The drama of Ibsen and some continental Naturalists made possible a radical change in and revival of British Drama. Towards the end of the Nineteenth century and in the early decades of the twentieth, the impact of the New Drama on English Drama became manifest in two major respects, apart from several minor features: (i) the theme of drama became a close reflection of changing social values, especially the demand for social justice for all sections of the society; (ii) the use of prose as the medium of drama.

The problem of social justice became acute for various reasons. The old social classification— the higher classes, the middle classes and the lower classes - no longer held good. The class distinction itself became thin; besides the classes were no longer as rigid as in the past; quite often an individual from one class could pass on to another class. Moreover, the spread of education, unequitable distribution of the national income and the spread of socialistic ideas heightened a demand for social justice.

Thus the concept of social justice infiltrates into drama, very frequently during the early decades of the present century. My aim is to study this phenomenon in order to find out how the idea of social justice penetrates into the tradition of English Theatre, with what effect and who the dramatists are in whose works the concept finds its best utterance. Although the problem is one of social history, my aim is predominantly to deal with its literary value. For the present I have thought it best to concentrate on three major playwrights of the first quarter of this century. My primary sources are the works of Shaw, Galsworthy and Granville-Barker; equally valuable are the plays of Ibsen, Tchechov, and some other dramatists such as Hauptmann and Strindberg.
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