CHAPTER –III
THE DISINTEGRATION OF INDIVIDUALS AND
THE RISE OF NEW HAMLETS – THEIR
IDEALISM AND CYNICISM

(i) JOHN OSBORNE

By 1956, only the memories of the Great
War and the Edwardian days were left. The new causes like the
dismantling of the Welfare State of the Labour Party, the
withdrawal of the British Imperial Power from India, the
suppression of the Hungarian Revolution by the Soviet Union and
the withdrawal of Britain and France from the Suez Canal along
with the maladies of joblessness and social insecurity and the
callous attitude of the major political parties of England towards the
plight of the common man made the British youths not only angry
but also morbid, sadistic, callous, hateful and neurotic. The
situation prevailing in England in nineteen fifties disintegrated
those individuals, who were upset on account of the fact that
England was relegated to a back seat in the international politics,
and it was forced to borrow its ideology from abroad and its sun
which never set was no more shining. John Osborne’s, ‘Look Back in Anger’ highlights the maladies which afflicted the British youths in nineteen fifties. Jimmy Porter who represents the youths of this period was unhappy because England had got everything imported; it had nothing of its own except the sweet memories of the Edwardian world. In this connection, Jimmy Porter remarked,

_Somebody said-what was it - we get our cooking from Paris, our politics from Moscow, and our morals from Port Said. Something like that, anyway. Who was it? Well, you wouldn’t know anyway. I hate to admit it, but I think I can understand how her Daddy must have felt when he came back from India, after all those years away. The old Edwardian brigade do make their brief little world look pretty tempting. All home-made cakes and croquet, bright ideas, bright uniforms._

Colonel Redfern who was the father-in-law of Jimmy Porter and who had returned to England from India after 1947 had the same kind of feelings about his country which was going to the dogs:

_I am a–what was it? an old plant left over from the Edwardian Wilderness. And I can’t understand why the sun isn’t shining any more ......................... It was March, 1914, when I left England, and, apart from leaves every ten years or so, I didn’t see much of my own country until we all came back_
Oh, I knew things had changed, of course. People told you all the time the way it was going—going to the dogs, ..............

Jimmy Porter was not only unhappy with himself and his family but also with the society and the universe. He felt that his youth was slowly slipping away without any serious consequence. He said to Alison that they had the same ritual, the same boredom and the same Sunday without any change.

Jimmy Porter was sorry to note that people of his time had no enthusiasm for anything; they were not human beings; nor were they actually alive because they did not raise a voice of protest against any wrong or injustice. As an idealist, he expressed his feeling of social concern to his wife, Alison saying:

*Oh heavens, how I long for a little ordinary human enthusiasm. Just enthusiasm-That's all. I want to hear a warm, thrilling voice cry out Hallelujah! Hallelujah! I'm alive! I've an idea. Why don't we have a little game? Let's pretend that we're human beings, and that we're actually alive. Just for a while. What do you say? Let's pretend we're human.*

Jimmy Porter was angry with himself and the people around him. He raved like a mad youth who had launched a war against the rotten society of England and the stinking universe without any potent force of his own. He was sad at the same time to note that people of his generation were not
able to die for good causes any longer. Jimmy Porter, in fact, launched a crusade against the rotten individuals and the rotten social setup of England but he was unable to do anything against those whom he held responsible for the miserable plight of the common man. Helena rightly remarked about him that he was born out of time and such people had no place in anything:

There’s no place for people like that any longer-in sex, or politics, or anything. That’s why he's so futile. Sometimes, when I listen to him, I feel he thinks he’s still in the middle of the French Revolution. And that’s where he ought to be, of course. He doesn’t know where he is, or where he’s going. He’ll never do anything, and he’ll never amount to anything.4

Like Hamlet and J. Alfred Prufrock, Jimmy Porter was a victim of indecision, morbid thinking and impotent anger. Both Hamlet and Jimmy Porter declared war on a rotten society. Both were made unfit by a higher education from accepting their normal place in the world. They thought too much and criticized everything too freely. Hamlet could have settled down to a soft berth in the Court of Denmark, married Ophelia, and waited for the succession. His tirades and asides were plainly calculated to disturb and annoy the Court. Jimmy Porter too could have found a job at a provincial university, instead of torching
himself and his nice wife by running a sweets stall. He could have made compromise with his in-laws and sought their help in seeking a good job for himself. Instead of doing it, he rained abuses on them simply because they belonged to a different section of society. Alison’s mother regarded Jimmy as an utterly ruthless youth who could have won the first prize for his ruthlessness. Mary Mccarthy has rightly compared Jimmy Porter with Hamlet in the following lines:

The story of Look Back in Anger has, from this point of view, a great deal in common with Hamlet. Cliff, the working-class Welsh boy, is Jimmy Porter’s Horatio, who sticks to him without understanding all the fine points of Jimmy’s Philosophy; and the scenes Jimmy makes with Alison have the same candid brutality that Hamlet showed to Ophelia. In both cases, the frenzied mockery springs from an expectation of betrayal. Ophelia is felt to be the ally of the corrupt Court with the murderer-king at its head, of her dull brother, Laertes, and her father, that ass Palonius. In Look Back in Anger, brother Nigel is Laertes and Alison’s mother is cast in the role of Polonius, lurking behind the arras. The fact that Alison is secretly exchanging letters with her means that she is in communication with the enemy, like that other docile daughter, Ophelia. Women cannot be trusted because they do not understand that such an act is treachery; they do it ‘in all innocence’. Apart from anything else, they do not take in the meaning of a declaration of war. 

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Jimmy Porter, in fact, is a frustrated left-wing intellectual rebel. His attitude to sex, religion and politics is unconventional. There is hardly any day when he does not fuss or frown over something or the other. He often fulminates against the church and the politics of the fifties. Helena rightly asked Jimmy Porter, “Jimmy, can we have one day, just one day, without tumbling over religion or politics?” But his all loud cries against politics, religion, morality and the church are nothing but sound and fury signifying nothing but his own intellectual hollowness and impotence. In matters of religion and morality, he has unorthodox beliefs. He is against the church. He believes that there is no God, and life is meaningless. He is critical of Helena who lives a sinful life with him and at the same time goes to church to seek blessings from the bishops. Jimmy Porter goes mad whenever he hears the church bells going and sees people entering the portals of the cathedrals in order to eat the spiritual beefcakes and to do some moral weight lifting to overdevelop their muscles. Jimmy Porter questions Helena:

Do you think that some of this spiritual beefcake would make a man of me? Should I go in for this moral weight lifting and get myself some over-developed muscle?
In matters of politics, Jimmy symbolizes the youth of the Post-War era and becomes the mouthpiece of the younger generation which was jobless and frustrated. He is angry because there is no change; things are the same everywhere. He is full of fire and blood. He champions the cause of the working-class but in thought and words only. Like an old impotent bear, he growls out in the wilderness “Revolution, Revolution, Revolution”. He tells Helena to write a fiery and bloody book:

Written in flames a mile high. And it won’t be recollected in tranquillity either, ............ It’ll be recollected in fire, and blood.

The cynical attitude of Jimmy was determined by his childhood experiences, his university education and the Post-War climate of his country. His anger had deep roots. The miseries of the world did not let him rest. When he was ten years old, his father came back home wounded from the Spanish War. There was none to help his father and mother. He used to look after his father and see him dying slowly. He, then, learnt what it was to be angry and helpless. After the death of his father, he went for university education without any money in his pocket. He had his own jazz band for raising money and meeting his education expenses. His study of Karl Marx, Sartre and Camus
convinced him that life is meaningless and there is a class war in society. The Post-War scenario of England and the failure of the Socialist Utopia of the Labour Government hardened his convictions. He exposed his heart and mind to Helena saying:

You see, I learnt at an early age what it was to be angry-angry and helpless. And I can never forget it. I knew more about-love .......... betrayal ........ and death, when I was ten years old than you will probably ever know all your life.  

Jimmy Porter is a spokesman of the angry, helpless, directionless and jobless youths of the Post-War period. In the Post-War period, the financial condition of England was in a shambles. The failure of the Socialist Utopia of the Labour Government filled the youths not only with anger but also with despair, frustration and loss of faith in politics, religion, culture and social and ethical values. Thus, the anger churning within them is expressed through Jimmy’s inability to communicate with others as fully and meaningfully as he feels.

John Russell Taylor rightly says that in Jimmy Porter, one is confronted with a man whose anger undoubtedly starts in human idealism and the desire that men should be more honest, more alive, and more human than they normally are. But very soon his mind degenerates into moods
profoundly destructive to life. He is the extreme embodiment of a particular state of mind of the Post-War youths. He feels what a social anarchist felt in a Welfare State.

Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* came to represent the dissatisfaction with society reflected in the novels of such young writers as John Wain, Kingsley Amis, and John Braine. Jimmy Porter, its rancorous protagonist, was thought to symbolize the fury of the young Post-War generation that felt itself betrayed, sold out, and irrevocably ruined by its elders. The older generation had made a thoroughness of things, and there was nothing the new generation could do except withdraw and indulge in the perverse and vicarious pleasure of nursing its resentment. John Russell Taylor rightly sums up the nature of British youths who were inspired by idealism but were misfit to root out the evils of their times:

*Look Back in Anger* presents post-war youth as it really is, with special emphasis on the non-U intelligentsia who live in bed-sitters and divide the Sunday papers into two groups, ‘posh’ and ‘wet’.¹⁰

Osborne next play, *The Entertainer* which was presented on the stage at the Royal Court Theatre, London, on April 10, 1957, again highlights the precarious
existence of the British youths in the Welfare State and the hope of the people for a better turn. The issue of the Suez Canal once again comes up because the family of Billy Rice has lost a young man of the family in the Suez Canal battle. The response of three generations of the Rice family to the social values of the nineteen fifties has been presented in the play to give us an idea of the bitterness of Jean Rice, Frank Rice and Archie Rice. The grand father, Billy Rice was a successful music hall comedian in his days. He has seen the glory of his Edwardian days and, like all old people, he is nostalgic about the golden days which are no more for him. He explains to his grand daughter, Jean Rice:

They were ladies. Ladies, and you took off your hat before you dared speak to them. Now! Why, half the time you can’t tell the women from the men.........

Billy Rice is highly dissatisfied with the roles which the political parties played in the fifties. His views on the government and the society of that time sum up the general social and political atmosphere in which the British youths were placed in the fifties. He tells his favourite grand child not to talk to him either about the government or the opposition:
Like the Government and the Opposition.
Don’t talk to me about the Government. Or that other lot. Grubby lot of rogues.¹²

He further tells us that people cannot depend on the government or any other political party for a support. People have to look after themselves because no political party is prepared to fight for any public cause:

We all need looking after. And you’ve got to look after your own kind. No use leaving it to the Government for them to hand out to a lot of bleeders who haven’t got the gumption to do anything for themselves.¹³

Jean and Frank are of the new generation, and they have their peculiar troubles. Their anger and energy recall the climate of Osborne’s first play. With their youthful energy, they explore the depth and meaning of life, but contemporary society seems to reduce all their dreams of a happy life to nothing. They grope about like blind bats in the affluence-ridden state of Britain where they find no sympathetic response to their desperate search for identity. Jean’s rejection of her fiance, Graham Dodd, is really a rejection of the gross materialistic values of the consumer society. While she decides to stay with the family rather than marry Graham, Frank, his brother, decides to immigrate to Canada in search of a better life. The
British Isles were too small to hold his big dreams. In one of the most forceful indictments of the limitations of British society, he sums up the world of bitterness of the Post-War generation:

*Look around you. Can you think of any good reason for staying in this cosy little corner of Europe? Don’t kid yourself anyone’s going to let you do anything, or try anything here, Jeannie. Because they’re not. You haven’t got a chance. Who are you—you’re nobody. You’re nobody, you’ve no money, and you’re young ...................... Nobody else is going to do it for you because nobody believes in that stuff any more. Oh, they may say they do, and may take a few bob out of your pay packet every week and stick some stamps on your card to prove it, but don’t believe it—nobody will give you a second look.*

The picture of the selfish, money-grabbing and go-getter society that we get here is the same in substance as held up by Jimmy Porter. Only Frank is less idealistic in temper and thinks mainly in terms of opportunities offered. Frank’s reaction to the whole situation is full of anger and bitterness, but it is Jean who brings out the insignificance and humiliation of the underdog living in the affluent society:

*Have you ever got on a railway train here, got on a train from Birmingham to West Hartlepool? Or gone from Manchester to Warrington or Widnes. And you get out, you go down the street and on one side maybe is a chemical works, and*
on the other side is the railway goods yard. Some kids are playing in the street, and you walk up to some woman standing on her doorstep. It isn’t a doorstep really because you can walk straight from the streets into her front room. What can you say to her? What real piece of information, what message can you give to her? What real piece of information, what message can you give to her? Do you say: “Madam, d’you know that Jesus died on the Cross for you?”

Here we have the glimpse of a young sensitive suffering mind, who can identify her sense of personal humiliation and frustration with that of many in society. The triviality and meanness of life at a certain level had never been painted better by Osborne.

But it is neither Billy Rice nor Frank Rice nor Jean Rice who is a pivot round which the story of the play moves. It is rather Archie Rice who is at the centre of the play and epitomizes the general mood of the British youths in the fifties. Archie Rice is an unsuccessful music hall comedian. He is painfully conscious of his failure as an artist and as a family man. In the music hall, he is desperate to establish his rapport with his audience in order to bring back his self-respect as an artist. Similarly, he tries at home to establish his human relationship with his family in order to regain his self-respect as a family man. The
irony of his fate is that he fails miserably in both the areas. He is torn with the agony of his repudiation by his family and rejection by his audience. He unbosoms his feelings of frustration and bitterness to Jean Rice and Frank Rice:

"We’re drunks, maniacs, we’re crazy, we’re bonkers, the whole flaming bunch of us. Why, we have problems that nobody’s ever heard of, we’re characters out of something that nobody believes in. We’re something that people make jokes about, because we’re so remote from the rest of ordinary everyday, human experience. But we’re not really funny. We’re too boring. Simply because we’re not like anybody who ever lived. We don’t get on with anything. We don’t ever succeed in anything. We’re a nuisance, we do nothing but make a God almighty fuss about anything we ever do."

Like Jimmy Porter, Archie Rice also laments the lack of genuine human emotions in the humdrum of British life. Years ago, in Canada, Archie heard a fat negress singing a negro spiritual song in a strange bar with such great emotion and abandon that he still envies the emotional capacity of that “old black whore singing her heart out to the whole world”. In the face of that old fat negress he saw the hope and strength for humanity. Archie thinks if he could feel so strongly only once in his life he would consider his life meaningful:
I wish to God I could, I wish to God I could feel like that old black bitch with her fat cheeks, and sing. If I'd done one thing as good as that in my whole life, I'd have been all right.  

But he remains a second-rate music hall artist with the painful vision of what he could have been. The devotion to his artistic integrity, illusion as it is, in conflict with the indifferent world, creates the central tension in the play and imparts to it an artistic unity. The dream of Archie to evolve into a real creative artist remains with him to the end, even when he is waiting for the income tax man and his final crash.

Like Jimmy Porter, Archie Rice is also a misfit. Two different worlds are juxtaposed-Archie Rice, the modern man in conflict with his surroundings, and Billy Rice, the hero of the music hall, in harmony with his past world and its values.

For Archie Rice, things have been so tough and the world so rough that he is always seen in such a tense mood that he leaves everything in a mess. He is financially so crippled that he has lost his appetite. Even if he feels hungry, he has nothing but tea and cigarettes for days together. The shadow
of an income tax man always follows him for he has been evading income tax for last twenty years. He tells Phoebe and Billy Rice:

*The twentieth anniversary of my not paying income tax. The last time I paid income tax was in 1936.*

However, Archie Rice keeps on going in spite of the fact that he is jobless, and hopeless and he has lost his son in the Suez Canal War and his daughter Jean Rice’s engagement stands broken off. Jean Rice consoles him saying: “I know, love. Things have been tough. But be sensible, you’ve got to keep on.”

The play which immediately followed Osborne’s ‘*Look Back in Anger*’ and ‘*The Entertainer*’ was ‘*The World of Paul Slickey*’, the performance of which was given at The Pavilion Theatre, Bournemouth on April 14, 1959. The play opens in the office of Paul Slickey, a gossip columnist for *The Daily Racket* with six lady journalists and six men journalists. The loud cries of the British youths against the treachery, lies, deceit, fraud and vices which prevailed in the Post-War period and which were heard in the last two plays of Osborne are echoed in ‘*The World of Paul Slickey*’ also. In the very dedication of the play,
Osborne sarcastically highlights the nature of the theme of the play:

I dedicate this play to the liars and self-deceivers; to those who daily deal our treachery; to those who handle their professions as instruments of debasement; to those who, for a salary cheque and less, successfully betray my country; and those who will do it for no inducement at all. In this bleak time when such men have never had it so good, this entertainment is dedicated to their boredom, their incomprehension, their distaste.²⁰

Jack Oakham, alias Paul Slickey claims that he is the man who looked after public interest, and people’s freedom and upholds the glorious traditions and institutions. He tells the common man that it is he who investigates vices, denounces prominent homosexuals and Labour MPs who try to be socialists. But the common man does not have any trust in the British intellectuals who simply howled and grinned. The Chorus which represents the British common public has full trust in the common sense of the British Public in spite of morbidity, distaste and bitterness in daily life. Despite the dismantling of the Welfare State, the common man was more hopeful and re-assertive than the British intellectuals. The Chorus highlights the goodness, hopefulness and practical wisdom of the common man in the midst of utter frustration and disappointment of the British intellectuals:
Come off it you intellectuals!
British common sense will always prevail!
What on earth are they angry about!
We are the majority, we are the ones who matter!
Most people are jolly hopeful, thank goodness!
I believe in Britain!
Life is quite morbid enough as it is!
We are solid and so are you. 21

But ‘The World of Paul Slickey’ is inhabited by uniformly despicable characters. The only angry young man in this play is outside it. It is John Osborne himself dribbling black bile and trying to spatter the audience with it. It is difficult for any reader and audience to identify with at least one of the characters in the play.

However, ‘Luther’ is much better play than ‘The World of Paul Slickey’ because the playwright continues in a less offensive way the angry man literature expected of him. In ‘Luther’, the angry man is the hero, and the audience can easily identify with this hero who is a universally respected religious reformer dead over three hundred years. Luther, the historic rebel has been recreated by Osborne with such a great care that there is
no harm in identifying with such man and in feeling indignation with him at society.

Osborne’s ‘Luther’, first performance of which was given at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, on June 26th, 1961 by the English Stage Company is focused on the revolt against the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church launched by Martin Luther. Luther’s anger and bitterness against the Roman Catholic Church and its practice of selling indulgences to the public were vehemently protested by Martin Luther. His crusade against the ecclesiastical class represents the anti-mood of the British youths in the fifties. Martin tells a monk named Staupitz that he is unhappy because he has no courage to stand up and raise his voice for a good cause. Like Jimmy Porter, he also feels that the Roman Catholic Church is a rotten thing just because people are not ready to make sacrifices for a good cause; they rather try to find lame excuses to save their skin:

My old friend, you’re unhappy. I’m sorry. We monks were really no good to anyone, least of all to ourselves, every one of us rolled up like a louse in the Almighty’s overcoat. 22

Martin Luther puts forward a suggestion to his friend to come out of his present state of despair. He tells him that either he should have faith in Christ, or he should get angry
with the world and lead it, or he should love a nun and lead a peaceful family life:

*Seems to me there are three ways out of despair. One is faith in Christ, the second is to become enraged by the world and make its nose bleed for it, and the third is the love of a woman.* \(^{23}\)

Martin himself got married to a nun named Catherine and had a child by her. It was a very bold and unconventional step taken by a monk like him. He tells his fellow monk that nuns are fine cooks, good housekeepers and wonderful mothers and as such they should be pressed for a family life:

*It’s a shame everyone can’t marry a nun. They’re fine cooks, thrifty housekeepers, and splendid mothers.* \(^{24}\)

Martin was not only a good family man but also a good social rebel and organizer of peasants’ movement. He was the man who highlighted the fact that every religion has its social value and it is the duty of every religionist to work for a social cause. No religion has its value in isolation. This was the greatest contribution that Martin made to religion and society. Martin was highly praised for his contribution to the German public by a monk named Staupitz:

*You’ve taken Christ away from the low mumblings and soft voices and jewelled gowns and the tiaras and*
put Him back where He belongs. In each man's soul. We owe so much to you.\textsuperscript{25}

Osborne's next play 'Inadmissible Evidence' which was presented at the Royal Court Theatre, London, on September 9, 1964, is a much better play than 'The World of Paul Slickey' and 'Luther'. It is a study of an isolated, demented, fragmented and neurotic individual who represents not only the failure of his generation but also the failure of the Welfare State and the loss of human values in the advanced industrial society of England. Like Jimmy Porter and Archie Rice, Bill Maitland, who is the hero of the play expresses his concerns not only about Britain's future and Britain's position in the world in the Post-War era but also his own future in the industrialized British society of the Post-War period. He asks his managing clerk, Hudson:

\texttt{Britain's position in the world. Screw that. What about my position? Vote wheedling catchfart, just waiting to get us into his bag and turn us out into a lot of little technological dogs turning his wheel spit of endless bloody consumption and production.}\textsuperscript{26}

Bill Maitland, like Jimmy Porter and Archie Rice is a sensitive solicitor of London who lives a hopeless life in complicated industrial society and is unable to accept the
contemporary human values of the Bourgeois society brought about by technological advancement. He fears that the induction of computers could make people not only jobless but also brainless. He expresses his anxiety about the future of the British youths to his managing clerk, Hudson saying:

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 to say it. There'll be no more laws’ delays, just the insolence of somebody’s office. They’ll need no more lawyers. I don’t understand who will be needed.  

Like Archie Rice, Bill Maitland has a split personality and is a failed man in his profession but he is acutely conscious of his inadequacies and is unfit for improving himself. He articulates about his loss of human dignity and his failure to establish relationship with others and his anxiety to keep things in shape in the following lines:

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 the first with friendship, I hardly succeeded at all. Not really. No. Not at all. With the second, with love, I succeeded, I succeeded in inflicting, quite certainly inflicting,
Bill Maitland is a miserable individual who has worked up his way to his present position of being a solicitor. He has been working in the service of the law as a solicitor and commissioner for oaths for about twenty-five years but he is a mediocre and a confused man. He is a man who has no self-confidence and is unable to tell the difference between a friend and enemy. He admits before the judge in his dream:

That I have never really been able to tell the difference between a friend and an enemy, and I have always made what seemed to me at the time to make the most exhausting efforts to find out. The difference. But it has never been clear to me, and there it is, the distinction, and as I have got older, and as I have worked my way up-up-to my present position. I find it even more, quite impossible. And out of the question. And then, then I have always been afraid of being found out.

Bill Maitland’s acceptance of his defeat, his sense of isolation and his miserable plight are studied at two areas of reality—the reality of his subjective consciousness and the reality of his actual situation in his day-to-day work. The opening nightmare scene with Hudson as the Judge and Jones as the clerk of the Court is his subjective version of what society is going to do
to him. His confession of maladjustment in all aspects of life, his haunting sense of inadequacy to face the demands of society set the tune for the progression of the play and let us grasp the central tension. Immediately after this nightmare scene we find him in his office in his tenuous relationship with the managing clerk, the secretary, and the office boy. Three women visit him to be advised on divorce and during his interview with them, the worlds of fantasy and actuality lose their identity. In the unsatisfied life of his clients Bill Maitland discovers scraps of his own useless life; in their accusations he discovers justification of his own style of living. The subjective and the objective seem to have lost all relevance for him, and he answers his own questions rather than those of his clients. The incidents in the life of his clients seem to interpret his own life.

This technique of juxtaposing the two worlds gives us an insight into the mind of Maitland and interprets the different layers of reality.
In complete contrast to the Post-War world exposed in the plays of John Osborne, we discover the other side of the Post-War world in the plays of Harold Pinter. In Pinter’s world, there are no intellectuals like Jimmy Porter or comedians like Archie Rice or rebels like Luther. Pinter’s world is inhabited by ordinary men and women living in constant fear. The atmosphere of terror and organized violence looms large in the plays of Pinter. The individuals in Pinter’s plays are presented as terrified victims of violence unleashed by unidentified individuals or organizations of the underworld.

‘The Room’, which is Pinter’s first play in One-Act and was first performed at Bristol University in May, 1957, contains a good meaning of the basic theme of Pinter’s later successful plays. As the curtain goes up on the stage, two people are seen in a room lying in a very big house. The room is inhabited by Rose, a simple-minded old woman whose husband, Bert never speaks to her although he is pampered and fed with overwhelming motherliness. The room is in a vast house; outside it is winter and night. Rose sees the room as her only refuge, her only security in
a hostile world. This room, she tells herself, is just right for her. She would not like to live downstairs in the basement, where it is cold and damp. The room becomes an image of the small area of light and warmth.

When asked by a critic what his two people in his room are afraid of, Pinter replied, ‘Obviously they are scared of what is outside the room. Outside the room there is a world bearing upon them which is frightening. I am sure it is frightening to you and me as well’. 30

‘The Dumb Waiter’ which is Pinter’s second One-Act Play written in 1957 and first performed in January, 1960 opens again in a room occupied by two people. These two people are two hired killers employed by a mysterious organization to go around the country and assassinate their employer’s victims. They are given an address and a key and told to wait for instructions. Sooner or later their victim arrives; they kill him or her, and drive off. They don’t know what happens then.

Pinter’s first full-length play is ‘The Birthday Party’ which was presented at the Arts Theatre in Cambridge on April 28, 1958. It combines some of the characters and situations of ‘The Room’ and ‘The Dumb Waiter’. This play is also full of mystery and terror. The safe and warm heaven of the
Room has here become a dingy seaside boarding-house. Stanley Webber whose real name is Joe Soap has been staying in this boarding-house as a paying guest for about a year. He is mighty scared of some people because he seems to have betrayed an underworld organization. He has been living in the boarding house in constant fear of the underworld agents. He has found a refuge in the boarding-house because it has not been visited by any guest for years. Stanley is so much terrified that he often goes without a shave and a bath and does not go out for any job. He never steps outside the door for fear of being identified and held up. On account of constant fear lurking in his mind, he does not have proper sleep at night. It seems that he has betrayed some secret organization, and the agents of this underworld organization are after him. If the statement of Stanley is taken at its face value, he was locked up in the hall where he gave a piano performance in a concert party on the pier. He could get out in the morning as the caretaker had gone home. As soon as he got out, he caught a fast train and landed in Meg’s boarding-house. He informed Meg saying:

But then they locked the place up and he couldn’t get out. The caretaker had gone home. So he had to wait
until the morning before he could get out. They were very grateful. And then they all wanted to give him a tip. And so he took the tip. And then he got a fast train and he came down here. 31

When the two unidentified visitors named Goldberg and McCann come to stay in the same boarding-house, Stanley’s fear knows no bounds. He is so much terrified that he could not celebrate his birthday in a joyful mood. He is so depressed on his birthday that he does not give a proper response to McCann when he congratulates Stanley on his birthday and wishes many-many happy returns of the day. The following dialogue between Stanley and McCann exposes the inner fear of Stanley:

STANLEY. I’m sorry. I’m not in the mood for a party tonight.
MCCANN. Oh, is that so? I’m sorry.
STANLEY. Yes, I’m going out to celebrate quietly, on my own.
MCCANN. That’s a shame.
They stand.
STANLEY. Well, if you’d move out of my way-
MCCANN. But everything’s laid on. The guests are expected.
STANLEY. Guests? What guests?
MCCANN. Myself for one. I had the honour
of an invitation. 32

When Stanley is face to face with Goldberg and McCann, several charges are brought against Stanley by them. The first charge which they level against him is that he has left their organization, and betrayed them, and he has been playing a dirty game with them. Secondly, he is accused of throttling his wife to death. Thirdly, he is guilty of lechery and contaminating human kind. Lastly, he is charged with impersonation as he has been living in the boarding-house with a changed name. The following dialogue among Stanley, Goldberg and McCann reveals the nature of charges brought against Stanley by the unidentified men:

MCCANN. Why did you leave the organization?
GOLDBERG. What would your old mum say, Webber?
MCCANN. Why did you betray us?
GOLDBERG. You hurt me, Webber. You’re Playing a dirty game.

GOLDBERG. What have you done with your wife?
MCCANN. He’s killed his wife!
GOLDBERG. Why did you kill your wife?
STANLEY. What wife?
MCCANN. How did he kill her?
GOLDBERG. How did you kill her?
MCCANN. You throttled her.

GOLDBERG. Where is your lechery leading you?
MCCANN. You’ll pay for this.
GOLDBERG. You stuff yourself with dry toast. 33

Both Goldberg and McCann spend their night with Stanley after the birthday party is over. Stanley is so terribly scared of him that he has a nervous break down. When he comes down in the morning for breakfast, he is just adjusting his broken glasses and is not in a position to see things properly. Soon after he is seen being carried away in a van by two unidentified visitors.

Pinter’s second full-length stage play is ‘The Caretaker’ which was first performed at the Art Theatre Club, London on April 27, 1960. This play also opens in a room lying in a decaying property. This play is a study of two individuals—one slow-witted and traumatized and the other a tramp, depending on the charities of others for his survival. Here again there are no fiery and boastful intellectuals like Jimmy Porter.
Aston who occupies the room in the upper storey in a dilapidated house is the elder brother of Mick. He is a morbid youth who is slowly recovering from the world of trauma. He is a strange individual but he is trying to adjust with the world. The signs of his gradual recovery are quite visible in his behaviour towards Davies who is a tramp and in his readiness to build up a shed for himself to become an independent being. His brother who is the owner of the large dilapidated house has made Aston the caretaker of this house and authorized him to renovate it and arrange its interior and exterior decoration. Aston spends his full time in his attic bed room collecting miscellaneous objects which appeal to him, or which make useful to him one day.

Aston is a mentally handicapped person. He is slow in thinking. He becomes mentally handicapped after he is given electric shock therapy in a psychiatric hospital. He tells us in his long speech towards the end of the Second Act of the play that suddenly one day he found himself in a hospital where he was asked many questions and told that he had got something in his brain and something would be done to his brain so that he could get a chance to live in the wide world. He tried to get out of the place but he failed. One day the pincers were fitted on his skull.
Since that day he had been in trouble. His thoughts had become very slow. He couldn’t co-relate his thoughts. He couldn’t hear what people said to him. He could not look to the right or the left. He looked straight. If he turned his head, he had a bad headache. He is better now but he is never the same and he does not talk to people now.

Aston’s brother, Mick is sick of him. He thinks that his elder brother, Aston does not like to work. He has the impression that Aston is work shy and slow-witted. He tells Davies several times that Aston is a slow worker. He tells him that he has made Aston incharge of his house with a hope that he would renovate the house but he hasn’t done anything so far:

_He’s supposed to be doing a little job for me ........... I keep him here to do a little job ......... but I don’t know ........... I’m coming to the conclusion he’s a slow worker._

Thinking that his brother wouldn’t do anything to his house, he proposes to run the house himself and invites Davies to stay on there as a caretaker:

_Look! I got a proposition to make to you. I’m thinking of taking over the running of this place, You see? I think it could be run a bit more efficiently. I got a lot of ideas, a lot of plans. How would you like to stay on here, as caretaker?_
We hear from him that before he was admitted to a psychiatric hospital, he was a factory worker. He used to visit a cafe where people of all ages listened to him with a rapt attention. In his factory also, he was listened to by people. He used to pass his time joking and entertaining people. Thus, Aston has a past to depend upon.

From his behaviour towards Davies in the present, we can predict that he has a future also. He seems to be a kind-hearted man. He saves Davies from a fight in a cafe. He brings him to his house and offers him shelter in his room. He offers him his brother’s bed and food free of charge and saves him from cold and the outside violence. He makes Davies feel that even in the hostile world, the springs of kind-heartedness are not dried up.

Towards the end of the play, Aston gets very cold towards Davies because he discovers that in spite of his goodness, the latter has not been good to him. He has poisoned his brother's mind against him and used both of them against each other.

Aston has not only his past and present but also his future. He is trying his best to adjust with the outside world.
and stand on his own legs. He has tarred over the leaking roof and is trying to put up a shed outside the garden to make his independent living. He does not want any help from any one. Davies offers him a helping hand in getting up the shed but he declines his offer saying: “No. I can get it up myself.”

He further says:

\[
\text{I can work with my hands, you see. That's one thing I can do. I never knew I could. But I can do all sorts of things now, with my hands.}\]

Unlike Davies, Aston’s character is unambiguous, consistent and coherent. He is capable of sustained anger for ungrateful Davies. In the words of Patricia Hern:

\[
\text{His character, on the surface at least, seems unambiguous; there is a consistent connection between the information given about his past and the evidence of his behaviour in the present of the play. He seems to have a future which leads on without violence or absurdity from this observed present: he will continue to inhabit Mick's house and derive hope from his unwavering plans to build a shed.}\]

When he learns that his hands can work very well and he can also think like others, he feels happy and plans to set up a shed independently. Not only that he even makes
a plan to partition one of the rooms along the landing with oriented screens. He says to Davies:

_I think I’ll put in a partition ............ in one of the rooms along the landing. I think it’ll take it. You know .......... they’ve got these screens ............you know .......... Oriental. They break up a room with them. Make it into two parts._ \(^{39}\)

The second individual who goes under the name of Bernard Jenkins is Davies who is a penniless and homeless tramp depending for his bread on lies and deceits but he never forgets to brag of what he never was and is. He manages to live on his wits but he poses to be a man of good family and clean habits. He depends upon the machinery and the benefits of the Welfare State inaugurated by the Labour Party in the Post-War period. He lives on the organized charities but evades to share the responsibilities and obligations to society which such benefits imply. In the words of Martin Esslin, _“Davies has lost not only his place in the world-he is homeless-but also his identity.”_ \(^{40}\)

Little is known of his past. When Aston rescues him from a fight at a cafe, he is jobless, moneyless and homeless. He has an insurance card in the name of Jenkins but he says that is not his. He has no possessions with him. He is seen in ill-fitting clothes which are other people’s cast-offs. But he always
brags of his being a respectable man. He claims that he had dinners with the best and in the best of plates. He claims to be a clean man. He tells us that he left his wife because she was a dirty woman. She used to keep a pile of her unwashed under clothing in a vegetable pan. This offended him and he left her just after a fortnight of their marriage. When he was young, nobody could take liberties with him. But when we see him for the first time, we find him sweeping the floor, cleaning up the tables and doing a bit of washing up in a cafe.

Davies, as we see him, is an old unhealthy man. He has been bowed down with a few attacks. He talks, groans and makes noises in sleep. He is mentally disturbed. Aston does not want him to stay in the room because he disturbs his sleep in the midnight. But he does not know that he groans and makes disturbing noises in sleep. He says to Aston:

*Listen. I been thinking, why I made all them noises, it was because of the draught........made me make noises without me knowing it...............* 41

He is always seen tense. He often smokes to release his tension. He has a pipe. He comes back to Aston’s room when he is half way down to get his pipe back. His speeches are often disconnected. They are marked with pauses and gaps.
One has to patch them together to make a picture of him. Here is an example:

All right..........I been offered a job here............ you wait............ you wait........................ your brother........he’ll sort you out................you call me that............ You call me that............no one ever called me that. You’ll be sorry you called me that..........42

He feels that his existence in society is absurd. He feels lonely and insecure. He feels that he is wanted by nobody.

He hates the aliens because their presence in the Post-War English society deprives him of good jobs. He is doing a menial job in a cafe because the good jobs have been snatched away by the aliens. In the Post-War period, there was an acute shortage of jobs in England. Even the Oxford graduates were compelled to open sweets stalls to earn their bread. Davies’s hatred for the aliens, therefore, is quite natural. He says to Aston:

What they want to do, they’re trying to do away with these foreigners you see, in catering. They want an Englishman to pour their tea, that’s what they want, that’s what they’re crying out for.43

Davies’s reminiscences cohere to form a credible character. He talks of his travels from Luton to the
northern and western suburbs of the capital, such as Watford, Hendon, Wembley and Shepherd’s Bush. He mentions a variety of temporary jobs, all commonly open to casual and unskilled labour like Davies. His prejudices can be seen to grow out of his sense of insecurity. He feels the need to assert his superiority over those foreigners who snatch away his rights. He tells Aston:

All them Blacks had it, Blacks, Greeks, poles, the lot of them, that’s what, doing me out of a seat, treating me like dirt. 44

Though Davies is vague about his origins and evasive about his past, yet these things do not undermine the credibility of his character.

Though Davies boasts of his boldness, he is meek like a goat. He feels insecure in an antagonist world where all is suspect, calculated either to discount or destroy him. He feels perpetually like an animal at bay threatened by Poles, Greeks, Blacks and lot of them. He is haunted with the fear of a Scot man. He, therefore, always carries with him a knife which he draws from his back pocket off and on even at the slightest danger to his life. He tries to use Aston and Mick against each other out of the feeling of insecurity of his job and shelter.
Davies is a pauper. He has to struggle for his clothes, shoes, food and shelter. He wears cast off clothes. He eats whatever is offered to him in charity. He uses shoes given to him by others. He sleeps wherever he is invited to do so. He often knocks at the Shepherd’s Bush to get a piece of soap. He goes to the other side of Luton to get a pair of shoes from a monastery. There he is offered food which is not enough even for a little bird. He is turned out from there like a street dog. He says to Aston:

I said, what do you think I am, a dog?
Nothing better than a dog. What do you think I am, a wild animal?
What about them shoes I come all the way here to get I heard you was giving away?²⁴⁵

Davies remains throughout a mysterious character. His identity could not be established either by Aston or Mick. He promises several times to go down to Sidcup and bring back his identity card and references but he always evades going to Sidcup on one pretext or the other. Sometimes he postpones his journey on the excuse of bad weather and sometimes on the pretext of his having no good and strong shoes. He conceals his identity from others on the ground that an open confession might incriminate him. He, therefore, uses an ambiguous language which is open to a number of interpretations. He tells Mick that he has
served in the colonies, which also means that he was transported there as a convicted criminal.

Since his behaviour is erratic towards both Aston and Mick, and since he uses the language which can be taken in many ways, he can impress any one as an unpredictable and strange man. The description of Davies by Mick, therefore, is not very surprising. He says to him:

*What a strange man you are. Aren’t you? You’re really strange. Ever since you come into this house there’s been nothing but trouble. Honest I can take nothing you say at face value. Every word you speak is open to any number of different interpretations. Most of what you is lies. You’re violent, you’re erratic, you’re just completely unpredictable. You’re nothing else but a wild animal, when you come down to it. You’re a barbarian.*

Towards the end of the play, Davies comes down on his knees. Deprived of his job as a caretaker and denied of his shelter in the room both by Mick and Aston, he is bewildered like a lost dog. He does not know what to do and where to go. He says to Aston.

*What am I going to do?*

*Pause*

*What shall I do?*

*Pause*
Where am I going to go?

Pause

If you want me to go ..........I'll go. You just say the word. 47

He is left on the stage asking Aston if he would let him stay in the room in case he goes to Sidcup and brings back his papers. He turns himself into a pathetic figure. We pity him for he comes as a homeless man and also goes out as a homeless person. His fear that the world is hostile to him is confirmed in the end. Davies’s vain plea to get another chance is almost unbearably tragic.

On the whole, Davies is personally unappealing on account of his blustering arrogance, his intolerance, his selfishness, his ingratitude and his treachery. In the words of Martin Esslin, “Davies is vain, irascible, evasive and prejudiced ............... Davies is a personification of human weakness. His need for a place in the world is pathetically obvious but he is unable to subdue his own nature ...............” 48 His self-indulgence, his apathy and inability to help himself deceives no one except perhaps himself. He is so selfish and ungrateful that he cannot resist temptation to play the two brothers (Aston and Mick) off against each other. He is, in fact, undeserving of the
charity offered to him by the two brothers. In the words of Martin Esslin:

"His ejection from the dingy room that could have become his world assumes almost the cosmic proportions of Adam’s expulsion from Paradise. Davies’s lying, his assertiveness, his inability to resist any chance to impose himself as superior, are, after all, mankind’s original sin-hubris (pride), lack of humility, blindness to our own faults."

‘The Homecoming’ which is the third full-length play of Pinter was first performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych Theatre, London, on June 3, 1965. This play presents a sequence of realistic events which at the same time might be a fantasy, a wish-fulfillment dream. The play is focused on the Post-War scenario of Britain, which had a very crippling effect on the family life of a butcher named Max. The memories of the Great War are still fresh in the mind of Sam who is the brother of Max. Lenny who is the second son of max also remembers the Post-War very much. When the Great War was going on, Lenny was too young to serve his country. Max very well remembers how he has worked as a butcher all his life to keep his family in luxury. But the coming of the Great War and the economic policies of the Labour and the Conservative
Governments in the Post-War period along with the physical invalidity of his family members has crippled the financial backbone of his family. His family is forced to take up prostitution as its family business.

Max’s wife, Jessie worked as whore to keep her kitchen going. His elder son, Teddy migrated to U.S.A. to seek employment there. His second son, Lenny worked as a professional pimp whereas his eldest son, Joey is an amateur boxer struggling to become a professional boxer.

But none of the family members of Max is a full-length study, and it is difficult to identify with any of the characters of the play.
The plays of Arnold Wesker once again present before us the political scenario of Great Britain from the thirties to the days of the Welfare State of the Labour Government. The rise of Sir Oswald Mosley’s British Union of Fascists, the rise of Anti-Fascism and Zionism, the Battle of Cable Street, the victory of Labour Party in the Post-War elections, the installation of the Welfare State of the Labour Government, the rise and struggles of the working-class people and the suppression of the Hungarian Movement under the Iron heels of the Soviet Union, and the reaction of British youths to these political situations from the thirties to the fifties – all have been graphically dealt with by Arnold Wesker in his ‘Trilogy’ and other plays.

Wesker’s own working-class background, his past political activities as member of the Young Communist League and later as a member of the Zionist Youth Movement went to the making of his mind and plays. The working-class people who had never appeared before the British play-goers and never talked about politics were made vocal by Wesker in his plays.
Unlike John Osborne and Harold Pinter, Wesker was not satisfied with the presentation of the symptoms of the social disease of the Post-War period; nor was he interested in the question of the man’s place in the scheme of the universe. What interested him most was the predicament of modern man, particularly the working-class individual in the industrial society of the Post-War period. However, his characters are not mere political entities. Their motives are varied and modified by their varied reactions and responses to the same political situation. The individuals struggling with enthusiasm and convictions not only for their existence but also for the betterment of the health of the diseased society of the Post-War period, can be easily identified by readers.

The characters who can be easily identified in Wesker’s ‘Trilogy’ and other plays are Ronnie Kahn, Beatie Bryant, Ada Kahn, Dave Simmonds, Peter and Pip Thompson. The Wesker’s ‘Trilogy’ may be interpreted as a dramatic story of defeated individuals trying to realize themselves in the fast changing society which remorselessly casts aside as left-outs those who do not accept its values and practices. Sarah, Ronnie, Dave and Ada refuse to accept the pattern of values in the
industrial society of Britain and consequently all of them are crushed.

Ronnie Kahn is one of the most important characters in the Wesker’s ‘Trilogy’. Like Osborne’s Jimmy Porter, he is an enthusiastic young man shouting slogans against capitalism and for the success and long life of the working-class movement and hoping for a millennium in the Welfare State of the Labour Party just after the end of the Great War. When his mother grumbles over the governance of the Labour Party and the promises doled out to the voters particularly the working-class people of East End of London during the Post-War elections, Ronnie Kahn pacifies his mother saying:

_We just put a Labour Party in power didn’t we? It’s right they should be the pioneers-good! Everybody is building. Out go the slums, whist! And the National Health Service comes in. The millennium’s come and you’re still grumbling._

Ronnie is the son of Sarah and Harry. He has inherited his faith in communism from his parents. When we first see him in Act II of ‘Chicken Soup with Barley’, he is at the age of fifteen and in his last year of school. He is already a young communist, working for the party, and he shares in the political activities organized by his parents, Sarah and Harry. Ada and her
husband Dave inspired him with the left-wing ideal in the first play. The success or failure of their lives as socialists is of the greatest importance to him. He is a passionate talker and humorist.

When Ronnie is seen in the last Act of ‘Chicken Soup with Barley’, he is at the age of twenty-five. He has just returned from Paris where he has worked as a pastry cook. The Kitchen has an awful dehumanizing effect on him. He now sees employment as a gigantic swindle which takes away the whole joy of life and gives you at most paltry sum of money saved at the end of it. When he returns from Paris, he tells his mother how a cook or any other person working in a restaurant is terrified of old age for lack of money or sufficient savings:

A man can work a whole lifetime and when he is sixty-five he considers himself rich if he has saved a thousand pounds. Rich! A whole lifetime of working in a good, steady, settled, enterprising, fascinating job! For every manager in a restaurant there must be twenty chefs terrified of old age. That’s all we are-people terrified of old age, hoping for the football pools to come home.51

Ronnie’s stay at Paris for some years and the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution by the Soviet Union have opened the eyes of Ronnie and forced him to revise his belief in communism. What he has discovered by now is that his socialist
ideal is not the answer to the world’s problems which are too complex to admit a clear-cut solution. The murder of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in the Soviet Union is still very fresh in his mind. Now words like democracy, freedom and brotherhood have hardly any meaning for him. He was going to be a great socialist writer but after the Hungarian Revolution and the tyranny of the Soviet Union in handling the revolution, he has given up the idea of writing books on the need of socialism. Ronnie’s mother who hoped her son to stand in her footsteps is not only shocked but also ashamed to see her son revising his faith in socialism. Ronnie who blushes in using the word ‘comrade’ asked his mother:

*What has happened to all the comrades, Sarah? even blush when I use that word. Comrade! Why do I blush! Why do I feel ashamed to use words like democracy and freedom and brotherhood? They don’t have meaning any more. I have nothing to write about any more. Remember all that writing I did? I was going to be a great socialist writer. I can’t make sense of a word, a simple word. You look at me as if I’m talking in a foreign language. Didn’t it hurt you to read about the murder of the Jewish Anti-Fascist committee in the Soviet Union?*

The language of politics has become meaningless to him. He is ready to give up the struggle. His
disillusion is so painful that he blames his mother for it, for she has passed on to him the beliefs which have now collapsed for him.

Ronnie now gets a job as a cook in Norwich, where he meets Beatie Bryant. He then moves to London. All that we learn from him during this period (1956-1958) from Beatie is that his despair is over. He no longer works for the party but he talks for it. He has begun writing again but he seems more concerned for humanity than for his party this time. He has decided now to put human being before politics. He has come to believe that he cannot change the world just by making speeches. He believes that unless the working-class people are educated and made to understand politics, the new world order cannot be brought about. Thus, Ronnie develops his theory of private socialism. The first disciple of Ronnie is Beatie. Beatie tells Jenny what she has learnt from Ronnie:

_He was interested in all the things I never even thought about. About politics and art and all that, and he tried to teach me. He’s a socialist and he used to say couldn’t bring socialism to a country by making speeches, but perhaps you could pass it on to someone who was near you. So I pretended I was interested—but I didn’t understand much. All the time he’s trying to teach me but I can’t take it Jenny. And yet, at the same time, I_
want to show I’m willing. I’m not used to learning. Learning was at school and that’s finished with. 53

However, Ronnie is pretty sick and neurotic. He is a victim of decisions and indecisions. His mind is never settled. He is groping in dark to find out a way to lead a meaningful life. When he meets Beatie in London, he makes up his mind to get married with her. When Beatie comes back home to live with her parents, she tells her parents that Ronnie is coming to propose for her. Beatie along with the members of her family has been waiting for the arrival of Ronnie but Ronnie doesn’t come.

Ronnie draws his inspiration from Dave and Ada. He admires Dave for two things. First, Dave fought in Spin. Secondly, Dave is his own boss, doing the work he loves. Now Ronnie takes positive pride and hope in Dave’s life. He seeks a political solution to the world’s ills with an ideal at once more humane and more personal. In the play, ‘I’m Talking about Jerusalem’, Ronnie is present throughout with Dave and Ada. He seeks a vicarious redemption of his hopes in Dave’s life. He himself has failed both in jobs and love but, he wishes success to both Dave and Ada in love and job. The failure of Dave and Ada is Ronnie’s own failure. He cries like a bloody mad dog at the failure
of Dave and Ada. Thus, the warmth, enthusiasm and convictions of Ronnie go on changing from time to time and what we see of Ronnie at the end of ‘Trilogy’ is nothing but a picture of a British impotent, directionless and bewildered youth of the fifties in the Post-War era. He seems to be a younger brother of Osborne’s Jimmy Porter.

Wesker’s next play is ‘The Kitchen’ which was first presented at the Royal Court Theatre, London on September 13, 1959. In this play, the world is compared to a Kitchen where people come and go and cannot stay enough to understand each other, and friendship, loves, and enmities are forgotten as quickly as they are made. Wesker here criticizes the meaningless mechanical life in the industrial society of the Post-War period. The image of the hectic rush of modern life is communicated through the rush in the Kitchen.

The leading character in the play is Peter. He is a rebel and is completely crushed where as Ronnie has a note of triumph even in his defeat. In ‘The Trilogy’, the leading characters have a vision before them but Peter who is the central character in ‘The Kitchen’ has no vision before him. He is dissatisfied with his work and life. He is nervous about losing his
job and eager to escape the drudgery. Peter, with all his rebellious spirit, never develops into a positive revolutionary.

Wesker’s next play is ‘Chips with Everything’. It was first presented at the Royal Court Theatre, London in April, 1962. Like ‘The Trilogy’ and ‘The Kitchen’, it is a powerful attack on authority, establishment and the cherished British institutions. It is a scathing attack on and an exposér of British ruling class by the R.A.F. officers. Pip Thompson who is the central figure of the play gets transformed into an officer. His transformation amounts to the bourgeois intellectual’s submission to the privileged society of his class.

Pip Thompson is a bourgeois intellectual. He is the hero who tries to declass himself and organize a rebellion among the R.A.F. men. Pip is intellectually superior to Peter. Peter fails because of his lack of clear cut intellectual comprehension of the objective, Pip fails because of his lack of character, his clear choice of his own class. Wesker, in Pip’s character represents a very common phenomenon in British public life-the rebellious intellectual, joining the ranks of the establishment after a heroic gesture of participation in working-class ideals.
The characters who stand out clearly as the spokesman of the toils and troubles of the Post-War period with their idealism and cynicism, their enthusiasm, convictions and disappointment are Jimmy Porter, Archie Rice, Ronnie, Peter and Pip. The characters who represent the other side of the Post-War period come from the world of Pinter. They are Stanley Webber, Davies and Aston.
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