting in the Suez War where he is rushing towards death. His younger son, Frank suffers in “damned prison” (p.31) for defying
the conscription orders, though he is physically unfit "with a cold in head half the year, and a weak chest" (p.30).

The drooped family atmosphere fails to provide Archie any relief from the corroding frustration that he accumulates at the hall. He turns to wine and woman to have relief, but to no avail. His virtues are that he admits that he is bastard, certainly where his wife is concerned, yet he can be very tender toward her, although he betrays her constantly. Though he is pained at the heart, he wears the mask of detachment and humour to conceal his anguish and anxiety. Alan Carter observes: "He carries over into real life the stage banter and throws away delivery in order to ward off any attack on his integrity." Archie does not want to be seen in despair: "If they see you that you're blue, / They'll---look down on you" (pp.24-25). His relentless cheerfulness suggests his heroic refusal to succumb to despair, which is reflected in the blue sung to the audience: "What's the use of despair / If they call me a square?" (p.24). Archie is conscious of the fact that Mick is inevitably to meet his death in the Suez War, yet he tries to encourage his wife to be happy and hopeful: "Come on love, pull yourself together. That's what we should have done years ago....Let's pull yourself together, together, and the happier we'll be" (p.58).

The real Archie is hidden behind the grinning façade. His laconic bitterness towards his audience makes us think that he still has feelings. Beneath his professional mask, Archie is "indubitably a man of feeling." It is obvious in his version to Jean: "You see this face, this face can split open with warmth and humanity" (p.72). Archie's awareness of what human emotions can really mean, witnessed by his softly sung blues when he learns of his own son, Mick's death, shows us that deep down he still cares: "The dead eyes, the casually tossed off jokes, the glib music hall patter, simply cover up the raw nerve ends of his feeling." He asks for the response of the audience to eradicate the shallowness of those around us. Alan Carter remarks: "He also recognizes the need for passion in the cold world; his life is an attempt to find such warmth." Archie's craving for hearing genuine human voice is apparent in his version to Jean:

It was when I was in Canada...one night I heard some negress singing in a bar... if ever I saw any hope or strength in the human face, it was in the face
of that old negress getting up to sing about Jesus or something like that... I never heard of anything like that here....But you'll not hear it anywhere now. I don't suppose we'll ever hear it again. There's nobody who can feel like that, I wish to God I could feel like that old black bitch...If I had done one thing as good as that in my whole life, I'd have been all right....I wish to God I were that old bag....But I'll never do it. I don't give a damn about anything, not even women or draught Bass. (pp. 70-71)

Archie is a sensitive man, but the anti-life forces ruin him so much that he seems to cease to be a human being. Martin Banham remarks that it is “the destruction of sensitive and seemingly intelligent man by a decadent and mercenary society.” The professional Archie is symbolic expression of the decay of the world: “I'm dead behind these eyes. I'm dead like whole inert, shoddy lot out there. It does not matter because I don't feel a thing, and neither do they” (p.72). In this connection, Billington’s comments about the play are pertinent; he says that the play “is an attack on the decline of real human values and the advent of a shoddy new opportunistic materialism.” Kenneth Tynan in a similar way contends that the play is Osborne’s diagnosis of “the sickness that is currently afflicting our slap-happy breed. He chooses, as his national microcosm, a family of run-down vaudevillians.” Whereas Ronald Mavor fittingly reminds us: “John Osborne cries out that we must feel for [Archie], and for his frightened wife, and for his neurotic son and for his mixed-up daughter and for his passé redundant father.” Mavor concludes that the play is “full of understanding of the value of life. Its lesson is that we should love one another.”

Whatever happens to the characters in The Entertainer seems to have arisen out of a cultural context where under the impact of growing affluence and science and technology an individual has become so selfish and self-centered that he ceases to be a feeling creature. The cult of materialism has disrupted the milder feelings which can provide a sense of belonging. The play suggests that the finer feelings of compassion, love and trust can act as anti-dote to the mess created by materialistic forces in the intra-familial relationships.

In the sixties, British society has become more impersonal and materialistic in its approach to life consequent upon the tremendous increase of affluence, advent of higher technology, urbanism and rising cult of individualism. Man has become an
insignificant cog in the machine of materialism. The play, *Inadmissible Evidence* dramatizes how the materialistic outlook on life plays havoc with intra-familial relationships. Maitland, the mediocre barrister, finds it difficult to pace up with the comparatively highly positioned colleagues in the legal profession in the age of cut-throat competition. Being “incapable of making decisions,”\textsuperscript{54} he depends on others to stay alive. Maitland tells the Judge (Hudson): “I have depended almost entirely on other people efforts. Anything would else have been impossible for me, and I always knew in my heart that only it was that kept me alive and functioning at all”\textsuperscript{(p.19)}. The more he depends on others, the more they withdraw from him, and the more he gets alienated and isolated. The haunting trepidation of “being found out”\textsuperscript{(p.19)} for the inadequacy of decisiveness engenders in him so much anxiety and frustration that he finds himself a prisoner of “embryonic helplessness”\textsuperscript{(p.20)}. He needs love and friendship for survival, but, neither his family nor his colleagues recognize his human needs. Maitland tells the Judge (Hudson):

> I never hoped or wished for anything more than to have the good fortune of friendship and the excitement and comfort of love and the love of women in particular. I made a set at both of them in my own way. With friendship, I hardly succeeded, I hardly succeeded at all. Not really. Not at all. With the second, with love, I succeeded, I succeeded in inflecting, quite certainly inflecting more pain than pleasure. (p.20)

In this play, the playwright also brings to light the impact of mindless use of technology on the settled patterns of professions and sociability. Maitland’s anxiety augmented by the impending fear of being replaced by computers breeds in him a throbbing sense of insecurity. Anticipating the looming offshoots of technological revolution, Maitland expresses his apprehension: “Soon we’ll be out of job. If anyone’s riddled with the idea that being busy is the same thing as being alive,” (p.28) he will be at the receiving end. Recognizing the horrors of the mindless use of machine which is trampling him underfoot, Maitland tries to protest, yet knows that he is helpless:

> Have you seen the papers this morning? Some mathematical clerk will feed all our petitions and depositions and statements and evidence into some clattering brute of a computer and the answer will come out guilty or not guilty in as
much time as it takes say it....They will need no more lawyers. I don't understand who will be needed. (p.29)

In the sixties, human values are being replaced by inhuman technology. The impersonal hands of machine are putting a deadening impact on the relationships based on love, compassion, trust, tolerance and solidarity. Maitland satirizes the wider use of "technological naught" in the rebuilding of Britain in the post-war period, as it is not, for him "a better way to emerge" (p.30) as a powerful and healthy nation. Being devoid of healthy human interaction, it destroys the finer feelings of love, compassion and solidarity, as it is aimed at "endless bloody consumption and production" (p.29). He is so critical of the hi-tech progress that he is unlikely to be pleased with less than the death of such pursuits and who pursue it: "Why doesn't he stick his scientific rod---into the Red sea or where he likes and take everyone he likes with him....The sooner the sea closes behind them the better" (p.29).

Maitland derides his office clerk Jones for being a product of this inhuman culture: "He's a tent peg. Made in England. To be knocked into the ground" (p.27). Jones is always found busy thinking in terms of money and gadgets only. Maitland mocks at Jones: "Got to keep you busy. Busy, busy, that's you who you want isn't it? That's why you came to me, isn't it, for no other reason" (pp.26-27). Jones, "a child of jet age," (p.74) is devoid of human excitement and enthusiasm. Maitland wonders aloud when young Jones, whom he distrusts, is going to betray him to the Law Society. In the nightmare trial, Jones is Maitland's defense counsel who turns prosecutor when Maitland decides to take up his own defense. Jones is simply the kind of man who breaches the trust of Maitland. Maitland snubs Jones: "You are unselfconscious which I am not. You are without guilt, which I am not" (p.85). In the entire legal profession, Maitland fails to find even a single person whom he can trust: "All we want is one good reliable person" (p.72). He is constantly plagued by the fear that "someone's going to shop" him "to the Law Society one day" (p.75).

In the post-war period, the Welfare State introduces various measures to raise the standard of living of the lower classes, but at the same time, it has made them calculating and conceited by turning the minicab into their mini-dream. Maitland
denounces the Welfare State for having encouraged a lower middle-class materialism and philistinism. The socialists such as Hugh Gaitskell and Harold Wilson largely associated welfare with mass consumption and the promise of technology. Even the leftist critic such as Raymond Williams is afraid that “the Welfare State has been a trojan horse through which American-style materialism has entered the country.”

According to Osborne, “What had finally conquered the nation was not visionary but the grocer’s mentality of balanced accounts. An unelected technology masked its insidious and intrusive power behind an ideology of service and caring.” Osborne is well aware of the fact that the ongoing ‘technological revolution’ rooted in self-gratification and self-perpetuation is destroying the feelings of love, compassion, kindness trust and solidarity which constitute the bedrock of family. Osborne suggests that judicious use of machine can put a positive effect on human relationships.

The playwright dramatizes the insidious impact of the cultural changes through the predicament of Maitland. Maitland, disgusted at the indifference and impersonality of society, takes recourse to indiscriminate sex and wine as safety valves to give an outlet to his tortured feelings, but, as for returns, he receives nothing except that of anguish and agony in abundance. With the passage of time, drink and debauchery lead to his downfall to the extent that he starts losing healthy interactions with his staff and colleagues. With the decline of Maitland’s retentive power and reputation, all his colleagues and clients “turn away” (p.76) from him. His managing clerk, Hudson intends to desert him for the Piffards, the wealthy and seemingly reputed legal firm. Shirley, the office secretary, has become so much “sick of the sight of Mr. Maitland” that she can not even bear to be “in the same room with him” (p.23). His receptionist, Joy enjoyed sex with him earlier, but now she expresses her intentions to leave him: “There’s not much to stay for, is there?”(p.107). Even the taxi drivers and the elevator boy “turned” their “back on” (p.28) him. His colleagues ignore his existence. Winters does not respond to him when the latter calls him on the telephone: “Oh tell him I’m out or something. Anything”(p.89).

Not only the colleagues, but the members of his family also desert him. They seem to be an assortment of the strangers who have nothing to do with the agonies of one another. His wife starts ignoring him in the pursuit of family affairs when he
ceases to be sound both economically and socially. His daughter, Jane, the product of consumer-culture, detests looking at him, as he is for her "only an inquisitive, hostile, undistinguished square" (p.64). However, he admits that he is "fairly rotten father but better than some" (p.65). Jane sets aside the responsibilities and anxious disabilities that have rendered his life so traumatic. Being a girl of the American age, she "is sure to marry an emergent African" (p.66) to enjoy worldly life. Maitland expresses concerns for Jane: "Sure, she’ll not get into any mess like us" (pp. 61-62). His son, at the age of eleven, joins a hostel despite his denial, and seems to be a "late developer" (p.42). Maitland satirizes him: "...he writes dull beady letters all about house-matches and photographic activities...It is like having a priest in the family"(p.41). Maitland’s father lives alone in the country side, and the isolation has made him so hard at heart that he does not feel love for his son. Maitland tells Jane: "... he doesn’t want to see me these days...when I went to see him the other day. He was tired and he wanted me to go. When I bent down and kissed him, he didn’t look up"(pp.102-03). Eventually, his mistress Liz comes to his office to inform him she too is discarding him. He tries desperately to connect people already out of reach and his voice surges on in endless repetition. Nicol Williamson who played the taxing role of Bill Maitland commented: "This isn’t a play about a man going down the drain. It’s about a man slipping down the drain and desperately fighting not to do so."57

Maitland is so much despised and overlooked by the members of his family in particular and the world in general that he loses grip on life prematurely. His self-destruction continues as the others discard him, and he is reduced to a tragic state beyond human dignity. He is left in the isolation of his own hell, with the knowledge he has nowhere to go. He needs warmth, tenderness, sympathy and love from his family as well as from the outside world, but he meets dryness, hatred and indifference. Maitland tells Hudson: "I want to feel tender, I want to be comforting and encouraging and full of fun and future things like that..."(p.55). On meeting this unbecoming treatment at the hands of the world, Maitland laments to Jane: "They’re all pretending to ignore me...There isn’t my place for me, not like you, in the law, in the country, or, indeed any place in the city"(p.102). She stands "all cool" (p.104) and wordless throughout his great tirade and leaves without opening her mouth. He bids
her final good-bye knowing that she too has eluded him. Tom Milne observes: “Nobody seems to pay attention to his inner feelings and hopes.”58 Defeated in this task, tarnished by his inability to be impersonal or less righteous, he stands alone, betrayed by himself and by those he loves.

The play ends with Maitland phoning Anna, his wife, to tell her that he won’t come home and just stay in his office unless and until somebody comes to get him. He is reduced to a state of hopeless despair. His last words are: “I think I’ll just stay there” (p.115). Maitland has managed to exorcize himself. The love he craves for is frustrated by his own inadequacy to give love, an inability obscured by his wide sexual appetite. He has numerous affairs, but all women dispose of him, in much the same way his wife and friends have disowned him. He is persistently conscious of the fate in store for him, but is defiantly confident that his values are correct rather than that of society. His downfall is that of a man trapped in the machine of progress, and as such it is representative of John Osborne’s fundamental position. A position described by Time magazine:

Osborne recoils at the world of the social contract symbolized by his lawyer-hero, the world of abstract concepts impersonal institutions, dehumanized relationships, bounded in paper and ratified by the press. The sense of loss that permeates his play is an unrequited yearning for the old blood ties of pre-industrial man, the organic community of honor and duty where man was knitted to man without intellectual sophistication or corporate complexity. The spectacle, of a human worm turning on the office spit, the sapped vitality, the jangled nerves, the repetitive routine, all these are abrasively marshaled by Osborne to convey his vision of the modern world as a playing field of pain.59

In this play, Osborne highlights also the issue of divorce fracturing familial relations. Maitland, as solicitor, receives cases of divorce, especially from women seeking divorce on the grounds of adultery or sexual assault. But what prompts them to resort to this step is the materialistic outlook that underlies the apparent accusations. It is the falling financial position of her husband that prompts Mrs. Anderson to seek divorce: “Things become increasingly unhappy and difficult when my husband gave up his job...He was able to be at home most of the time” (p.87). Another client, Mrs. Garnsey seeks divorce on the grounds of adultery, but at the roots of this charge lies the declining reputation of her spouse, which is evident in her
deposition to Maitland: "I know... nothing really works for him. Not at the office, not at his friends, not even his girls... everyone’s drawing from him....And now, I can’t bear to see him. And now it’s me" (p.55). In these cases, it is clearly established that they value their husbands in terms of productivity and social employability. All these cases are the reflection of Maitland’s life in particular and society’s in general.

In the late sixties, advancement of technology has brought out rapid and radical changes in the cultural life of England. The long-established channels of cultural entertainment have been replaced by the newer ones. David Thomson rightly observed that the youth spent their “new found wealth on long-playing records of pop-singers, transistor, radio sets and cosmetics.” The social and moral recklessness is what Thomson refers to as “cultural bulldozers.” In *Time Present*, Abigail, the representative of this cultural chaos, offers almost nothing wholesome in terms of entertainment except that of din and noise with vulgarity in abundance, but she scales heights in the profession by serving the stuff which is the most sought after in the present time. On the other hand, Pamela, the talented artist, finds herself helpless in the present time, finding no sane and sound opportunity to display her serious artistic talent amidst the cultural whirlwind. Alan Carter comments: “Like all of Osborne’s heroes, she is unable to do anything but watch helplessly from the sidelines. She is appalled at the hypocrisy and emptiness of contemporary life.” As a result, she loses healthy contact and communication not only with the outside world, but with her family also. Even her father who “used to write beautiful letters” seems to have lost interest in her. It is not only the father, but others have also lost interest in her: “No one writes to me. Except for some occasional sun-questing queen who send me a card from wherever the wog rumbo is thickest at the moment” (p.42).

The unprecedented growth of affluence and advancement of technology allied with hippie culture have brought about tremendous cultural changes in the every walk of British social life. Its impact is distinctly discernible in the younger generation which has become irresponsible towards the older generation. The new culture emphasizes unbridled freedom of self-expression and self-gratification. The youngsters adopt their lifestyles along the lines of ‘eat, drink and be merry,’ taken literally disregarding the value of commitment and responsibility towards family and
society. Pamela finds a great lack of commitment, responsibility, sanity and seriousness in the hippie lifestyle that the youngsters are adopting. She lambastes her step-sister, Pauline for the type of life the latter is leading with a hippie boy friend, Dave. Pamela mocks at him: “Does he have a name or is a group? It was a bit different to tell you if he was one or several” (p.22). It is manifest that the new culture is putting an adverse impact on the relations based on care and commitment; responsiveness and responsibility; attachment and attainment, and devotion and dedication.

In this play, the playwright also highlights the issue of divorce fracturing family ties in the money-oriented society. In the post-war society, spouses resort to divorce to escape the incompatible marriage, thereby overlooking the genuine needs of children. They become so selfish and callous that they refuse to perceive beyond their physical needs. Edith left her husband twenty years ago, finding him indifferent to her aspirations and needs. She, restricted to her needs, became so much selfish that she overlooked the well-being of Pamela. She looked at her husband from a materialistic perspective, disregarding his value as human being. Her money-oriented outlook on life came to the fore when he ceased to be an earning hand. Pamela tells Constance: “Oh, here’s one of his great flops. His own adaptation of “The brothers Karamzov.” Lost all his savings in that....His own management, you see. And his own wife dunning him for money all the time” (pp.79-80). In this respect, Gideon Orme suffers from the same fate that Maitland suffers from and the proposition his case suggests is the same. In the contemporary acquisitive society, matter has become more important than emotions. When an individual ceases to be significant in terms of money and matter, he is regarded as unwanted and undesirable.

In this play, the playwright also dramatizes the issue of child care in the face of parental divorce. In the face of parental divorce, Pamela, deprived of maternal love and care, comes to realize the value of love and friendship for a healthy existence: “I believe in friendship, I believe in love. Just because don’t know how to does’t mean I don’t. I don’t or can’t” (p.28). To seek love and warmth in the wider world she abandons her family and stays with a wealthy friend, Constance, but the latter also refuses to recognize the needs of the former thinking that she needs only food and
drink. Moreover, Constance can not afford to spare time and sincere intentions to satisfy the needs of Pamela, as the former gets busy perpetuating her political interests. Frustrated with Constance, Pamela establishes sex relations with Murray to seek love, but leaves him also, finding selfish, opportunist and womanizer. Pamela cries to Constance: “Oh, come off it, Constance, that’s what we all need— love and friendship and a hot cuddle. And they really are on short supply” (p.37). It clearly establishes the fact that personal relationships are devoid of largesse, love and loyalty.

Pamela, disillusioned and embittered, becomes whimsical and critical of every thing that denies her right to live as human being. Frank Marcus rightly observes that Pamela like Jimmy “is concerned with the quality of life, railing against its shabbiness, its emptiness and hypocrisy.” Pamela’s hostile attitude towards her mother is evident in the way she receives her: “She’s Madam Distress Fund, my Mamma...My mother’s a bat” (p.26). Ronald Bryden rightly observes: “Pamela is, herself, sufficiently spiky and pathetically individual to make an impersonal point about the necessity and loneliness of egotism in a society whose only shared values are fashionable trivia.” Pamela finds all the members of her family vulgar, opportunists, heartless and selfish, as they fail to understand what she wishes—she wishes to live a meaningful life. She is underrated by all, though she is a good actress. After the death of her father, she gets more alienated and isolated. She does not like to stay any more with Constance or the members of her family, for she gets stifled in their company. Pamela tells Murray: “I’d like some, oh, privacy, I guess. Anyway, I’d like to be alone, and not stared at, please go away” (p.61). She intends to leave the place for France to have a change in the company of her homosexual friend. In the end, Constance comes to realize the need of Pamela:

Constance: Darling, please stay. You need love more than anyone I’ve ever known. And looking after. We’ll both do it.
Pamela : You look after Murray. He’s the sort who needs it. Clever men need a lot of pampering...(p.72)

It is manifest that Pamela’s sufferings and sorrows are rooted in her cheerless childhood. She is deprived of love and care in her childhood in the wake of parental divorce. On grown up, she is deprived of due opportunities to display her talent as actress in the whirlwind of cultural mess. With this she gets frustrated and wishes to
have tender touch of love to embalm her anguished heart and tortured psyche, but everyone, engrossed in her or his concerns, fails to cater to her human needs. The way the playwright dramatizes the plight of Pamela indicates that he is committed to human values of love, compassion, solidarity and tolerance.

In this play, Osborne also brings to light the issue of old age. In the consumerist society, the aged people are considered as great liability on family. When they cease to be earning hands, they are treated as undesirable elements. The insidious manifestation of this culture gets reflected in the behaviour and attitude of members of family towards the aged people. In this play, Gideon Orme, the great stage artist of his times, is on the verge of death in the hospital, and needs emotional support from his family, but no one except Pamela seems to be concerned about his pathetic plight. In these circumstances, Gideon is “convinced that he’s going to be alone” and “panics if he’s left alone. Especially if he nods off and there’s no one there when he wakes up” (p.18). Edith feels suffocated in the sickly presence of her husband: “It’s not much fun... sitting up all night in a hospital room” (p.14). For her, it is rather tiresome to have “long waiting sessions with Gideon” (p.17) in the disgusting place. Andrew and Pauline, absorbed in their pursuits, reluctantly attend on him. All of them take turns to attend on him more out of sense of duty than out of a genuine affection. They even talk about his probable death. The relatives are also not concerned about him. Edith tells Constance: “They’re not interested....They make it pretty clear what a nuisance you are---just the fact that you exist” (p.19).

In the dramatic world of Osborne, the more an individual becomes rich, the more he becomes alienated and isolated not only in the society, but also in the family. In the plays of the seventies, his protagonists are suffering from an acute sense of alienation and isolation, though they enjoy a life of plenty. It is evident that the growing cult of materialism is disrupting the relations based on feelings and instincts. This culture gives birth to the relations based on selfish ends and monetary calculation. Money provides individual with physical comforts, but at the cost of relations based upon affection and attachment. In the wider world, social relations are exploitative, fragmentary and shallow. In Very Like a Whale, Jock Mellor starts out “as a pretty simple engineer” and becomes “captain of Industries.” But in the course
of twenty years, surrounded by machinery, he loses interest in all kinds of relations and things. Harold Ferrar observes that "his work is meaningless to him, his marriage futile, his children unable to salve his heart's pain...we are shown that Sir Jock's recognition of his uselessness to himself or his family as he dwindles inexorably towards a lonely path."66 Alan Carter remarks that Jock shows "marked lack of interest in his family; neither his present wife, nor his former wife are held in much esteem and even children seem more duty than pleasure."67 His former wife, Barbara leaves him, and the present wife, Lady Mellor makes his life unbearable with her ceaseless bitchiness, finding him apathetic to their aspirations and needs. The present wife tries to break his silence with her bitchiness and taunts, but he remains unmoved. His problem, perhaps, lies in the fact that he suffers from an acute sense of loneliness and boredom in the vast world of impersonal relations. About his boredom, Jock retorts to the query of Lady Journalist: "Boredom? Oh, daily experience. Like rheumatism..." (p. 19). The more he fights against his lonely existence, the more he loses grips on life, and the more he gets isolated.

Jock suffers from so much isolation that he feels "dread" (p. 10) to go home to join the party in his honour for contribution to technological advancement, because he is "tired of knighthood gags" (p. 19). The reason lies in the fact that these parties constitute his dreadful experience and drab existence. At the party, the way he moves impatiently from one guest to another indicates that he wishes to revitalize his old human proximity. The more one tries to know about his life and achievements, the sooner he leaves him or her. Jock becomes impatient to open his heart to his childhood friend Stephen Grain: "Wish they would all go. You and I could talk," (p. 19) but the latter has also, to some extent, become "very selfish" (p. 36) and circumscribed his area of life by the time. Contrary to him, Jock has "spread his investment so wide" that he becomes lonely "Very Like a Whale." (p. 37). Jock, no doubt, enjoys life of plenty, but the materialistic pursuits have isolated him from the social life. Joan Bakewell comments:

Sir Jock Mellor...lives in the paddled cell of luxury life. He travels in car so big no one touches, sleeps in beds so wide there is no contact. Through the windows of the Rolls he observes the exotic beauty of London at night. Secretaries and chauffeurs cocoon him at work; servants and a lonely wife
shelter him at home. Everything money can buy is his and it is worthless. In a life style abounding in choices he has no freedom.68

Jock admits that he is "not very likeable," but at the same time, he says: "It's not an age of friendship" (pp.34-35). Before his final collapse, he tells the T.V. Interviewer that the present time is "Very like. Like a Whale" (p.53) for him. In this context, we are reminded of what Eric Fromm asserts:

Modern man feels uneasy and more and more bewildered. He works and strives, but is dimly aware of a sense of futility with regard to his activities. While his power over matter grows, he feels powerless in individual life and in society. While creating new and better means for mastering nature, he has become enmeshed in a network of those means and has lost the vision of the end which alone gives them significance---man himself.69

Presently, Jock gets fed up with the selling machinery, because it has cramped his life to a great extent, and bleakness and uncertainty have become permanent features of his life. Dread of being swept away in the world of machine and cut-throat competition is evident in his conversation with his doctor, Ted:

Ted: What's it for---
Jock: Selling Us. Selling Us.
Ted: I hope you get a good price.
Jock: Can't guarantee it, dear boy. You may be the best but they may not want you. (p.39)

Jock expresses his revulsion to American materialistic culture that makes man heartless. His critical attitude to American culture is evident in his conversation with his driver, Tom:

Jock: London does not seem to belong to us any more, Tom.
Tom: No. sir I know what you mean, sir.
Jock: Look at it. London--To let. Look at them.
Tom: Perfect nuisance if you ask me, sir. Block up the roads. Fill up the restaurants...Still---
Jock: Yes?
Tom: Well, I suppose we depend on them, sir.
Jock: Depend?
Tom: Yes, sir, well if it weren't for their money, all their dollars and marks and things, we'd be even worse off than we are today.
Jock: Yes.... (p.22)
Jock meets the members of his family, but the meetings prove far from being enjoyable exchange of genuine feelings. He meets his sister, Jane with a view to open his anguished heart, but finds it difficult. He meets the son by his former wife, but feels that it would have been better if he had not “seen” (p.47) him. The meeting proves an exercise in futility, as both want to escape one another as soon as they meet. At the hotel, where Jock is staying, he is told that his son has called him twice with a message, but he does not even ask what the message is. It shows his non-caring attitude towards his son. In the end, Jock meets his aged father who lives alone in a secluded house with a dog as companion, but the latter takes more interest in his pet dog and television set than in the former. Jock kisses him on the forehead, but it is for him no more than a dry touch. The father finds it hard to take his eyes off the T. V. to talk to his son. Dryness of father-son relationships is conspicuous in the following conversation:

Father: What’s the matter? Are you in a hurry or something?
Jock : Don’t go up. I’ll let myself out.
Father: Oh, are you going? I won’t get up. Could you turn the sound up?
Jock : Of course. Sam must see the news. Good night, Dad. (He kisses him on the forehead.) (p.42)

It is more than palpable that his frustration is rooted in the uncaring attitude of the father for the son. Later on, when the T. V. announces his death, the father remains unruffled, and his callousness grows to a horrible extent that he calmly “switches over to another channel” and asks his dog: “Come on, Sam boy. Dinner time, then...You don’t want to watch that” (p.54). Joan Bakewell remarks:

They all fail him and he stares his own failure in the face....The play is about money and success, the ambition to have them and the assumption they are life’s crowning glory. These are false Gods. Glutted with objects, our lives have no substance....

It is evident that the materialistic pursuits in the age of machine and cut-throat competition make man so much egocentric and selfish that he becomes insensitive and indifference to familial and social responsibilities. By dramatizing the miserable plight of Lord Jock Mellor the playwright suggests that the feelings of love and involvement can go in a long way to revitalize the fragmented familial relations.
In the dramatic world of the playwright, the materialistic pursuits have made an individual so egocentric, callous and selfish that he seems to be dried of genuine feelings of love, compassion and trust. As a result, familial relationships come to be characterized by alienation, isolation, indifference and mistrust. In *Watch It Come Down*, Ben Prosser, the former film director, suffers from an acute sense of alienation even at home. He becomes selfish with his demands for love and solace from his family, especially from his wife, Sally. On the other hand, she wants to be loved, but fails to respond to the needs of her husband. Ben needs love and solace from his wife to combat boredom and isolation, but at the same time finds it hard to "be romantic in a world that despises imagination." Ben is indifferent to the needs of Sally, and, in turn, she is also apathetic to his sufferings. Sally rebukes Ben: "You like saying hurtful things. They require no effort....What's worse, me. The minute you get in" (p.14). The divergent needs lead to emotional incompatibility, engendering a sense of loss and frustration in them.

In the post-war period, the tremendous growth of prosperity not only creates communication gap between the husband and wife, but also between the old generation and new generation. In this play, Ben loses interest in his aged mother who lives in an isolated room upstairs "with her television and cats" (p.10). It is also alleged that Ben had no cordial relations with his father when the latter was alive. Sally tells Raymond: "...he didn't have to have much either until he was dying and started treating him like Tolstoy on his last platform"(p.10). Not only Ben, but Sally is also averse to the well-being of the lady. Sally tells Raymond: "...I can't stand that sight of her....Tell her to put her teeth in if she ever comes down" (p.31). On the other hand, Ben's mother is also least disturbed about the upcoming divorce between Ben and Sally. Sally tells Raymond: "... It won't worry her just so long as her cats are fed and the telly's working" (p.12). David C. Marsh is of the view that the isolation of the aged has resulted from that the protective function of the family has been taken over by the Welfare State:

Under the National Assistance Act of 1948, the assessment of the needs of an applicant bears no relation to the resources of the family. It is now possible for the aged parents of limited means to be cared for by the State even though he
or she may have wealthy sons and daughters, and this clearly represents past purely family obligations.\textsuperscript{72}

Not only the aged and the young, but the children have also become so much egocentric that they lose interest in their parents. Ben meets the daughter by her former wife "three time a year,"\textsuperscript{(p.19)} and the meetings prove far from being pleasant. Ben admits to Jo:

I was sitting in the restaurant with my daughter. She refused a cushion for her chair like she used to have. Very politely. I looked at her. She looked at me. I talked about the restaurant, the waiters, the food, who went there, what dishes there were... She tackled her spaghetti, her steak, her ice cream. Her coke. We said less and less. I would her to go. She wanted to go...I left her at home and we neither of us said a word.\textsuperscript{(p.38)}

Ben's former wife, Marion seems to feel guilty for depriving the little daughter of parental love and care. Marion admits to Ben: "Oh, Ben, it's been a glass steel wall. Both observing the child and her us. We do---did nothing with her----or her with us. I tried keeping her out of the bedroom, for my sake as much as yours!"
\textsuperscript{(p.53)}. It is comprehensible that the daughter, deprived of parental love, develops hatred towards her parents, especially for the father who has left her with her mother to grow as an unhealthy adult. Sally tells Ben: "...Perhaps she doesn't like you. Just that...a lot of people, you know..."\textsuperscript{(p.19)}. This shows how they give more importance to their individual concerns than the genuine needs of their daughter.

Another couple of Glen and Jo seem to be happy, but, under the surface, frustration breeds owing to negligence of the biological needs of Jo, as Glen is always found lost in the dry world of books, where he finds no words of endearment to say to Jo. Glen is obsessed with a sense of failure, as he sees a bleak future in the books. He is an epitome of love and friendship, but is now dying. His approaching death indicates the death of these finer values. Jo tells Sally: "Glen is the life. If he goes. It all. Goes, the wit, the irony, the kindness, the struggle with himself which he never unburdened"\textsuperscript{(pp.33-34)}. Jo holds the view that love requires a great deal of sacrifice on the part of lovers. Without undergoing pains, pleasures of love are not possible. Jo tells Shirley: "...It's hard to love, isn't? It's like religion without pain. It's not flowers and light and fellowship. It's cruel and we inhabit each other's dark places"\textsuperscript{(p.39)}. If they stay indifferent to one another in the times of personal crisis, they are certainly
doomed to a tragic end. The playwright suggests that the virtue of love, sympathy and trust can save the institution of family from its tragic doom.

*The End of Me Old Cigar* portrays how a group of divorced, estranged and separated women demean the institution of family by assuming the role of prostitutes. In the name of freedom and expression of their ire against their husbands and family life, they resort to an act of gross indecency. By resorting to this ploy, they not only debase themselves, but also make a low-graded mockery of the institutions of marriage and family. Their dismal project not only constitutes the gross violation of the sanctity and significance of the institution of marriage, but also deprives the children of maternal love and care. Regine Frimly, originally a Hackney girl, Myra Stentiz, has divorced several husbands, and now runs a sex-racquet at her splendid house in the countryside to entertain highly well-off men from all the quarters of British society. Regine tells Stella: “I’ve had a good life. I expect it be better now, for awhile, at least.” It is evident that it is not only her sexual frustration that prompts her to ply the flesh trade, but it is also her debasement in the name of enjoying a better life. As a social façade, she keeps Stan as husband, but uses him as a pimp. She suspects his intentions and keeps separate keys of the bank-vaults where she conceals the films of the customers shot in the compromising positions: “He’ll do anything for money.” The playwright highlights the problem of prostitution hitting very hard at the roots of the family.

*The Divorce Reform Act* undoubtedly has freed the aggrieved couple from incompatible marriage, but at the same time, it has made the couple callous, irresponsible towards family life, especially children. In this play, almost all the members of the Regine group are living on the alimony received from their ex-husbands. Besides, they are working as professionals in various fields. Miss Stella Shrift, the journalist, abandons her job to seek “a scoop” (p.19) at Regine’s establishment. She gives in to the allurements offered by Regine: “It’ll be more rewarding than the Hunt Ball Fashion Show...” (p.22). Now she considers herself: “...Not an outside observer. A participant. A resistance worker”(p.26). She also coaxes the reluctant women into orgies. She threatens Mrs. Gwen with life when the latter refuses to succumb to their temptations: “Watch it you untalented trollop. I can
get you eaten up" (p.31). Lady Gwen Mitchelson, a nibbling actress, has “two children on lots of alimony from sweet, misguided ex-husband actor,”(p.30) but goes easily by the wishes of Regine. Mrs. Letitia, a writer on sex matters, not only abandons her job, but also deserts her children for the sake of cheap fun or popularity.

But this strange notion of freedom has made their lives so irksome and tiresome that they wish to go home back, perhaps to have a sustained emotional support from their husband and children. Fienberg gets tired with this strenuous exercise: “I’m sick to death of staring up at myself in the ceiling mirror. I almost fancy my husband”(p.26) and gives vent to her anger against Regine: “You have wasted us.... We are your waste. Your effluent. Men and their things. Big deal. Big fucking deal. Let them do it themselves. You’re all a Big Deal. Protagonists. Tyrants” (p.32). Letitia tells Regine: “I can’t stay...I’m sorry Tom’s wanting me on his constituency stint this weekend” (p.27). But Regine with the help of Stella does everything from persuasion to punishment to make them carry out her mission. Moreover, the pair of Mrs. Isobel Sands and Len falls in love with each other, as they find each other comforting and honest. Len tells her: “We need love. Otherwise we would be alone” (p.45). Len tells Isobel: “How does one avoid cruelty? And be honest and survive” (p.49). Osborne suggests that love and loyalty to one another may forge lasting marital and familial relationships.

In the last play, Dejavu, J.P., the protagonist, has now grown older, sadder and however wiser in a society which has become more “brutal” and more “coercive.” Now he has entered into the club of “a better class of person” (p.137) through acquisition of wealth, but he is lacking in finer qualities of a better man. He lives in a country house with about fifteen rooms somewhere in the Midlands. His celler is stocked with wines fifteen and twenty five years old, and keeps a choice of champagnes permanently on ice. His clothes are casual, but expensive. He seems to be so callous that he warns his pregnant daughter not to look to him for hope “that is in no one’s gift” (p.35). J.P. has married twice and twice he has failed as a husband. He appears to live alone, except for a dying dog. His life has become a dreadful existence with his wives gone and his daughter hurling abuses on him. His daughter Alison finds him a disgusting old man and she has no love and respect for him.
Alison: I think you're mad and utterly horrible.
J.P. : I don't know why you have ever come back here. I've nothing to offer you.(p.35)

Alison ignores J.P. by putting Sony Walkman on her ears, so does Cliff by lying “asleep beneath the newspaper” (p.102). J.P. makes his final exit realizing that there exists no possibility for genuine human contact.” Indeed, Osborne has written an epitaph on the burial of family relationships in the present-day society in his last play.

The foregoing examination of Osborne's plays brings out Osborne's stark and bleak view of the modern society where it seems difficult to maintain meaningful and cordial family relations. Osborne's dramatic world is littered with the amputated and dysfunctional limbs of the body of the institution of family. The playwright has rightly diagnosed the modern malady of the numbness of heart and emotional incapacity which has made him a stranger even in his family. But the depiction of the fragmented form of family does not mean that he has lost all hopes of its rejuvenation. His criticism of disvalues underlies his broad vision and faith in human values. Behind his criticism of the contemporary family lies his serious view to rejuvenate the positive human values of love, compassion, trust, tenderness, tolerance and compatibility which could make their world better and happier. Even a cursory reading of Osborne's plays draws our attention towards the fact that almost all the major characters have a certain level of deformity or at least an angularity caused by a cumulative impact of various facts like emancipation of women, class-consciousness, attitude towards sex and so on. But it would be an over-simplification if these characters are not seen to be moulded by the impact of inroads of technology in day-to-day life and the potentialities of the scientific and technological programmes being made. Yet another significant complex of factors to the immediate goals of life, particularly when the goals are shaped by the acquisition and monetary concerns, is further compounded by ideological fashions and fads of the contemporary society. Seen from this perspective Osborne’s plays gives us a galaxy of characters whose lifestyles and concerns are a beautiful exemplification of the realization of life shaped by the technological revolution and the hippie culture.
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