



Modul Bahan Ajar

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY DRAMA

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This Modern and Contemporary Drama module provides the students with knowledge of modern and contemporary drama spanning from the late 18th century to early 21st century. The students are equipped with concepts and characteristics of modern and contemporary drama; historical, social, and ideological background that influence modern drama and contemporary drama; various kinds of modern and contemporary drama; and methods to analyze modern drama and contemporary drama. Excerpts of dramatists' masterpieces are added on purpose in post-reading activities to assist the students in understanding modern and contemporary dramatic works. In addition, activities in pre reading offer challenge to the students' critical thinking and serve as preparation section.

Ongoing improvement on the quality of this module is a must. Therefore, criticisms and suggestions are highly appreciated.

Meeting 1

RENCANA PROSES KEGIATAN PEMBELAJARAN SEMESTER (RPKPS)

Mata Kuliah : Modern and Contemporary Drama (3 SKS)
Semester : 5
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Program Studi : Sastra Inggris
Dosen : Tim

Deskripsi Singkat:

Mata kuliah ini merupakan mata kuliah wajib yang harus diikuti seluruh mahasiswa sastra Inggris dengan bobot 3 sks. Mata kuliah ini dirancang dengan tujuan: (1) memberikan pengetahuan mengenai konsep dan latar belakang historis drama modern dan kontemporer; dan (2) memberikan pengetahuan mengenai karakteristik drama modern dan kontemporer beserta elemen-elemen yang mempengaruhinya; dan (3) memberikan pengetahuan dan keterampilan menelaah drama modern dan kontemporer secara komprehensif.

Kompetensi yang ingin dicapai:

Mahasiswa mengetahui konsep dan latar belakang drama modern dan kontemporer, mengetahui karakteristik dram modern dan kontemporer beserta elemen-elemen yang mempengaruhinya, dan mampu menelaah drama modern dan kontemporer secara komprehensif.

Bahan kajian:

1. Perkembangan drama modern dan kontemporer.
2. Karakteristik drama modern dan kontemporer.
3. Tokoh-tokoh dan karya-karya dalam drama modern dan kontemporer.
4. Analisis drama modern dan kontemporer.

Kriteria Nilai Akhir:

Kuis	: 15%
Tugas Terstruktur	: 20%
Partisipasi Aktif	: 10%
UTS	: 25%
UAS	: 30%

Pelaksanaan Kuliah:

(1) NO	(2) MINGGU KE	(3) KEMAMPUAN AKHIR YANG DIHARAPKAN	(4) MATERI PEMBELAJARAN	(5) BENTUK PEMBELAJARAN	(6) KRITERIA (INDIKATOR) PENILAIAN	(7) ALOKASI WAKTU
1	1	Memiliki pemahaman mengenai kontrak perkuliahan dan RPKPS mata kuliah <i>Modern and Contemporary Drama</i> .	RPKPS	1. Ceramah 2. Diskusi	1. Mampu menyebutkan tujuan, topik-topik yang akan dipelajari, dan kriteria penilaian mata kuliah <i>Modern and Contemporary Drama</i> .	150 menit

2	2	Memiliki pemahaman mengenai perkembangan drama modern.	<i>Emergence of Modern Drama</i>	1. Ceramah 2. Diskusi 3. Tugas	1. Mampu menyebutkan beberapa istilah yang sering digunakan dalam drama modern 2. Mampu menyebutkan periodisasi drama modern. 3. Mampu menyebutkan tokoh-tokoh dan karya-karya terkenal dalam drama modern. 4. Mampu membedakan drama par-modern dan modern setelah menelaah kutipan drama <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> dan <i>A Doll's House</i> . 5. Mampu menjelaskan efek kondisi sosial di era modern terhadap drama modern.	150 menit
3	3	Memilik pemahaman mengenai unsur-unsur intrinsik dalam drama modern.	<i>Intrinsic Elements in Modern Drama</i>	1. Ceramah 2. Diskusi 3. Tugas	1. Mampu menyebutkan definisi karakteristik unsur-unsur intrinsik dalam drama modern. 2. Mampu menjelaskan pentingnya unsur-	150 menit

					<p>unsur intrinsik dalam membangun bentuk dan struktur drama modern setelah menelaah kutipan drama Hedda Gabbler dan <i>Waiting for Godot</i>.</p> <p>3. Mampu membedakan produk dari teater realist dan teater absurdist berdasarkan penelaahan terhadap kedua contoh teater tersebut.</p> <p>4. Mampu menyebutkan dan menjelaskan subjek-subjek dan tema-tema yang digunakan dalam drama modern.</p>	
4	4	Memiliki pemahaman mengenai isme-isme yang ada dalam drama modern	<i>Prominent "isms" in Modern drama</i>	1. Ceramah 2. Diskusi 3. Tugas	1. Mampu menyebutkan karakteristik drama realisme, naturalisme, simbolisme, ekspresionisme, dan eksistensialisme.	150 menit

					2. Mampu mengidentifikasi produk teater ekspresionis setelah menelaah kutipan dan gambar drama <i>The Adding Machine</i> . 3. Mampu menjelaskan unsur-unsur naturalisme dalam kutipan drama <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> dan simbolisme dalam kutipan drama <i>At the Hawk's Well</i> . 4. Mampu menyebutkan persamaan antara drama realis, naturalis, simbolis, ekspresionis, dan eksistensialis.	
5	5-7	Memiliki pengetahuan untuk menjelaskan dan mengaplikasikan langkah-langkah dalam	<i>Analyzing Modern Drama</i>	1. Ceramah 2. Diskusi 3. Tugas	1. Mampu menyebutkan langkah-langkah dalam menganalisis drama modern. 2. Mampu menjelaskan langkah-langkah dalam menganalisis	450 menit

		menganalisis drama modern.			drama modern. 3. Mampu menerapkan langkah-langkah menganalisis drama modern pada drama <i>Arms and the Man</i> .	
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8.

Ujian Tengah Semester

7	9-11	Memiliki pemahaman mengenai karakteristik dan jenis-jenis drama paska perang dunia.	<i>Post War Drama</i>	1. Ceramah 2. Diskusi 3. Tugas 4. Praktik	1. Mampu menyebutkan tokoh-tokoh dan karya-karya drama paska perang dunia. 2. Mampu menjelaskan hubungan antara karya-karya drama paska perang dunia dengan situasi sosial-politik di masa tersebut. 3. Mampu menganalisis unsur-unsur yang dalam drama <i>Brechtian</i> dan <i>Theatre of the Absurd</i>	450 menit
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8	12-13	Memiliki pemahaman mengenai analisis tekstual drama paska perang dunia.	<i>Analysing Post War Drama</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ceramah 2. Diskusi 3. Tugas 4. Praktik 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mampu menjelaskan mengenai konsep <i>Angry Young Men</i> 2. Mampu menjelaskan mengenai konsep <i>kitchen –sink realism drama</i>. 3. Mampu menjelaskan pergerakan-pergerakan dalam drama yang terjadi antara tahun 1945 sampai tahun 1990. 4. Mampu menganalisis drama absurd. 5. Mampu menjelaskan konsep-konsep drama absurd yang ditemukan dalam drama <i>Waiting for Godot</i> 	300 menit
9	14	Memiliki pemahaman mengenai drama kontemporer pada tahun 1990-an.	<i>Contemporary Drama: The 1990s</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ceramah 2. Diskusi 3. Tugas 4. Praktik 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mampu menjelaskan keterkaitan antara isu politik dan teater pada tahun 1990-an. 2. Mampu menjelaskan pengertian <i>the in-yer-face theatre</i>. 	150 menit

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Emergence of Modern Drama

Contents

This chapter addresses emergence of modern drama, including discussion about basic concepts, historical background, some prominent figures, and modern dramatic works. Related tasks are composed in pre- and post-reading activities.

Objectives

Finishing this chapter you are expected to:

1. know some terminologies related to modern drama
2. know the historical period of modern drama
3. know some prominent figures and works of modern drama
4. be able to distinguish between pre-modern and modern drama after scrutinizing the excerpts of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*
5. understand the effects of social condition in modern era upon modern drama

Meeting 2 _____

1.1. Pre-reading Activity

1. Read the quotation from a character in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1599) below. Give your comment about the meaning of Jaques' statement.

JAKUES. All the world's a stage,
 And all the men and women merely players;
 They have their exits and their entrances;

Taken from *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (1996:622)
compiled by Wordsworth Editions Limited

2. Figure 1.2 and 1.2 below are adaptations from the well-known scene of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* which was written in about 1595.



Figure 1.1¹



Figure 1.2²

Explain the differences between figure 1.1 and figure 1.2, especially in terms of characters portrayal and settings.

1.2. Reading Activity

Modern Drama: A Brief Historical Review

Drama develops as dramatists always search for improvements. The drama we know today has undergone changes and those changes are influenced by the world's dynamism throughout the ages. History of western drama has recorded four great eras emerging in parallel with four great ages in Europe; they are Classic Greek and Roman Drama, English Renaissance Drama, French Neoclassical Drama, and Modern Drama (King, 2007). Each era produces its own dramatic style that differs from one another; for examples: Sophocles of Classic Greek Drama, who uses **chorus**³ to address characters' dilemmatic situation, is different from William Shakespeare of English Renaissance Drama, who emphasizes sophisticated diction to trigger dramatic tension; or Jean Racine of French Neoclassical Drama, who remains formal in composing lines involving characters' feelings, is different from Henrik Ibsen of Modern Drama, who employs flexible words to facilitate spontaneous emotions.

¹ Taken from <http://www.aitkin.k12.mn.us/OneAct/oneact2013/oneact2013.html>

² Taken from <http://transmedialshakespeare.wordpress.com/category/slide-showsphoto-galleries/>

³ A group of singers and dancers in Classic Greek drama who comment on what is happening accompanied by music

Regarding Modern Drama, we need to know that this era was actually preceded by two major events, Industrial Revolution and French Revolution. Both happened in the last half of 18th century and influenced the birth of modernism. Modernism, according to Krasner (2012:3), was the condition in which tradition was found to be lacking and the task of making sense of ourselves and the world could no longer depend on authority, religion, or antiquity. It represented massive social, economic, philosophical, and artistic changes.

Instilling the spirit of modernism, modern dramatists are concerned about social issues and, consequently, drama becomes a medium for social criticism. Modern drama rejects traditional convention of formalities that possibly limits dramatists' expressions and pays more attention to the implied contents or suggested ideas instead. In this case, the spirit of **realism**⁴ is considered as one of the foundations of modern drama. The spirit itself is well-delivered by Henrik Ibsen, a Norwegian dramatist who is celebrated as the father of modern drama. His works, such as *A Doll's House* (1879) and *Hedda Gabler* (1890), provide vivid description of normal human beings and their problems in familiar and realistic settings. Realism in Britain, particularly, came to prominence when Oscar Wilde shocked the Victorians with his wit in the late 19th century. One of his most famous dramas is *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) which criticizes Victorian etiquettes. Another celebrated figure is George Bernard Shaw whose concern about women's role is portrayed in *Arms and the Man* (1894) and *Saint Joan* (1923).

The style of modern drama changed significantly after the world wars in the first half of 20th century. Destruction and chaos faced by hopeless people due to the wars played an important role in the emergence of **Theatre of the Absurd**⁵. One of the prominent figures of Theatre of the Absurd is Samuel Beckett. His masterpiece, *En Attendant Godot* or *Waiting for Godot* (1953), presents the characters whose lives are wasted for endless talks and arguments while waiting for something that, somehow, cannot be defined. As a result, characters' actions violate conventional activities. Beckett's works have influenced many dramatists, including Edward Albee who was awarded **Pulitzer Prize**⁶ for *A Delicate Balance* in 1966.

1.3. Post-reading Activity

1.3.1. Group Discussion

Below are excerpts taken from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1595) and Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879). Read carefully.

⁴ Generally, accuracy in the portrayal of life or reality, or verisimilitude (Morner & Rausch, 1991:182)

⁵ A kind of drama growing out of the philosophy of existentialism and flourishing in Europe and America in the 1950s and 1960s (Morner & Rausch, 1991:1)

⁶ Award given for achievement in art and literature

ROMEO AND JULIET

(Taken from Act II, Scene 1 - when Juliet appears at a window in her house while Romeo is anticipating her presence in Capulet's orchard. They are deeply in love.)

ROMEO. She speaks:-
 O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art
 As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,
 As is a winged messenger of heaven
 Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes
 Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him
 When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds
 And sails upon the bosom of the air.

JULIET. O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
 Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
 Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
 And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO *(Aside)*. Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET. 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;-
 Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
 What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
 Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
 Belonging to a man. O, be some other name.
 What's in a name? that which we call a rose
 By any other name would smell as sweet;
 So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
 Retain that dear perfection which he owes
 Without that title:- Romeo, doff thy name;
 And for that name, which is no part of thee,
 Take all myself.

ROMEO. I take thee at thy word:
 Call me but love, and I'll be new baptised;
 Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET. What man art thou that thus bescreen'd in night,
 So stumblest on my counsel?

ROMEO. By a name
 I know not how to tell thee who I am:
 My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
 Because it is an enemy to thee;
 Had I it written, I would tear the word.

JULIET. My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound:
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

ROMEO. Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

JULIET. How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard-walls are high and hard to climb;
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROMEO. With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out:
And what love can do, that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

JULIET. If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

ROMEO. Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords: look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

JULIET. I would not for the world they saw thee here.

ROMEO. I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;
And but thou love me, let them find me here:
My life were better ended by their hate
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

JULIET. By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

ROMEO. By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash't with the furthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

Taken from *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (1996:254)
compiled by Wordsworth Editions
Limited

A DOLL'S HOUSE

(Taken from Act III - when Torvald Helmer is about to open the letter from Krogstad, his co-worker. The letter reveals that Nora, Torvald's wife, forged her late father's signature when she got a loan from Krogstad without being known by Torvald. Krogstad blackmails Nora in order to save his job because he is about to be fired by Torvald.)

HELMER. *(Kisses her forehead)*. Good night, my little singing bird. Sleep well, Nora, I'll just read through my letters.

He takes the letters into his room and shuts the door behind him.

NORA. *(Gropes around her, wild-eyed, seizes Helmer's cloak, wrap it round herself, and whispers quickly, hoarsely, spasmodically)*. Never see him again. Never, never, never. *(Throws her shawl over her head.)* And never see the children again either. Never, never. Oh, that black icy water. Oh, that bottomless...! If only it were all over! He's got it now. Now he's reading it. Oh no, no! Not yet! Torvald, goodbye... and my children.

She rushes out in the direction of the hall; at the same moment Helmer flings open his door and stands there with an open letter in his hand.

HELMER. Nora!

NORA. *(Shrieks)* Ah!

HELMER. What is this? Do you know what is in this letter?

NORA. Yes, I know. Let me go! Let me out!

HELMER. *(Holds her back)*. Where are you going?

NORA. *(Trying to tear herself free)*. You mustn't try to save me, Torvald!

HELMER. *(Reels back)*. True! Is this true what he writes? How dreadful! No, no, it can't possibly be true.

NORA. It is true. I loved you more than anything else in the world.

HELMER. Don't come to me with a lot of paltry excuses!

NORA. (*Taking a step towards him*). Torvald... !

HELMER. Miserable woman... what is this you have done?

NORA. Let me go. I won't have you taking the blame for me. You mustn't take it on yourself.

HELMER. Stop play-acting! (*Locks the front door.*) You are staying here to give an account of yourself. Do you understand what you have done? Answer me! Do you understand?

NORA. (*Looking fixedly at him, her face hardening*). Yes, now I'm beginning to understand.

HELMER. (*Walking up and down*). Oh, what a terrible awakening this is. All these eight years... this woman who was my pride and joy... a hypocrite, a liar, worse than that, a criminal! Oh, how utterly squalid it all is! Ugh! Ugh! (*Nora remains silent and looks fixedly at him.*) I should have realized something like this would happen. I should have seen it coming. All your father's irresponsible ways... Quiet! All your father's irresponsible ways are coming out in you. No religion, no morals, no sense of duty... Oh, this is my punishment for turning a blind eye to him. It was for your sake I did it, and this is what I get for it.

NORA. Yes, this.

HELMER. Now you have ruined my entire happiness, jeopardized my whole future. It's terrible to think of. Here I am, at the mercy of a thoroughly unscrupulous person; he can do whatever he likes with me, demand anything he wants, order me about just as he chooses... and I daren't even whimper. I'm done for, a miserable failure, and it's all the fault of a feather-brained woman!

NORA. When I've left this world behind, you will be free.

Taken from *Literature: The Evolving Canon* (1996:1351-1352) written and compiled by Sven Birkerts

Now, answer the following questions. Take some suitable quotations to support your answer.

1. In terms of style, what are the differences between the lines of dialogue in *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Doll's House*? State your opinion.
2. In terms of characters, what are the differences between Romeo and Torvald in treating their beloved women; and between Juliet and Nora in treating their beloved men? Explain your answer.
3. Romeo-Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* and Torvald-Nora in *A Doll's House* are couples who love each other but, at the end of the story, their love lives end differently. Romeo and Juliet remain together and believe in their love beyond anything; furthermore, they commit suicide only to defend their love. On the other hand, Torvald and Nora eventually separate after dealing with complicated domestic problems. Which one is likely to happen to modern-day people, the like of Romeo-Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* or the like of Torvald-Nora in *A Doll's House*? Why?

1.3.2. Individual Assignment

You have read that Industrial Revolution and French Revolution influence the emergence of modernism. Thus, modern drama is affected by social condition following those historical events. In what ways do you think the social condition at that time affects modern drama?

Intrinsic Elements in Modern Drama

Contents

This chapter addresses characteristics of modern drama, specifically discussion about intrinsic elements: character, plot, setting, dialogue, and theme. Related tasks are composed in pre- and post-reading activities.

Objectives

Finishing this chapter you are expected to:

1. know characteristics of intrinsic elements (character, plot, setting, dialogue and theme) in modern drama
2. know the significance of intrinsic elements in shaping the form and structure of modern drama after scrutinizing the excerpts of Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabbler* and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*
3. be able to distinguish between the product of realist and absurdist theatre, based on their intrinsic qualities, after scrutinizing the figures taken from both theatrical production
4. understand the variety and universality of subjects and themes in modern drama and their significance for humanity

Meeting 3

2.1. Pre-reading Activity

Before discussing the subject in this chapter, let us brush up on your understanding about intrinsic elements.

1. What is the importance of intrinsic elements in a drama?
2. What are the intrinsic elements in drama? Explain each of them.

2.2. Reading Activity

Revisited Intrinsic Elements

A drama is composed by some intrinsic elements working as inseparable units. This notion is implemented by modern dramatists in many ways. The old-established paradigm of character, plot, setting, etc. is experimented and elaborated resulting in various kinds of

dramatic works. There is a sense of innovation; dramatists are eager to create something new. Ibsen has started it by introducing real to life character, such as Nora Helmer in *A Doll's House*. This character has shocked the society for her being deviant, in terms of attitude and standpoint, challenging moral standards that strictly divide the role men and women. Like Nora, other characters in Ibsen's prominent works come from upper to middle class who have to face complicated horizontal problems, the problems that might be experienced by any ordinary human being. Exposing characters' conflicts and psychological problems in domestic settings, Ibsen has successfully revealed the issues that were taboo to discuss prior the 19th century.

The laws of conventional plot are still used in early modern drama. Ibsen himself employs a well-made plot; the plot that observes the traditional unities of time, place and action (King, 2007:71). The plot contains a series of events results from complicated conflicts among characters. To some extent we may find modification in terms of act and/or scene composition; for example, the new version of serious drama is not tied to the formality of five-act play used in many Renaissance works. Another modification happens in terms of structure. Open ending, which does not give conclusive resolution, is used to replace closed ending, which offers decisive resolution. Nevertheless, closed ending is still employed in some modern works.

Realist drama avoids generalized setting. A place is described comprehensively including its specific props and detailed decors. Consequently, characters exist in a defined location. Many modern dramatists employ setting as both mirror of the real world and specific symbol. It may provide significant clues which lead readers or audience to the theme, the soul of drama. Thus, scrutinizing the details of setting and its changes throughout the drama might help readers of audience in conducting critical analysis.

Dialogue in modern drama represents natural human speech. Careful verses, which were commonly used in dialogues of the past great dramas, are replaced by plain language. The sense of common expression containing spontaneity, pauses, hesitation and interruption can be felt although the dialogue itself remains artificial. This is in line with the argument from Anton Chekhov who says, "Avoid 'choice' diction. The language should be simple and forceful" (Pickering, 2005:18). Chekhov's statement represents the spirit of many modern dramatists, especially those who refer to realism and **naturalism**⁷ in composing dialogues in their works.

The concepts of well-defined character, well-made plot, realistic setting, and true to life dialogue that are popular in early modern drama were gradually revisited and changed by dramatic works in later years. In this case, radical changes are done by Theatre of the Absurd.

⁷ A literally movement that emerged in France, America, and England during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and that emphasizes biological and socioeconomic determinism in fiction and drama (Morner & Rausch, 1991:145)

We won't find sufficient information about characters and settings in absurdist works since the characters lack motivation and exist in unclear settings. Conventional actions are missing because there is no obvious exposition, climax, or resolution. The plot does not develop the way it does in realist drama. Strange interaction happens because dialogues among characters are not cohesive and tend to be disconnected.

Dramatic works in modern era carry out broad themes. Those themes do not only concern about issues faced by majority of people but also taboo and sensitive subjects experienced by minorities, including the problems faced by domesticated women, particular ethnic mix (African Americans, for example), and homosexuals. According to Abbotson (2003), modern dramatists' concern covers the subjects related to social attitudes toward death, religion, women, or ambition. Some themes include specific character relationships, such as those between siblings, couples, or parents and children, or general relationships between people, such as those created by a sense of community, growing up, or aging. Themes also highlight specific areas of concern, including attitudes toward work, illness, and war. Each theme is developed by considering more specific social, moral, and political issues to which it can be related.

2.3. Post-reading Activity

2.3.1. Group Discussion

1. Look carefully at figure 2.1, figure 2.2, figure 2.3, and figure 2.4 below. Which figures belong to realist theatre? Which figures belong to absurdist theatre? Relevant argument, which is based on the notions of realist and absurdist theatre about intrinsic elements, is needed to support your answer.



Figure 2.1⁸



Figure 2.2⁹

⁸ Taken from <http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2009/oct/20/what-to-say-about-endgame>

Figure 2.3¹⁰Figure 2.4¹¹

2. The following excerpts are description of settings taken from two prominent modern dramas; excerpt 1 is taken from Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (1890) and excerpt 2 is taken from Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953). Read carefully. In what ways do you think the description of setting in excerpt 1 represent characteristics of modern drama? In what ways do you think the description of setting in excerpt 2 represent characteristics of modern drama? State your opinion and take some quotations from the excerpts to support it.

Excerpt 1:

A spacious, handsome, and tastefully furnished drawing room, decorated in dark colours. In the back, a wide doorway with curtains drawn back, leading into a smaller room decorated in the same style as the drawing-room. In the right-hand wall of the front room, a folding door leading out to the hall. In the opposite wall, on the left, a glass door, also with curtains drawn back. Through the panes can be seen part of a veranda outside, and trees covered with autumn foliage. An oval table, with a cover on it, and surrounded by chairs, stands well forward. In front, by the wall on the right, a wide store of dark porcelain, a high-backed arm-chair, a cushioned foot-rest, and two footstools. A settee, with a small round table in front of it, fills the upper right-hand corner. In front, on the left, a little way from the wall, a sofa. Further back than the glass door, a piano. On either side

⁹ Taken from <http://www.sheridanroadmagazine.com/blog/sights-sounds-the-petrified-forest/>

¹⁰ Taken from <http://www.sfgate.com/living/article/No-one-wants-to-be-put-in-a-gender-box-A-2827603.php>

¹¹ Taken from <http://www.courttheatre.org/season/show/endgame>

of the doorway at the back a whatnot with terra-cotta and majolica ornaments.—Against the back wall of the inner room a sofa, with a table, and one or two chairs. Over the sofa hangs the portrait of a handsome elderly man in a General's uniform. Over the table a hanging lamp, with an opal glass shade.—A number of bouquets are arranged about the drawing-room, in vases and glasses. Others lie upon the tables. The floors in both rooms are covered with thick carpets.—Morning light. The sun shines in through the glass door. Miss Juliana Tesman, with her bonnet on and carrying a parasol, comes in from the hall, followed by Berta, who carries a bouquet wrapped in paper. Miss Tesman is a comely and pleasant-looking lady of about sixty-five. She is nicely but simply dressed in a grey walking-costume. Berta is a middle-aged woman of plain and rather countrified appearance.

Taken from *The Works of Henrik Ibsen: Hedda Gabler and The Master Builder* (1912:21-22) published by Charles Scribner's Sons

Excerpt 2:

A country road. A tree.

Evening.

Taken from *Waiting for Godot: A Tragicomedy in Two Acts* (1954:2) published by Grove Press Inc.

3. Subjects and themes in modern drama comprise many issues and reach many aspects of human life comparing to those found in previous eras. What makes this variety of subject and themes happen?

2.3.2. Individual Assignment

You have been introduced to some greatest modern dramatic works. Do the matters discussed in the like of *A Doll's House* or *Waiting for Godot* serve useful purposes to humanity even until today? What makes those dramas relevant/irrelevant to refer to?

Prominent “isms” in Modern Drama

Contents

This chapter addresses characteristics of modern drama, specifically discussion about some prominent “isms”: realism, naturalism, symbolism, expressionism, and existentialism. Related tasks are composed in pre- and post-reading activities.

Objectives

Finishing this chapter you are expected to:

1. know characteristics of realism, naturalism, symbolism, expressionism, and existentialism in modern drama
2. know the product of expressionist theatre after scrutinizing the excerpt and figure taken from Elmer Rice’s *The Adding Machine*
3. understand the spirit of naturalism and symbolism in the excerpts of Anton Chekov’s *The Cherry Orchard*, and William Butler Yeats’ *At the Hawk’s Well*
4. know the similarities among realism, naturalism, symbolism, expressionism, and existentialism in modern drama

Meeting 4

3.1. Pre-reading Activity

The following excerpt is stage direction of the final scene in Elmer Rice’s *The Adding Machine* (1923). Read carefully.

Before the curtain rises the clicking of an adding machine is heard. The curtain rises upon an office similar in appearance to that in scene two... In the middle of the room Zero is seated completely absorbed in the operation of an adding machine. He presses the keys and pulls the lever with mechanical precision. He still wears his full-dress suit but he has added to it sleeve protectors and a green eye shade. A strip of white paper-tape flows steadily from the machine as Zero operates. The room is filled with this tape – streamers, festoons, billows of it everywhere. It covers the floor and furniture, it climbs the walls and

chokes the doorways.

The stage aforementioned direction is performed in the following figure 3.1: Zero (the man with full-dress suit) jumps from key to key on giant adding machine. Look carefully.

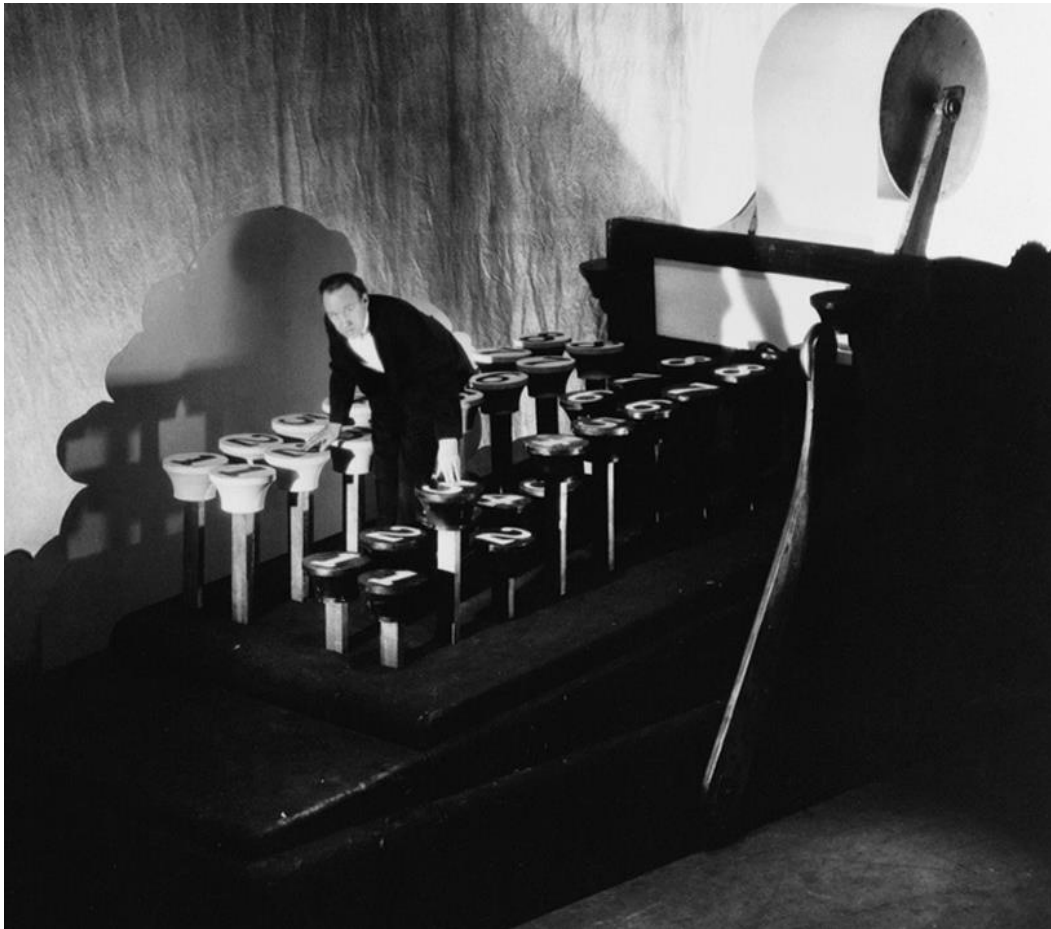


Figure 3.1

Taken from *Expressionism and Modernism in the American Theatre* (2005:176-177) written by Julia A. Walker

Adding machine is early version of calculator; a device for adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing numbers. The adding machine in Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine* is portrayed as a huge device filling the stage. It is as if the stage is the device itself and the character, Zero, does his activities on it.

1. Browse the internet to find the actual size of adding machine in early 20th century and compare it with the one you see in figure

- 3.1. Is the real one as huge as the fictitious one? Provide evidence to prove your answer.
2. In your opinion, what is the purpose of portraying a man who is working on a giant adding machine as shown in figure 3.1?

3.2. Reading Activity

Flourishing “isms”

Humanities observed rapid growth of cities and machines resulting in social and political upheaval in 19th and 20th century. Men of letters perceived this phenomenon and reacted critically by employing new approaches and theories integrated in their works. The world of drama, in particular, did not only belong to well-made plays any longer since newly-born plays offered new perspectives. These dramatic works introduced the so-called “ism”¹². Some of the isms are influential, even until today. In fact, they have been inspiring the humanities throughout the ages.

As stated in previous chapter, early modern drama is identical with realism. Many literary critics believe that realism is a product of momentous events in the late eighteenth century. Revolutions in social and political realms happened and gave the way for a new era. Egalitarian beliefs replaced the oppressive monarchy and the middle class began to be influential, empowered by rapid expansion of industry. According to Birkerts (1996:1305), realism was born because artists and writers responded to the needs of the new public, creating works that presented issues and situations familiar to the common person. In this case, the new public meant by Birkerts was the middle class. Realism in drama is marked by the portrayal of middle class people who are speaking to one another by using real to life language. They talk about daily problems. In performance, realism is supported by realistically designed stage and props.

Realism, to some extent, may overlap with naturalism. Both isms emphasize objective presentation of life. However, it is believed that realism which spawns naturalism. There is the dividing line between them. Naturalism tries to show social matters as they are, regardless of dramatic convention; as we can find in Anton Chekov’s *At The Cherry Orchard*, for example, which portrays reality by providing a “slice of life”. A dramatic work inspired by naturalism is not tied to well-made plot to achieve its effect. Thus, it is not surprising that a naturalist drama ends in anticlimax or lack of resolution.

In contrast with realism and naturalism, symbolism proposes the use of metaphors and images to express ideas. It is evoking rather than describing. A symbolist drama employs aesthetics values in its dialogue rather than direct statements; as we can find in William Butler Yeats’ *At the Hawk’s Well*, for example. The world in symbolists’ point of view is different from realists’ and naturalists’. According to Birkerts (1996:1439), symbolists suggest that things of this world are

¹² Movement, ideology, belief, or set of principles

just emblems of a deeper reality. As a result, symbolist dramas are often dense with otherworldly atmosphere.

Another ism rejecting realistic premises is expressionism. Instead of being objective in depicting things, expressionists expose subjective feelings. They try to present emotional experience in performance. The inner nature of reality must be elaborated and exposed with the emotions. According to Birkerts (1996:1439), expressionism is a reaction to dramatic works that put trust in surfaces. The logic, in contrast with the mirroring rule of realism, is to present life not as it is perceived outwardly, but as it is felt. The dramatic works applying expressionism provide tormented and logically disconnected storyline.

The last prominent ism influencing modern drama is existentialism. The concept of existentialism, actually, can be traced back years before 19th century. Nevertheless, it is Søren Kierkegaard, a Danish philosopher, who is celebrated as the founder of modern existentialism. Existentialism is a philosophy that focuses on the individual human being's experience of, recognition of, and triumph over the meaningless of existence (Morner & Rausch, 1991:73). The notion of existentialism is implemented in absurdist drama that offers no clear climax, no true reversal, no understandable confrontation scene, and no definable insight (King, 2007:455). This kind of drama emphasizes the limitations of language for communication and the absence of meaning in life.

3.3. Post-reading Activity

3.3.1. Group Discussion

1. The following excerpt is taken from Anton Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard* (1903). Read carefully.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD

(Act IV - when Lopahin (Yermolay Alexeyevitch) is about to leave the house of Madame Ranevsky. Lopahin is talking with Varya (Varvara Mihailova) before leaving the house.)

VARYA. (Looking a long while over things). It's strange, I can't find it anywhere.

LOPAHIN. What are you looking for?

VARYA. I packed it myself and I can't remember. (A pause)

LOPAHIN. Where are you going now, Varvara Mihailova?

VARYA. I? To the Ragulins. I have arranged to go to them to look after the house – as a housekeeper.

LOPAHIN. That's in Yashnovo? It'll be seventy miles away. (A pause). So this is the end of life in this house!

VARYA. (*Looking among things*). Where is it? Perhaps I put it in the trunk. Yes, life in this house is over – there will be no more of it.

LOPAHIN. And I'm just off to Harkov soon – by this next train. I've a lot of business there. I'm leaving Epihodov here, and I've taken him on.

VARYA. Really!

LOPAHIN. This time last year we had snow already, if you remember; but now it's so fine and sunny. Though it's cold, to be sure – three degrees of frost.

VARYA. I haven't looked. (A pause). And besides, our thermometer's broken. (A pause).

VOICE AT THE DOOR FROM THE YARD. "Yermolay Alexeyevitch!"

LOPAHIN. (*As though he had long been expecting this summons.*) This minute!

Taken from *Literature: The Evolving Canon* (1996:1392-1393) written and compiled by Sven Birkerts

After reading the excerpt, answer the following questions. Take some suitable quotations to support your answers.

- Which one is more important for Lopahin: the answer for what Varya is looking for or the place Varya is going to go? Explain your answer.
- Which one is more important for Varya: the place Lopahin is going to go or the information about weather given by Lopahin? Explain your answer.
- What is the significance of pauses in the dialogue between Varya and Lopahin?

2. The following excerpt is taken from William Butler Yeats' *At the Hawk's Well* (1916). Read carefully.

AT THE HAWK'S WELL

(When Young Man, who is looking for a well, meets Old Man.)

OLD MAN. What mischief brings you hither, you are like those
Who are crazy for the shedding of men's blood,
And for the love of women?

YOUNG MAN. A rumour has led me,
A story told over the wine towards dawn.
I rose from table, found a boat, spread sail
And with a lucky wind under the sail
Crossed waves that have seemed charmed, and found
this shore.

OLD MAN. There is no house to sack among these hills
Nor beautiful woman to be carried off.

YOUNG MAN. You should be native here, for that rough tongue
Matches the barbarous spot. You can, it may be,
Lead me to what I seek, a well wherein
Three hazels drop their nuts and withered leaves,
And where a solitary girl keeps watch
Among grey boulders. He who drinks, they say,
Of that miraculous water lives for ever.

OLD MAN. And are there not before your eyes at the instant
Grey boulders and a solitary girl
And three stripped hazels?

YOUNG MAN. But there is no well.

OLD MAN. Can you see nothing yonder?

YOUNG MAN. I but see
A hollow among stones half-full of leaves.

OLD MAN. And do you think so great a gift is found
By no more toil than spreading out a sail,
And climbing a steep hill? Oh, folly of youth,
Why should that hollow place fill up for you,
That will not fill for me? I have lain in wait
For more than fifty years to find it empty,
Or but to find the stupid wind of the sea
Drive round the perishable leaves.

YOUNG MAN. So it seems
There is some moment when the water fills it.

OLD MAN. A secret moment that the holy shades
That dance upon the desolate mountain know,
And not a living man, and when it comes
The water has scarce plashed before it is gone.

YOUNG MAN. I will stand here and wait. Why should the luck
Of Sualtam's son desert him now? For never
Have I had long to wait for anything.

Taken from *Four Plays for Dancers*
(1920:4-5) written by William Butler
Yeats

After reading the excerpt, answer the following questions. Take some suitable quotations to support your answer.

- a. Does Old Man welcome Young Man? Provide evidence proving that Old Man welcomes/does not welcome Young Man.
 - b. Why are they arguing with each other?
 - c. Is there any water in the well when the dialogue happens? Explain your answer.
3. Many literary critics regard Anton Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard* carries out the spirit of naturalism. On the other hand, William Butler Yeats' *At the Hawk's Well* is an example of symbolist drama. Explain the naturalism that you can find in the excerpt of *The Cherry Orchard* and the symbolism in the excerpt of *At the Hawk's Well*. Take some quotations from the excerpts to support your arguments.

3.3.2. Individual Assignment

You have studied the characteristics of realism, naturalism, symbolism, expressionism, and existentialism found in modern drama. Although they vary in characteristics, they also have many aspects in common. What are the similarities among those isms?

Analyzing Modern Drama

Contents

This chapter addresses steps to analyze dramatic works: conducting close reading and finding an idea; collecting evidence and composing draft; and composing comprehensive analysis. Related tasks are composed in pre- and post-reading activities.

Objectives

Finishing this chapter you are expected to:

1. know the steps to analyze dramatic works
2. understand how to carefully read and find an idea in a dramatic text; to collect evidence and compose draft; and eventually to compose comprehensive analysis
3. be able to apply the steps to a modern dramatic text: George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*

Meeting 5 _____

4.1. Pre-reading Activity

Previous semester you were assigned to analyze literary works intrinsically, including drama.

1. What were the steps you took to analyze those works? Mention and explain the steps.
2. What was the significance of the steps for your process of analysis?

4.2. Reading Activity

Conducting Close Reading and Finding Ideas

Analyzing is different from retelling. Instead of paraphrasing the whole story of a work in general sense, an analysis focuses on specific issues taken from the story. Birkerts (1996:1569) argues that in order to address particular aspect of a dramatic work, that is a specific focus or problem as the object of analysis, we need know the entire work or the full context of the drama.

Drama, unlike prose or poetry, mainly relies on the dialogue to achieve its effects on the readers. The messages of a drama are carried out by series of conversation. Therefore, to analyze a drama we pay more attention on the dialogue between characters. According to Birkerts (1996:1569-1570) words and statements in the dialogue can have very different meaning depending on who is speaking and in what context. In this case we have to be attentive, to read closely the dialogue. In addition, awareness of both the context “within” the text (for example, the situation between characters and their personalities) and “outside” the text (for example, the historical context of the drama) is needed to get better understanding of the drama. In other words, it is important to look at who are speaking, their motivation, and their words’ importance in signifying historical time and place.

The importance of close reading is like foundations which support a building. It is a technique to scrutinize specific parts of a dramatic text. It regards the relationship between the form and structure of the drama and its content. In order to do a close reading of a dramatic text, we can do the following steps.

- a. Read each act and/or scene of the drama carefully from the very first one until the very last one.
- b. Pay attention on the diction and the structural elements of the drama.
- c. Respond to the drama by giving our opinion. Our opinion is our first impression coming from our observation. The more carefully we observe the more authentic and precise our opinion will be.

After drawing the first impression in close reading activity, we need to ask some questions to ourselves about elements in the drama that have impressed us. These questions function as “research questions” that enhance the idea which is going to be elaborated. The following table 4.1 contains examples of questions arranged in categories. These categories and questions serve as guideline to elicit our critical response. It is free to add, modify, change, or combine them accordingly.

No.	Categories	No.	Example of Questions
1.	Dialogue	1.1.	What kind of language used in the dialogue?
		1.2.	What are the patterns of language used in the dialogue?
		1.3.	What are the key words, key phrases, and/or key expressions in the drama and their significance in delivering the message of the drama?
		1.4.	What function does chorus, soliloquy, and aside serve to the overall meaning of the drama?
		1.5.	How does the dialogue help characters’ development?

No.	Categories	No.	Example of Questions
2.	Plot	2.1.	What kind of plot used in the drama?
		2.2.	What are the patterns of the plot used in the drama?
		2.3.	What are the major events in the drama and their significance in delivering the message of the drama?
		2.4.	In what ways do subplots enhance the main plot of the drama?
		2.5.	How do acts and/or scenes in the drama develop?
3.	Character	3.1.	Who is/are the major character/s in the drama?
		3.2.	What kind of conflicts experienced by the character?
		3.3.	How does the character deal with their conflicts?
		3.4.	Does the character's personality change throughout the drama?
		3.5.	How does character's personality develop throughout the story?
4.	Setting	4.1.	Does the setting in the drama have symbolic meaning?
		4.2.	To what extent does the setting contribute to the atmosphere of the drama?
		4.3.	To what extent does the setting contribute to the characterization in the drama?
		4.4.	To what extent does the setting contribute to the plot of the drama?
		4.5.	In what ways does the setting present temporal, spatial, and social aspect?
5.	Subject/Theme	5.1.	What is the central underlying subject/theme of the drama?
		5.2.	In what ways is the subject/theme presented in the drama?
		5.3.	To what extent is the universality of the subject/theme in the drama?
		5.4.	What specific part(s) of the drama that support(s) the formulation of the subject/theme?
		5.5.	How does the subject/theme influence characters' action, plot, setting, and dialogue of the drama?

Table 4.1

The questions in table 4.1 may overlap each other since one type of question can be applied to different categories and might be answered by considering different categories too. For example, if we are impressed or interested in the subject/theme of a drama and intend to focus on identifying its central message and how it is presented, we need to take into account the other intrinsic elements. In doing so, the questions that belong to the category of character, plot, setting, and dialogue can also be employed.

4.3. Post-reading Activity

4.3.1. Group Discussion

The following excerpts are selected from George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* (1894). The focus of your attention is directed to a character named Raina and her conversation with other characters, Sergius and Catherine. After reading closely, what is your impression of Raina? Try to formulate questions that will lead to the elaboration of your idea!

ARMS AND THE MAN

Excerpt 1:

(Taken from Act II - when Sergius has just returned from the war as a hero. He has come to visit Raina's house. They chat for the first time since Sergius left for the war.)

RAINA. *(Placing her hands on his shoulder as she looks up at him with admiration and worship)* My hero! My king.

SERGIUS. My queen! *(He kisses her on the forehead with holy awe.)*

RAINA. How I have envied you, Sergius! You have been out in the world, on the field of battle, able to prove yourself there worthy of any woman in the world; whilst I have had to sit at home inactive,—dreaming—useless—doing nothing that could give me the right to call myself worthy of any man.

SERGIUS. Dearest, all my deeds have been yours. You inspired me. I have gone through the war like a knight in a tournament with his lady looking on at him!

And you have never been absent from my thoughts for a moment. *(Very solemnly.)* Sergius: I think we two have found the higher love. When I think of you, I feel that I could never do a base deed, or think an ignoble thought.

Ekserpt 2:

(Taken from Act II – when Sergius has left Raina with her mother, Catherine. Catherine warns Raina that there would be a scandal if anyone found out Raina sheltered a strange man in her room.)

CATHERINE. You think! Oh, Raina, Raina! Will anything ever make you straight forward? If Sergius finds out, it is all over between you.

RAINA. *(With cool impertinence).* Oh, I know Sergius is your pet. I sometimes wish you could marry him instead of me. You would just suit him. You would pet him, and spoil him, and mother him to perfection.

CATHERINE. *(Opening her eyes very widely indeed).* Well, upon my word!

RAINA. *(Capriciously—half to herself).* I always feel a longing to do or say something dreadful to him—to shock his propriety—to scandalize the five senses out of him! *(To Catherine perversely.)* I don't care whether he finds out about the chocolate cream soldier or not. I half hope he may. *(She again turns flippantly away and strolls up the path to the corner of the house.)*

CATHERINE. And what should I be able to say to your father, pray?

RAINA. *(Over her shoulder, from the top of the two steps).* Oh, poor father! As if he could help himself! *(She turns the corner and passes out of sight.)*

Taken from *George Bernard Shaw's Arms and the Man – The Electronic Classics Series Publication* (2013:36-37&42-43) edited by Jim Manis

4.3.2. Individual Assignment

After reading and conducting discussion about the steps to do close reading and to find ideas, do the following tasks.

1. Read carefully George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* and formulate a specific idea based on interesting aspects of the drama by employing the guideline in table 4.1. Remember, you are free to add, modify, change, or combine the categories and/or the questions in accordance with your focus of attention.
2. Consult your lecturer about the idea that you have formulated.

Meeting 6

4.4. Pre-reading Activity

Look at the following figures.

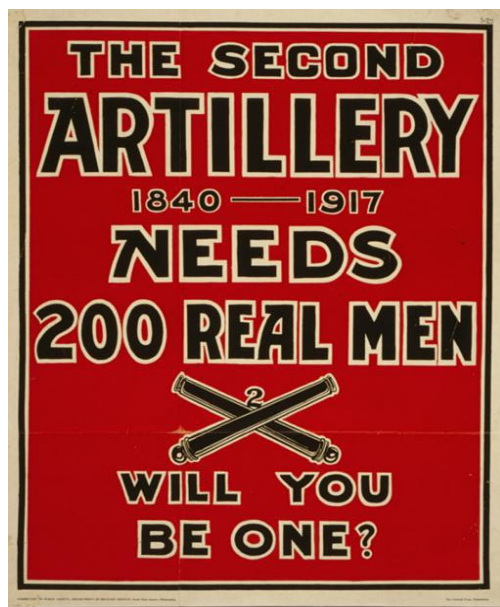


Figure 4.1¹³

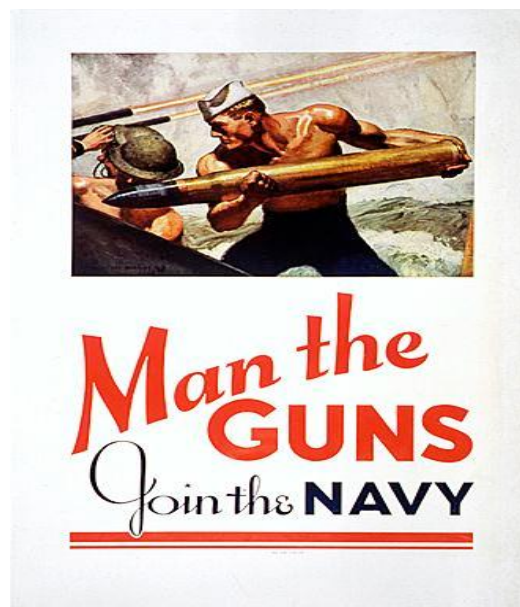


Figure 4.2¹⁴

The above figures are early 20th century posters aimed to provoke people to join the armies.

1. Which part of the posters that is provocative?
2. What do you think about someone who joins the army in a war to defend his country's independence; is it glorious or foolish?

4.5. Reading Activity

Collecting Evidence and Composing Rough Draft

After formulating ideas, which are represented by questions, the next step is to answer those questions by collecting as many as possible relevant and reliable evidence. We need to make notes for acts, scenes, lines, pages, symbols, etc. that deal with our ideas. Then the notes are sorted accordingly and connected each other. Eventually, this connected evidence is a starting point to our rough draft. For example, if we try to identify the image of war as expressed in George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, we need to note characters' opinions as well as attitude towards war. We write down the key dialogue complete with the information of act and/or scene and page. We also need to jot down the setting and the key moments in the drama that will support our analysis.

¹³ Taken from Shaw Festival 2014: *Arms and the Man* Study Guide (2014:3)

¹⁴ Taken from The Orlando-UCF Shakespeare Festival: George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* Study Guide (2005:13)

In order to strengthen the analysis, we can take extrinsic elements as additional data. Those are aspects which are outside the dramatic text but related to it. In this case, in accordance with Klarer's premise (2004:77-78), we can employ author-oriented, reader-oriented, and context-oriented approaches. Author-oriented approaches put the main emphasis on the author, trying to establish connections between the work of art and the biography of its creator. Reader-oriented approaches focus on the reception of texts by their audiences and the texts' general impact on the reading public. Contextual approaches try to place literary texts against the background of historical, social, or political developments while at the same time attempting to classify texts according to genres as well as historical periods. Therefore, it is legitimate to take out-of-the-text data as long as it remains in the context. For example, we can relate the atmosphere of war experienced by the characters in George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* with historical facts of Serbo-Bulgarian war (a war between Serbia and Bulgaria) in around 1885. Then, we can connect it with situation faced by a character named Captain Bluntschli, a Swiss mercenary with the Serbian army, who are trapped behind enemy line, in a Bulgarian house and has complicated relationship with a Bulgarian woman, Raina Petkoff.

The notes and evidence that have been collected are developed into free-writing. This free-writing contains outlines of elaborated ideas without worrying formal patterns and dictions of an essay. The significance of free-writing is to map out arguments in a clear sequence. After it is all set, a rough draft is ready to be written. In a rough draft, analysis is already presented in paragraphs. The quotations to select and their page numbers as well as the sequence to follow in making points are composed in the draft.

4.6. Post-reading Activity

Individual Assignment

After reading the steps to collect evidence and to compose rough draft, do the following tasks.

1. Develop the ideas that you have formulated in previous meeting into rough draft by employing the steps explained in today's meeting.
2. Consult your lecturer about the rough draft that you have composed.

Meeting 7 _____**4.7. Reading Activity****Composing Comprehensive Analysis**

The final step in analyzing dramatic text is to perfect the rough draft. Thus, a comprehensive analysis is ready to be presented. According to Birkerts (1996:1581), an analysis requires that we select a scene or passage of dialogue in order to examine its function in the play as a whole. We have to isolate the dynamics of the scene and show how the words and actions of the characters reflect the larger pattern of the drama. In this case, we have to balance the big picture – the unfolding of the whole drama – with the details. The selected dialogue must clearly illustrate our point. We need to avoid quoting long passages that are only generally relevant. In addition, when quoting exchange of dialogue, we need to include the name of the speakers as well as any stage direction that may be part of the passage.

A formal and standard analysis presentation consists of introduction, content of analysis, and conclusion. Introduction persuades the readers and leads them to know what to expect. Content contains elaboration of topic sentences leading the readers to the discussed issue and the strong points or arguments related to it. Conclusion summarizes the result analysis and provides clues about the broader implications of the discussed issue.

4.8. Post-reading Activity**Individual Assignment**

After reading the steps to compose comprehensive analysis, do the following tasks.

1. Develop the rough draft that you have made in previous meeting into a literary essay by employing the steps explained in today's meeting.
2. Present the essay that you have composed.

Chapter 5

Post War Drama

Contents

This chapter addresses Post war drama and related tasks composed in post-reading activities.

Objectives

Finishing this chapter you are expected to:

1. know prominent figures in post war drama
2. know prominent works in post war drama
3. explain the relationship between dramatic works and social-political situation in post war era
4. explain the effects of World War toward dramatic works

Meeting 9

5.1. Reading Activity

The World of Drama after the World Wars

At the end of World War II the theatre industry was in crisis phase. Many theatres had been destroyed, there was a deficiency of actors and managers and films were becoming increasingly popular, which led to many theatres being converted into cinemas (Alegre, n.d). Efforts to rebuild the cultural structure of civilization after the devastation of World War II led to a rethinking of the role of theatre in the new society.

In 20th-century, there were 3 figures drama are the American Eugene O'Neill, the German Bertolt Brecht, and the Italian Luigi Pirandello. The history of post-war drama involves important changes in the performance of plays. These changes are linking with the changes in the way plays are written: the innovations introduced by the plays require new acting styles and new theatres. The crucial development began in 1956. The first was the success of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* when it was first performed at the Royal Court Theatre. The play is about a love triangle involving an intelligent and educated but disaffected young man of working class origin (Jimmy Porter), his upper-middle-class, impassive wife (Alison), and her haughty best friend (Helena Charles).

Alegre (n.d) says that Osborne invited the audience to consider the new sense of social alienation of the rising lower middle-class, also dispersing conventions as to the appropriateness so far observed on the English stage. Osborne's famous play gave expression to the disaffected youth of the post-war period called "angry young men" to describe Osborne and those of his generation who employed the harshness of realism in the theatre in contrast to the more escapist theatre that characterized the previous generation. The play had tremendous cultural impact and, because of that impact, it constituted a turning-point in the history of post-war British theatre. A number of playwrights have cited *Look Back in Anger* as a substantial influence on their work. However, in the late 1960s was the end of stage censorship: a chance for younger authors a greater freedom of language and allowed them to go much further than the Angry Young Men or the working-class dramatists in their virulent social criticism.

Bertolt Brecht began influencing the direction of 20th-century drama with his plays and innovative theories shortly after the First World War. He developed "Epic Theatre". He used the term for the first time in 1926 to emphasize a style of drama which contrasted to realistic theatre. Brecht promoted the ideas of Marxist theory, which found followers among the English playwrights of that period, especially of a Marxian leaning. His theory recommended that the audience disassociate itself from any "illusion" created by the play and from any emotional involvement with the characters, but instead, concentrate on its ideas.

By the 1940s and 1950s, the European theatre had revolutionized by his idea. He expected the spectator not only to enjoy the performance but also to look critically at the actions of the various characters. He rejected the theatre as mere entertainment. For Brecht, this 'distancing' from the character on the part of the actor required a 'demonstration' rather than an 'impersonation' of the role, commenting on the character being portrayed and revealing the relationship between motives and constraints.

Brecht's Epic Theatre sought to appeal to reason rather than emotion in order to develop understanding of the social forces that shape our lives; he strongly believed that alienation was crucial to any kind of understanding, providing the distance necessary for critical thinking. His primary contribution to twentieth-century theatre began with his rebellion against the forms of drama that dominated the European, British and American theatre during the early and mid-nineteenth century: the artificial styles like the melodrama and the well-made play. Instead, he saw both conventional nineteenth-century drama (melodrama and the well-made play) and the new forms of realism and naturalism through different methods. In contrast to the artificial constructions of melodrama and the well-made play, the 'artificiality' of Brecht's drama does not aim simply to entertain, but rather to distance the audience from emotional involvement and thereby develop and inspire thought. Instead of ending with defined

closure – solving all the play's dilemmas and offering a return to social order - Brecht's plays end with open-ended questions that seek to stimulate intellectual engagement with the play's moral and social issues and offer possibilities for how the world could be.

Brecht sometimes combined simple narrative language with action so that the performer both described an action and demonstrated it simultaneously. Other features of alienation included the punctuation of the action by songs and the use of the stage as a 'platform' that made no pretence of resembling an imaginary location.

An acting style is determined by the purpose of the drama, and Brecht had a main didactic focal. In Marxist terms he aimed to recreate on stage dialectic: a society comprising a number of forces that collide and struggle against one another, and his object was to make the audience adopt an attitude of enquiry and criticism. The implication for the actors was that Brecht demanded a performance style in which the emphasis was not on psychological motivation or the apparent 'truth of the character's imagined inner life, but on the way in which the character's actions were influenced and determined by social forces.

The characters presented might, therefore, be archetypes, caricatures, masked figures or recognizable authority figures with recognizable behavioral traits. The actor, as it were, stood outside the character, inviting the audience to join in a process of evaluation and reflection. In order to achieve this, Brecht sometimes combined simple narrative language with action so that the performer both described an action and demonstrated it simultaneously.

In Britain, since the 1950s a considerable number of playwrights with strong personal political convictions have used Brechtian forms. This is an early example of an avowedly political drama since politics have always been an essential ingredient of drama, in which the writer promotes a particular set of beliefs or ideology.

In the years immediately following World War II, American drama advanced in its development of complex moral dramas pioneered by Eugene O'Neill in the 1920s and 1930s. But the playwrights of the postwar period did not attempt for several years the wide structural experimentation of the earlier period as Realism remained the dominant style. But the dominant American playwrights of the 1940s and 1950s were newcomers Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller. Williams emerged in 1944 as an accomplished dramatic poet in his autobiographical play *The Glass Menagerie*. In the post-war period of optimism, Williams and Miller examined the darker and self-destructive aspects of the American experience.

An important new element in the world of British drama, from the beginnings of radio in the 1920s, was the commissioning of plays, or the adaption of existing plays, by BBC radio. This was especially important in the 1950s and 1960s (and from the 1960s for television). Many major British playwrights in fact, either effectively began their careers with the BBC, or had works adapted for radio. In the late 1970s and 1980s female playwrights became more prominent on

Broadway—corresponding with the women's movement. Their dramas offered intimate depictions of women's lives separate from men.

5.2. Post-reading Activity

5.2.1. Group Discussion

Divide your class into 3 groups. Each group must take one of O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, Pirandello's *Henry IV*, and Brecht's *The Measures Taken* as the material for a class discussion about the characteristic of their plays by relating to the social and political aspect in the post world war era.

5.2.2. Individual Assignment

1. Tell your opinion about the reason why World War's aftermath brought changes in western drama
2. Name of two of Brecht's works and describe what the plays were about related to his idea of epic theatre
3. What do you perceive about political dramatic theatre?

Meeting 10

5.3. Reading Activity

Brechtian Drama

Elements of literature signify the things that are used to make up a work of literature. Based on the structure, there are two types of elements in literature: intrinsic elements (the literary elements which can be found inside the literary works) and extrinsic elements (the literary elements which can be found outside the literary works but it indirectly influence the structure of the literary works).

Before starting to scrutinize what the features of elements used in Brecht's epic theater, we may take a little look at how he developed such technique. Brecht began writing his influential musical plays like *The Threepenny Opera* in the 1920s. At the same time he began to study of the works of Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*. Brecht's reading of Marxism and the application of its concept of *dialectics*, influenced his ideas for theatre. Brecht took a revolutionary stance-not only towards the class struggle, but also towards the representation of bourgeois realism on stage. Brecht's theatre sought, therefore, to *estrangle* the audience from everyday reality so that it could be reinterpreted in a new light. He wanted the audience to *sit back* from their views of events that they had come to see as natural and inevitable, and question the world created by Capitalism and the society it sustained.

As has been explained in the previous chapter, contrasted to the realistic theatre, Brecht's theatre always shows dramatic illusion in its characterization, setting, action and techniques such as the *alienation effect* of using screens featuring captions to reveal the forthcoming action. These techniques break the illusion of drama. We do not get lost in the story or the characters. Instead we are constantly reminded that these are actors communicating ideas and situations to us. The presentation tended to be satirical, like that is represented in play scenes with mismatched emotions, for example, humor in a sad scene.

The common characteristics of Brechtian plays were: the action was reported or observed in one's point of view, which of course, past tense was used (fairy- tale like: the beginning mostly came with "Once upon...") . Giving the past event, Brecht intended to make his plays as plays, not as an escapee for the audience in the present time they watch. It happened and unlikely to be happen again, so that the audiences can grasp its aim: to critically think and to learn something from the play. The witness narrated the incident and the action was demonstrated. The actor and the audience were meant to not to be emotionally involved, and unlike naturalistic style, he lessened dramatic impact for the victim. Plays were performed with the house lights on so that audience members remained aware of each other during the performance, music and dancing were used to break up the action of the play, or scenes were sung rather than spoken, placards were used to give information to the audience. Typically, Brechtian

plays used of character 'types' ('the policeman', 'the mother') and the characters speak as if quoting someone else rather than speaking dialogue. The plays incorporated comedy routines and jokes, freeze frames, mime, masks, made non-realistic movement – slow motion, robotic etc. Brecht believed that the actor should move as if blocking movements on stage for the first time or in a robotic, dreamlike way. Since he was also influenced by the theatre of Asia with its use of mime and gesture, clear precise vocal work, symbolic characters and graceful, rhythmic movement, Brecht encouraged his actors to be physically fit and flexible, as his plays sometimes required dance, mime and even acrobatics.

Brecht liked performances that had an unrehearsed, improvised feel to them. This is because such acting did not concentrate upon the emotions of character. Brecht did not want actors to look at characters from a psychological perspective, rather they should interpret their role from a social perspective. They should not concentrate upon feelings, but upon events and relationships between characters. When rehearsing a play, Brecht was not interested in spending time exploring the inner emotions of characters, instead he wanted to explore actions and relationships between people. Brecht's actors were encouraged to rewrite the play into single sentences that described the play's main action. Rather than focus upon emotions, Brecht would prefer actors to focus upon elements such as blocking. For Brecht, blocking was a device by which to show interactions between characters and to study their social positions in relation to each other. The whole time, actors were asked to present their characters and demonstrate their actions, even include their own comments about their character's behaviour. In essence, a Brechtian actor has to react rather than act; he should not try to show human nature, but human relationships.

Brecht's staging was known for its minimalist style. It was often bare and the lighting used was usually white or blue. Brecht used such lighting to ensure that he created a theatre without illusion. Brecht often exposed all sources of light to the audience. He did not use a curtain, in fact he preferred to use a half curtain, because he did not want to hide anything in front of the audience. Brecht used set design to emphasise the plays' theatricality. He also showed the audience the source of music, often choosing to place the musicians on stage.

In Epic Theatre, the narrator who interrupts the flow of the action addresses themselves directly to the audience. Characters in the play do the same, though they retain their character when discussing their experience with the audience. In Brechtian Theatre, audience's impression of reality – the world outside the theatre – is strengthened. As a result, the typical theatrical illusion, the illusion of having escaped the outside world, will be shattered. The identification of the audience with the characters on stage is realized in a manner that excludes passivity and creates an inclusive environment. Such theatre making, involving theatre effects, setting, and acting techniques on stage,

makes the audience aware that the *means of production* in his theatre is the message he is trying to communicate to them, that stage realism, like life outside the theatre, is made, not given.

5.4. Post-reading Activity

5.4.1. Group Discussion

1. What do you perceive about Brecht's technique 'Epic Theater'?
2. What are intrinsic elements of Brechtian drama? Describe.
3. What do you know about alienation technique?
4. Watch a short cut performance of Brecht's *The Measures Taken* directed by Becca Johnson and make a group discussion about its intrinsic elements (find on Youtube, you also need to read the script)
5. What are the differences between dramatic theatre and epic theatre?
6. Create your own group's short play as an example of resemblance the characteristic of Brechtian drama! (maximum duration length: 5 minutes)

5.4.2. Individual Assignment

After reading Brecht's *The Measures Taken*, make your own analysis about its intrinsic elements in a minimum 3 length page-essay.

Meeting 11

5.5. Reading Activity

Theatre of the Absurd

World War II and its horrors left a widespread sense of the meaninglessness of human existence. In this sense, theater of the absurd brilliantly expressed this idea. Both Absurdism and epic theatre were against the idea of dramatic naturalism or illusionism; but drama of the angry young men of the fifties, being primarily a drama of protest against contemporary social set-up, was inclined to be more naturalistic though only up to a certain extent.

English playwrights of the post-1950 period are too numerous and too individualistic to categorize themselves in a few groups. Dividing from the point of view of technique and from that of theme and intention, we can say that there were two groups of English playwrights of that era: the first was the Social Protestors, generally, but not always influenced by Brecht. They can be further split into the following three subgroups: "Angries" of the 1950s, Non-radical that aims for social change, and Radical leftists, revolutionists, and anarchists. The second was the Technical Innovators who were influenced by the theatre of the absurd.

The most famous plays of the theater of the absurd are Eugene Ionesco's *Bald Soprano* (1950) and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953). The original French version of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* was staged three years later while the English version was put up on a London stage in 1955. *Waiting for Godot* was Beckett's pioneering attempt at the Theatre of the Absurd in England, a revolutionary movement which had already gained much momentum in Europe thanks to the work of the French dramatists Camus and Ionesco and their Continental followers. The two other French practitioners of this kind of drama were Jean Genet and Arthur Adamov. In England Harold Pinter and N.F. Simpson adopted some features of absurd drama.

The term 'Theatre of the Absurd' was first used in 1961 as the title of a book by the critic and one-time head of BBC radio drama, Martin Esslin. In this work he considers the plays of Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet Eugene Ionesco, Fernando Arrabal, Arthur Adamov, N. F. Simpson, Harold Pinter and Edward Albee, all of whom came to prominence in the 1950s and 1960s. Esslin identified a movement in the theatre that appeared to respond to a view that any belief in a rational universe is an illusion and that humanity is out of harmony with its surroundings in such a way as to suggest a lack of meaning.

The influential Danish philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) had already laid the foundations for the later work of the French philosophers and writers Sartre and Camus when he said "I believe because it is absurd". Stunned by the horror of the Second World War, and particularly its impact on their native France, Jean-Paul Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* (1945) and Albert Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) reflected a feeling of total abandonment

by God, of uncertainty, anxiety, purposelessness, and of mankind's inexplicable relationship with the universe, which was reflected in their later plays and novels. It was in this intellectual and spiritual climate that what has become the emblematic play for the Theatre of the Absurd, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, was written. It was first produced in England by Peter Hall in 1955.

More has probably been written about *Waiting for Godot* and its impact on the post-war theatre than about almost any other modern play and you would be well advised to become acquainted with both the play and the many subsequent critical reactions to it; it is constantly revived and revisited and remains one of the most uncomfortable, provocative, bleak yet sometimes comic stage metaphors ever created.

Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* proved a landmark in the history of English drama. Beckett proposed a reflection on the form of drama, drawing the audience's attention to the artificiality of speech, plot and characters on the stage.

Pinter is the most notable practitioner of absurd drama after Beckett. The vogue of absurd drama lasted for about a decade from 1955 but its influence can be found in the work of several latter-day playwrights as well. Absurdist playwrights tended to abandon traditional elements of the drama, including logical plot development, meaningful dialogue, and intelligible characters, in order to convey modern humanity's feelings of alienation, and despair—the sense that reality is itself unreal.

The sources of the theater of the absurd are diverse; they can be found in the precept of surrealism, dadaism and existentialism; in the traditions of the music hall, vaudeville, and burlesque; and in the films of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. The pessimism and despair of the 20th cent also found expression in the existentialist dramas of Jean-Paul Sartre, in the realistic and symbolic dramas of Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and Jean Anouilh, and in the surrealist plays of Jean Cocteau.

Theatre of the absurd was based on the philosophy of Existentialism of Camus and Sartre according to which the universe and an individual's life in it are too chaotic and too irrational to be reduced to a comprehensible system. Theatre of the absurd tries to mirror the chaos and incomprehensibility of existence. Plot is dismissed because it is based on causality, characters are mostly ordinary people who do not understand themselves or one another, and whatever they do is arbitrary and unpredictable and incomprehensible to themselves and to the audience.

Theatre of the Absurd works by cheating and frustrating the expectations of its audience. In performance the laws of logic and of cause and effect appear to have deserted the language and action. It has often been said that the Theatre of the Absurd is about the breakdown of communication. Action may be punctuated by comic routines and, to use an expression of David Campton's, there is an

uneasy blend of 'laughter and fear'. Every actions and setting were intentionally made absurd: a mysterious figure who never appears, repetitive actions, long speeches or shorter speeches that may employ the non sequitur (a speech that does not follow in meaning). The language may equally be used to intimidate, confuse, fill the void of silence or time, or to indicate the presence of some unspecified external threat.

Somewhat similar to the theater of the absurd is the so-called theater of cruelty, derived from the ideas of Antonin Artaud, who, writing in the 1930s, foresaw a drama that would assault its audience with movement and sound, producing a visceral rather than an intellectual reaction. After the violence of World War II and the subsequent threat of the atomic bomb, his approach seemed particularly appropriate to many playwrights.

5.6. Post-reading Activity

5.6.1. Group Discussion

Read and discuss in group about the essential elements of theatre of the absurd in Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958)

5.6.2. Individual Assignment

Explain about the differences between Absurdism, Nihilism, Dadaism, Existentialism and Surrealism which were popular in the play of Post World War II era!

Analyzing Post War Drama

Contents

This chapter addresses textual analysis of Post War Drama and related tasks composed in post-reading activities.

Objectives

Finishing this chapter you are expected to:

1. understand the concept of Angry Young Men
2. understand the concept kitchen-sink realism drama
3. know the movement spanning from 1945-1990
4. understand how to analyze absurdist drama
5. understand the basic concepts found in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*

Meeting 12

6.1. Reading Activity

The Movement of Angry Young Men and Ideology in *Look Back in Anger*

Look Back in Anger (1956) is one the most famous of John Osborne's plays. The genuine realism of its setting represented a revolution in the British theatre. The play was perceived as giving voice to a frustrated and politically and culturally disengaged constituency – the lower-middle-class, first-generation graduates whose literary heroes, including Osborne, became known as the Angry Young Men. Their political views were usually seen as identifying with the left, sometimes anarchistic, and they described social alienation of different kinds. They also often expressed their critical views on society as a whole, criticising certain behaviours or groups in different ways. Throughout the late 1950s and into the 1960s, the Angries often met at or were nurtured by the Royal Shakespeare Company, and through this venue other such emerging playwrights as Edward Bond and Wole Soyinka were exposed to the this movement directly.

John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* was the monumental literary work that influenced the concept of the Angry Young Man.

Osborne wrote the play to express what it felt like to live in England during the 1950s. According to Wilson (2007), the main issues that Angry Young Men had were "impatience with the status quo, refusal to be co-opted by a bankrupt society, an instinctive solidarity with the lower classes. Referred to as "kitchen sink realism," literary works began to deal with lower class themes. In the decades prior to Osborne and other authors, less attention had been given to literature that illuminated the treatment and living circumstances experienced by the lower classes. As the Angry Young Men movement began to articulate these themes, the acceptance of related issues was more widespread. Osborne depicted these issues within his play through the eyes of his protagonist, Jimmy. Throughout the play, Jimmy was seeing "the wrong people go hungry, the wrong people be loved, the wrong people dying". Post world war, the quality of life in England for lower class citizens was extremely poor; Osborne used this theme to demonstrate how the state of Britain was guilty of neglect towards those that needed assistance the most. In the play there are comparisons of educated people with savages, illuminating the major difference between classes.

In Jimmy Porter, Osborne created what came to be seen as a model of the "angry young man"—complaining about the lack of passion of his age, entreating Alison and Cliff to show some enthusiasm. He is marvellously, unreasonably idealistic in a wildly unfocussed way. Jimmy Porter spoke for a large segment of the British population in 1956 when he ranted about his alienation from a society in which he was denied any meaningful role. Although he was educated at a respectable and prestigious university in the United Kingdom, the real power and opportunities were reserved for the children of the Establishment, those born to privilege, family connections, and entree to the "right" schools.

The play describes 1950s life in an East Midlands bed-sitting room among the underemployed graduate classes. The extreme unglamorous of the setting alone represented a new from theatrical tradition. In the central character, Jimmy Porter, Osborne is engaging in self-portraiture which characterizes his major plays. He also embodies the frustrations of a particular age and class, a generation of young men who had attempted to leave behind their working-class origins, using higher education as the means by which to do so. An alternative point of view would condemn Jimmy, first for his extreme futility, and then for his general unpleasantness, finally for the bilious of his attempts to dominate the women in his life. Through Jimmy Porter, Osborne expresses a masculine anxiety about disempowerment and that he places the fear of or blame for that emasculation on to women. For men of Jimmy Porter's age and class, there were unique of factors coming together to fill in a sense of rage and frustration.

The visual symbolism of the two women ironing clothes while wearing one of Jimmy's shirts in Act I and III might promise some kind of feminist motif. However, the play's sympathies are so determinedly

with the character of Jimmy, that any such potential gender-political irony is dissolved. One of the criticisms most often levelled at the play is that it is not apparent what Jimmy Porter is angry about. For Osborne, the answer seems to lie in Jimmy's Act III speech:

"I suppose people of our generation aren't able to die
for good causes any longer. We had all that done for us,
in the thirties and the forties, when we were still kids.
There aren't any good, brave causes left."

Thus, Jimmy's anger arises from a sense of having missed out on the opportunities for idealism, or heroism, or at least for action of some sort, that had been provided to the previous generation first by the antifascist struggles of the 1930s, and then by the Second World War. There has been wide acceptance of this explanation of Jimmy Porter's anger as having its origins in the absence of opportunities for glory.

Rana (n.d) says that a review of *Look Back in Anger* from the critic Kenneth Tynan in *The Observer* hailed Osborne as the most important playwright since the war. Suddenly, Osborne found himself famous and the English Stage Company became solvent overnight despite the most of critics who attended that first night felt it was a failure. Tynan's review had been the exception, but had been extraordinarily influential both on public opinion during the latter part of the play's initial run in 1956, and on much academic opinion for the better part of the next three decades. However, Tynan, it was later suggested, had conspired with George Devine, the then guiding light of the Royal Court Theatre, to endeavour to cleanse the London theatre of excessive homosexual influence. On that basis, Tynan's enthusiasm for *Look Back in Anger* should be seen as a part of a much larger exercise in heterosexualisation and masculinisation of the mid-1950s theatre. Thus far, the play's success and influence can readily be accounted for. Whether this success and influence were achieved because of or in spite of Jimmy Porter's misogyny, however, are another matter, and a difficult one, especially given how extreme the misogyny sounds to early-21st-century ears. If Osborne's characterization of Jimmy Porter accurately captured the spirit of the age in other respects, then the question arises as to whether that spirit might have been, in fact, as misogynistic as he was.

The perception of them as "angry" outsiders was the one point of coherence of English "provincialism". Feelings of frustration and exclusion from the centre and the Establishment were taken up, as common sense substitutes for the Freud and Sartre of the 'highbrows'. In a negative description, they tended to avoid radical experimentalism in their literary style; they were not modernists by technique. Also included in the Angry Young Men was a small group of young existentialist philosophers led by Colin Wilson and also including Stuart Holroyd and Bill Hopkins. Outside of these subgroupings, the "Angries" included writers mostly of lower-class origin concerned with their

political and economic aspirations. They included John Osborne, Harold Pinter, John Braine, Arnold Wesker and Alan Sillitoe, Doris Lessing, and Bryan Johnson.

Giving another story about one of the 'angries', Collin Wilson in his *The Rise and Fall of The Angry Young Men* (2007) utters that he became part of this story (the "Angries") because before the end of the month when *Look Back in Anger* was performed, it was his first book *The Outsider* that received an unprecedented welcome although he himself regarded *The Outsider* as a work of existentialist philosophy. He utters:

I quite literally woke up that morning to find myself famous, one critic heading his review: "HE'S A MAJOR WRITER AND HE'S ONLY 24". [.....] The popular press insisted on labeling Osborne and I as Angry Young Men, although I certainly wasn't angry about anything. But it was summertime and the silly season, when there was very little hard news to write about, and the press publicized the Angry Young Men for all they were worth, plunging us into a maelstrom of feeble-minded publicity. [.....] In fact, long before the end of 1956, everyone was sick of the Angry Young Man cult, including the popular newspapers that had launched it. By this time the this movement had achieved too much momentum to fade away - particularly since the emergence of America's Beat Generation, and a volume called *Protest: The Beat Generation and the Angry Young Men* included contributions from Norman Mailer, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs as well as myself, Osborne, Amis, Wain and John Braine.

In addition, historically, the "angry" writers who emerged in the fifties gave birth to the satire movement of the 1960s - *Beyond the Fringe*, *That Was the Week that Was* and *Private Eye*. Given the changes that have since taken place in British culture and politics, *Look Back in Anger* can nowadays be regarded as an example of one of the great influences on the historical development of the British theatre.

6.2. Post-reading Activity

6.2.1. Group Discussion

1. What do you know about angry young men?
2. What do you perceive about the issues that angry young men were actually angry about?
3. What is kitchen-sink realism drama?
4. Make analysis about the movement or -ism that was influenced by plays spanning from 1945- 1990.

6.2.2. Individual Assignment

Read John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* and make an argumentative essay about the play related to its criticism to the era of Post World War.

Meeting 13

6.3. Reading Activity

The Uncertainty of Godot's Identity in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*

Identity in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is somehow enthralling. It is to be meticulously scrutinized because readers and critics are often perplexed about Godot, a mysterious absent figure, who only appears within the dialogues among characters and whom the two characters of the play, Vladimir and Estragon, commit to await loyally despite not being acquainted. Very often the readers and critics have an inquiry about the indefinite identity of Godot. Unfortunately, Samuel Beckett refuses to provide information about who Godot exactly is. As cited in Grave and Federman (1979: 177), Beckett states, "If I knew, I would have said so in the play." Thus, Godot's identity is constructed in an uncertainty, which potentially leads to ambiguity. However, this construction to some extents cannot be separated from Beckett's insistence on making the readers actively involved in characters identification. Simpson (1991:82), as cited in Lawley (2008: 35), claims that Beckett's refusal to give firm answer is his way of putting his audience in the same universe, intellectually and emotionally that his characters inhabit.

Godot's identity is uncertainly constructed throughout the play. There is no exact 'truth' regarding Godot's identity that Beckett intends to explicitly reveal. Godot is set up within discursive and very restricted attributes which are simultaneously questioned by characters within their dialogues. Unfortunately the answers and responses given—in relation to Godot—are also vague and even inadequate. Beckett seems to provide Godot with 'blurred' attributes as a 'thesis'. Yet, he then challenges it with 'antithesis' to obscure Godot's identity. Thus Beckett's refusal to provide Godot with clear identity by all means strengthens the justification that *Waiting for Godot* is a postmodern text.

To begin scrutinizing the indefinite identity of Godot, it is worth to have a look at Godot's first appearance within the dialogues between characters. In the very beginning of the play, Godot is depicted as a nebulous figure whom the two characters, Vladimir (Didi) and Estragon (Gogo), insist to await on the country road. Though Vladimir and Estragon do not know exactly who Godot is and when he will definitely appear, they seem dedicated to wait for his arrival:

VLADIMIR: He didn't say for sure he'd come.

ESTRAGON: And if he doesn't come?

VLADIMIR: We'll come back tomorrow.

ESTRAGON: And then the day after tomorrow.

VLADIMIR: Possibly.

ESTRAGON: And so on.

VLADIMIR: The point is—

ESTRAGON: Until he comes. (8)

Using pronoun 'he' to denote Godot, Vladimir and Estragon, to some extent, slightly reveals the identity of Godot. However, 'he' in this case is applied in the very general and discursive sense. 'He', a signifier that lexically refers to male first person singular, could refer to every individual; it could represent human beings and even God as well. Thus, 'he' in the above passage evokes multi signified. 'He' also creates mystery because Godot himself either has not been depicted or has not appeared. Furthermore, the signifier 'he' tends to entail a suspense, which engenders the indefinite identity of Godot, notably due to the fact that Godot doesn't tell Vladimir and Estragon when he will definitely come and who he really is.

Godot's identity furthermore remains enigmatic, particularly in the case that Godot's name is destabilized by Vladimir who asks Estragon, "His name is Godot?" (21). Here Vladimir shows his doubtfulness about the exact name of Godot. Such a question to some extent proves that Godot's identity is constructed indefinitely within the 'zone' of instability. By doubting about Godot's name—'Godot' is regarded as a thesis as well as a signifier in this case—, Vladimir automatically deconstructs Godot's attribute through antithesis. This phenomenon is related to the notion of postmodern-identity scholars that, according to Cerulo, tend to "deconstruct established identity categories" (1997:391). In the case of Godot's name which is questioned by Vladimir, the attribute of identity then seems to be neither essential nor fundamental. It is set up in the paradigm of 'becoming' rather than 'being' or 'given'. As a consequence, Vladimir is not able to convince himself that the name of the figure for whom he is waiting is Godot.

Furthermore the name 'Godot' will entail many possible meanings if it is observed within the context of French—Beckett's first language—and of Irish—a language of a country where Beckett spent his childhood. According to Graver, there are some common French words and phrases which begin with 'god'. *Godillot* in French for 'old shapeless boot'; *Godasses* are 'military boots', *Godailleur* is 'to go pub-crawling'. *Goder* means 'to pucker' and *Godet* is the name of a popular cognac, and also the French word for 'a wooden bowl'. In addition, 'Godo' is spoken Irish for God (2004: 41-42). Thus, as a 'signifier', 'Godot' potentially will result in many debatable and fractured interpretations. For instance, it would be problematic to interpret 'Godot' as 'an old shapeless boot' because the pronoun which denotes to Godot is 'he', as it is previously discussed. However, 'boot' itself is actually connected to the play, notably due to the fact that, in some parts of *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett narrates how Vladimir and Estragon make a useless talk about the old boot, like in this dialogue: Vladimir: "Taking off my boot. Did that never happen to you?" Estragon: "Boots must be taken off every day, I'm tired telling you that. Why don't you listen to me?" (2). Yet, despite making 'boot' as the central theme and attention, Beckett tends to focus on Vladimir and Estragon's determinant intention to wait and meet Godot.

Being curious with and 'haunted' by Godot, Estragon and Vladimir, as the outsiders, who significantly contribute to the construction of Godot's identity, then insist to deliberately delve into the identity of Godot through more investigation:

ESTRAGON: That he couldn't promise anything.

VLADIMIR: That he'd have to think it over.

ESTRAGON: In the quiet of his home.

VLADIMIR: Consult his family.

ESTRAGON: His friends.

VLADIMIR: His agents.

ESTRAGON: His correspondents.

VLADIMIR: His books.

ESTRAGON: His bank account. (18)

Here Vladimir and Estragon attempt to search for Godot's identity through social entities that are existent around Godot. They are committed to investigate Godot's family, friends, agents, and correspondents. Moreover, Godot's books and bank account are also supposed to be helpful sources of Godot's identification. So in this phase, it is conspicuous that Godot's identity is not presented in an empty entity. Godot is depicted as a figure that has wide relationships with others. Vladimir and Estragon also act as if they are detectives who try to discover Godot's mystery. Unfortunately family, friends, correspondents, and agents who are mentioned in the above passage never come up in the rest of the story. Moreover there is no information given whether Vladimir and Estragon are eventually able to consult Godot colleagues and family. In other words there is no clear 'cause and effect' as well as continuation in the above planned investigation. The *absence* of Godot's colleagues as well as of Godot himself throughout the play are very pertinent to one of the characteristics of postmodern text; that is *absence*, as already mentioned in the introduction of this essay. These absences of course give significant impact on the uncertainty of Godot's identity and of the indeterminacy of the story.

While Estragon and Vladimir still have no idea about who Godot is, another character, Boy, comes and says that he has a message from Godot. Boy in this case is also regarded as an outsider functioning as an informant in the construction of Godot's identity. Boy seems to have been acquainted with Godot:

VLADIMIR: You work for Mr. Godot?

BOY: Yes Sir.

VLADIMIR: What do you do?

BOY: I mind the goats, Sir.

VLADIMIR: Is he good to you?

BOY: Yes Sir.

VLADIMIR: He doesn't beat you?

BOY: No Sir, not me.

VLADIMIR: Whom does he beat?

BOY: He beats my brother, Sir. (51)

Godot, in the dialogue above, has a title 'Mr', instead of 'Mrs' or 'Ms'. It keeps the information that Godot is a male figure as in the beginning of the story the pronoun 'he' is used to denote Godot. The dialogue above also reveals that Godot has a servant, Boy, who looks after Godot's livestock. Thus Godot might also be a 'landlord'. Moreover the personality of Godot is also delineated. Godot, according to Boy, has ambivalent personality. In one side, Godot is a cruel and hostile. He treats Boy's brother violently. On the other hand, Godot does something good to Boy. Thus the appearance of Boy to some extent can be a 'key' in divulging Godot's identity. Unfortunately, Boy's information still cannot be sufficiently used to point out who Godot exactly is.

6.4. Post-reading Activity

6.4.1. Group Discussion

1. Discuss and take the important notes on the above example of analysis.
 - a. What do you know about identity?
 - b. Who is actually Godot in your opinion?
 - c. Why do Vladimir and Estragon intend to wait for Godot?
2. Look for the information about the historical background of the play and the concept of existentialism
3. Is there any Beckett's personal background that refers to existentialism topic that affected to his work? Explain.

6.4.2. Individual Assignment

Read "Waiting for Godot" and write the interesting information you can gain from your reading

Contemporary Drama: The 1990s

Contents

This chapter addresses contemporary drama: the 1990s and related tasks composed in post-reading activities.

Objectives

Finishing this chapter you are expected to:

1. know the relationship between political issue and theater during the 1990s
2. know the in- yer-face theatre.
3. be able to analyze Sarah Kane's *Blasted*

Meeting 14

7.1. Reading Activity

According to Willcocks (in Holdsworth, 2008, p.7), 1989 was a pivotal year in European history. The revolutions of the communist Eastern bloc, the break-up of the Soviet Union and the subsequent ending of the Cold War were to confront Europe, particularly the countries of the European Union (EU), with challenges which are proving difficult to resolve. The plays that produced in this era provide examples of how British playwrights explored and interpreted the challenges faced by post-communist Europe during the 1990s. The focus of these plays is the events in the countries of the former Eastern bloc and the Balkans. For the example, Nicholas Kent's *Srebrenica* and Sarah Kane's *Blasted* offered prominent warnings about ignoring Europe's nationalistic and ethnic tensions and concern themselves intimately with the conflict that followed the break-up of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a horrific conflict that marked the nadir of European transition and change during the 1990s.

British theatre of the 1990s witnessed an outburst of new talent and presented a new sensibility that sent shockwaves through audiences and critics. Those events reflected actors' and student actors' desires for new and fresh scenes and monologs -- pieces that are up-to-date and exciting to perform. The drama book reflects

current trends where small theatre groups proliferate, women and minorities have a growing influence, and drama has become a truly international art form. Pickering (2005) says that by the 1980s the British theatre saw more fine women playwrights developing. Some of these writers also moved into film and television. Many of the issues dealt with were deeply personal: breast-feeding, organ transplants, violence, abuse, drugs, and the traumas of breast cancer. These topics, together with a view of an increasingly disturbing society based on violence and exploitation, continued to occupy the minds of playwrights in the 1990s and into the current century.

There were four of the major playwrights who emerged and had a significant impact on British theatre in 1990s: Sarah Kane, Anthony Neilson, Mark Ravenhill, and Philip Ridley. Their works were notably known as "In-Yer-Face Theatre". The plays that triggered the new style of this theatre included Anthony Neilson's shockingly violent *Penetrator* (1993), Sarah Kane's *Blasted* (1995), with its scenes of cannibalism and anal rape, and Mark Ravenhill's *Shopping and Fucking* (1996). The term of "In-Yer-Face Theatre" was a journalistic term for a new style of drama that emerged in 1990s Britain, when a number of young playwrights produced works that were seen as being deliberately aggressive, confrontational, and provocative.

In-ye-face theatre was both a new sensibility and a series of specific theatrical devices. In terms of sensibility, these playwrights were drawn to the depiction of psychological and emotional extremes, some of which – such as sexual abuse or viciousness – were truly distressing. They insistently broke taboos and used direct, powerful language, often with fast and furious dialogue. Their sensibility relished the idea of provocation. As a series of theatrical techniques, in-ye-face theatre involved a stage language that emphasised rawness, intensity and swearing, stage images that showed acute pain or comfortless vulnerability, characterisation that preferred complicit victims to innocent ones, and a ninety-minute structure that dispensed with the relief of an interval. In-ye-face theatre depended on certain material conditions, mainly the ready availability of studio spaces (typically seating between fifty and eighty people) which provided ideal conditions for the kind of experiential theatre where audience members felt as if they were actively sharing the emotions being depicted by the actors. (Law, 2011)

In-ye-face theatre describes not just the content of a play but rather the relationship between the stage and the audience. In other words, it strongly suggests what is particular about the experience of watching extreme theatre – the feeling of your personal space being threatened, or violated. This kind of theatre was a radical break with much of the drama of the 1980s. At its best, its aim was to use shock to awaken the moral responses of the audience – its desire was no less than to help change society.

Within this era, there was also technique of drama that popular among the playwrights: monologue. The monologue is usually a substantial piece of text for a single voice: a long speech delivered by one character that may be heard but not interrupted by others. It is presented by a single character, most often to express their mental thoughts aloud, though sometimes also to directly address another character or the audience. A number of playwrights have written plays that are an entire monologue or have structured their plays around a series of monologues that 'freeze' the rest of the physical action. As an example, Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* (1998) concentrates on the idea of direct address to the audience.

The idea of the 'solo' performer in theatre is not a new idea since it was developed during medieval era that engaged audiences with ballads and narratives. The extensive rediscovery of such skills has resulted from the economic situation in the theatre and a growing awareness of exploring contentious social issues. The solo text is a very personal response to contemporary social issues and, in both the UK and USA, has been used as a way of addressing the collective conscience of the nation (Pickering, 2005).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Spalding Gray explored almost every facet of American life through his stage monologues, establishing the monologue as a major new dramatic structure and theatre event. British plays structured around a series of monologues include John Godber's *Bouncers* (1977) and Debbie Isitt's *The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband* (2002). Both plays employ a similar technique: the action on stage is suspended and other characters 'freeze' while a single character describes an aspect of their predicament or explains some part of the narrative. This technique is foreshadowed in Pinter's *The Caretaker* (1960) and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953) when one character launches into a massively long solo speech while the other characters remain still and silent. Beckett's monologues and narrative voice technique together with his minimal staging are rather like the 'stream of consciousness' novel and present the conscious and unconscious thought processes of the speaker (Pickering, 2005, p.34).

7.2. Post-reading Activity

7.2.1. Group Discussion

1. What do you perceive about the relationship between social issues and theater during the 1990s? (Take Sarah Kane's *Blasted* as the supporting material of your argument)
2. What do you think about monologue in a play?
3. Read one of the in- yer- face theatre plays. Analyze and give explanation about its typical techniques

7.2.2. Individual Assignment

Read and watch (on Youtube or other source) Sarah Kane's *Cleansed* or *Crave* and make an essay (1500 words) of your own interpretation about the play.

Contemporary Drama: Early 21st Century

Contents

This chapter addresses contemporary drama: early 21st century and related tasks composed in post-reading activities.

Objectives

Finishing this chapter you are expected to:

1. know the characteristics of 21st century
2. know the different between classic drama and contemporary drama

Meeting 15

8.1. Reading Activity

As the 21st century got under way, history remained the outstanding concern of English literature. Twenty-First Century British Plays remarked the reminder of the relevance, vitality and innovation of British theatre that emerge in recent years. Drama or theatre changed to reflect what's on the time. 21st century drama became more realistic and psychologically connected experience. However, these days drama are more various and compounded techniques, not merely basic on particular political or social interest. Playwrights are free to decide with what approach they want to present their work, either they will be classical or contemporary. Plays are not always related to certain popular themes on society, but also can be merely "a work" or "an entertainment".

Considering the audience, 21st century's audience tends to be seated in rows on one side of the stage. They are observing the play because they are meant to be the observer of the play. Between actors and audience, the actors talk and relate to each other exclusively. They do not speak to or acknowledge the audience as they are meant to stay in the world of the play. The scenery, costumes, lighting and sound are designed by artists and constructed by craftsman to create

the environment of the play. It is designed to represent the place and time. The degree of naturalism to expressionism or abstract is carefully calculated to tell the story of the play. The play is written then rehearsed for several weeks by the actors. There is a director who guided the actors to play out his vision of the play. Each night the actors repeat the same lines, movements, motivations and responses as developed during the rehearsal process and less spontaneous since the characterization must well- developed and as flawless as possible. The text is almost fully in prose but still life- like and mostly uses common daily language.

There were five of the best new British plays from the first decade of the twenty-first century: Joe Penhall's *Blue/Orange* was one of the most notable works in early 21st century which touch upon the theme of racism, health, and power. It won the Olivier Award for Best New Play 2001. Kwame Kwei-Armah's *Elmina's Kitchen* which was about gun crime and the struggle to make a living. Herald Neilson's *Realism* dramatized the everyday life and increasingly bizarre fantasies. Bola Agbaje's *Gone Too Far!* explores a London community divided by race and prejudice. Simon Stephens' *Pornography* was the first play to be written about the London 7/7 terrorist bombings, tells seven entwining stories of people's lives during the day leading up to the catastrophic event. Although contemporary issues such as global warming and international conflicts received attention, writers were still more disposed to look back, for example a British playwright, Alan Bennett. His play, *The History Boys* premiered at the Royal National Theatre in London on 18 May in 2004; it portrayed pupils in a school in the north of England during the 1980s.

American Sarah Ruhl's *Passion Play*, a three and a half hours play was considered as a new remarkable play of 21st century. She is two-time Pulitzer for Drama finalist, currently a Best Play Tony nominee for her *Vibrator Play* and one of the five most produced playwrights in the country. Ruhl has quickly become one of the American theater's most original and powerful voices. *Passion Play* focuses on three productions of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. French (n.d) says that Ruhl dramatizes a community of players rehearsing their annual staging of the Easter Passion in three different eras: 1575 northern England, just before Queen Elizabeth outlaws the ritual; 1934 Oberammergau, Bavaria, as Hitler is rising to power; and Spearfish, South Dakota, from the time of Vietnam through Reagan's presidency. In each period, the players grapple in different ways with the transformative nature of art, and politics are never far in the background, as Queen Elizabeth, Hitler, and Reagan each appear, played by a single commanding actor. According to Sutton (2010, par. 3) the show was considered completely professional and flawless in every respect. Despite its international, postmodern period-skipping, Ruhl's play (like all her others) uses one subject—here, religion—as a lens through which to analyze the various elements that make up

American identity. In this case, those include sexuality, religion, morality, community, politics and theater.

Another remarkable play was a work of Tracy Letts. He is the author of *August: Osage County*, an epic tragicomedy about family that has taken America by storm. His new play is the presented youngest member of American drama's extended, dysfunctional family - a natural heir (or rebellious stepchild) to Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee and Eugene O'Neill. He won the 2008 Pulitzer Prize, five Tony awards. Letts has a highly developed emotional intelligence. His *August: Osage County* was originally inspired by his own family. He grew up in Oklahoma and does not regard his own family as having been unhappy. In particular - and it is what makes his play powerful - he understands the force of what is not being said (Kellaway , 2008, par. 1).

8.2. Post-reading Activity

8.2.1. Group Discussion

1. What do you perceive about 21st century drama?
2. What are the differences between the classic drama and contemporary drama? Make your analysis as complete as possible (including the theme, technique, intrinsic, extrinsic, etc.)
3. Divide your class into 3-5 groups and make a play which is inspired by the recent issues of your community or maybe a personal experience. Use any of existing method of playwriting and properly perform in front of your class. Let the others analyze or criticize your play

8.2.2. Individual Assignment

Watch a video of recent plays / theatre and deliver your review about it in an approximately 400 words essay (put any pictures and references that support your ideas)

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<http://www.sheridanroadmagazine.com/blog/sights-sounds-the-petrified-forest/>

<http://www.sfgate.com/living/article/No-one-wants-to-be-put-in-a-gender-box-A-2827603.php>

<http://www.courttheatre.org/season/show/endgame>

Angry Young Men: a concept reflecting impatience with the status quo, refusal to be co-opted by a bankrupt society, and an instinctive solidarity with the lower classes.

Chorus: A group of singers and dancers who sometimes serve as actors to comment on or interpret the significance of the action.

Epic Theatre: A theatre that emphasizes a style of drama which contrasted to realistic theatre. The audience disassociate itself from any "illusion" created by the play and from any emotional involvement with the characters, but instead, concentrate on its ideas.

Existentialism: A philosophical movement which emphasizes on individual existence, freedom, and choice.

Expressionism: An ism that exposes subjective feelings by presenting emotional experience in performance.

In-Yer-Face Theatre: A journalistic term for a new style of drama that emerged in 1990s Britain, when a number of young playwrights produced works that were seen as being deliberately aggressive, confrontational, and provocative.

Ism: Movement, ideology, belief, or set of principles.

Kitchen sink realism: literary works that deal with lower class themes.

Naturalism: A literally movement that emerged in France, America, and England during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and that emphasizes biological and socioeconomic determinism in fiction and drama.

Realism drama: A type of modern drama that presents objective presentation of the details of everyday life.

Symbolism: An ism that proposes the use of metaphors and images to express ideas. It is evoking rather than describing.

Pulitzer Prize: Award given for achievement in art and literature.

Theatre of the absurd: A type of drama which portrays illogical situations and uses unconventional dialogue and plot to express the absurdity of human existence.