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A S T U D Y O F I T S N A T U R E , D E V E L O P M E N T A N D A N T E C E D E N T S

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(ABSTRACT)

English Drama 1956 - 68

This study examines the work of English dramatists produced during a period widely regarded as an important renaissance after a long stagnation. An explanation of the actual dates chosen and the plays and playwrights represented appears in the Introduction (p 4).

The study is divided into three main parts. Each part is then subdivided into a first chapter which traces the antecedents of the plays of our period in twentieth-century English, American and European drama, with a glance at relevant earlier work, and two more chapters which concentrate on the period itself.

Part I deals with the relationship between the stage and the auditorium in terms which disregard the ephemeral physical circumstances of the first production in order to examine the visual and vocal relationships actually specified in the text, and traces development through representative examples.

Part II examines the language itself, the use of words: the detailed analysis in this part necessitates a selection of representative examples from the work of each playwright, to show different usages.

Part III examines each play in the light of the fundamental reason for its existence - its purpose - by dealing with the audience reaction which is called for by the text; the structure which governs this reaction; and the moral, religious, political or philosophical assumptions implicit or explicit in the plays.

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INTRODUCTION

Much critical work has been done in the last few years on modern English drama: indeed, most of this has been produced during the time I have worked on this study (1972 - 1975). * But almost all this work is concerned with stressing the distinctions between modern drama and its twentieth-century antecedents, and the differences between the dramatists in the period itself. This thesis will examine certain neglected aspects of the drama which can be related both to a general development within the period and to certain common ground with the English, American and European drama of the twentieth century. The choice of dates - 1956 to 1968 - has been made in the following way. The first performance of "Look Back in Anger" (Osborne) in May 1956 was the starting point for a drama new in content, style and language (although traditional in its use of the stage). The late 1950's represents the time when the influence of the Berliner Ensemble productions of Brecht, the continental "theatre of the absurd", and the English productions of the works of Beckett were first being felt in England. The concluding date, 1968, has been chosen for two reasons. Firstly, a practical one: some cut-off point is necessary in a continuing subject, or the thesis would be endless owing to the continual appearance of new plays. Secondly, 1968 marks the approximate

* The overwhelming weight of the critical work is on Pinter (see Bibliography) with less work on Arden, Wesker and Osborne, and only disconnected work on the more minor dramatists, with the importance, for example, of Saunders or Bond little represented. In consequence the long subsections which follow on Pinter in Parts I, II and III, and to some degree those on Osborne, at least in Part II, do not so much always break fundamentally new ground as "place" the work in the context of the drama of the period as a whole. It is now becoming true with Pinter particularly, as with Shakespeare, that the volume of criticism in relation to the length of the original text is such that no further examination can avoid critical parasitism. The basic themes of the three Pinter sections which follow, those of "retreat", the precise relationship with naturalism, and philosophical purpose, have been little tackled elsewhere, except obliquely. The ratio of criticism to text in the other dramatists is such as to allow much more scope for critical comment, although a certain avoidance here of uniformly detailed discussion of those plays already discussed into a state of total collapse (e.g. "Look Back in Anger", "Chips with Everything", "Serjeant Musgrave's Dance") will be evident.

dividing line between the supremacy of the major playwrights of the 1950's and 1960's - Pinter, Arden, Wesker and Osborne - and the emergence of the younger dramatists of the 1970's - Ayckbourn, Mercer, Hopkins, Hampton, etc. The year, 1968, also provides a "watershed" in the style of most of the major dramatists; fundamental changes were then taking place in the work, for example, of Osborne, Arden, Pinter and Bond. *

All the major work in the period has been included, except that certain relatively important dramatists have had to be bypassed; these include Bolt, who unlike the rest of the dramatists is commercial and therefore less open to ordinary critical methods, and is little related to other playwrights of the period; Behan, who follows the Irish rather than the English tradition and has little relationship with other drama; Livings and Willis Hall each have only one play of importance ("Eh!" and "The Long and the Short and the Tall") showing no development and little relationship with other work. Rudkin and Nichols, who also have one play each in the period, have, however, been included on the grounds of their importance within the general movement of the drama. The selection of plays has been governed by space and to a certain extent by value-judgement. Hence, while the whole of Pinter's work, except for the film scripts, is examined in Part III because of his relatively short and concise plays, as well as his overriding importance, Osborne's lesser work is avoided. Often the dramatists' television and radio work is left unexamined as it contains special characteristics which are unrelated to the stage drama, although Pinter's work is a major exception.

As the three Parts examine different aspects of the work concerned, I have altered the order of plays and playwrights to suit each part, at the cost of a slightly less neat construction. Part I takes up two major themes and traces chronologically the development of alienating stage techniques; Part II treats the language of the plays in a thematic order; Part III treats each dramatist separately in a pattern suiting the philosophical basis underlying the plays.

* If the closing date - 1968 - still seems somewhat arbitrary then it can be treated as the starting point for a similar examination, as yet hypothetical, of the drama since that time; this thesis and the hypothetical work to follow would then show the same inter-relationship as the seminal works on modern drama, John Russell Taylor's "Anger and After" and "The Second Wave".

DEFINITIONS

In the course of preparing this study, I have found it helpful to use a small number of words in specialised or personal senses. I have defined these on the occasions when I first use them, but I append here for convenience an alphabetical list.

Advance

A mode of writing which allows the actors to step out of the conventions of traditional naturalism and speak directly to the audience. Often there is also a physical advance into the audience during the performance.

Available

An "available" play is one which deals with subjects and characters which are broadly familiar to most ordinary people, and in which the plot or development is worked out in a way which depends on a clear understanding of motives and actions by the audience, and a consecutive series of events on the stage.

Dialectic

Drama which has as its subject the presentation of groups in conflict, and written with a broadly political motive.

Fatalist

Drama in which the plot is worked out in a way which assumes that mankind in general suffers under a malignant fate: we can understand fate's workings, but not change them.

Illusionist

Drama which asserts that man's understanding of his world and himself is ultimately impossible.

Private

Drama dealing fundamentally with relationships within the family as its main plot, professional relationships and other subjects being secondary.

Retreat

A mode of writing which confines the production of the play behind the proscenium arch. It can take the form of traditional naturalism ('the suspension of disbelief') or, more often, in the modern theatre, of the virtual abandonment of dramatic techniques of dialogue and movement in order to highlight the language itself.

Type

A character whose professional or national status is of more importance in the plays than his individuality. He is presented as representative

of a group: he "stands for" it on the stage.

Unavailable

The opposite of "available": a play which deals with subjects or characters which are in themselves unfamiliar to the average audience, or in which the plot or development is worked out by methods which do not rely on logic, or on full understanding by the audience.

PLAYS OF 1956-68

The following are the main plays discussed in this study (see the Bibliography P287). In the TV/Radio column the following symbols are used: B for BBC, ART for Rediffusion, and R for Radio.

	<u>TV/Radio</u>	<u>Stage</u>
JOHN ARDEN		
The Waters of Babylon		1957
Live Like Pigs		1958
When is a Door not a Door		1958
Sergeant Musgrave's Dance		1959
The Happy Haven	(w. M d'Arcy)	1960
The Business of Good Government	"	1960
Soldier Soldier	written 1957	B 1960
Wet Fish	" 1960	B 1961
The Workhouse Donkey		1963
Armstrong's Last Goodnight		1964
Left Handed Liberty		1965
Friday's Hiding	(w. M d'Arcy)	1965 March
The Royal Pardon	"	1966 Sept.
Squire Jonathan		1968 June
The Hero Rises Up	(w. M d'Arcy)	1968 Nov.
EDWARD BOND		
The Pope's Wedding		1962
Saved		1965
Early Morning		1968 March
Narrow Road to the Deep North		1968 June
SHELAGH DELANEY		
A Taste of Honey		1958
The Lion in Love		1960
PETER NICHOLS		
A Day in the Death of Joe Egg		1967
JOE ORTON		
Entertaining Mr Sloane		1964
The Ruffian on the Stair		1966
Loot		1966
The Erpingham Camp	1966 June	1967 June
The Good and Faithful Servant	B 1967	April
Funeral Games	B 1968	
What the Butler Saw		1969

	<u>TV/Radio</u>	<u>Stage</u>
JOHN OSBORNE		
Look Back in Anger		1956
The Entertainer		1957
Epitaph for George Dillon		1958
The World of Paul Slickey		1959
A Subject of Scandal and Concern	B 1960	
Luther		1961
Plays for England		1962
Inadmissible Evidence		1964
A Patriot for Me		1965
A Bond Honoured		1966
Time Present		1968
The Hotel in Amsterdam		1968
HAROLD PINTER		
The Room	(written 1957) =	1960
The Birthday Party		1958
Revue Sketches		1959
A Slight Ache	R 1959	1961
The Dumb Waiter		1960
The Caretaker		1960
A Night Out	R 1960	
The Dwarfs	R 1960	1963
Night School	ART 1960	
The Collection	ART 1961	1962
The Lover	ART 1963	1963
The Homecoming		1965
The Tea Party	B 1965	
The Basement	B 1967	
Landscape	B 1968	
DAVID RUDKIN		
Afore Night Come		1962
JAMES SAUNDERS		
Barnstable	B 1959	1960
Next Time I'll Sing to You		1962
A Scent of Flowers		1964 Sept.
Neighbours		1964 Oct.
The Borage Pigeon Affair		1969
N F SIMPSON		
A Resounding Tinkle		1958
The Hole		1958
One Way Pendulum		1959
The Form		1961

	<u>TV/Radio</u>	<u>Stage</u>
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TOM STOPPARD

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead		1967
Enter a Free Man		1968 March
The Real Inspector Hound		1968 June

ARNOLD WESKER

Chicken Soup with Barley		1958
Roots		1959 June
The Kitchen		1959 Sept.
I'm Talking about Jerusalem		1960
Chips with Everything		1962
The Four Seasons		1965
Their Very Own and Golden City		1966

P A R T I

CHAPTER ONE

Fundamentally, the art of the theatre consists of messages from behind the line of the stage front into the auditorium - in other words, vocally from the actors who hold, so to speak in parenthesis, the playwright and producer - and visually, from the décor to the audience. As most plays are meant to be performed and appreciated in a theatre situation rather than read, a fact which some critics tend to forget, messages of appreciation and absorption from audience to actors are essential in determining the pace and structure, indeed the feeling and final impact of a play. Thus, as the critic is sitting in the auditorium and taking part in the two-way communication outlined above, he must attempt to define his position with regard to the piece as much with reference to the reactions of the average audience as he can: he must, at the very least, take as much notice as possible of them. It is within the spectators' experiences in entering the playhouse, occupying it, and leaving it, that we can define the degree to which they are alienated, physically or mentally, from what is going on on the stage, and this becomes the only real context for an adequate examination of the text. Thus the physical appearance of the theatre and the direction of the series of messages in physical terms is as important to audience and critic as the language and symbolic structure by which the "idea" is expressed. For example, "King Lear" is not the same play, in terms of its ultimate cathartic effect on the audience, on a so-called "fourth wall" stage in a conventional setting as it might be in a theatre in the round, or brought forward on to an apron stage: the change of direction of the messages forces a fundamental difference in the producer's and actors' approaches to the play, and thus in its effect. If this is true of a Jacobean play, then how much more do productions of modern plays change with their setting, in their much lesser dependence on the spoken word as an "open door" to the meaning of the play, as an explanatory key to the "idea", and indeed in the obvious lack of tradition inherent in their modernity and experimental status. This renders their "text" much less sacred than that of Shakespeare has since become, and therefore more guided by external, seemingly irrelevant considerations.

But the text of the plays must still be examined separately from the physical circumstances of their first production in order to

determine if the conditions of that production were essential to the interpretation of the play, and its first impact on audience and critics, or whether they were irrelevant or even misleading on later consideration of the play. To help this discussion, since I must define my terms at the outset, I use the concepts "advance" and "retreat" to make a basic division in dramatic types in modern drama, and to try to find the influences on it and its similarities to traditional work. These two words refer to the methods of stage movement by the actors and of the words they use to each other and the audience, by which the playwright's intention is fulfilled: I hope to show that in most cases this is reflected in the meaning, idea or moral of the play.

A distinction must however be made between philosophy and staging. Those plays which in Part III are characterised as "dialectic" or "fatalist" in philosophy, and which often use "advance" staging methods, leave the audience with an answer rather than a question, or at least present clear arguments for two or more contrasting points of view which can be examined rationally in order to come to a decision. Obscurity is avoided rather than courted, language is used for communication and elucidation rather than concealment of meaning, both between actors on the stage and between actors and audience, the action is generally fast, dramatic sections well-defined and usually only one or at most a small number of climaxes are sought within the presentation of the drama. This I shall term "availability". The use of the stage which broadly corresponds to these basic purposes of the playwright involves the actors advancing towards the audience, often physically on an apron or projected stage, to increase immediacy, and dramatically in using language and ideas easily understood by the ordinary audience, and acting out situations into which the audience can "advance" by self-projection and emotional sympathy. *

The "retreat" type, on the other hand, is opposite in almost every way: the audience is left in a state of emotional and mental discomfort and is not sure what its reaction is intended to be, or

* "(Joan Littlewood's) often expressed wish to make drama a collaborative process involving the audience very directly seems to have already seeded itself. New spacial relationships between actors and audiences and new kinds of audience involvement are being sought in many different types of theatre"
(Katharine Worth, "Revolutions in Modern English Drama", Intro. p viii)

even if there should be any at all; obscurity and non-explanation is the rule, and place, time and circumstance are rarely clearly defined. Language is used on the stage for every purpose but communication: between characters real meanings are concealed, and dramatic irony is often reversed so that only at a late stage in the piece does the audience realise the meaning of the action presented. The action is slow, containing much irrelevant matter, little movement and much use of pauses of varying lengths: if a single climax is present it is usually unexpected and to varying degrees incomprehensible to the audience in ordinary dramatic or rational terms - "unavailable". As I have discussed above, this type of purpose is usually presented by traditional dramatic methods, though with some notable exceptions. The corresponding stage method shows the actors "retreating" from the audience, often behind a proscenium arch to produce a picture-frame effect. The actions, emotions and experiences of the characters are presented in such a way as to alienate the audience from them - to emphasise the differences between stage and auditorium rather than their similarities, and to appeal, by and large, to negative emotion in the audience, or in other words, to induce a "retreat" in them from acceptance of the world presented before them.

When we look for the ancestors of the two types in earlier drama, we think immediately of the familiar and often-analysed contrast between the style and interest of two important European playwrights, Brecht and Beckett. While Brecht in his subject-matter, philosophy and language typifies the "advance" type of dramatist, the entirely opposite intention, ideas and theatrical language of Beckett "retreat" from the audience. It is not implied that these two invented the distinction or that all later dramatists were merely imitating them. Rather the "advance" and "retreat" types, in both past and present, represent two opposing strands of thought, a fundamental division in philosophy, morality, method of communication, indeed in politics and the responsibility of art, among intellectuals in the twentieth century. The division is reflected in the drama rather than described by it, and can be applied in broad terms to all the plays under discussion: even those which straddle the theatrical fence show how uncomfortable such a position can be.

The playwrights of the twentieth century who can be classified, broadly, as "available" to the audience in subject, setting and characterisation are in many cases also those who advance by stepping out of the conventions of naturalism to speak directly to the audience - with placards, film projections and recordings as well as the direct actor-audience relationship. Both Brecht and Odets utilise these aspects of communication with the auditorium - in Brecht's case, to create with his use of exposed lights and stage business his celebrated "V-effekt", and in Odets' case to create a powerful sense of participation. The former use can be compared with that of Arden, while Wesker's early work uses Odets' type of emotional appeal. There are, however, exceptions to this general trend. Other playwrights with the same broad purpose only occasionally use these devices. Arthur Miller, except in the unusual "A View from the Bridge" and at the end of "Death of A Salesman", seldom uses advance techniques, and O'Casey's drama takes place entirely behind the foot-lights. Elements, however, in Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" look forward to the humorous use of the theatre public in Stoppard, Saunders and Nichols and make a tentative "advance" within this one play. But although Brecht, Odets, Miller and O'Casey have a common and broad political purpose which prompts them to retain as much availability as possible in order to reach a mass, rather than a minority, audience, it is only Brecht himself who can be shown to foreshadow, if not directly to influence, much of the "advance" work of the period.

Brecht's early plays reflect the German symbolist tradition in their use of placards, projections and emotional rhetoric to make forceful, simple points. The earliest work, such as "Baal" (1923) and "Drums in the Night" (1922) is naturalistic in being confined behind the proscenium arch: the setting is of the "fourth wall" type, although in "Baal" the language is artificially heightened. But his overt political message in the 1920's and 1930's prompts a more direct use of the propagandist approach of "epic" theatre. "In the Jungle of Cities" (1921) with the asides and comments on the scene from the characters:

Garga: "94 degrees in the shade. Noise from the Milurantee
Bridge Traffic" *

* Sc I p 121

points the way to "St Joan of the Stockyards" (broadcast 1932), while "Edward II" (1932) introduces the placard or projected scene-heading, which is lengthened beyond the provision of pure information into the realm of active comment. "Mother Courage" uses the same technique. There is no direct parallel with this in modern drama except in Arden's "The Hero Rises Up" which is consciously based on the same nineteenth-century sources as Brecht's work - the popular theatre and melodrama characterised by Arden in his "imaginary museum". * "A Man's A Man" in 1926 shows these techniques combined to convey information to the audience by other means than the complex allusions of naturalism. The Master of Ceremonies introduces both the subject and the characters as they enter, as a mediator between the audience and the play. The slide projections inform and entertain the audience with humour as well as comments. The style conforms to the comic tradition of music-hall and pantomime, enclosing vaguely naturalistic sections within an alienating "epic" framework (Osborne's "The Entertainer" and the Arden play above have much in common with it in presentation). "The Elephant Calf" (written 1924-6) is a slight piece only relevant for its introduction of a very common motif in modern drama - "conscious theatre". A stress is put on the conditions of the building itself and the fact of the theatrical production, with references to the bar, seats, drinking and smoking and so on. This technique is the basis of much of Pirandello's work, although in his case there is no real advance into the audience (see below), and is also found in the work of Stoppard and Saunders. The audience is included in the stage directions, and there are off-the-cuff remarks from the actors written in (as in Saunders' "The Borage Pigeon Affair" (1969)) and the complete alienation of identification produced by the humorous ending ("All off to the boxing match") has many parallels in modern drama.

"Saint Joan of the Stockyards" (broadcast 1932 and finally produced in 1959) advances further into the auditorium with the placard information underlined by newsboys who run among the audience throughout the play, introducing a note of immediacy by shouting out the state of the play's business transactions. At the finale the use of loud-

* Arden's expression for his conception of popular theatre, from the mystery plays to the popular melodramas of the nineteenth century.

speakers, also used by Bond in "Narrow Road to the Deep North", to announce the Wall Street Crash brings the historical events into the foreground of the audience's attention, as do the triumphant shouts at the end of Odets' "Waiting for Lefty", by sheer volume of "attack on the audience".

The songs of self-explanation which punctuate "Mother Courage" (1941) are like those later used by Arden in most of his plays. Sometimes, as in most of the songs of Mother Courage herself, there is a vaguely naturalistic introduction, (as in Arden's early work - see Part II), but most of the songs are used as a theatrical shorthand to introduce the characters and to examine motives and are addressed, to a varying degree determined by the producer, directly to the audience. Scene 10 shows the ultimate in this direction: the song from the house is made to stand for a whole way of life which the characters of the play have lost, and communicates directly to the understanding of the audience (as do Arden's later songs and verses). Another step towards intimacy in actor-audience relations is found in the songs which Mother Courage sings with her own interpolated comments, a technique which Arden also finds useful in alienating his audience from the songs of his middle-period plays.

"The Good Person of Szechwan" (1943), like the earlier "A Man's a Man" uses a character, Wang, as a mediator between stage and auditorium who introduces the scenes and the play itself, but is also present in the action. Half-way to the developed use of the narrator in "The Caucasian Chalk Circle", this technique is also found in Miller's "A View from the Bridge" and Bond's "Narrow Road to the Deep North". The interlude, which takes place in front of the curtain, and which by direct speech to the audience and the exposure of the props in the costume-change * emphasises the dramatic technique itself, is used in terms of the deliberate breakdown of theatrical conventions in Osborne's "The Entertainer" and at the end of Arden's "Left-Handed Liberty". The epilogue, also addressed directly to the audience in the Shakespearean manner, is spoken by a player "apologetically" with a direct appeal to its understanding. Brecht invites us to think about the issues raised - the basic reaction he wants from his audience

* as in Wesker's "Chips With Everything", Act II Sc II

to all his major work. There is nothing as straightforward as this in the modern drama, perhaps because of the lack in English dramatists of a similar moral and political basis, although Arden approaches the form in the historical plays.

The two plays of 1938, "The Trial of Lucullus" (broadcast 1940) and "The Life of Galileo" (broadcast 1943) do not "advance" to Brecht's usual degree. The placards or projections which introduce the scenes in the latter play are followed by short verses of comment, often humorous, the two functions of information and entertainment found in "Mother Courage" being separated. Except for the choral Scene 10, the dialogues are naturalistic, although Brecht's notes state:

The stage décor must not be such that the public believes itself to be in a room in medieval Italy or in the Vatican. The public must remain always clearly aware that it is in a theatre.

The technique of the play is used again in Osborne's "Luther" with the "advance" reduced to scene introductions, and the matter of the play presented in a traditional manner. "The Trial of Lucullus", however, with its poetic presentation and fantasy setting, is for Brecht an unusual parallel with the work of Christopher Fry, drawing on Brecht's poetry rather than his dramatic talent. Only one modern play uses the curious device of embodying a stage direction in the dialogue:

The Court Crier: And up jumps the jurywoman, formerly a fishwife
in the market. *

This is Arden's "Friday's Hiding", which could be played with the Scottish stage directions spoken by a narrator. After 1968 Saunders' "The Borage Pigeon Affair" uses the Sandwichboard Man in the same way as Brecht's characters.

"The Caucasian Chalk Circle" (written 1933 - 5, produced America 1948, Germany 1954) brings together all the techniques in an exploitation of levels of naturalism in the same way as Pirandello. But where Pirandello used the technique to create his "illusionist" thesis (see Part III Chapter), Brecht uses it to alienate as

well as implicate the audience on both emotional and rational levels, to produce a complex rather than a simple, and a dynamic rather than passive or Aristotelian reaction to the play. The Story Teller signals each scene and introduces the play in verse * as the centre of the play around which the other characters, including the audience itself, and the action, can revolve. He takes the place of Brecht's earlier placards and projections, and as he is both integrated in and yet outside the play, he can direct the audience's reactions in the way the author wishes. As in Arden's "Serjeant Musgrave's Dance", there are three levels of interpretation within the play: the direct speech to the audience encloses the villagers' discussion which itself encloses the play proper, including the subsection of the Azdak scenes. The Story Teller, as in Arden's later work, conducts the players like the narrator of a medieval mystery play:

**

Story Teller. Look about you once more, you blind man! (he does)

He also explains the thoughts and feelings of the main characters to make the meanings transparently clear, a technique adapted by Nichols in "A Day in the Death of Joe Egg" although in this case the characters themselves explain. The technique of the description of Grusha's thoughts, and of Simon's on his return, develops that of the comments in "Mother Courage" to include a more detailed psychological interpretation, making the characters both more "available" to and more alienated from the audience. The comments and lyrics from the Chorus, however, add little to the interpretation, and are not found in modern drama. The explicit moral at the end, which brings together all levels of the play in a few words, as in "The Good Person of Szechwan", is generally avoided by modern English dramatists, whose curtain speeches appeal directly to the emotions, as with Osborne, or leave an impression of silence and failure, as with Bond and Pinter.

Brecht's emphasis on the exposure of lights, props and curtains in his "epic" theatre has been reduced by most modern dramatists to a humour based on the theatrical conventions, but his levels of communication with the audience, ranging from the vignette naturalistic

* He sings the lines in the German version.

** Sc II p 16

scenes to the directly expressed morals, are exploited also by many of the English dramatists in their search for an alternative to realistic traditional theatre.

Three other plays of the twentieth century, all from America, foreshadow the "advance" work of the English dramatists. Arthur Miller, whose early work is naturalistic in the "retreat" type of "fourth wall" family situation drama, introduces a certain "advance" at the end of "Death of a Salesman" (1949) in the Requiem. This brings the characters out of dramatic context with set speeches directly to the audience, the artificiality stressed by the symbolically lit city behind, and recalls both Brecht's morals at the end of his plays, and those of Arden in his historical drama. "A View from the Bridge" (1955) "advances" with the use of Alfieri as a Brechtian commentator and introducer, recalling Wang of "The Good Person of Szechwan". He enters the action and takes part in it as well as alienating the scenes by his comments, punctuating the plot and adding a timeless quality which expands the meaning of the play into the realm of human nature itself, and thus transcends the actual waterfront setting.

Odets' "Waiting for Lefty" (1935) is different from his other, and much more traditionally naturalistic drama, in its complete "advance" into the audience for a specific ideological purpose. From the beginning of the play, the audience is encouraged to feel themselves as representing the Union members by the actors planted among them, who orchestrate the emotional involvement of Odets' ideal audience in the issues with which the play confronts them. The three levels of dramatic technique, as in "The Caucasian Chalk Circle", are tautly and concisely managed here as each group - the planted audience, the trade unionists onstage and the characters of the family and situation scenes - is interconnected with the others in a way impossible in the setting of the Brecht play. The group onstage comment on and interfere in the naturalistic vignettes, which dramatise Joe's speech in a use of theatrical time which is not found elsewhere in the drama. Each scene has a concrete and simple ideological basis which recalls Brecht's "Terror and Misery of the Third Reich" (1933) in technique while surpassing it in structural verve and control of emotions. The whole of a society is, in outline at least, analysed and condemned, a feat no other dramatist has attempted: the simplistic rendering appeals directly to the emotions in a triumph of propaganda. The

extremely specific nature of the setting of the play and its subject lend it admirably to a complete "advance": the lack of such a use of the theatre in modern English drama may be a reflection of the failure to concentrate on live, contemporary issues.

I propose now to turn from examples of plays which I have characterized as mainly of the "advance" type, to an important and influential play which looks both ways, to "advance" and to "retreat" drama. Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" contains the source-material of much of the dramatic technique of later English dramatists, and demonstrates the characters both of the completely "retreated" later drama and of the "conscious theatre" advance of the "illusionists". * First produced in 1953, and brought to England in 1955, the play "advanced" from its own subject-matter in the asides to the audience and references to the physical fact of the stage and to critics, yet the entire action is kept behind the proscenium: the "advance" is only a tentative one, and of word rather than action. The comic asides which draw on a music-hall tradition -

Vladimir. He wants to know if it hurts. **

are common in modern drama to remind the audience that they are present in the theatre - in other words, as a "V-effekt". But although it has influenced so much other drama, the use here seems arbitrary in that the characters Beckett produces are so unnaturalistic that there is no traditional "suspension of disbelief" to be countered by alienation. Their effect is reduced to that of pure entertainment - to keep the audience interested in the non-eventful drama. Various elements of this humour occur again in the work of Stoppard and Saunders. The "return the ball" game with words in Act I is recalled by Saunders' verbal cricket game in "Next Time I'll Sing to You", and the unfinished dirty joke and the reference to the audience -

Vladimir. (turning to the audience) that bog. ***

are used by Stoppard in "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" to create with the audience an intimate atmosphere within which to discuss the philosophical purpose of the play. The "conscious theatre" which

* See Part III

** Act I P 10

*** Act I P 15

is the basis of Stoppard's "The Real Inspector Hound" is found in such lines as:

Vladimir. It's worse than being at the theatre.
 Estragon. The circus.
 Vladimir. The music-hall.
 Estragon. The circus. *

Other examples are:

Estragon. At the end of the corridor, on the left.
 Vladimir. Keep my seat. **

and:

Vladimir. There! Not a soul in sight! ***

culminating in the word "critic" used as a final word of abuse. ****

But these elements are not found in any of Beckett's other work, which retreats further and further from the audience. + The actors' dialogue is always directed to one another or addressed to the void, ++ and they are reduced in scope of action and therefore dramatic relationship with the audience until they are ultimately confined in tapes, jars or spots of light, the barrier of the proscenium being almost total. "Endgame" (1957) contains a few elements of theatricality within the text, drawing attention to the theatre, but with less reason than in "Waiting for Godot". The humour is not sustained as it is by the music-hall duo of the earlier play, and the language and action of the characters are so divorced from the audience that alienation is unnecessary, and there is no danger of over-involvement:

Hamm. Did anyone ever have pity on me?
 Clov. Is it me you're referring to?
 Hamm. An aside, ape! Did you never hear an aside before? I'm warming up to my last soliloquy. +++

* Act I P 34

** Act I P 34

*** Act II P 74

**** Act II P 75. "The insouciance of Beckett's characters is one of their most attractive qualities."

(Katharine Worth, "Revolutions in Modern English Drama", P147)

+ (his plays)—Beckett) "They remind us, as Kenneth Tynan put it, how much the drama can do without and still exist."

(Katharine Worth, "Revolutions in Modern English Drama", P 146)

++ This is not the same as the auditorium in that the characters show no consciousness of its presence.

+++ P 49

and:

Clov. This is what we call making an exit. *

Similar subject-matter in Pinter is treated without this sort of advance, and is more consistent for it. The later work, with its mimes, radio work, music or the tapes of "Krapps' Last Tape" (1959) and the jars of "Play" (1967) divorces the actors totally from the audience, reducing the communication to that of emotional evocation. The tone of much of Beckett's early humour is found again in the work of Stoppard and Saunders, though with a much more comfortable and familiar relationship with the audience. The total "retreat" of the later work has been avoided by all the modern dramatists with the exception of Pinter, whose plays of 1968 and 1969 contain many elements in common with it.

The work of Pirandello also shows some of the characteristics of "advance" technique in its exploitation of the play-within-a-play situation to create levels of truth and reality, all of which, including the audience itself, are made to be relative. But by asking for identification and support of his characters in emotional terms, he devalues "advance" in its rôle as alienation. The confusion he creates only makes the audience feel as unreal as the stage events, rather than cutting through the obvious unreality of the stage actions to the truth of what is being said, in the manner of Brecht. But only in "Six Characters in Search of an Author" (1921) does the "conscious theatricality" really break through the boundary of the proscenium. The open stage, the curtain being used only once, when a mistake by one of the technicians is written in to provide an excuse for an interval, is used for a similar purpose in Saunders' "Next Time I'll Sing to You". Here the attention of the audience is drawn to the lights, the prompter and the stage props as objects, to open the discussion of theatricality itself, rather than, as with Brecht, to forestall identification. In the Pirandello play, vignettes, being the various parts of what he calls "The Scene", are played in a naturalistic manner without the bathos Saunders creates to alienate his narrated sections. The histrionics of the Six Characters are meant to be taken seriously here, and they put the Pirandellian techniques of the surrounding scenes in the background by the emotional force of their presentation. The entry of the Six

Characters * is through the auditorium, and throughout the play the aisle and the foyer entrance are used to involve the audience physically in the action, to a certain defined extent, so that the shocks of the play are felt by them as part of the action; the emotional involvement called for is the opposite reaction to that produced by similar techniques in Brecht. The Actors' responses to the scenes played by the Characters - horror, applause, excitement and sympathy - and of their spokesman the Producer, create artificially the reaction Pirandello wants from his audience, in something of the same manner as the "APPLAUSE" board held up at radio and television live shows. Their fear at the apparition of Madam Face, and the whole magic business itself, is of this kind, and this character varies the hierarchy of reality which develops from Characters - Actors - stage hands - audience. The laughing exit of the Stepdaughter through the auditorium ends the play on a note of high emotion: its philosophy is of the "retreat" type, despite the theatrical confusion with which it is presented.

"Each in His ^{Own} Way" (1924) is more characteristic of Pirandello's work in confining the dual level of theatricality behind the curtain. The illusion is as strong, and the usual reactions and naturalistic conventions apply as much, in the "foyer" scenes as in the others. The choral interludes are firmly divided from the play itself by the dropping of the curtain, and the form is an excuse for a more explicit answer to his critics from Pirandello than would otherwise be possible, but contains no genuine "advance" into the audience, any more than Stoppard's "The Real Inspector Hound". "Right You Are" (1918) and "Henry IV" (1922) also enclose the discussions of theatricality, sanity and truth behind the proscenium, so that the audience must deduce the philosophy from the scenes onstage, as in the plays of Ionesco.

Within the twentieth century the tradition of naturalistic theatre, which continues in much of modern English drama, is upheld by many playwrights whose similarity to each other in "retreat" from the audience behind the proscenium is such that individual analysis is unnecessary. The work of Shaw, and of Miller and Odets, (except for the plays discussed above) in clothing ideology in dramatic situations is

* Perhaps "Personalities" would be a better translation.

continued by Wesker, while the slighter, mostly comic, tradition of Wilde and Coward is represented, with some variation owing to the influence of the media, by Simpson. The autobiographical situation drama of O'Neill and Rattigan is found again in the work of Osborne and Delaney.

The drama of Ionesco has certain techniques in common with other practitioners of black comedy and the Theatre of the Absurd such as Orton. His drama depends on the creation, by the traditional means of "fourth wall" realism with naturalistic dialogue, setting and characterisation, of a powerful emotional identification with familiar characters onstage in order that the visual and verbal shocks should make more impact. Orton's early work uses the same technique, and his "retreat" is into a private world which nevertheless contains its own logic, in the same way as that of Ionesco.

Despite its strongly political subjects the later drama of O'Casey approaches the problem of the inadequacy of traditional ~~ad-~~ditional realism by the use of songs, colour, costume, lighting, poetics and dance in the symbolist direction later shown by Wesker and Arden, and is drawn from the early twentieth-century Irish theatre of Yeats and Lady Gregory. All the plays take place behind the proscenium, and the function of the music and dance, as in Delaney's "A Taste of Honey", is as a framework for the naturalist episodes of dialogue, generalising them out of a particular context of time and place to make O'Casey's political or moral point. His early drama, which early Wesker recalls, encloses all the political and contemporary reference within the framework of naturalism, calling for an emotional reaction to events. This reaches its extreme in such plays of the war years as "The Star Turns Red" (1940) where the histrionics and rhetoric appeal to the audience through their emotional identification with the characters, and the relative failure of the technique in comparison with that of "Waiting For Lefty" shows how "advance" helps an immediate subject and polemical moral.

By and large, those plays which "retreat" from the audience in staging technique do so to encourage the sort of emotional identification which is unnecessary, if not damaging, to the political specifics which form the basis of much of these radical but traditionalist playwrights. Beckett's philosophical points are made clearer by the distance between audience and stage, and the family situation dramas of

(for example) O'Neill, utilise naturalism to its fullest extent; the combination of direct design on the audience and the creation of realistic characters and scenes is never a happy one. The use of song, poetry and dance by many of the dramatists is an attempt to combine traditional theatre with a wider reference and with a degree of pure entertainment, but the majority of the English audience finds it difficult to accept such techniques in "serious" drama, so that only by means of devices from pantomime such as those in Arden's work can such experiments approach success.

CHAPTER TWO

I shall now examine representative plays of my period in the light of the categories outlined in Chapter I. The degree to which any play can be classified as an "advance" or "retreat" type depends on the whole tone of the relationship between audience and stage. This is a complex study, but can be divided roughly into two parts. The first is the social availability of the subject and characters of the play to the audience - in other words, how closely the matter of the play approaches in time, place and action the ordinary experience of the spectator. * The second is concerned with related methods of staging and the precise amount of personal interaction between the actors and the audience. Within the "advance" type it can be seen on examination that the whole relationship revolves around a crucial scene, or a repeated type of scene in the same mode. Thus in "The Entertainer", music-hall acts become punctuation to the text, and offset the dramatic scenes by placing the characters in context. The climactic scene in the market-place in "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance" defines the relationship of audience and actors within the play; and the repeated appeals to the audience and the role-changing requires an ever-adjusting relationship in the solo scenes and direct speeches of "A Day in the Death of Joe Egg". The modern playwright cannot work in isolation: a broad development of the "advance" technique can be traced throughout the period. This is not to say that one playwright was directly influenced by the work of another, although this must have happened in some cases, but some concept like the "climate of ideas" in art forms seems needed to cover the overall similarity in approach. Those plays from the early part of the period which "advance" to the audience in increasing their involvement in the play, show the spectators used primarily as the symbol of a group or crowd within the play, where such a presence is temporarily necessary. An example is "The Entertainer": here the music-hall acts are addressed directly over the footlights. But although such a play does not "advance" very far over the proscenium barrier, it is nevertheless more characteristic of the type than, for example, "Chips with Everything", where the dance at

* This also includes how perceptible the contemporary application is to him.

the emotional and physical centre of the play is just as isolated from the audience by the proscenium arch as is the rest, and there is no direct involvement at any ^{point} stage. The play is available in very specific terms to anyone who has done National Service, and this must have applied to quite a large section of any audience when ^{it} the play first appeared, but social availability and "advance" in terms of staging and communication do not, in this case, coincide.

Before I discuss the theatre language of modern drama in detail, some examples from among the plays under discussion would be useful. Such a play as John Osborne's "The Entertainer", is a good example of the "advance" type which is also available: although the play is usually performed in, and was indeed written for, the proscenium arch type of theatre, its subject-matter of the decline of music-hall as reflected in Archie Rice and his family is easily available to the audience. When Archie does his pathetic music-hall "turns" the audience becomes part of the play in that the patter is addressed directly to them, a device often used, with variations, in more recent drama. The language of the play, both in movement and word, is fast and coherent: emotional situations on the stage are explained to the audience and worked out in a rational way. Archie's songs are another feature common to the "advance" type of play: they often, as here, become a comment on or punctuation of the text and uncover more shades of meaning for the audience. * Fundamentally, although it is a moot point whether the play succeeds in communicating the reactions of the family to the tragedies of their lives, Sir Laurence Olivier has shown that it can be done, and in intention the play is open to its audience in the spheres of word and idea: the communication over the stage front is two-way: "The Entertainer" "advances" towards its audience's understanding and sympathy.

Arnold Wesker's "I'm Talking About Jerusalem", the third play of his trilogy, is similarly concerned with the break-up of a way of life and a family, and the technique (a series of vignettes which are pretty widely separated in terms of time) is also similar: it's a technique readily available to and understandable by an audience, particularly a modern audience familiar with the conventions of television and the screen. The characters are sympathetic and their motives

* see Part II

explained and understandable: the springs of their action are exposed to us. As in all Wesker's drama, but particularly in the trilogy, communication between characters on the stage, and between characters and audience, by the word alone, is so important as to become almost the main subject of the play: through all disagreements the characters advance towards one another and the audience in understanding and make the play a study in the success and failure of communication. Unlike ^{that of} "The Entertainer", at no time is the audience addressed directly, and to this extent there is a certain withdrawal behind the stage-front line, but this is overcome by the basic availability of subject, emotion and conclusion of the play to the audience.

On the other hand, my description of "retreat" drama could almost be applied wholesale to the work of Harold Pinter. A play like "The Homecoming" illustrates most of the characteristic traits. The springs of the action are not open to the audience, and Pinter is throughout at pains to emphasise the difference between actors and audience: his characters are long-established London criminals, and there are few types of people less likely to be in the audience. Sympathy or identification is destroyed by this and by the total lack of explanation of the action of the play: without any aspect to relate to themselves, the audience can have as little sympathy with these people as with the speakers of a casually-heard scrap of conversation in a station buffet. However strongly their interest is held by events on the stage, Pinter's technique, which presents extremely realistic dialogue and action in a series of scenes the connections between which must be supplied by the audience, is not conducive to the sort of dramatic coherence which makes the "advance" type of drama readily available to the audience. In all productions of the play the distance between actors and audience must be emphasised by underlining the importance of the stage-front and proscenium arch, or the sense of menace and uncertainty will be lost: both the meanings of the play and the actions of the characters "retreat" away from the common perceptions and emotions of the audience into a private world, a "retreat" which is reflected by the use of dialogue as a cover for real meaning, and by the slow pace of most of the play in terms of theatrical action. The very nature of Pinter's drama is such that "retreat" from the sensibilities and understanding of the audience is essential to his purpose.

N F Simpson's "One Way Pendulum" although very different in

style and intention from Pinter's drama, exhibits many of the traits of the "retreat" type. This farce has no conclusion or philosophy, except the obvious one of making the audience laugh, and, while bizarre and unexpected events and actions are used by Pinter to produce a sort of mental and emotional discomfort, Simpson uses them to increase the comedy in a way which has become familiar in the comic radio and television programmes of the last few years. * It is essential that the stage-front embodies a very sharp distinguishing line, because the feelings of the characters and the events of the play must be to a great degree alienated from the ordinary consciousness of the audience in order to produce good comedy of this kind. The series of almost unconnected scenes is again common to the type, as dramatic coherence and emphasis on "plot" would be inimical to the sense of surprise which is the basis of Simpson's humour. The play and its characters "retreat" from the audience into a private world whose disconnected and illogical manifestations act on the sense of comic incongruity of the audience: both Pinter and Simpson, for very different reasons, write plays in which only the tip of the iceberg of action and explanation emerges from the dramatic context: nine-tenths of the subject matter is submerged and "retreated" from the direct perceptions of the audience.

In "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance" (1959) the amount of physical involvement of the audience in the stage action during Act III, Scene I is a matter for the producer to decide, but it can be considerable. "A Day in the Death of Joe Egg" (1967) shows written-in involvement where the reaction, in contrast to the Arden play, depends mainly on the type of audience and how willing it is to follow the directions of the playwright as expressed through his actors. At the end of the period "The Borage Pigeon Affair" (1969) (James Saunders) is a good example of the continuance of the trend, but the "advance" over the footlights and through the theatrical conventions is still entirely written into the play. It is still distinguished from the "happening" and such non-theatrical events in that there is little scope for ad-lib and the play continues on its rigidly-appointed course no matter what the audience reaction may be. There is a certain amount of involvement, but not a real opportunity for the audience to change the course or

* from the "Geon Show" and "I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again" to "TW3" and the recent "Monty Python".

even the tone of the play. But this distancing from stage events probably increases the comedy, which is simply dependent on the capacity of the audience to laugh, and a similar effect can be found in the work of Simpson, and in the comic aspects of James Saunders' "Next Time I'll Sing to You" (1962). Thus in style the "advance" type of play is gradually moving away from its great fore-runner, Brecht, in his "Verfremdung" - the stressed distance between play and audience. It is questionable, however, whether the comic tradition is improved by this trend. It depends to a great extent on the specific audiences to which the plays are directed. As far as comedy is concerned, English audiences seem to laugh mainly when they are unselfconsciously separated from the play's physical progress by the definite division of a proscenium arch and a sufficiently rigid plot to enforce alienation, and thus the "advance" tradition when it produces something like "The Borage Pigeon Affair" is a little too uncomfortable for the assumptions of traditional comedy in both subject and staging; but perhaps the audience is now developing the capacity to enjoy such machinations. * Similarly the cathartic effect in, for instance, "A Scent of Flowers" (1964) (Saunders) is only achieved at moments of complete, though temporary, illusion and separation of play from audience. The point may be illustrated by some more detailed discussion of the plays.

It seems convenient to begin with John Osborne, whose work spans the period in question and whose play "Look Back in Anger" serves as a starting point for the modern theatrical movement. This is not to say that no drama of interest was produced during the years before 1956, but it must be admitted that "Look Back in Anger", however conventional ^{or} it may now seem, was a radical departure from the prevailing theatrical tradition at the time. ** But this chapter is only concerned with the possible links between drama "available" to its audience and the degree of "advance" or "retreat" with which this familiar or unfamiliar subject is presented. It was generally agreed by critics at the time, after a brief initial resistance, that the characters of the play, and

* "The movement away from the proscenium that has been going on steadily during the last decade has been by and large a movement away from realism towards the more aggressively theatrical drama which is now beginning to look like the nucleus of the next tradition."

(Katharine Worth, "Revolutions in Modern English Drama",
Introduction p viii)

** See Part II and Part III

particularly Jimmy Porter the hero, were true to life in a contemporary and immediate way. This was the authentic reaction of post-war youth to society, they said - indeed, the arguments^{were} almost entirely about whether it was worthwhile to portray such people on the stage, rather than about the validity of the characters. That this authenticity seems to have been accepted almost universally at the time indicates the familiarity of the audience with at least an outline of the way of life, ideas and actions portrayed. It was accepted that households like Jimmy Porter's did exist: this being taken for granted, the audience and the critics were at liberty to argue over their personal feelings about such people, almost to the exclusion of any attention to the structure of the play itself. Thus the anger of Jimmy with his world, his friends and himself, which is really the only subject of the play, is eminently available to its intended audience: the fact that John Osborne says he is now embarrassed by the play, * and that to a modern theatre audience the play, though still forceful, is very dated, only re-inforces the argument that it was directly available at the time: plays which use as their subject people or ideas which are contemporary but short-lived, usually age badly. But this type of "availability", confined as it is to a short time and a limited audience, is less theatrically valid than the broader appeal to humanity of a less socially conscious play which is set in a wider context. The test of art in drama, as in other art forms, is in its accessibility outside the limited society and idea-structure in which it was made. It is not necessary to study the historical and philosophical background of classical Greece to appreciate the Greek drama, or to be a seventeenth-century scholar to enjoy Shakespeare, but "Look Back in Anger" will be largely incomprehensible in a hundred years without an extensive historical and sociological gloss. From the present viewpoint, "Look Back in Anger" retires into a remote mid-fifties world in the same way as the vignettes of characters in their cluttered room "retreat" behind the footlights. The lack of any "advance" over this barrier has hastened the play's tendency to lapse into "period drama", as even at the time of production - when the familiarity of the audience with the subject was not reinforced by a sense of

* "I daren't pick up a copy of "Look Back" ~~in Anger~~ nowadays. It embarrasses me" (1961)

joining-in, of being part of the stage world - the reality of "the Porters' one-room flat in a large Midland town" was cushioned from them by distance. Porter and his friends were like animals in a zoo bounded by the proscenium arch, and gained sympathy mainly from those predisposed towards it. It seems to be a general rule in Osborne's plays that any effect of immediacy and availability which might occur does not bring with it any "advance"-type stage technique: throughout the period most of his characters are in familiar but distanced goldfish bowls, with the emphasis on the separation between audience and actors rather than their interrelation. But "The Entertainer", as already mentioned, is an exception.

"The Entertainer" uses a hesitant "advance" to the audience. The play generally "retreats" behind the stage front when domestic scenes are portrayed, and only in the music-hall scenes is the audience used at two levels: as the hall audience at the place and time of the play, and as the real audience (Scenes 2, 4, 7 and 13). But if these scenes are necessary to the play - which they are to create atmosphere and to show how mediocre are the stage "turns" on which the lives of the characters are built - then it is difficult to know how else they are to be staged, unless a large stage audience were to be introduced. The "advance" nature of the drama is therefore, in 1957, in its infancy, and in fact, Osborne doesn't seem to have gone any further in this direction since. However, the play is in touch with contemporary events, in terms of the death of Kink at Suez and the forceful and idiomatic slang, pulling no punches, and therefore is "placed" in the audience's mind so that they feel at home in the depicted environment which is vital and topical. Therefore although the characters are sympathetically and understandably portrayed, the play still mainly "retreats" behind the proscenium arch, and if played, for example, on an open stage, or in the round, would not be much changed. The separation of play and spectator is also to a certain extent necessary because Osborne's subject, the music-hall, also showed this separation, using familiar themes but with the distancing effect of the footlights between performers and audience. * But this effect apparent in the halls was probably mainly during the acts, and

* "Intimacy and grandeur; the proscenium frame enclosing the little room and the open area where actors and audience confront one another directly."
(Katharine Worth, "Revolutions in Modern English Drama, P 73)

less so in between them, and therefore more soliloquy could easily have been used in the play as it is, tentatively, in the first scene. "The Entertainer" is therefore of the "advance" type in some fundamental way, although not in the staging itself; nevertheless it points the way to what came later.

In "Luther" (1961) on the other hand, owing to the almost total concentration of the author on the central character, the subject of "advance" doesn't really arise: the play is an extended sermon in Jimmy Porter style in which the other characters scarcely matter - the language is really the only aspect of the play which shows it to belong in the "new drama". Though it is a well-structured and competent historical play which makes its points, "Luther" cannot be said to be breaking any new theatrical ground. A similar structure, with an almost total emphasis on one character, also characterizes "Inadmissible Evidence" (1964), but here the character of the failing and dying lawyer, recalling similar characters in Pinter, "advances" to the audience in sympathy; so does the subject which, though hackneyed, is familiar to the public - lack of communication symbolised by the struggles with the telephone and clients, and the very thin line between objective and subjective reality. It is the fact that the audience can understand and sympathise with the mind of the protagonist in this play which makes it one of the playwright's best: we are no longer a passive audience of a series of forceful monologues, and can appreciate both the former success of Bill Maitland and his accelerating fall into personal and business ruin. "Time Present" and "Hotel in Amsterdam" (1968) withdraw again from audience sympathy, and Osborne returns to his basic stage situation - from monologue to secondary actors and thence to the audience. Tentative moves in the direction of the audience in "The Entertainer" and "Inadmissible Evidence" do not conceal the basis of Osborne's theatrical idea, which combines availability of subject and character with "retreat" in stage presentation: paradoxically real emotional immediacy is sacrificed by this method, while the excessive concern with contemporaneity in each play means that they do not wear well. Osborne's work shows that "advance" and "availability" in drama are not necessarily synonymous, but perhaps emphasises the dangers of separating the two.

The plays of Arnold Wesker are in this respect very similar.

The ideas and motives of the Jewish family in the trilogy, of the cooks in "The Kitchen", of the recruits in "Chips with Everything", even of the architect in "Their Very Own and Golden City" and the couple in "The Four Seasons" are all reasonably "available" to the audience: the characters think and react as expected, their motives are familiar to the spectator, and the "moral" behind the drama is explicit rather than implicit (a distinction which will be examined in a later section). But at no point does a character in one of Wesker's plays step out of the microcosm, out of the proscenium arch, and declare himself as part of the real world, as an actor in the theatrical production, as someone playing a part. This lack of "advance" tends to distance the plays into a kind of film-script, divorced from contact with the audience in its "here and now" situation. Indeed, Wesker's technique of small episodes taken from a large span of time, and used to explore the reasons for behaviour in particular situations, is very like the cutting of a film. "Chicken Soup with Barley" (1958) first uses this technique as Wesker explores the reason for the disillusion of the post-war left-wing idealist, but in the context of the whole trilogy this fragmentary pattern is consolidated by the central pivot, the static "Roots" (1959), which adheres pretty strictly to the unities. The same technique in "Their Very Own and Golden City" (1966), when not balanced by a similar static and unchanging centre, makes the play violently episodic: the symbol and fact of the cathedral which serves to turn the ambition and hopes of Andrew Cobham towards the City lacks the strength and conviction of the country life in "Roots". When writing of a subject such as the social development of the dynamic and intensely communicative Kahns, Wesker can use the description of the strongly contrasting Norfolk family, to reassure an audience to whom the character type may be unfamiliar. But the constant need to relate audience to characters in an idealistic fashion would not be so pressing if the actors could "advance" into the audience, if we could feel drawn into the Kahns' political arguments, indeed if it was more "Our" than "Their Golden City".

"Chips with Everything" (1962) is a good example of an "available" play with which an ordinary audience can immediately identify. The setting, characters and plot are very familiar as in most of Wesker's work, but the play does not physically "advance" to

the audience in any way. Emotions, like those of Smiler and Tip with the dummy, are transmitted at second hand, although powerfully felt by an identifying audience, and there is no direct audience-to-player contact. The best-managed scene, the silent coal-stealing mine, has no relation to the rest of the play in style or content, and demonstrates in its notable success how passive the other scenes in the play must be. Again, the play is primarily written to make a point (which it does) rather than to involve the audience: there is scope for the sergeant using the audience as recruits or something similar, but this is not done. The play depends on the mainly intellectual appreciation of Wesker's ideas on class and the National Service, its impact worked out in the head rather than physically felt in the theatre. "The Four Seasons" (1965) is a very different case: in fact it belongs in the "retreat" section: although the characters are relatively familiar, it is their own private lives and psyches with which the play is concerned. It is an interesting departure from Wesker's usual style and preoccupations, and will be examined in Part III. But as far as the other plays are concerned, we have seen that Wesker's stage technique is fully as traditional as Osborne's, although for different reasons, and thus the immediate impact of the play and its ideas on the audience is lessened by distance. Paradoxically, it would seem that Wesker's philosophy of social change would benefit, like that of Brecht, by being alienated from the audience to allow for dispassionate thought, while the more direct emotional and social appeal of Osborne's themes would benefit from "advance" staging. However, the reason why Wesker's drama seems to suffer more from such drawbacks can be found in his much greater emphasis on specific types of people and a very limited set of problems and solutions, whereas the dilemmas of Osborne's characters (as distinct from his settings) are those of humanity as a whole and are not tied to a specific period or class. "Look Back in Anger", of course, contradicts this, but even here the conflict which centres on Jimmy is an eternal one, although expressed in particular mid-fifties terms.

A development of Osborne's double use of the crowd * can be

* (1) as the play's audience to which speeches are directed;
 (2) to represent an audience or crowd which takes part in the events of the play.

seen in Arden's "Serjeant Musgrave's Dance", which by 1959 can produce a stage direction like this (Act 3, Scene 1):

As there is no crowd, the speeches are delivered straight out to the audience, and the DANCEE acts as a kind of fugleman to create the crowd-reaction.

As the play is manifestly propagandist, the ideas, morals and philosophy are most important, and the development of the characters has a certain two-dimensionality inherent in this kind of drama, where individuals are only of secondary importance. So the ideas and impact of Black Jack's climactic speech must be directed forcefully to the audience, which must be involved in the fear of the gun, shock at the skeleton and relief at the dragoons; in other words, it must substitute for the reaction of the imagined townspeople. Hence the audience is deeply involved, in its physical presence in the theatre as well as mentally, in the play. As with "The Entertainer" contemporary events are very much in mind, and the parallels to Cyprus and Suez must be drawn, but Arden's technique is to use symbols, and a parable form, rather than actual references, and he rarely ventures into a modern setting. In a play basically concerned with ideas like "Serjeant Musgrave's Dance" ^{he} uses intellectual arguments, as at the beginning of the climactic scene, to communicate his ideas, and also the audience's emotional reactions, to make a more immediate impact. The play is not really of the "advance" type in familiarity of setting (this is too removed from the ordinary experience of the audience) but Arden skilfully uses the climax technique to bring the audience into the play, and in involving them, breaks down the proscenium division at the crucial moment. He uses a combination of "advance" and "retreat" technique to make a particular moral point, by and large successfully.

After "Serjeant Musgrave's Dance" Arden wrote plays with similar theatrical features, though their subject and presentation are utterly different. They illustrate a movement towards the fusion of "availability" and "advance" in the drama which shows Arden at his best. But first the play "The Waters of Babylon" (1957) must be considered, as it was in fact written and produced before "Serjeant Musgrave's Dance" but seems to post-date it in dramatic technique. At first glance the characters have little general "availability" to

the average audience, the principals moving in a very dubious society, but from the first movement of the play Arden uses "advance" techniques to involve the audience in the emotional interplay of the dramatis personae. Thus:

Krank (confidentially, to the audience ...). Half past seven of a morning. What kind of day is it? Cold, I think, yes, rainy *

and immediately the man and his emotions live in the audience - they are in his confidence and become part of the action. With little more than the occasional aside, and a series of short soliloquies and songs from Krank, as at the end of Act I:

Krank. Not until somebody gives me five hundred pound. Keep these people away from my house **

and where, for example, Cassidy makes an inclusive gesture to the audience:

Who'll buy me a drink now? ***

Arden manages to involve the audience in the final catharsis of what would normally be a very unsympathetic anti-hero and his friends. He is also able to do away with the trappings of realistic theatre as he shows in his initial note:

As the scenes of this play are, to some extent, unlocalised, the sets should be in no way realistic. Where it is necessary to indicate a particular locality, this must be done rather by suggestion than by outright illustration.

Arden goes on to compare his methods to pantomime, and because of his involvement of the audience, unnecessarily complex staging and scene-shifting can be eliminated; thus by gaining simplicity the play may gain universality of appeal. Curiously enough, after the success of "Serjeant Musgrave's Dance" Arden again retreats from his audience to consider a different social question in much the same way, just by presenting the conflict on the stage in a pretty realistic manner and inviting comment and thought. The method of "Live Like Figs", where indirect audience participation of the type required in "Serjeant

* Act I P 19

**Act I P 40

*** Act III P 75

"Musgrave's Dance" or "The Waters of Babylon" is not needed or wanted, is continued in the historical dramas which Arden later produced in co-operation with Margareta d'Arcy, which use a technique of Brechtian alienation and non-identification to leave the audience's mind clear to examine a specific problem: to see it from every angle, but from the outside rather than the inside. "The Happy Haven" (1960), however, opens out again to the audience and can thus use such conventions as masks to make a formal effect without alienating the feelings of the audience, who are profoundly involved in the universal theme. The Author's Note makes an interesting comment on the subject, and is worth quoting in full:

At the Royal Court, the play had of necessity to be played within the proscenium arch. This is a necessity that will doubtless be imposed upon most productions of "The Happy Haven" in this country, but it is none the less a regrettable one. The unsatisfactory organisation of the English theatre in general and the archaic design of its buildings continually hamstringing any attempts on the part of dramatists and directors to open out the conventions of the drama

The Doctor addresses himself directly to the audience in an extended Krank-like monologue and explanation:

Doctor. Ah-hum. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. First let me say how glad I am to see you here*

which dispenses with the necessity of informing the audience of the situation in a textured "realistic" fashion within the drama, and also enlists their sympathy and attention. The "lecture" technique of direct actor-audience relationship is often found in the work of other dramatists, particularly Saunders and Nichols. The relationship is, however, becoming complex as the triangle of speaker, audience and other actors develops - jokes can be used against other characters by the first, in much the same way as Shakespeare's characters make asides to the audience. Here, for example, is the extended pastiche of the old people's physical condition:

Doctor. Fitted six years ago with improved Walschaerts valve and gear replacing original Stephenson's link motion, and injectors also recently renewed. Latent procreative impulses require damping down**

* Act I So I p 195

** Act I P 197

Such devices increase the eventual shock with which the audience realises the full individuality of each of the old people, and its sympathy swings from doctor to patients until it is the old people who are in control at the end -

All Old People (bowing to the audience) Goodnight - *

and who lecture the audience severely and with an authority gained through the course of the play.

The technique comes to its fullest application in "The Workhouse Donkey" (1963) whose subtitle, "A vulgar melo-drama", shows how much Arden has learnt from his tentative foray into non-realistic drama in "The Happy Haven". In this case the first production was at the Royal Court, but Arden was enough at home with his material not to let himself be restricted in his "advance" towards the audience by this fact. As far as "availability" is concerned, the play is definitely topical and contemporary in subject and character: the people are simple or complex when and where expected, and act as one would expect; as this is joined to a definite "advance" style, one would expect the play to be the most successful of its type. A discussion of artistic worth is out of place in this section, but the methods of "advance" may be indicated. The audience is given a man, Dr Wellington Blomax, who can set the scene, explain the action and direct the sympathy: again jokes are used to draw the audience into a feeling of intimacy. By "advancing" in this way Arden also makes it possible to exaggerate the characters to the visual melodramatic level to make his point, without any risk of withdrawing the audience's sympathy and understanding. Dramatic monologues by various characters, particularly the protagonists Butterthwaite and Feng as well as Blomax, keep the footlight barrier down, or very low, so that the artificial nature of the characteristic Arden verse and songs adds to, rather than distracting from, the effect of the dramatic whole. Realism is in fact not in question, and - the fundamental truth of all "advance" drama - the fact that the audience realises it is an audience, sitting in a theatre and watching actors presenting a play text, is used to advantage by the playwright rather

* Act III P 272

than ignored. The interplay is again complex, as the movement of the play continually fluxes and refluxes across the footlights; as sometimes, for example, one character will confide in the audience, while at other times the ceremonial of the council isolates the stage. The difference is that from the very first speech (direct to the audience) Arden consciously enlists them on the side, so to speak, of the play and what it is trying to say. We are part of it, so how it turns out in the end is concerned with our reaction as well as what is written. "Advance" and "availability" combine to produce a lasting art form.

Saunders' "Next Time I'll Sing to You" (1962) shows the use of "advance" staging and presentation techniques to put forward a fundamentally "retreat" or "unavailable" subject, by the use of a minimal stage set. The barrier between what is in the play and what is not breaks down temporarily (as it does completely in the later *"The Borage Pigeon Affair"* in which Saunders makes a comedy about his own job as a playwright):

If there is any theme that runs through all my work, it's the absurdity of finding logic in anything at all. *

He uses this technique to make points about the hermit. In the first half of the play the man's beard is false, while in the second it becomes real as the actor "hermit" becomes the Hermit himself, and in contrast the others, particularly Keff and Dust, become society as seen by the hermit - cruel and unbelieving. The subject is delicate and the philosophy behind it might produce laughter or incomprehension if it were presented in normal dramatic form, but the method of constant bathos where the serious language and "played scenes" are put in the "inverted commas" of irrelevant comment and direct appeal to the audience in the form of jokes and asides, succeeds, paradoxically, in increasing the serious impact of these scenes. The ambivalent attitude of actors to audience is, however, written in, and there is little scope for any real reaction to a particular audience or its views or emotions. Possibly there is a fundamental conflict in trying to write this kind of play with ad-libs in the text and the reactions carefully monitored. But if Shakespeare could use such

* Cover, Penguin Plays ed.

devices with his clowns so can Saunders, except that the whole business of stepping in and out of theatrical convention, advancing and retreating like waves of the sea over both mental and physical footlights, is something fundamental to Saunders' art.

His next work "Neighbours" (1964) is entirely "retreated" in character, and loses dramatic intensity by it: it may be argued that Saunders' intention was different here, but the play has no place in this section. "A Scent of Flowers" (1964), however, while avoiding the specific theatrical pastiches of the first play, manages to "advance" in a subtle and wholly natural way and thus to enlist the emotions of the audience. Near the beginning the characters introduce themselves:

Zee: Cogo, darling.

Godfrey: Let us dispel misconceptions.

Zee: O.K. This creature was neither my father, brother, boyfriend, ghostly tutor, nor even lover. *

The audience is an audience, and is accepted into the circle of characters as such, but - and this is all-important - as an equal, neither superior nor inferior to the other characters on the stage. It is as if the old custom of placing stools on the stage for the nobility, who were addressed in lieu of the audience as individuals and thus became protagonists, had been extended to the whole auditorium of the theatre:

Edgar: At the moment of my conception, my parents both hellowed with laughter **

Thus the characters are gradually introduced in the quietest possible way, and the intimate atmosphere is preserved. This gives extra impact to the "set-pieces" illustrating Zee's road to suicide, and as a technique it is less forced and more familiar than the many violent changes of "Next Time I'll Sing to You". In fact the whole play is in a lower key, which in its intimacy and warmth only increases the effect of such climaxes as the audience's discovery that Zee is dead, and the last betrayal by Edgar. It may be said that Saunders' use of the "advance" type reaches its fulfilment in this domestic drama with its quiet use of climax to devastating effect, allied as it is with the complete "availability" of the subject, the perfectly

* Act I P 131

** Act I P 142

ordinary family, and the only too common theme of suicide. In his next play (unfortunately outside the period in question), "The Borage Pigeon Affair" (1969), Saunders returns with deleterious effect to the theatrical yoke of "Next Time I'll Sing to You"; although a very funny comedy, the play is nothing else, and only succeeds completely because of its very limited objectives.

A good example of a play which combines "advance" and "availability" is "A Day in the Death of Joe Egg" by Peter Nichols (1967). The subject is both personal and very close to the audience, and identification is very strong because the audience feels at home in the situation portrayed. As far as technique is concerned the audience is totally involved in the action, and becomes an essential "character" in the play, as it is really about people play-acting. Nichols uses the relationship very sensitively, with subtle changes from laughter to disgust, fear to relief, and horror to boredom, to chime in with each phase or character. At the beginning of Act I Nichols gets the audience's attention by shock: they don't know whether to do what he asks or not. The music-hall comedian's technique of appeal to individual members of the audience works well in helping the others to identify as well. The constant changing of rôles and asides to the audience helps the atmosphere of familiarity and involvement, where no barrier remains between audience and stage. When Sheila is upstairs Bri begins by talking to Joe, but in a well-managed development says "What am I doing talking to you?" * and from then on speaks directly to the audience in total "advance". Later all the characters do it, and the audience quickly becomes accustomed to it. The technique is useful to create depth in the characters, and is used as a kind of theatrical shorthand for vignette character-studies. An example is Bri's speech which begins:

Bri. That girl upstairs, in the bedroom, off in the wings,
wherever she is. No, seriously. **

The gentle joking at theatrical conventions also adds to the homely feeling:

Bri. What are you telling them? ***

* Act I P 25

** Act I P 25

*** Act I P 27

A further development of the "advance" technique features two characters and the audience in a three-way conversation which combines ordinary staged dialogue with ironic comments to the audience and direct appeals. This creates great sympathy which transforms the usual theatrical illusion of reality into its actuality. After Sheila has explained directly about her hopes and fears for Joe, the audience experiences a shock when the ^{actress} ~~action~~ playing Joe herself skips on stage and announces the interval: subtle playing on levels of theatrical illusion by the author helps to increase the emotional impact of moments like this. As Joe tells the audience, the play returns to the ordinary dramatic mould in Act II to set up the relationship between the four adults, and there are only occasional asides to the audience, who are in any case quite used to them by now. They do not obtrude upon the naturalistic context which is set up for the shock when both characters and audience are led to believe that Bri has killed Joe: he is, in fact, testing the feelings of both his wife and the audience in different ways. Here, as the proscenium arch becomes a barrier for a while, the action is more distanced, but this effect is countered by the intimacy established in Act I. Having been "educated" by the first part of the play, the audience can now accept quite readily the form Nichols feels is best for his purpose, as when Grace tells a straight narrative and Bri tells stories at the end. At the end the audience is left with a question - will Bri go to school or return? - and this shows that the "advance" form can be successfully used, as here, to portray an emotional subject in an open-ended way, and to bring both the mental and emotional powers of the audience to bear on whatever theme the playwright is tackling. The question is not, however, as it is in the "retreat" form, one of identity or the reality of the world, but is concrete and immediate.

"The Real Inspector Hound", a play by the dramatist Stoppard, presented right at the end of the period in 1968, shows how much ground has been gained in the "advance" type of play in the way of audience acceptance and appreciation: ground like this, once made, can never really be lost, and a new dimension of theatre is open. By this time the audience readily accepts the idea of its own mirror-image, and the involvement of the critics as characters in the play together with the general breaking down of any division between "stage-audience" and players shows a brilliant grasp of the movement

of drama of this type. Nevertheless, in performance the line between actual audience and the world of the stage is never in fact broken: the breakdown of the barrier is a theatrical falsehood presented in conventional dramatic terms, * and this cannot compare with the real and totally necessary and satisfying involvement of the audience which is found in the best of the plays discussed above, where "availability" and "advance" are one, and where the self-consciousness of the audience is used rather than ignored, in a continuum of theatrical objectivity and subjectivity.

* See Part III

CHAPTER THREE

Among "retreat" dramatists it is Pinter whose work is of supreme importance; his plays will therefore be examined first, followed by reference to other traditionally-staged drama. It is a critical commonplace that the work of Harold Pinter centres on the room as setting, subject and central symbol of his drama. Pinter is par excellence a "fourth wall" playwright, the actors being contained entirely behind the proscenium arch, and the projection towards the audience being of an emotional and mental type rather than of directed words or actions. * Much of his work was originally written for radio and television, and this fact, together with his increasing concentration on film work and the film scripts that he has written points to a traditional type of drama being his main interest - in other words, the "retreat" type described above. Nowhere in the plays can a direct relationship between actors and audience be seen to exist, a fact which can readily be appreciated when it is seen that these works which have been transferred from radio or television to the stage have undergone no radical change in structure or style. In many cases, as with "The Tea Party" (1965), the camera's viewpoint is preferable to that of a live audience in the presentation of the drama. The progressive deterioration of Disson's eyes and sanity, as a metaphor for the collapse of his life and illusions, can only be satisfactorily represented by alternating, as Pinter does, Disson's personal viewpoint with that of the other characters. While playing table tennis he sees two balls instead of one, which is impossible to reproduce on the stage: it would have to be verbally explained. Similarly, the chaotic final scenes as Disson inevitably loses both his sight and his grip on reality, depend on "cuts" in the film from objective to subjective viewpoints for their effects - indeed, they would be impossible without such a technique. Two other plays written originally for television, "The Basement" (1967) and "Night School" (1960) show similar traits, and "The Basement" particularly is dependent on the "quick-cut" technique, the changes in the furniture and seasons being used almost to excess to illustrate the developing

* "Secrecy is Pinter's great subject, his most compelling reason for always using the proscenium, the closed, framed stage where the characters can be shut up and spied on."
(Katharine Worth, "Revolutions in Modern English Drama," P 90)

relationship of the three characters.

That the first pre-requisite of drama, a living relationship between the stage and the auditorium, is almost unnecessary in Pinter's work, could lead a critic to the conclusion that this playwright is moving away from that particular literary form altogether, but this is a personal viewpoint which I shall discuss later. ~~But~~ Linked to this question is what I have called "availability", that familiarity to the audience of dramatis personae and dramatic action which is essential to most forms of drama. Here again the critical commonplace is that Pinter's characters speak and act exactly as do people in everyday life, if we disregard the symbolic aspects of his work. Cases for or against individual plays as works of art are made on the basis of pure naturalism: is such and such an action or reaction believable in real terms, and if not, is the symbolism necessary or just? But we are concerned with drama, not documentary reportage: a suspension of disbelief is necessary in a playhouse situation, however "naturalistic" the play, and the question of whether or not a certain phrase is a legitimate and expected reaction to a situation in real life becomes irrelevant; the important question is whether it is dramatically valid at the particular moment within the play when it is used. Even ^{if} a tape-recorded conversation in real life were translated wholesale to the boards, its impact could not help but change in the move, and thus the question of its naturalistic legitimacy would have to take its context into account. We have uncovered a more subtle form of "advance", inherent in all theatre but particularly important in Pinter, where a conversation, which in real-life circumstances would include only the participants, must also be directed towards the audience, and the question of reality and naturalism becomes infinitely complex. Just as the vague shadowy stage relationship of the characters in "Landscape" (1963) includes a measure of indirect communication and rapport encapsulated in the cocoon of isolation and conversational counterpoint, so the conversations in Pinter's other work must always be studied with the additional character in mind: the author's sense of the corporate identity of his archetypal audience. "Advance" is inherent in "retreat". This said, we must also not lose sight of the simplest and ultimately most important level on which Pinter's plays work for the audience - the emotional movement, rhythm and language structure of the plays -

in other words, their music.

An intellectual approach tends to obscure the simple emotional reaction which is the basis of the appreciation of most dramatic art. Certainly in the case of most "retreat" drama there is a feeling of satisfaction induced by the poetry of the language, often partly at least divorced from its meaning, and the structure of short and long pauses, quick-fire conversations, long speeches and inconsequential backchat which make up the climax, or series of climaxes, of the plays. When asked what his plays were about, Pinter said "The weasel under the cocktail cabinet" - a much discussed and quoted phrase which he subsequently revealed to be entirely meaningless. The fact that he used a curious and arresting juxtaposition of words to create an immediate effect without regard to their "ultimate" or "true" meaning is of paramount importance to an understanding of his plays: the important thing is the impact - the emotional result on the audience - and the means is entirely secondary.

To begin with "The Room" (1960) Pinter's first play, in a critical discussion may seem rather unfair, but in fact, unlike that of many modern playwrights, Pinter's development has been steady, and by and large in a straight line: his basic style and theatrical language in the widest sense were laid down in this play, and their development can be traced in a fairly logical, chronologically consistent way. At first glance the play is a chaotic jumble of dramatic styles, ranging from the extreme realism of the opening one-sided conversation (where, nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that the audience's presence makes it two-sided, and changes it from meaningless noise into communication) to the sudden symbolism of the death of Riley and Rose's blindness at the end. Nor is the transition smooth. Structurally the Sands overbalance the play towards its second half, as being seemingly too concerned with each other to have any relationship with reality inside the play - their landlord is different from the real one, and they insist that Room Seven is to let - or outside it. Their intrusion into the room is one of youth into settled age (all the other characters are over fifty) but is rather clumsy in raising the dramatic tension for no discernible reason, and when the intrusion of the blind negro Riley is added, the play becomes top-heavy with unidentified and unrealised menace. But Pinter is above all an actor's writer and his words are the medium for direct

exposition: none of these criticisms are valid when the audience's actual reaction to a careful performance of the play is seen. In moving from a meticulous objectivity - the meal in all its detailed accuracy - to the relatively abstract - the comings and goings of Kidd, the couple and Riley, and back to the concrete - Bert's description of his drive and the final climax, Pinter uses a structure similar to music or poetry. His accurate ear for dialogue and the utter ordinarieness of the characters (even Riley turns out to be supremely commonplace), in other words, the familiarity and "availability" of the action, allows the audience to take for granted the surface movement of plot and words, to feel the underlying climb towards climax. The use of musical terms seems appropriate here. Thus the "first movement" in the quiet, calm, intimate atmosphere of the room is concerned with simple, direct facts and unambiguous ideas, while as soon as the third character, Mr Kidd, enters, the uncertainty and complexity of the central "second movement" is born; the door of the room is open, people come and go, and their insecurity is reflected in doubt on points of fact - does the landlord have a sister? how many floors are there? and so on. As the play continues, the disparate elements of the couple and eventually Riley are introduced, and their difference in age or race from the original characters (their discord with the original theme) develops the central movement into a dissonance punctuated by the increasing uncertainty between fact and fiction which surrounds the characters, and their increasingly curious behaviour. The third movement at the end returns to the theme of the first, and is shown to be a strong theme, not a weak one, in the realities of icy roads, strong emotions and the final cathartic act of violence and insanity which clears the miasma, in however brutal a fashion, of the meaningless circlings of the previous movement. The audience's understanding is in fact of the basic movements, the undercurrents of feeling which work towards culmination.

In "The Birthday Party" (1958) the musical elements are much stressed.* Stanley is a former concert pianist, and the drum which Meg gives him has a complex role in the play, as a symbol of his Oedipal relationship with Meg (it is a child's toy drum), as a

* Esslin compares Pinter's technique with that of painting (P 66 "The Peopled World") as I do with music - these connections could be claimed to show the essentially undramatic nature of the plays.

measure both of Meg's insensitivity and her kindness, and as a medium for emotion expressing climax in terms of sound. (Indeed the device so pleased Pinter that the drum was used later in very much the same way in "The Lover" (1963)). Again, there is a status quo which is to be violently broken, and the irrevocable change must be reflected in the sound and movement of the language, but the technique is much nearer the surface. The opening movement is very similar to that of "The Room", although the greater disorganisation in Meg's presenting of the meal points to a more inevitable breakdown. The peace is nearer the surface in Stanley's attacks on Meg and failure with Lulu, before the entry of McCann and Goldberg completes the fragmentation and dissonance of the character-relationships: the peace with which Pinter always opens his plays is here seen to be easily broken. All the themes are there by the end of Act I: it remains to set them in motion. Stanley's savage drumbeat, followed directly by McCann tearing up the paper, presages the play's swoop into the region of nightmare. The ambiguities again increase gradually, as the device of Stanley's fictitious birthday and Goldberg's confused and contradictory reminiscences contribute to the raising of the dramatic temperature - the wheelbarrow in the van, the weasel under the cabinet: uncertainty breeds more uncertainty. Abruptly the music breaks into a trio with the two men's preliminary "softening-up" of Stanley; the vigorous staccato question-and-answer enthralling the audience and moving to a climax when physical tries to oust mental violence, and Pinter breaks the audience's concentration by means of the party - a break both necessary and artistically satisfying. In the game of Blind Man's Buff, the blindness motif is a forerunner of the one which Pinter uses to such an important effect in his later work: where in "The Room" it is the ultimate stroke of fate, here it represents the gradual divorcing of Stanley from his environment and humanity, and is analogous with death. Sounds become the most important thing as the music becomes fast and furious. Although the third act has been called an anti-climax, it is a necessary development of the simple one-directional movement to climax of "The Room", and the music dies down quietly in the opposite direction to the movement in Act I as characters are subtracted from the scene; all is fixed, and only ends are to be tidied up. The movement in "The Birthday Party" is both more fully realised and more symmetrical than that of "The Room" - the peripeteia inherent in all Pinter is

one which is more on an intellectual than an emotional level, more available to the audience and as a result more easily analysed by orthodox critical methods.

"The Dumb Waiter" (1960) returns to the single one-dimensional movement of "The Room", not because Pinter does not wish to portray the violence of the shooting on the stage, but because a certain ambiguity must be left in the final outcome. The music is of a relatively simple kind, with perhaps more incidental humour than before. Even this serves a purpose other than that of pure entertainment: as well as delaying the climax in this long one-acter, it increases the impact of the reality of the death at the end by making the audience forget the purpose of Gus and Ben's sojourn in the room. The wild improbability of the dumb-waiter's instructions and the comedy of Gus and Ben's reactions also serve to distract the audience from retaining the realisation, which must come early in the play, that these are hired killers. The domestic details and semantic squabbles highlight the grotesqueness of the situation, and the dumb-waiter's demands serve as a sort of abortive false climax to preview the real one, both murder for hire and the dumb-waiter situation being ultimately insane. It is a measure of the simplicity and "availability" of the play that such an explanation is possible: the type of character chosen is only made familiar (a familiarity which is, as always, essential to Pinter's purpose) by the very humour and irrelevance that seem to destroy the mood.

The music in "The Homecoming" (1965) is of a very different kind. Here the animal situation of power struggle is paramount, and the theme, of youth and age, recalls the Sands/Hudds relationship in "The Room", but the takeover is a very gradual one of which the play shows only a small part. The issue is Max's family taking over from him - he is losing his feudal supremacy at last, but fighting back hard. The other changes, Sam's revelation and death and the break-up of Teddy and Ruth, are secondary, though contributory to the central point. The family's possession of Ruth is part of the struggle with the world that Teddy now represents, but it is Max's failure to assert himself with her that is the most significant fact in the context of the play. Pinter has almost destroyed his own music in the paring down of this play to essentials: there is none of the long, almost lyrical inconsequential conversation that punctuates his

earlier work, and the whole feeling of the play is taut. But the important fact is that this tautness is shown to be a way of life with the family, and the climaxes of violence, both verbal and physical, are subsidiary and necessary to its continuance: the change is fundamentally organic and natural in this case, and the characters are all at home with the emotions expressed; the understanding of both characters and audience of the basis of the action is raised from merely intuitive to intellectual levels. Symbols are almost absent, and one could suggest the analogy that modern pop music represents the staccato beat and driving force of "The Homecoming" where only classical music could interpret such plays as "A Slight Ache" (1959) with its combination of dark archetypes and urbanity, or indeed "The Caretaker" (1960), in its careful shifting of allegiances and observation of character. "The Homecoming" is Pinter's least musical play, as befits its subject-matter, and it could be argued that while sacrificing a good deal of incidental audience pleasure in the varied forms of his dialogue, Pinter here represents an ultimately more satisfying drama than anything else he has done.

Among those dramatists who confine their dramatic action behind the proscenium arch in plot and dialogue, the movement in the period is generally away from the traditional naturalism influenced by the English translations of the works of Chekhov, Strindberg and Ibsen, and by the work of Shaw, Coward and Rattigan. This reaction is examined with regard to language in Part II and structure and purpose in Part III. Various deviations from the techniques of the traditional "well-made play" are found in the work of each playwright, although in some the techniques are pretty consistent throughout.

Rudkin's one play within the period, "Afore Night Come" (1962), typifies the work of the late 1950's and early 1960's in its naturalism of dialogue and character. The ritualistic elements of drama are found in the actions of the characters, rather than in the words, as in the work of Pinter, or in the movement, dance and song as in the modern ritual theatre of, for example, the Living Theatre or in the work of Grotowski. Rudkin's technique corresponds broadly to that of Ionesco in using the naturalism of his stage action and words, within the context of the proscenium in a traditional

manner, to produce a particular emotional effect on the audience. Rudkin encourages identification and sympathy from the audience with believable, everyday characters and then shocks the spectator with the gradual, inevitable unfolding of the murder. A similar technique is found, for example, in Ionesco's "The Lesson" (1951), which first lulls the audience with a commonplace dramatic situation of old teacher and young pupil in order to make the eventual shock greater: Rudkin uses the comedy of Spens, the jokes in general and the farcical repetitions of Act I to the same effect. The "retreat" nature of the involvement of the audience with the actors is essential for the believability of the characters in their own world, which is necessary to make the play's emotional impact. //The work of Orton shows that not all the dramatists experience a reaction against the picture-frame stage. In order that the targets for Orton's satanic humour should be seen to be real, the early plays set up familiar, believable situations and characters in the same way as "Afore Night Come". But increasingly through the period as traced in Part III his farcical humour takes over from the directed early satire, and the plays resemble more and more the traditional "retreat" drama of West End farces and detective thrillers. The distance between the audience and the stage emphasised by the technique is increased by the unfamiliarity of the subject-matter: the result is, paradoxically in the context of Orton's early work, to keep the audience complacent as they assume that the satire is not directed at themselves, but at another world entirely. A "retreat" stage naturalism combined with a distanced subject-matter allows the audience to laugh at Orton's plays with no reference to themselves.

Edward Bond illustrates a development from "retreat" to "advance" more concisely than the other playwrights. The early work - "The Pope's Wedding" (1962) and "Saved" (1965) - relies on the traditional cathartic techniques of audience emotional involvement to make its philosophical and moral points about humanity. The boundary between the acutely naturalistic world onstage and the auditorium is necessary to show the isolation of the characters from any real relationships or communication, while the naturalism itself encourages believability in the same way as Rudkin and early Orton: despite differences of language, the three dramatists use similar techniques in the early 1960's. "Early Morning" (1963), however, has

affinities with Pinter in its dramatic portrayal of the events in the mind of Arthur, and with Ionesco, and the "theatre of cruelty", in the conscious use of shock tactics. * The characters of the play, however, are neither naturalistically believable nor alienated for the purpose of our understanding, and the style of the second play of 1963, "Narrow Road to the Deep North", demonstrates how he solves the problem of the confusing mixture of caricature and sympathy. This play shows a vaguely Brechtian advance in terms of such features as anachronism, soliloquy, explanation to the audience, and songs: Bond's increasingly committed dramatic purpose makes such techniques necessary.

Delaney's unusual and idiosyncratic use of the "music and dance" entrances and exits in "A Taste of Honey" (1958), which draws the audience's attention to the stage itself, is not really an "advance" form: the characters are naturalistically and familiarly presented to involve the audience's emotions, and the technique only brackets the scenes in the same way as the Knight's introductions in Osborne's "Luther". Delaney discards this technique in "The Lion in Love" (1960) to concentrate on a traditional dramatic form, and the faults of the play are independent of this change: the subject-matter of her work is such that "retreat" techniques suit it best.

Wesker's serious purpose disallows the humour of the "advance" techniques of, for example, Stoppard and Saunders, so his reaction against naturalism is in the direction of symbolism. The Trilogy (1958 - 1960), although containing certain symbolic sections (see Part III) appeals to the audience on the traditional level of sympathy and identification: he emphasises the familiar human aspects of political and historical events. The later plays all contain mainly naturalistic episodes; the unrealistic scenes in "Chips With Everything" (1962) (Smiler's running), and the last scene of "Their Very Own and Golden City" (1965) are used as shorthand to convey his meaning in simple and direct terms. The symbolism, with his hoped-for mass audience in mind, is held firmly in check except in "The Four Seasons", where the "privative" subject ** allows more dramatic freedom owing to the lack of propagandist purpose. But the play doesn't hold

* Bond's shocks, however, are of the mind as well as the emotions and senses, and therefore go beyond the "theatre of cruelty" techniques.

** See Part III, Chapter Seven

together, owing to the lack of the traditional plot-line, which is strong and vital in all his other plays, and is in fact, except in the "Beckettian" lyrical late Pinter, an essential of "retreat" drama. Wesker's use of stage time is also important in contrast to the timelessness of Pinter, Stoppard and Saunders, where the action is contracted to a moment or a single but endless day (see Part III). His technique is drawn from a long tradition of the radical drama of the twentieth century - Shaw, Miller except for "A View from the Bridge", and Odets except for "Waiting for Lefty". The building-up of character in a certain defined time, place and circumstance in the context of the proscenium arch makes points indirectly to the audience by showing them what happens, rather than telling them directly as in Brecht and late Arden.

The early and late drama of Osborne, as distinct from "The Entertainer", "Luther" and "Inadmissable Evidence", uses the same techniques as Pinter in terms of relationship with the audience, but without his ideological purpose. Osborne's drama is an expression of his personal feelings concerning modern life and relationships within the characters on stage. Despite his denials, the main characters are to a great extent mouthpieces for his views (as discussed in Part III) and as in Pinter's "The Caretaker", whole plays are often little more than frames for long tirades by his heroes and heroines, ostensibly to the other characters, but in fact directly to the audience. The whole of the dramatic panoply is subordinated in "Epitaph for George Dillon" (1958) and "Look Back in Anger" (1956) as well as the plays of 1968, to an expression of feeling which approaches that of Pinter's "Landscape" in transcending dramatic limitations. The everyday world which Osborne invites his audience to believe in is only built up to form a background to the major speeches, as the more usual wish for catharsis which produces the "retreat" form is no more important than the plot line itself in most of his drama.

The different types of "retreat" in the audience-actor relationship demonstrated by these playwrights are all directed towards the same end. As Impressionism was, in part, a reaction to the camera, so the ubiquity of television and the long existence of film at the time of our period prompts each dramatist to seek a method of appealing directly to the emotion of the audience, in order to make the resulting catharsis serve his varied purposes.

P A R T I I

CHAPTER FOUR

The actual language of the plays under discussion reflects elements which can be traced back to the earliest English drama. Nevertheless, the two major conflicting and complementary strands in the language of these plays - the poetic and the prosaic - can be shown to have their origins in major dramatic movements within the last century. Though it is naturally impossible to trace specific influences on the language of the playwrights of this period, whose general literary and dramatic education was accomplished in a world in which the availability of many different media was becoming increasingly universal, it is none the less possible to suggest certain uses of language and means of expression among important English language playwrights of relatively recent date, which compare with the moderns.

Though few of the modern playwrights are as consciously poetic as Fry or Eliot, a poet's emphasis on language, rhythm, economy of diction and the techniques of climax and anti-climax or bathos, can be seen in plays as different as Saunders' "Next Time I'll Sing to You", Pinter's "Landscape", and Arden's "Soldier, Soldier". An acute observation of everyday speech rhythms and naturalism of dialogue, subjected to a complex and individual process of choice and rhythmic patterning by the playwright, is very evident, at least in translation, in the works of Chekhov, the early works of Beckett, and in some of the work of Shaw; this can be seen to form a linguistic tendency which continues in modern playwrights. This can be found in the work of Rudkin and Wesker, and indeed, to a certain extent in Pinter, although his intense verisimilitude is always a result of a complex process of *précis* and a very individual perception of modern language. A third, though possibly more minor strand can be found in the comic drama of Nichols and Simpson, its vocabulary and structure often based on vaudeville and the music-hall, and later, the radio comedy show: it will be shown that similar handling of material can be seen in the work of Coward and even in Eliot's fragmentary early drama "Sweeney Agonistes".

The relationship in matters of language between early twentieth-century and the modern drama does not necessarily correspond with those relationships reflecting the concepts of "advance" and "retreat" outlined earlier. Both poetic and prose language can, in fact, be utilised in "advance" and "retreat" drama depending on

the personal preference of the playwright, and to a certain extent on his subject-matter. I shall not attempt to trace the linguistic origins of the drama in terms of direct influences: nor will any similarities which I trace imply any less originality or individuality in the playwrights under discussion. Though it is the novelty in type and style of post-1956 drama which has attracted most attention, some demonstration of its linguistic similarities with styles which have been in the mainstream of English language drama for decades may help to place it in its proper context.

The subject-matter and style of Eliot's plays would seem to have little in common with post-1956 drama in this country, but certain similarities of language can be traced. His earliest dramatic work, now extant only in the fragmentary "Sweeney Agonistes", has been pointed out by Katharine Worth and Raymond Williams as not only echoing the preoccupations and style of the German drama of the period - the Brecht and Weill who were so great an influence on modern drama - but also as forshadowing the drama of the fifties. The music-hall and "jazz" orientation of this structure has already been discussed, but the demotic counterpoint of the following is notable:

DORIS: I like Sam
 DUSTY: I like Sam
 Yes, and Sam's a nice boy too.
 He's a funny fellow
 DORIS: He is a funny fellow
 He's like a fellow once I knew,
 He could make you laugh.
 DUSTY: Sam can make you laugh.
 Sam's all right.
 DORIS: But Pereira won't do
 We can't have Pereira
 DUSTY: Well what are you going to do? *

This has some stylistic similarity to the "Game of Chess" section of "The Waste Land" and shows a parallel solution to the problem of dramatising modern urban speech-rhythms as Pinter^{uses} in "The Homecoming":

LENNY: The last bird! When we stopped the car
 JOEY: Oh, that ... yes ... well, we were in Lenny's car one night last week
 LENNY: The Alfa.
 JOEY: And er ... bowling down the road ...
 LENNY: Up near the Scrubs.
 JOEY: Yes, up over by the Scrubs

* "Sweeney Agonistes", P 115 - 116.

LENNY: We were doing a little survey of North Paddington.
 JOEY: And er it was pretty late, wasn't it?
 LENNY: Yes, it was late! Well? *

Arden produces a similar effect in "Soldier, Soldier":

SOLDIER: For Germany the steamers
 Sail out of Harwich.
 MARY: That's what they told me
 After the marriage.
 SCUFFHAM: (trembling with rage)
 Marriage to a soldier
 Aye, to a soldier.
 Mrs. PARKER: (very vindictive)
 Well might she call herself
 Married to a soldier.
 PARKER: (trying to smooth things over)
 It's just a bit of singsong- like -
 They're none so bad, you know, aren't soldiers,
 Only - like - principle behind them that's vicious.
 Mrs. PARKER: Aye, and an Irish wife
 Well might she call herself
 Married to a soldier. **

Here selected words from urban dialect provide a structure of phrase repetition reminiscent of the use of traditional English ballads in "Sweeney Agonistes" -

<u>He</u> could make you laugh	Sam could make you laugh
After the marriage	Marriage to a soldier

- which establishes simple themes and delicately allows the tone of the actor's voice to demonstrate the shifting emphasis of the ideas from Sam to Periera, or from Parker's to Scuffham's attitude to the soldier. The single-syllable, or at least simple, words and ideas serve to shift the audience's attention from the words themselves to the "body language" of the actors in relationship, while at the same time the simple rhythmic pattern concentrates the audience's attention. Both conversations are the stating of previously held opinions, and are static rather than dynamic: the simple repetitions and rhythms of Greek chorus have much the same effect, as a statement of attitudes, of description, rather than as dramatic movement. The subtle insertion of deeper meanings into a seemingly banal song-lyric constitute a

* "The Homecoming" Act II P 67
 ** P 54

useful "playing-down" of an unpalatable reality:

Where the Gauguin maids
In the banyan shades
Wear palm leaf drapery *

... And you wait for a knock and the turning of a lock
For you know the hangman's waiting for you **

This device is also found useful by Osborne in "The Entertainer":

NUMBER NINE

Blues. Spot on Frank at piano.

Frank: Bring back his body, and bury it in England.
Bring back his body, and bury it here.
Bring back his body, in an aeroplane.
But don't ever talk to me.
Those playing fields of Eton
Have really got us beaten.
But ain't no use agrievin'
'Cos it's Britain we believe in
So bring back his body, and bury it here.
Bring back his body in an aeroplane -
But j-st don't ever talk to me. ***

Arden, in "The Waters of Babylon" uses a similar technique:

Krank: O when I was young
I played with a gun
And all the other children in a row
I shot them through the head
Till they lay down dead
And then I did not know
Where to go,
Where to go.

But the children they arose
And came creeping from the ground
And they fired silver bullets up my stair
They woke my true love
Who was sleeping up above,
Till she ran from me
Tearing out her hair,
Out her hair.

They drove down the doors
And set fire to my roof,
And they pulled away the pillars of the wall.
I stood in the street
With the rain upon my feet;
Whilst my house so majestic
Did fall -
Oh did fall. ****

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- * "Fragment of an Agon" P 122
 - ** "Fragment of an Agon" P 126
 - *** "Number Nine" P 74
 - **** Act I P 40 - 41.

But such fragments in Eliot's work are something of a dead end: the similar use of a "poetic demotic" to inject a sense of reality into a rather high-flown religious drama in "The Rock" seems forced and unreal. The use of the chorus in "Murder in the Cathedral", and "The Family Reunion" is only faintly echoed in modern drama by the rôle of the commentator on the action in Nichols and Saunders: the working-class urban language and speech-rhythms which are central to the modern drama are absent in Eliot's later verse-plays.

The language of Fry's plays is distanced from modern life not only by verse, but also by time: no attempt is made to capture the authentic flavour of the speech of the time in which his plays are set, as, for example, Arden does convincingly in "Armstrong's Last Goodnight":

LADY: Why, Johnny, whaur's your lockit tongue? Ye do deliver me maist dear words as vehement as ane millwheel, Johnny. This is the first time ye hae been heard to utter without ane weir of tree-trunks across your teeth. And what has causit it, sir?

GILNOCKIE: You.

LADY: Aye, me -
When I stand in the full direction of your force
Ye need nae wife nor carl to stand
Alswael beside ye and interpret ... *

It is a measure of the lack of individuality of Fry's language that a section from any of his plays can immediately be recognised as his work, but cannot be placed in its historical setting:

HOEL: It was all in the way
Of battle. I only expelled him from the world
As I let out my breath singing to the fame
Of Britain.

TAFRID: The fame of Britain! The fame of Britain
Is sung by us now. Let him eccho Eccho
Into death, with the same ease.

OSWALD: Easy death,
Easy as shutting a door!
(A.D. 596) **

JENNET: Why should you want to be hanged?

THOMAS: Madam,
I owe it to myself. But I can leave it
Until the last moment. It will keep
While the light still lasts.

JENNET: What can we see in this light?
Nothing, I think, except flakes of drifting fear,
The promise of oblivion.
(A.D. 1400) ***

* Act II Sc 9 P 80
** "Thor with Angels" P 12
*** "The lady's not for Burning" P 56

Whether he is writing tragedy or comedy, Fry's characters are always either more or less than people in themselves: they are always either symbols of moral and religious truth, or mere background material, while the emphasis which modern dramatists place on regional language (as in Wesker's "Roots") or historical accuracy (as in Arden's "Left-Handed Liberty") is the starting point for the drama rather than a minor part of the whole. Those modern playwrights, particularly Pinter and Arden, who are concerned with words and speech-rhythms in themselves as a major part of their dramatic effect, paradoxically show more universality in the idiosyncrasies of their carefully observed portrayal of speech than Fry or Eliot can with a poetic language of drama which has its roots nowhere but in the minds of the playwrights.

The drama of the "Irish Movement", however, and particularly that of Synge and O'Casey, is poetic while not consciously metrical, and despite the differences which are bound to exist between mid-century urban dramatists and playwrights drawing on an earlier rural (or, in the case of O'Casey's early plays, provincial Irish) tradition, the plays of those two playwrights have much in common with those under discussion in language, as well as content and structure. Thus within the "dialect" writing of O'Casey, popular Irish songs play an integral and essential part in the unfolding of the action: they are not just a commentary on it:

BRENNAN: (giving him a coin) For a bare four minutes, and leave the door open so's th'sound 'll have a fair chance to go in to him. (the verger opens the door) That's it. You're a kind man, really. (BRENNAN stands facing into the porch, the verger leaning against the side of it. BRENNAN unslings his melodeon, plays a few preliminary notes on it, and then sings softly:)

A sober black shall hide her body entirely,
 Touch'd be th'sun an' th' salt spray of th' sea;
 But down in th' darkness a slim hand, so lovely,
 Carries a rich bunch of red roses for me! *

The political symbolism of the red roses is stressed as various stanzas from the song are sung, as here, throughout the play. The solemn tune and setting allows the singing to act as a requiem for the ceremonially exposed body in these phrases.

(A golden shaft of light streams in from the left of the road, and, a moment afterwards, Loreleen appears in the midst of it. She stands in the gateway staring at the three men squatted on the ground.)

LORELEEN: (puzzled) What th' hell's wrong here?
 MICHAEL: (in a whisper - motioning MAMAN to continue) Go on, man.
 MAMAN: (singing - with more quavers in his voice):
 An' when we've swabb'd th' blood away
 We'll take their hundred-ton gunn'd ship in tow-o-o,
 Their precious jewels 'll go to deck the breasts of
 women, white as snow-o-o,
 So hoist all sail an' make for home through waves
 that lash and winds that blow!

MICHAEL: } (together) Blow, blow!
 SERJEANT: }

(LORELEEN comes into the garden, and approaches the men. The golden light follows her, and partly shines on the three singers.)

LORELEEN: (brightly) Singin' is it the three of you are? *

The contrast between masculine roughness (exhibited in a combination of lust and piety) and feminine wisdom which underlies the anti-religious tone of this play is supported by the choice of a sea-shanty as a defiance to the humanity of Loreleen.

Arden's songs, as distinct from his spoken verse passages, have the same effect in carrying forward the action, explaining events, or revealing character: Arden is here closer to Brecht than O'Casey in that he uses his own lyrics, but in popular-song forms. The similarity is in the attention which the audience must give to the words of the songs in both cases, as they have a much more important effect on the drama than the songs which punctuate the action in most twentieth-century musical plays, the rôle of which is merely to allow the audience to relax. Here are two examples from "The Workhouse Donkey":

BLOMAX: The days they have been in the green of my garden
 When between us was neither a "beg your pardon"
 Nor a "stop it", nor "give over": but "here I am, here",
 "Ch my dove and my dear", "So close and so near".
 The days they have been, without forethought or fear. **

The traditional romantic phrases, mixed with naturalistic exclamations, bring out the conflicting impulses in Blomax towards warmth and self-interest; they are placed in a ballad-like context which allows the expression of an emotion unusual to the character to be separated from

* "Cock-a-Doodle Dandy" Sc II P 177
 ** Act I Sc 6 P 49

his everyday prose speech. (The ballad in the O'Casey play also acts as a "heightener".)

WELLESLEY: Too young, too tall, and your eyes too bright
You look too new and you look too hard,
You dream too deep in the deep of the night,
And you walk too long in my backyard.
You stand and ask for your white bread
And you stand and you ask for your brown,
But what you will get is a good horse whip
To drive you out of town. *

The nursery-rhyme references contrast with the force of the "good horse whip" to dramatise a similar division in the personality of Blomax's daughter.

O'Casey's use of the Irish dialect of his time, changed just enough to make it intelligible to most audiences, increases the impact of his topical religious and political subjects, and in the same way modern playwrights as diverse as Rudkin, Wesker and Arden use provincial and historical language to heighten, rather than obscure, the universality of the communication. That the writing of Synge is as musical and poetic as it is dramatic is shown by the ease with which it may be translated into opera, as with Britten's version of "The Riders to the Sea", where hardly a word is changed from the original script. Here there is a difference: the language of the Aran islanders on which Synge based his plays is very far from that of modern urban or rural England; nevertheless the inexorable movement towards climax of "Riders to the Sea" or "Deidre of the Sorrows" finds parallels in the organisation of linguistic stresses in Pinter's "The Dumb Waiter" and "The Birthday Party", and Arden's "Armstrong's Last Goodnight". Two passages from Synge illustrate this:

NORA: (in a whisper) Did you hear that, Cathleen? Did you hear a noise in the north-east?
CATHLEEN: (in a whisper) There's some one after crying out by the seashore.
MAURYA: (continues without hearing anything) There was Sheamus and his father, and his own father again, were lost in a dark night and they holding a thing in the half of a red sail, and water dripping out of it - it was dry day, Nora - and leaving a track to the door. (She pauses again with her hand stretched out towards the door. It opens softly) **

* Act II Sc 4 P 80
** "Riders to the Sea" P 50 -51

NAISI: I cannot leave my brothers when it is I who have defied the king.
 DEIDRE: I will go with you.
 NAISI: You cannot come. Do not hold me from the fight.
 (He throws her aside almost roughly.)
 DEIDRE: (with restraint) Go to your brothers. For seven years you have been kindly, but the hardness of death has come between us.
 NAISI: (looking at her aghast) And you'll have me meet death with a hard word from your lips in my ear? *

The following passage from Pinter contains some similarities:

GUS: Ben, look here.
 BEN: What?
 GUS: Look.
 (Ben turns his head and sees the envelope. He stands.)
 BEN: What's that?
 GUS: I don't know.
 BEN: Where did it come from?
 GUS: Under the door.
 BEN: Well, what is it?
 GUS: I don't know.
 (They stare at it.)
 BEN: Pick it up.
 (Gus slowly moves towards it, bends and picks it up.)
 What is it?
 GUS: An envelope.
 BEN: Is there anything in it?
 GUS: No.
 BEN: Is it sealed?
 GUS: Yes.
 BEN: Open it.
 GUS: What?
 BEN: Open it! **

Although the emphasis of Synge is on language as a means to climax, the movements and expression of the actors which are all-important in the Pinter piece are necessarily supported by the combination of repetition and pause. Pinter's climax is one of silence and non-movement, whereas Synge's is one both of words and movement, but in each case the types of words used are precisely calculated to "wind up" the audience's emotional involvement. The negative words, for example, of the second Synge piece - "cannot", "leave", "defied", "fight", "go", "hardness", "death" and "death" again - ^{are} paralleled by the increasing incongruity of the words in the next passage - "pockets", "cockeyed",

* "Deirdre of the Sorrows" Act III P 334

** "The Dumb Waiter" P 45

"cockeyed", "worse", "convalescence", "rainbow", "angels". The increasing disorientation produced by negative or inappropriate words is again a sure movement towards climax:

McCANN: Out of our own pockets.
 GOLDBERG: It goes without saying, Between you and me, Stan, it's about time you had a new pair of glasses.
 McCANN: You can't see straight.
 GOLDBERG: It's time. You've been cockeyed for years.
 McCANN: Now you're even more cockeyed.
 GOLDBERG: He's right. You've gone from bad to worse.
 McCANN: Worse than worse.
 GOLDBERG: You need a long convalescence.
 McCANN: A change of air.
 GOLDBERG: Somewhere over the rainbow.
 McCANN: Where angels fear to tread.
 GOLDBERG: Exactly. *

Arden's use of the sense of approaching menace is shown in:

GILNOCKIE: Brand. Get his brand. Tangle it up.
 (The SECOND ARMSTRONG takes WAMPHERAY's sword and wraps twice about the hilt, tying it to the scabbard.)
 Let's hae his gully-knife.
 (The SECOND ARMSTRONG passes over to him WAMPHERAY's knife.)
 You the gun.
 (The THIRD ARMSTRONG picks up WAMPHERAY's hand-gun.)
 THIRD ARMSTRONG: Loadit.
 GILNOCKIE: Aye, water.
 THIRD ARMSTRONG: We've nae water here. Do ye want me to -
 GILNOCKIE: Then pour in bloody usquebach and ask nae mair fool questions.
 THIRD ARMSTRONG: (pouring whisky down the barrel)
 This is no a very provident method, Gilnockie.
 I doubt -
 GILNOCKIE: Do it.
 THIRD ARMSTRONG: Aye.
 GILNOCKIE: (looking at the sword). He'll yet pull that out. See. Mak it sicker. **

Despite the language differences, the extracts have in common an unwillingness to speak of the real approaching tragedy: the subject is "talked round" although every character knows exactly what threatens. In my experience this is consonant with real expressions of fo^erboding.

Drama similar to the work of those modern playwrights who make the greatest efforts to capture, and above all, exploit in very subtle ways, the prose rhythms of everyday speech is less well represented in earlier work. Chekhov is always considered the great

* "The Birthday Party" Act III P 82

** "Armstrong's Last Goodnight" Act I Sc 3 P 33 - 4

innovator in this field, but such subtleties as speech patterns and vocabularies are not to be discussed when the work is only known in translation: it can however be said that from an English language point of view the dramatic prose of "The Three Sisters" and "The Cherry Orchard" seems to point the way to the authenticity of Pinter and Wesker. Similar problems arise when Brecht is considered, and in a section entirely devoted to language, the verbal effect of his works in translation can only be vaguely allied to modern drama, although his influence is obvious in other fields. The wordy prosiness of Shaw is nowadays considered something of a backwater: indeed it is the middle-class nature of the language of his plays, in vocabulary, lightness of tone, and ease of intellectual communication, which, as in the work of Eliot, distances them from the realism and preoccupation with the concrete of modern drama. The appeal to the audience's conscious intellectualism in Shaw and Fry finds few echoes in a drama based on the working class in both subject and (with less success) in audience. Osborne's later venues use, however, the lightness of touch of Shaw, but in doing so, retreat from the major stream of the drama of his time: after his first few plays Osborne's language seems to have contracted to the personal experience of what was still a very restricted audience. Similarly, the influence of twentieth-century playwrights as important as Pirandello and Beckett must be measured other than in terms of pure language, for the simple reason that translation, however good, can never transfer the imponderables of linguistic feeling. The fidelity and attention to detail of Pinter's "Revue Sketches" and Osborne's "Look Back in Anger" and "Inadmissible Evidence" in the context of modern setting and discussion of contemporary problems are one of the really new elements of modern drama in England. Here are three examples:

FIRST: I not long got here.
 SECOND: Did you get the all-night bus?
 FIRST: I got the all-night bus straight here.
 SECOND: Where from?
 FIRST: Marble Arch.
 SECOND: Which one?
 FIRST: The two-nine-four, that takes me all the way to Fleet Street.
 SECOND: So does the two-nine-one. (Pause) I see you talking to two strangers as I come in. You want to stop talking to strangers, old piece of boot like you, you mind who you talk to.
 FIRST: I wasn't talking to any strangers. *

CLIFF: That stinking old pipe!
(Pause)

JIMMY: Shut up.

CLIFF: Why don't you do something with it?

JIMMY: Why do I spend half Sunday reading the papers?

CLIFF: (Kicks him without lowering his paper). It stinks!

JIMMY: So do you, but I'm not singing an aria about it. (turns to the next page). The dirty ones get more and more wet round the mouth, and the posh ones are more pompous than ever. (lowering paper, and waving pipe at HELENA). Does this bother you?

HELENA: No, I quite like it.

JIMMY: (to CLIFF) There you are - she likes it. (he returns to his paper. CLIFF grunts). Have you read about the grotesque and evil practices going on in the Midlands? *

BILL: Joy, get me Mrs. Maitland, will you? What's up with him?

HUDSON: Well, he wants a divorce.

BILL: Grounds?

HUDSON: Adultery.

BILL: Well?

HUDSON: Well, the thing is this, sufficient evidence all right, I don't think, but he wants it on his own terms.

BILL: What do you mean, his own terms?

HUDSON: Quite simple. He insists on having sexual relations with his wife three times a week until the case comes up.

BILL: And the wife?

HUDSON: Oh, she agrees.

BILL: Well - good for them. **

New subjects are supported by a forceful use of modern vocabulary. Any forerunners of this style - a "throwaway" type of conversation appealing directly to the audience's sense of reality and consciously retreating from orthodox dramatic language or subject - are to be found in the other media: radio, television and films. In their semi-documentary portrayal of the immediate surface of life consisting of simple words, ideas and relationships made obvious to the widest possible audience, radio and television, as well as the more popular of the films, have influenced drama in abandoning many of the subtleties of feeling and expression which were considered essential in the past. There has been a decline in the type of verbally orientated play represented by Fry or Eliot; in modern drama the connection between action and the word is obvious and clear, and one grows directly out of the other. Whereas a production of most earlier drama can be understandable, if extremely limited, without movement on the stage except for entrances and exits, no modern play would be comprehensible with this treatment: it is the outer man, both in words,

* "Look Back in Anger" Act III Sc I P 75

** "Inadmissible Evidence" Act I P 39

ideas and movement, with which modern plays are almost exclusively concerned. The simplicity of the dramatic language highlights the directness of communication, actor to actor and actor to audience, and the existential actions and speech of the characters have become paramount. The setting, both of time and place, and overt symbolism or moral argument has been neglected in favour of the direct statement of the moment, a process ending ultimately in such plays as Pinter's "Landscape" and "Silence" when relatively simple statements of relatively simple feelings are the substance of the play - the word is all - the rest of the usual dramatic paraphernalia is so tentatively proposed as to be almost non-existent:

(I)

BETH

But I was up early. There was still plenty to be done and cleared up. I had put the plates in the sink to soak. They had soaked overnight. They were easy to wash. The dog was up. He followed me. Misty morning. Comes from the river.

DUFF

The fellow knew bugger all about beer. He didn't know I'd been trained as a cellarman. That's why I could speak with authority.

BETH

I opened the door and went out. There was no-one about. The sun was shining. Wet, I mean wetness, all over the ground.

DUFF

A cellarman is the man responsible. He's the earliest up in the morning. Give the drayman a hand with the barrels. Down the slide through the cellar flaps. Lower them by rope to the racks. Rock them on the belly, put a rick up them, use balance and leverage, hike them up onto the racks.

BETH

Still misty but thinner, thinning. *

(II)

RUMSEY

On good evenings we walk through the hills to the top of the hill past the dogs the clouds racing.

ELLEN

Sometimes the wind is so high he does not hear me.

BATES

Brought her into this place, my cousin runs it.

ELLEN

all the blue changes, I'm dizzy sometimes
(Silence)

RUMSEY

that the path and the bushes are the same, that the gate is the same **

* "Landscape" P 25
** "Silence" PP 46 - 7

The range of feeling encapsulated in the words, and the images evoked by them, replace the concrete assertion provided by action and set changes with a series of impressions personal to each member of the audience.

Many examples can be found, however, in what might be represented as the "mainstream" of English drama which use the same linguistic techniques as the more traditional modern plays. An interesting continuing point is the emphasis on the slang of the time in which the play is set, or written: the proliferation of the mass media in this country makes such linguistic tricks universal enough to represent contemporaneity in any period to which they are applied:

- FREDDY: (opening the door for her) Are you walking across the park, Miss Doolittle? If so -
- LIZA: Walk! Not bloody likely, (sensation) I am going in a taxi. (She goes out).
(Pickering gasps and sits down. Freddy goes out on the balcony to catch another glimpse of Eliza.)
- Mrs. ENSFORD HILL: (Suffering from shock) Well, I really can't get used to the new ways.
- CLARA: (throwing herself discontentedly into the Elizabethan chair) Oh, its all right, mamma, quite right. People will think we never go anywhere or see anybody if you are so old-fashioned. (1912) *

- DICKIE: We were practising the Bunny Hug.
- GRACE: The what dear?
- DICKIE: The Bunny Hug. It's the new dance.
- CATHERINE: (helpfully) It's like the Turkey Trot, only more dignified.
- GRACE: Oh, I thought that was the Tango.
- DICKIE: No, more like a Fox-trot, really. Something between a Boston Glide and a Kangaroo Hop.
- ARTHUR: We appear to be straying from the point. Whatever animal was responsible for the posture I found you in does not alter the fact that you have not done a single stroke of work this vacation.
- DICKIE: Oh. Well, I work awfully fast, you know - once I get down to it.
- ARTHUR: That assumption can hardly be based on experience, I take it.
- DICKIE: Dash it, Father! You are laying into me this morning.
- ARTHUR: It's time you found out, Dickie, that I'm not spending two hundred pounds a year keeping you at Oxford, merely to learn to dance the Bunny Hop.
- DICKIE: Hug, Father.
- ARTHUR: The exact description of the obscenity is immaterial.
(set in 1912 - 14) **

* Shaw: "Pygmalion" Act III P 736

** Battigan: "The Winslow Boy" Act I Sc I P 8

TEDDY: Good God! Its - not - Peter Kyle - is it?
 DORIS: Yes, it is, Teddy. It really is. Isn't it wonderful?
 TEDDY: Fukka gen?
 DUSTY: Fukka gen, sir.
 TEDDY: Good Lord! I say - I mean - Good Lord! (1942) *

There is a direct line to Osborne's use of such words to "place" his characters:

JIMMY: Oh yes. There's a Vaughan Williams. Well, that's something, anyway. Something strong, something simple, something English. I suppose people like me aren't supposed to be very patriotic. Somebody said - what was it - we got our cooking from Paris (that's a laugh), our politics from Moscow, and our morals from Port Said. Something like that, anyway. Who was it? (Pause) Well, you wouldn't know, anyway. I hate to admit it, but I think I can understand how Daddy must have felt when he came back from India, after all those years away. The old Edwardian brigade do make their brief little world pretty tempting. (1956) **

PAUNELA: Why not? You're a party authority on education, or about to be or something. You could, let's see, you could try to apply the problems of relating poetry, freak-outs, crazy slides, happenings, action painting and so on to the Comprehensive School. Or the Grammar School. Or trip clothes. She actually sells those things she's wearing. What's the name of the shop? Switched Off or Knocked Off or something. Oh no, I forgot, that's finished now isn't it? The shoddy clothes scene. It's the bookshop, she sells books and records and dope, I shouldn't wonder. "Ecstatic", that's the name of that one. "Ecstatic". And there's an art gallery attached. Quite a scene, isn't it, Pauline? And then there's her pad in the evenings. (1968) ***

The pre-occupation with language as such, including regional differences and foreign languages as well as slang, is one of the hallmarks of English drama. The variety of language in modern drama is only second in importance to the variety of dramatic structure. It is an inheritance from the interest of Shaw and Wilde in language - the very wordiness of these and more recent playwrights - which is utilised by those of the modern dramatists whose backgrounds are academic. It is the enormous variety of the English literary tradition the playwrights can draw on which produces work like that of Arden, between medieval Scots border pastiche on the one hand:

* Rattigan: "Flame Path" Act I P 97
 ** Osborne: "Look Back in Anger" Act I P 17
 *** Osborne: "Time Present" Act I P 25

LINDSAY: I think I should postpone baith venery and poetry and set my wits to work on policy. Lord Maxwell is richt violent angert against us. The man's been repudiate by his vassal. Gif what he will tell the King is creditit by the King, there will be ane rope around this halse in less than two weeks.

MC.GLASS: Ane noosit rope, lady. This is nae game. *

and urban north country dialect of the present on the other:

BUTTERTWAITE: Aye now they also put up a new malt-house for Harry Sweetman two year sin'. It proves bloody little, but we are on t'right lines I think it's high time I betrayed the working classes, don't you? And patronized an entertainment that is normally above my means. (He consults his diary.) I've nowt on next Monday, what about Monday? All right then, write it down, the Copacababa, Monday. And we'll see what shape of others have got nowt on that evening. Ha, ha. You watch me conquer yet a ain where fear will follow and none will praise me: till I do it, and then they'll all fall on their knees! **

Similarly Osborne's progression from the "kitchen sink" to the expensive hotel runs the gamut both of linguistic styles and of social classes:

JIMMY: Your damned great feet! That's the second time you've kicked my ankle! It's no good - Helena will have to do it. Go on, go and make some tea, and we'll decide what we're going to do.

CLIFF: Make some yourself.
(He pushes him back violently. JIMMY loses his balance, and falls over.)

JIMMY: You rough bastard!
(He leaps up, and they grapple, falling on to the floor with a crash. They roll about, grunting and gasping. CLIFF manages to kneel on JIMMY's chest.)

CLIFF: (breathing heavily) I want to read the papers.

JIMMY: You're a savage, a hooligan! You really are! Do you know that! You don't deserve to live in the same house with decent sensitive people.

CLIFF: Are you going to dry up, or do I read the papers down here?
(JIMMY makes a supreme effort, and CLIFF topples to the floor.)

JIMMY: You've made me wrench my guts! ***

MARGARET: Was that the waiter?

GUS: Wrong order. Yours ^FParier's coming.

MARGARET: You rang down?

LAURIE: Yes, we did.

MARGARET: We?

* "Armstrong's Last Goodnight" Act III Sc I P 95
 ** "The Workhouse Donkey" Act I Sc & P 59
 *** " Look Back in Anger" Act III Sc I P 82

LAURIE: Gus did. It's the waiter - he likes a rough trade,
 don't you Gus?
 (Gus grunts)
 It's the beatings at that prep school and scrumming
 down in the mud and being genuinely liked by the men,
 no?
 GUS: I don't think the waiter's exactly my dish. But I
 quite like the Dutch I think. Seem rather nice up to
 now. *

The extraordinary richness and variety of the drama of 1956 to 1968 is one of language as much as of venue and structure. Whereas certain omens of what was to come are to be seen in the popular English drama of this century, it is the very fact that much of the influence and motive force behind modern English drama came from foreign works in translation (from Brecht, Beckett and Pirandello, not to speak of Ibsen, Chekhov and Strindberg) that forced the dramatists to forge a new language to express their ideas: in fact, a new set of linguistic styles ranging from the poetic drama of Arden's "Friday's Hiding" -

CHORUS: We shall find nocht we shall find nocht
 Till every man controls his wife
 Till every fork lies under the knife
 Till every plate kens its place in the larder
 And every slate sticks to the rafter
 And one gang's first and the roest gang after
 That's what we call restoring order. **

- to the urban blankness of Edward Bond's "Saved".

As far as most ordinary people are concerned, twentieth-century English drama until 1956 consists of comedy. When we disregard the works of European playwrights, the giants of the epoch, the plays which are best-known of the last fifty years are those of Coward, Rattigan and Shaw. Of these, Coward's output was almost entirely comedy and musicals, while most of the best known and most enduring work of Shaw and Rattigan is the same. But it is difficult to find any similarity between these works and the type of comedy which has been prevalent since 1956 among the new dramatists. Where Coward's light comedies draw on a long West-end tradition, loosely to be described as situation comedy, which can be traced back to the Restoration as well as forward to the Brian Rix farces of today, the modern comic medium which is innovating rather than drawing directly on the old traditions

* "Hotel in Amsterdam" Act I P 110 - 11
 ** P 203

is a mixture of the absurd, the black and above all, the verbal. The situations in, for instance, the comedies of Simpson are fully as ridiculous as those of Coward, but it is the verbal reactions of his characters on which the comedy is based rather than on the sequence of events on the stage. Where Coward's stage actions are more important than the actual words used, Simpson's are only a mechanism for the exposure of his linguistic felicity:

MONICA: (Into the telephone) Hallo - Joanna? ... hold on a minute, Henry wants to speak to you Yes, he's here in the studio.
 (MONICA hands the telephone to HENRY, then crosses above LIZ to down L. HENRY takes the receiver and continues his conversation throughout the following)

HENRY: (into the telephone) Darling you gave me the most awful fright

(the door bell rings. ROLAND signs to LIZ that there is someone at the door.)

No, I got through everything yesterday and there was no sense in staying, but I sent a telegram
 (FRED enters up L. and crosses to answer the bell. ROLAND rises, stops him and tells him someone is there. FRED looks scandalised and exits up R.)

No, I couldn't think what had happened

(ROLAND signs to LIZ that it is all right, and sits. GARRY sees this and taps his forehead at LIZ.)

Yes, we're all here

MIDDIE: That was Nora's little boy. He's brought across our boa constrictor, Uncle Ted.
 (She hands the box to UNCLE TED)

UNCLE TED: Do I open it?
 (She slides the lid open)

BRO: (pressing into the box) That's never a boa constrictor.
 (He sits again in the armchair)

MIDDIE: Don't let it get out of its loose-box. We shall have it eavesdropping.

UNCLE TED: (closing the box and handing it to MIDDIE.) You don't seem to be getting much for your elephant, do you?

MIDDIE: (crossing to the fireplace) We may decide to have it lengthened. (She puts the box on the mantelpiece).

UNCLE TED: Yes, But of course, you won't get the thickness then.

The actions in the Simpson piece are of secondary importance to the words themselves, while Coward's space-use - the entrances, exits, movements and exchange of looks between separated characters - is as important as the words spoken. At times, as in the above extract, he almost relies on sign language to convey his meaning.

* "Present Laughter" Act II Sc 2 P 394
 ** "A Resounding Tinkle" P 21

The work of Simpson and Nichols recalls that part of the Shakespearean tradition which is concerned with puns, clowning and verbal wit for its own sake perhaps more than any other plays written since the seventeenth century in England: indeed, the very robustness of the humour recalls its early sources. A slightly different type of comedy can be seen in the work of Orton: here the language in itself is only comic in relation to the situation - a dramatic technique which paradoxically, in view of his subject-matter, is more recognisable in terms of traditional English comedy; Orton's plays rely on the relationships between the visual and aural signals which reach the audience:

ERPINGHAM: I shall confiscate your luggage. What is your chalet number?
 (KENNY butts ERPINGHAM in the stomach. ERPINGHAM crumples up in agony. JESSIE MASON seizes KENNY by the arm)

MASON: You can't do this. Mr Erpingham's a gentleman.
 (EILEEN drags MASON away.)

EILEEN: (screaming) We were refused permission to wed. We defied the ban on our love. I was insulted. I'm an expectant mother.
 (KENNY punches ERPINGHAM in the mouth. MASON screams. EILEEN struggles with her. The FADRE tries to separate them.)

FADRE: Leave Miss Mason alone. She's a sensitive artiste.
 (RILEY and W.E.HARRISON are fighting off the attacks of the other campers. KENNY is viciously beating up ERPINGHAM. EILEEN is screaming and hitting JESSIE MASON. The FADRE kneels amid the carnage. His hands folded in prayer.)

FADRE: Oh, Merciful Father, in Thee we trust when dangers threaten.
 (He is hit by an egg. The campers and Staff struggle and scream around the figures of KENNY and ERPINGHAM. Disaster strikes when ERPINGHAM abruptly disappears through a hold which opens in the floor. A silence falls. They look down the hole. The FADRE rises and joins them. He looks down and shakes his head.)

FADRE: As the little foxes gnaw at the roots of the vine, so anarchy weakens the fibres of society.

EILEEN: (weeping) I'm a mother-to-be. I should be protected from this kind of thing. *

The shock effect of violence on stage is an important departure from tradition. This is also different from traditional radio comedy: obviously the visuals are important. However, the major emphasis of Simpson, Nichols and Stoppard is on the word in a tradition which draws

* "The Erpingham Camp" Sc II P 64 - 5

on the world of popular entertainment rather than the theatre. The popularity of the radio comedy show, such as the Goon Show, or "I.T.M.A." during the war, more than the more esoteric "theatre of the absurd" tradition from the continent, was responsible for the verbal preoccupation of modern comic playwrights. A dramatist such as Saunders, who uses the theatrical convention to make a verbal and situation comedy, "Barnstable", shows how the comic heritage is used and discarded when necessary by a modern comic master. The noises off are just like radio sound-effects rather than events on the stage.

SANDRA: (soundlessly) If you please sir

CARBOY: Speak up, my girl.

SANDRA: If you please, sir, the east wing has fallen.

CARBOY: Nonsense, nonsense! Learn your place my girl.

DAFINE: Bring it over here, Sandra.
(SANDRA wheels the trolley to L.)
You may pick flowers, now, Helen. As many as you like. Pick all the flowers. We shall arrange a centrepiece for the dining-room.

SANDRA: The dining-room's gone, ma'am.

CARBOY: Gone?

SANDRA: Fallen, sir.

CARBOY: Nonsense, nonsense! It's all these paperbacks, that's the cause of it. Apply yourself, my girl. Be diligent! Cast your eye downwards. Humility. Sacrifice. How dare you! Remember your place!
(There is a crash. Plaster falls from the ceiling.)

DAFINE: More frequently.

SANDRA: Oh, sir.

CARBOY: Nonsense. It was nothing. A bird falling. Let us at all events keep calm. *

A similar tradition, represented by the detective thriller which has been so popular in the West End for decades, is lampooned in Stoppard's "The Real Inspector Hound". Modern playwrights are quite capable of drawing on the comic tradition with its situational absurdities and stock characters, but twentieth-century media have resulted in a verbal bias which is something quite new in English drama since the seventeenth century.

CHAPTER FIVE

Linguistic usages in the modern period range from the complete naturalism of Rudkin to the almost total alienation of Arden's late work, and include a large number of different approaches to dialogue and monologue. The specificity of place as it is reflected in the dialects utilised by Wesker, Rudkin, Bond and, to a certain extent, Delaney, is balanced by the casual, regionally unplaced, and practically classless intimacy of Nichols, Stoppard and Saunders. Pinter's language develops speech-patterns belonging narrowly to a very specific area * through the unspecific urban idiom of the television work to the generalised archetypal expression of "Landscape"; Wesker's later work draws attention to dialect by opposing it to urbanised English ("Chips With Everything", "Their Very Own^{and} Golden City"). The personal comic language of Simpson, drawn from the radio, and Orton, a frame mainly for the outrageous epigram, has little connection with the other work. In both cases it is made comic basically by the naturalistic setting, a technique similar to that of Bond and Rudkin, although with a very different purpose. Osborne's linguistic structure - a pattern of monologues given a frame to make them meaningful - is also a technique which is personal to himself, although Pinter's "The Caretaker" has affinities with it. The movement of the 1960's away from naturalism and realism is broadly reflected in that of the language of the plays.

In the same year that Bond's "The Pope's Wedding" was produced (1962), a play appeared by Rudkin which uses the same type of naturalistically produced regional dialect to make real for the audience a confined rural setting and a violent dénouement - specifically, a murder. "Afore Night Come" combines the long scene-setting of the Black Country dialect and the realistic set and portrayal of work to create a contrast with the Gaelic lyricisms of Roche, the victim, and the commonsense normality of Jeff and Larry, the casual workers, gradually preparing the audience for the final act of violence. The repetitions of Spens' orders punctuate the play:

Spens: "Don't get shocking them bloody boughs! Shoot any bugger as I catch shocking them bloody boughs: will,

* Jewish, North London.

and all! *

.

Get bloody moving! Six hundred boxes to fill afore
night come **

They form a rhythm for the representation of the seasonal work in the orchard, and the gradual unfolding of Johnny "Hobnails" madness by his increasingly wild language:

Johnny: Don't think I care what happens to you. One wheel I
amn't on, any road. You. You. Larry Lewis. It's only
a wonder after all you'm anything. Don't you think so?
You needn't have been. Not like the Word. Not like the
sun and moon. They are eternal. You just come***

This matches and underlines the inexorable movement towards the murder.

The moment when the decision to kill becomes overt is done in mime, a technique which is often used by other dramatists (like Arden and Pinter) to make important plot points in an atmosphere of concentration, and to bypass the ambiguities of words:

(Stage directions: Slowly, at first, Ginger begins to sharpen knives. Jim and Albert watch. First knife sharpened. Ginger gives this to Albert. Albert takes, tries blade on finger; puts knife through belt; moves off ... Enter Larry, meeting Albert at exit. They pause, resume. Albert exit. Larry comes to crates. Ginger aware of new presence. Jim unaffected. Larry senses something. Second knife sharpened. Ginger gives this to Jim. Jim takes, tries blade on finger, breathes in tensely, audibly; laughs a little; then sees Larry watching and quickly, with a glance at Ginger, which Ginger meets, shafts knife through belt ****

The murder itself is supported by a complex series of lighting and sound props with the noise of the helicopter rising to crescendo as the lights change, lightning flickers, and the poisonous spray falls. The stages of the killing - from the slashed face to the cross-cut, pitchfork and removal of the head - are done in full view of the audience and without speech; this technique is at variance with that of Pinter, the only other modern dramatist whose work contains a great deal of physical violence. Rudkin's method here is in keeping with the type of attack on the sensibilities of the audience which is found in other plays of the 1960's, in the work of Bond and Orton. Although

* Act I P 85
** Act I P 99
*** Act II P 123 - 24
**** Act II P 120

Bond, in "Narrow Road to the Deep North" put similar atrocities on the stage at the end of the period, Rudkin's use of naturalistic language and staging to familiarise the audience with the dramatic movement before shocking us at the end, is a technique not used again, by him or any other dramatist. * It is possible that the attack on the audience is so complete in this play that the ordinary theatre-goer cannot support the experience.

Delaney's "A Taste of Honey" (1958) uses naturalistic language in a way similar to almost all the plays of the late 1950's. While such plays as Wesker's "Chicken Soup with Barley" and "Live Like Pigs" belonged to the London environment, in the same year (1958) Delaney's work was seen as the first precursor of a regionally-based drama, using a language characteristic of one small area of Britain, and thus gaining specificity and familiarity. But during the 1960's the movement in the work of almost all the dramatists was away from this type of narrowly-based naturalism towards the type of universalised modern idiom with which Pinter, Osborne and Saunders enlarge their points of reference. Delaney's language in the play has affinities with the realistic feeling of early Bond and Rudkin, but uses the simple alienation and punctuation techniques of music and dance at the beginning and end of each scene, very much in the way that Osborne puts the naturalistic conversation scenes of "The Entertainer" in a music-hall context.

Phrases from television and advertising make their appearance throughout the play: much of the characters' self-examination is in terms familiar to us from those media or the newspapers and this increases the contemporaneity of reference as well as contrasting in the manner of Orton a dead language with a live reality:

JO: ...and we're supposed to be living off her immoral earnings. **

.

HELEN: Children owe their parents these little attentions. ***

The frequent "throwaway" lines in the third person and consciously repeated clichés manage to create the impression of tired acceptance

* "...the slice-of-life introduction and the carefully documentary setting are only the bait which leads audiences cheerfully into his trap." (J R Taylor, "Anger and After" P 306)
**Act I Sc I P 7
*** Act I Sc I P 8

of reality which is the keynote of the play. The heavy sarcasm has the same effect, as it is repeated by the characters without conviction, the conversation consisting of a series of verbal signals which have little relationship with the surface meaning:

HELEN: Of course, you know I can't bear to be parted from you. *

The humour of the comedians' routines which are submerged within the language shows a slight movement away from naturalism which never really materialises:

JO: I couldn't believe my eyes. He was thin, weak-chinned, with a funny turned-up nose.

HELEN: It wasn't his nose I was interested in.
(Tugboat heard). **

Helen's irony continues - "I'm a cruel, wicked woman" - "Independent working woman" - to enliven the rather directionless dialogue until Peter enters. Here the pace quickens into a real conflict situation, and as always where the plot is to be advanced, the short, staccato, single-syllabled language cuts through the jokes and clichés:

JO: Ordering me about like a servant! The kettle's not boiling. I suppose she hasn't told you about me.

PETER: Christ!

HELEN: Go and lay the table.

JO: No.

HELEN: Well, do something. Turn yourself into a bloody termite and crawl into the wall or something, but make yourself scarce. ***

until the situation adjusts itself and the slower, more cliché-ridden language returns.

Scene II contrasts reality with falsity, in the very simple language where, only occasionally, because of the characters' embarrassment, does facetiousness break through:

JO: I like that. Can I keep it?

BOY: Yes, take it, my soul and all, everything.

JO: Thanks. I know, I can use my hair ribbon for my ring. Do it up for me.

BOY: Pretty neck you've got.

JO: Glad you like it. It's my schoolgirl complexion. ****

But after the decisions of the relationship are made, as in Scene I,

* Act I Sc I P 8

** Act I Sc I P 11

*** Act I Sc I P 16 - 17

**** Act I Sc II P 24

the language retreats again from direct expression of feelings:

BOY: It's a sad story, Jo. Once, I was a happy young man, not a care in the world. Now I'm trapped into a barbaric cult ... *

At the end there is even a reference to Shakespeare, which seems out of character in this scene:

BOY: Why? Do you object to the 'gross clasps of the lascivious Moor'? **

Delaney seems to find it necessary to include everything in the dialogue; the references are not only contemporary, but literary and even, in Act II, biblical: "And he took up his bed and walked". The return to childhood of Act II Scene I is illustrated by the language as well as by props such as the balloons; the nursery rhymes are naturalistically introduced by the brand name reference:

JO: ...They taste like dog food.
GEOFF: Spratts!
JO: You look like a spratt. Jack Spratt, who'd eat no fat ... ***

The increasing conflict and aggression towards the end of the play decreases the convoluted, self-conscious nature of the language as the characters become more involved in the action, and posture less, while the nursery rhymes round off the end in keeping with the relatively light tone used throughout:

HELEN: Put it on the stage and call it Blackbird.
JO: As I was going up Pippin Hill,
Pippin Hill was dirty ****

Delaney's use of the dancing and musical entrances and exits in this play has the same effect - of alienation and division of phases of the action - on the mainly naturalistic language and set, as Brecht's exposed lights and narrator techniques have on his plots. This counteracts the claustrophobic effect which would otherwise be produced by the realistic set, props, and the "fourth wall" nature of the play's relationship with the audience.

* Act I Sc II P 25
** Act I Sc II P 38
*** Act II Sc I P 51
**** Act II Sc II P 87

The work of Wesker is much less diverse than that of many of the other dramatists in terms of staging and language. Wesker's output is also governed by his politico-social purpose in all his plays, except the uncharacteristic "The Four Seasons", and his linguistic technique, subordinated to the subject more than in most other modern drama, is much more consistent. * Wesker's work, unlike Arden's, does not clearly demonstrate sharply different uses of language or clear stages of development. It is clear, however, that the movement from "Chicken Soup with Barley" to "Their Very Own and Golden City" shows an increasing use of realism as opposed to naturalism in linguistic style, to parallel the change from emphasis on the past to emphasis on the future. I have chosen for detailed study three plays which demonstrate Wesker's use of dialect writing and regionalism of setting. "Roots" (1959, June) uses language which is much more intensely 'placed', socially, historically and geographically, than his other plays. "The Kitchen" (1959, September), although produced in the same year, makes a complete contrast in its cosmopolitan language, fast pace and tightly constructed dialogue. "Their Very Own and Golden City" (1966) embodies both the rhetorical writing of the trilogy and the deeply personal language of relationships developed through "Chips with Everything" and "The Four Seasons". Wesker says in the introduction to "Roots":

This a play about Norfolk people; it could certainly be a play about any country people and the moral could certainly extend to the metropolis. But as it is about Norfolk people it is important that some attempt is made to find out how they talk. **

This demonstrates both his commitment to naturalism in language, and his wish that the meaning of the play should extend from its restricted setting. The accuracy which he requires from actors and documents in a detailed instruction on pronunciation, makes the use of language in this play new in English drama. Wesker's dominant mode of expression in "Roots", the highly specific regional vocabulary

* "I'm tired of implication and subtlety. I hope that my alternative is not banality. I desperately want to be simple and direct." (Wesker: "Art is not Enough" in Twentieth Century Vol. CLXIX (1961) 1008 P 194)

** "Note on Pronunciation" P 83

and phrasing, has no real parallel in 'dialect plays' like "Hobson's Choice" or "The Daughter-in-Law"; nor do these embody the kind of dialect tradition of the Irish movement at the Abbey Theatre, and so are not available in the same way for Wesker to draw on. After the articulate and urbanised language of "Chicken Soup with Barley", the language of "Roots" emphasises Wesker's preoccupation with the theme of communication between classes, across social, educational, and later (in "The Kitchen") national barriers. "Roots", indeed, is an acid test for this section of my work, as it simultaneously demonstrates and discusses communication via language.

Jimmy and Jenny's conversation, opening the play, acts also as an introduction to the dialect for the audience:

JENNY: Sit you down then an' I'll git you your supper on the table.

JIMMY: Blust gal! I can't eat yit. *

This establishes the mode of speech as a norm in a domestic setting in order to bring out the contrast first of Beatie's own language, and then of her reporting of Ronnie's. His words, as portrayed by Beatie, contrast with the environment firstly in their lack of dialect and their intonation, or tone, and only secondly in subject. As the play progresses and Beatie quotes him more and more, so the family notices less and less what is said, but more the patronising and intellectual tone in which it is said, so they fail to take in most of the subject-matter. The characterisation of Ronnie, which is central to Wesker's purpose, brings out an aspect of his language which continues throughout his work: when a subject of importance is stated, the naturalism of the dialogue often breaks down under the pressure of the necessity for direct communication to the audience. Hence the difference between:

JIMMY: Manchester Guardian? Blimey Joe - he don' believe in hevin' much fun then? **

and

JIMMY: What's alive about a person that reads books and looks at paintings and listens to classical music? ***

Immediately, the subject of words in themselves becomes important in

* Act I P 86

** Act I P 83

*** Act I P 89

the play:

BEATIE: 'Well, language is words', he'd say as though he were telling me a secret. 'It's bridges, so that you can get safely from one place to another.' *

Beatie/Ronnie's long, fast and involved speeches contrast with the slow, reflective, gossip language of the Beales. The silence after Jimmy leaves** is a punctuation mark before the more intimate conversation, rather like the rest between movements of a symphony. The length and quality of the on-stage silences is a measure, in Wesker's work, of the type of language he is writing, and they have many different functions. This emphasis on differences of pace to dramatise reflection, conversation or argument is one of the main consistent aspects of Wesker's technique. The use of differing pace is not used, as it is by Arden, to play on the audience's sympathy and degree of alienation, since Wesker's social purpose forbids, even temporarily, the complete alienation from the traditional 'villain' found in Arden's work. There are exceptions, notably in the treatment of the officers in "Chips with Everything", and parts of the treatment of the unionists in "Their Very Own and Golden City"; by and large, though, the audience's sympathy is extended - and expected to extend - to everyone on the stage. A new aspect of Ronnie is found in Beatie's long speech of explanation of the beginning of her relationship with him:

BEATIE: ...From the first day I went to work as waitress in the Dell Hotel and saw him working in the kitchen I fell in love ***

The language is simple in structure and with little overt dialect in vocabulary or phrasing, and the use of this type of intermediate between the language of Norfolk and of Ronnie leads one to believe that Wesker could not have made the heroine of his play as inarticulate as Jenny or Mrs Bryant: thus Wesker is reaping the rewards of specificity of language in a feeling of the authentic, but having it both ways with the articulate Beatie and the reported intellectual Ronnie to make his points. **** A contrast with this method can be seen in the early plays of Bond, where the dialect writing is all, so to speak, on the same level, and any comment on the overall situation

* Act I P 90

** Act I P 92

*** Act I P 95

**** The role of Larry in "Afore Night Come" is similar.

must come either from within the dialect format, or be implicit.

The rest of Act I develops the subject of words and communication in various ways. The fact is reported that most of the family is not speaking:

JENNY:You know she and Mother don't talk to each other?
BEATIE: What, again? Whose fault is it this time? *

.

JENNY: Well, Susan and Mother don't talk neither so you get a lot of peace-making to do.

BEATIE: Well go t'hell, what's broken them two up? **

This emphasises the general theme of lack of 'bridges' (Ronnie's words), while Jenny's mimicking of the child Beatie -

JENNY: 'Tis my gel. I wan'a 'nana, a 'nana, a 'nana ... ***

- reflects Beatie's mimicking of Ronnie, showing it as a common trait. Stan Mann introduces a note of authentic rural tradition to balance the sophistication of Ronnie's reported speeches, and the domestic details of housekeeping money and the realities of life and health round off the movement in subdued and calm language, in preparation for the central Act.

The second Act begins with Mrs Bryant calling to the cat: in fact, in all three opening scenes the subject of communication is alluded to, as, in the first, Daphne is off-stage and calling, in the second the cat is offstage and does not come, and in the third Beatie is off-stage but calling down. Stan and Mrs Bryant's conversation uses the well-established and traditional technique for invoking rural dialect, that of repetition:

STAN: Yearp. Pass the ole time away. Pass the ole time.
MRS BRYANT: Time drag heavy then?
STAN: Yearp. Time drag heavy. She do that. Time drag so slow, I get to thinkin' it's Monday when it's still Sunday. ****

But Wesker doesn't overdo this, and stylistically it works, in conjunction with the relatively lively dialogue around it. Such uses are legitimate in context, but Wesker's doctrinaire 'voice' in Stan Mann doesn't seem to ring true:

* Act I P 98
** Act I P 98
*** Act I P 99
**** Act II Sc I P 107

STAN: No, they 'ont that! Run ole things the years ent they?
 (Pause) Them young 'uns is all right, though, long as
 they don't let no-one fool them, long as they think it
 out themselves. *

It is the context of Stan's contemporaries, revealing how age brings bitterness, that prevents this sort of generous intelligence towards the young from carrying any conviction. The references throughout the scene to the fish-van and the buses however, probably only seem hackneyed with hindsight: Wesker's careful ear for language has been much imitated since in less legitimate ways, but here it is authentic:

Mrs BRYANT: There go Sam Martin's fish van **

In the centre of the Act is the 'wasp game' - another of Wesker's 'organised' silences parallel to those in Acts I and III. Almost every one of his plays contains a mime section of vigorous or intensely physical action and comedy which functions as a rest and balance to the highly verbal quality of the plays. The ~~coat~~^{cake}-stealing scene in "Chips with Everything" is the most famous one, but the pastry-making in "The Four Seasons" is similar. In "The Kitchen" the technique is turned upside down; here a quiet, reflective, talkative sequence - the 'dreams' - balances the violent actions and words around it, while in "Their Very Own and Golden City" the hero's handstands, having the same function, are distributed through the play. The naturalistic introduction and context of the song -

BEATIE: Oh a dialogue I'll sing you as true as me life ... ***

- is being used to make Wesker's point about the merits of folk music, a completely different technique from that of the later Arden, but somewhat akin to his earlier use of folk-songs. Neither, however, is used for specific comments in the same way as the central song of "Chips With Everything" - "The Cutty Wren".

The argument over electricity in Scene II again dramatises communication, when Mr Bryant refuses to speak directly to his wife. Beatie acts as intermediary:

Mrs BRYANT: Tell him we've got kippers for tea and if he don' want none let him say now.

BEATIE: She says its kippers for tea.

* Act II Sc I P 108

** Act II Sc I P 110

***Act II Sc I P 113

Mr BRYANT: Tell her I'll eat kippers.
BEATIE: He says he'll eat kippers. *

It is again authentic that when Mrs Bryant cannot think of what to say, she repeats ad infinitum her two stories - Jimmy Skelton and Ma Buckley. The generally slow pace and the long speeches reflect the increased intimacy of Beatie and her mother, which is fulfilled at the end of the act in genuine communication:

BEATIE: Listen to that Mother. Is it difficult? Is it squit?
It's light. It makes me feel light and confident and happy **

Frank Bryant's endless repetitions and tired jokes in Act III authentically fill gaps in the uneasy social situation - it is such words which in a slow rural society set him up as a social type:

FRANK: The mysterious stranger has not yet come - we await. ***
He also, by contrast, shows the healthy single-mindedness of the other characters and their unashamed expressions of feeling:

JENNY: Well, I aren't waiting long 'cos I'm hungry. ****

The humour of Jimmy's apocryphal 'association' brings the audience in to the family circle and establishes the intimacy to contrast with the later more overt aggression. The central silence of this Act comes before Beatie's baiting of her mother, and makes a movement into more complex identifications by the audience as Beatie's picture of herself is gradually shown to be distorted. Again, as Wesker's own voice comes out in the 'Judgement' section through Ronnie and through Beatie, the structure of the language seems a little artificial, and the dialect is only tentatively produced so that his doctrinal meaning is unmistakable.

In the middle of an almost hysterical outburst of quotations by Beatie, the letter arrives and produces a complete and violent contrast. Whereas Beatie's quoting of Ronnie, up to now, has been all on his side, Mrs Bryant's reading of the letter ("Takes letter and reads contents in a dead flat but loud voice - as though it were a proclamation") provides a new picture of Ronnie, who is, after all, backing out. The sympathies of the audience, which have been wavering, are suddenly reversed by this simple technique. Now Beatie's real

* Act II Sc 2 P 123
** Act II Sc 2 P 129
*** Act III P 133
**** Act III P 133

character emerges and the other members of the family use aggressive questioning, a tactic which was formerly left to her. The climax of this movement is found where (in what is for her an extremely long speech) Mrs Bryant finally turns on Beatie and attacks her both physically and verbally. Suddenly it is shown that she can communicate in a crisis, and in fact she shows real insight into the relationship between Beatie and Ronnie:

Mrs BRYANT: ...When you tell me I was stubborn, what you mean was that he told you you was stubborn - eh? When you tell me I don't understand, you mean you don't understand isn't it

But it is also her goading that awakens Beatie:

Mrs BRYANT: Go on - you say you know something we don't so you do the talking. Talk - go on, talk gal. **

Paradoxically she is at last teaching Beatie, just when she says she cannot. At the end of the play, as Beatie's long speeches take over the dialogue and she finally finds her voice, it is in rejecting Ronnie that she finds her own way:

BEATIE: Oh, he thinks we count all right - living in mystic communion with nature. Living in mystic bloody communion with nature. But us count? Count Mother?

The voice she finds is, with her real background, more real than Ronnie's, and by the end she has gone further than he has: Wesker's subject - communication - informs the end of the play:

BEATIE: I'm talking. Jenny, Frankie, Mother - I'm not quoting no more. ****

Her rejection by the family cannot destroy her personal triumph, embodied in the last words of the play:

BEATIE: I'm beginning on my own two feet - I'm beginning ... †

"The Kitchen", first produced in the same year as "Roots" (1959), is a complete contrast in three ways: in setting, as it is an urban and working atmosphere, in structure, with its subsidiary and

* Act III P 145
** Act III P 145
*** Act III P 147
**** Act III P 148
† Act III P 148

final climaxes, and in language, with the complex mixture of nationalities involved. Wesker chooses a balance between ordinary English and complete incomprehensibility for each of the foreign nationals, and thus the different levels of vocabulary and phrasing which in "Roots" were concerned with understanding and sympathy, here become more difficult to analyse. The central character, Peter, speaks good English as a result of his long stay in this country, but occasionally breaks into German with his compatriots. He is contrasted with the Irish Kevin (the new cook) in both language and temperament; Kevin's easy-going, slow conversation provides a foil to the quick, idiomatic and aggressive words of Peter. The different national groups - the Cypriots, the Maltese, the Germans - create two levels of relationships reflected by the degree of intimacy of the language used. Within his own national group each character is more outgoing and willing to discuss personal problems, while making mainly social conversation with the others. By his choice of characters, and by making the hero non-English, Wesker again emphasises his theme of communication. He writes in the opening stage directions:

(As he lights each oven the noise grows from a small to a loud ferocious roar. There will be this continuous battle between the dialogue and the noise of the ovens.) *

The oven noise is a dramatic symbol for the constraints of the actual process of work on communication, and as such also forces the audience to listen carefully: each phrase or sentence emerges from a very insistent background, with the result that the pauses are of a different quality from those of other plays, being filled with noise except for those at the very end.

Work, rather than words, begins the play, and this sets the whole tone - that what the characters say is secondary to what they do. The conversation is first about the work:

MAX: And don't forget my puff pastry tomorrow.
 RAYMOND: Usual?
 MAX: Usual.
 PAUL: (to Ray as he returns) It's religieuse today? **

Only then does it deal with the reported events of the night before.

* Act I P 19
 ** Act I P 20

The opening characters - Max, Paul and Raymond - speak good English, and Wesker uses them to introduce the audience gradually to the different uses of language. Thus the broken English of Dimitri can be used to create sympathy and identification in the audience -

DIMITRI: I make it, Paul, I make it. There! She does not look handsome. I'm sorry for that - *

or to introduce Wesker's voice in Dimitri's condemnation of a factory society:

DIMITRI: Knob. That perhaps I would put in. All day I would screw in knobs. I tell you, in a factory a man makes a little piece till he becomes a little piece, you know what I mean? **

The simple, single-syllable words put over the point forcefully. One of the two aspects of the music which is always found at some point in Wesker's plays, now emerges naturalistically from the new record player, and some of the characters dance; the second is Peter's song, which in inanity and meaninglessness fits in well with both his and the kitchen's character - even the rising and falling scale of notes mirrors the climaxes of the play.

The latent aggression of all the characters first emerges in a conflict between nationalities:

NICK: Ah no, bloody hell! You get yours from the veg room. That is for me, that is what I got ready.

BERTHA: (nastily) You don't bloody hell me, my son. You bloody hell in your own country. ***

This sharpens the attention of the audience for Peter's entrance. His high spirits and 'foreignness' are exaggerated in his first words:

PETER: Hya, hya, hya ... auf geht's, auf geht's. ****

and the language becomes more clipped and economical as the work speeds up, also flaring into quarrels for no reason. As usual, Wesker uses an articulate and well-established character for explanations:

PAUL: ...A quarrel starts and it goes on for months. When one of them is prepared to apologise so the other doesn't know how to accept *****

* Act I P 22
** Act I P 23
*** Act I P 24
**** Act I P 25
***** Act I P 26

Marango's entrance is a mine, accompanied by the noise of the ovens, allowing Peter full rein to describe him in his big speech. The scene of the waitresses' meal seems naturalistic but this effect is achieved by a construction similar to that used later in "Their Very Own and Golden City", as each waitress in turn is given a single sentence, and these combine to make up a prose pattern. As the kitchen work speeds up towards the interval, Peter is the only one who enjoys it:

(At this moment a queue has formed at Peter's station and he now rushes there laughing like a merry fool going into battle.) *

Now the viewpoint narrows to Peter and Kevin alone and this dramatises Peter's sudden aggression:

PETER: Oh no, no, no, no, my friend. The plate room, the plate room, in the plate room you'll find them. This is mine. I have need of it. **

As the curtain falls, connecting phrasing and even syntax breaks under the strain.

The 'dream' section, in the second half of Act I, is an attempt by Wesker to round out the main characters by making them more human, but it seems a little artificial. A version of his play written now would probably leave out this section to put ~~more~~ single-minded emphasis on the social commentary of the working scenes, but this would also result in the loss of the reflective and imagic language balancing that of the two meal services. The sequence allows Wesker to speak through Paul in the long speech on his neighbour:

PAUL;I'll tell you, Next door me, next door where I live is a bus driver. Comes from Hoxton ***

The sentiments seem out of place, however, just as the length of the speech is out of proportion in the mouth of a relatively minor character.

The second Act is much shorter and contains more violent activity, but it follows the classical technique of having the most violent action off-stage. Hence the waitress's collapse happens in the dining-room - all that is heard is a cry - and the incident can be reported by the characters, again putting the emphasis on the words used rather than on stage action. Peter smashes plates to the floor

* Stage direction, Act I P 40

** Act I P 41

*** Act I P 45

on stage:

PETER: Leave it! Leave it there! I'll serve you. Me! Me!
Is my kingdom here. This is the side where I live.
This. *

Then he slashes the gas pipe (out of sight), and cuts himself (in the dining-room off-stage) so that the violence of his action does not detract from the concentration on language by being shown on stage. Peter's last words in the play are both apposite and economical --

PETER: (to Alfredo) Now he cares - **

-leaving the end to Marange in his longest speech, as Peter has gone beyond language in his desperation and it is no longer possible for him to communicate. Marange takes Wesker's points somewhat too forcefully in the same way that Jimmy Beales did in "Roots":

MARANGE:I give work, I pay well, yes? They eat what they want, don't they? I don't know what more to give a man. He works, he eats, I give him money. This is life, isn't it? I havn't made a mistake, have I? I live in the right world, don't I? ***

He is made something of a caricature in order to make Wesker's moral, in the same way that Paul stepped out of character to deliver his long speech.

The play breaks new ground in being based on characters for whom English is a second language, and the simple and naturalistic prose reflects the changing pace of the play; the effect is somewhat artificial in places, as it so often is in Wesker's work, when he wishes to put forward a particular socio-political point. The forcefulness of the language in general, however, suits the polemical purpose and the interactions of character look forward to the linguistic patterns of "Their Very Own and Golden City".

Towards the end of the period, after what is generally considered an excursion - "The Four Seasons" (1965) - Wesker returns to the political and social messages and ^{urban} ~~northern~~ settings of his early work, with "Their Very Own and Golden City" (1966). It is again a play in which levels of dialect are important in our feelings of sympathy

towards the characters; it is above all concerned with the type of

* Act II P 59
** Act II P 60
*** Act II P 61

rhetoric which Beatie reports in "Roots" and Paul and Peter display in "The Kitchen".

The first word of the play, 'I', establishes its tone - that of individuality against the monobloc, of idiosyncrasy against uniformity: the hero is very much a central figure, recalling more the overwhelming her-figures of John Osborne's early work than the integrated characters of earlier Wesker. Andy is the only lynch-pin to hold the diversity of this play together. The opening scene shows Wesker using naturalistic language in a rhetorical mode - the opening soliloquy could be said in real life, and the repetition of Jessie's comments strikes a note of authenticity in the context of youthful naivety:

JESSIE: Do you talk to yourself?
 ANDY: Every man should have a cathedral in his back garden.
 JESSIE: I've never heard you talk to yourself.
 ANDY: Look at the way that roof soars.
 JESSIE: Talk to yourself and you'll go mad. *

The keynote of rhetorical imagination is already set, and this illustrates another aspect of Wesker's preoccupation with communication; throughout the play drama and reality, word and truth, are contrasted. An extension of this is that those characters who say what they mean, and express their feelings, are those for whom the audience and Wesker feel sympathy, while the double-dealing of the authority figures - the unions and the government - is dramatised by hypocrisy of speech. The repetitive and forthright phrases, as Andy puts his points, are again founded on naturalism - they not only drum in Wesker's meanings, but dramatise the youth and vigour of the speaker:

ANDY: Stoney, you're sulkin'. Don't sulk, Stoney. A thousand books said 'no', honest they did. **

Andy's parody of Casper at the end of the scene recalls Beatie's quoting of Ronnie, and is often used in the play as an economical method of reporting incidents and words offstage. In this case, the words introduce Casper, who turns out in the next scene to be and do exactly as described, and thus fulfils the audience's expectation in humour. Scene II shows a development in Wesker's treatment of dialect: instead of establishing, as in his earlier work, a rigid 'depth' of dialect for each character and sticking to it, he now makes the distinction that

* Act I Sc I P 13
 ** Act I Sc I P 15

differing company changes speech. Thus when talking with old Casper, Andy's dialect deepens:

ANDY: Nay, I'm jesting, tha's a gentleman, I'd never rock thee. *

In the next scene Andy speaks almost normal English, in his intimate conversations with Jessie, and the naturalism of the language is balanced by Andy remaining on stage for the following scene, which takes place at a different time and place - a duality of continuity and discontinuity.

Scene IV introduces the contrast between age and youth, experience and innocence, which replaces here the urban/rural, class or nationality contrasts of the other work. The language of age is represented by Jake Latham, in a dialect worn down from its original vitality:

JAKE: You mean I've got to return something for that dreary old medal of service? All right, I'll ask a question then. I know it's answers the young always want but I'm afraid this old 'un's going to be different - that 's my reputation anyway, being different, a stale sort of reputation I'm feeling now. **

The discussion moves, Weskeresque, to an argument about the meaning of words and slogans:

JAKE: Brother! Let's face facts! Let us stand together! It's only with strong determination that we can go forward! Jargon. ***

But the slogans are shown to depend on those who use them: Andy's direct emotional appeal to Jake -

ANDY: Jake Latham! What could you teach me? ****

-breaks through the barrier of cynicism which he has set up. Again, Wesker uses a repetition of words or phrase, in a different guise, to tie together scenes separated by both time and place, as at the beginning of Scene V:

JAKE: When you come to me and say 'teach me', what do you mean? No, first - why me? †

* Act I Sc 2 P 18
** Act I Sc 4 P 22
*** Act I Sc 4 P 23
**** Act I Sc 4 P 24
† Act I Sc 5 P 24

Jake's speeches have more liveliness here in their personal context, and he can make history human. Wesker's own voice can be heard, but as the scene is well introduced and in context, and the audience expects and accepts the subject, the political lesson is quite appropriate:

JAKE: ...So the directors of the Bank demanded to see the Prime Minister and give him their view of the situation. And what was their view? They said to him: 'MacDonald, old son, this isn't a financial problem, it is a political one *

The conversation with Kate at the end of the scene, continues in Scene 6, in spite of a gap in time, to link the play together, but quickly becomes aggressive as Kate makes a direct attack on Andy:

KATE: How can you dare?
 ANDY: I - blast you, woman, I'll not have anyone talk at me like this.
 KATE: Honesty hurts you, then!
 ANDY: It's your tone of voice, it gets in the way. **

Alternating scenes of heightened language with casual conversation, Wesker again introduces rhetoric in Scene 7: Andy gets up on the tomb just as Ronnie gets on a chair in "Roots" and the certainty and irreverent, egotistical force are the same:

ANDY: Now, dearly beloved apprentices, my ragged-arsed brothers, my sermon today comes from the Bible. ***

The method of Socratic questioning makes for good, rousing propaganda:

ALL: Get rid of the rotten houses!
 ANDY: Right. Who built the rotten houses?
 ALL: The property owners. ****

Here the dialogue becomes liturgical in structure, and shows the rough and direct nature of the play's language in its complete simplicity and attack. But the development of the technique in Scene 9, where Paul and Stoney quote Andy, begins to seem a little overdone:

PAUL: 'Politicians are men we hire to mend roads and tend to the sewers.'
 STONEY: 'The Prime Minister is an accountant. Give the city to its artists and teachers.' †

The tone here can only be found acceptable in terms of the move away

* Act I Sc 5 P 25
 ** Act I Sc 6 P 30
 *** Act I Sc 7 P 33
 **** Act I Sc 7 P 33
 † Act I Sc 9 P 39

from naturalism and towards stress on the rhythmical elements of language. The imminence of war is referred to but not overstressed, while the repetition of Jake and Andy's argument, in Scene 10, dramatises the non-communication of youth and age; towards the end of the scene, however, humour and understanding return, and again the mode of expression returns, significantly, to dialect:

JESSIE: Grumpy and pompous - all at thirty, my!

ANDY: Oh God, Jessie, shall us ever build cities? Shall us ever stop wasting energy and build these cities? *

The viewpoint again moves out into public life at the meeting - away from intimacy and towards rhetoric. Jake is found to have his own powerful voice:

JAKE: - this is my faith, this is where I stand and if necessary, this is where I will die. **

Andy's is much more direct, and his use of repetition and rhythm produces good, forceful propaganda - it can be seen that his practice with his friends has borne fruit:

ANDY: Facts: Jake Latham is the man who calls for unity, but look - he takes a stand that cracks the very solidarity he wants.
How dare he argue then for unity?
The argument is that in a war we should reply by paralysing every nation with a strike.
Facts.
Who will strike? The unions are destroyed in most of Europe.
Who's left? ***

The scene is immediately balanced by one of poetic, lyrical language with Biblical and prophetic tone and musical rhythm, which ends the act on a hopeful note:

ANDY: Build us cities of light. ****

In violent contrast with the hopes at the end of the war, Andy is shown at the beginning of Act II fighting with words for the life of his idea, and stung by the Chairman's smugness into constant contradictions and even self-parody:

ANDY: Don't stop me, I'm in full flight. Socialist! 'Four

* Act I Sc 10 P 43
** Act I Sc 11 P 44
*** Act I Sc 11 P 46
**** Act I Sc 12 P 48

walls, Mr Cobham, to keep out wind and rain ... *

The Chairman's sanity and grasp is answered in vague words by Andy:

ANDY: a cheap skate dreariness, a dull caution that kills the spirit of all movements **

The report of the rest of the argument, in the next scene, retains the interest of the audience by keeping variety in the language, and giving a different viewpoint:

KATE: And when you told him that not even the gods will forgive him what did he say?

ANDY: He'd take the risk.

KATE: And so?

ANDY: And so, - nothing! ***

Wesker's rhetorical lyricism returns as Kate whips up Andy's emotion, in strong contrast to the previous scene:

ANDY: I haven't the language of heroism, Kate.

KATE: Then forge it.

ANDY: From what? The words of politicians?

KATE: Forge it.

ANDY: From the old poets?

KATE: Forge it. ****

Scenes 3, 4 and 5, before the 'continuous scene', portray the germination of the city idea mainly as a battle of words, alternating the prosaic and the lyrical. Simple economic planning in specific terms contrasts with a heightened and personal language of stories and dreams: the scenes are even more continuous than anything before, to prepare for absence of conventional scene divisions in the rest.

The first part of the 'continuous scene' shows a retreat from naturalism in language which echoes the retreat from realism in continuity of stage set, place and time. Individual characters are more and more subordinated to the necessity of building a complete movement, and rhetoric drowns individuality in passages where the group are only voices arranged like the responses in church to build up a picture:

STONEY: Variety - that's what you see. Roads that are wide and alleys that ramble.

PAUL: Bold squares and intimate corners...

STONEY: There's colour in that city, and sound.

PAUL: And movement of line and patterns of mass. †

* Act II Sc I P 50
** Act II Sc I P 52
*** Act II Sc 2 P 52
**** Act II Sc 2 P 54
† Act II Sc 6 P 65

As Andy sells out gradually to political pressure, and moves more and more in exalted circles, so dialect again becomes important. Sometimes it emerges to contrast his essential bluntness with that of the unfamiliar environment -

ANDY: 'Aye',
MAITLAND: 'Aye', he said. He still retains his dialect, charming. I'm delighted to have met you. *

- while at other times it is a defiance:

ANDY: (defiantly) I said - aye. **

But it is always self-conscious where before it was natural. Final permission to start building is not given in so many words, but is implied, to chime in with the atmosphere of 'wheeler-dealing':

KATE: There's a great deal of political gain in being benevolent to the left.
(The party breaks up. Only Andy is left. The thuds and scrapings heard from a building site now echo.) ***

The long, completely naturalistic section of the General Purposes Committee, which forces Andy to another major compromise, acts as a counterweight to the exalted and imaginative language around it, and again the argument ends up about words - those of the trade union constitutions. The same technique - of parts subordinated to the whole - is used here, but only lightly, thus retaining the natural feeling:

CAMBRIDGE: I'll tell you frankly. Your project focused attention on the constitutions of nearly every trade union in the country -
WORTHINGTON: - and nearly every constitution declares its fervent aim as being the final take-over of the means of production -
MATHESON: - which everyone has forgotten - thank God -
CAMBRIDGE: - until now. ****

Every character quotes every other character through the 'continuous scene'; although there are shown tremendous and unbridgeable conflicts of interest, there is no difficulty, for any of the characters or the audience, in understanding exactly what is being, or has been, said. Wesker can move from solidly-based comprehension into the higher realms of rhetoric, rhythmic responses and lyricism without

* Act II Sc 6 P 71
** Act II Sc 6 P 78
*** Act II Sc 6 P 72
**** Act II Sc 6 P 76

obfuscating the issues. Even Jessie, the most prosaic of the main characters, fits the linguistic mood with a sort of free-verse appeal:

JESSIE: I'm a good mother, you say, I cook, I mend, I even iron your shirts to your satisfaction, but words, I can never find words. I'm not a fool; I've been made to feel it often enough, but I'm not a fool *

At the end the first visual rendering of the city to the audience is upheld by a small triumph in the T.U.C., and the language again becomes lively for a while, but in the banquet scene Andy sounds exactly like Maitland, and his use of the language, and the notable absence of dialect, shows him at last both old and 'sold out':

ANDY: ..Having spent a lifetime bullying traditionalists in order to bring into being a revolutionary project, it seems right to stop bullying for a moment and share at least one of the traditions of my opponents. ***

The dead language of the card game is contrasted, finally, with the return to the vitality and hope of the past, together with a return to naturalism at the very end of the play.

The development of Wesker's use of language through the period is towards a greater domination of the rhythmical and rhetorical elements of his prose. There is an increasing contrast between the lyrical, private conversations and monologues and the rhetorical public statements, and the hierarchy of dialect takes on more complex forms. Although the later plays move away from the very specific setting and language of his early work, they still retain the concentration on communication as the subject, and the dramatic language always remains direct enough to carry over the message to which it is subordinated. Where Arden and Pinter are concerned with meanings drawn from word patterns, Wesker (like Osborne) is concerned with his subject first, and the means of communication are fitted to it. A comparison with Pinter's use of language will show the range of attitudes possible within the assumptions of stage naturalism.

From 1956 to 1968 the work of Harold Pinter shows in broad

* Act II Sc 6 P 82

** Act II Sc 6 P 87

terms a movement away from naturalism of setting, staging and action which is accompanied by an increasing concentration on the power of the word in itself. Pinter not only wrote more plays than the other playwrights of the period, but they are also more varied in style and linguistic use than is immediately obvious: many themes, however, can be traced in almost all his work, whatever its subject-matter. My selection of works for linguistic study is made easier by the similarities of the plays written at roughly the same time: thus the study of one, within a tentative group, can be applicable to the others. "The Birthday Party" (1958), Pinter's first performed play, establishes the use of naturalistic and ritualistic language, constantly referred symbolism and complex changes of pace. The plays of 1960 - "The Room", "The Dumb Waiter" and "The Caretaker" - show development in these directions; characters are given equal weight in the self-revelatory speeches which punctuate the work, as well as within the intensely naturalistic conversation pieces. The plays "A Night Out" (1960), "The Dwarfs" (1960) and "A Slight Ache" (1961) * were all written first for radio, and show even more emphasis on words, as befits the medium. The view of life given, and of the characters, is much more subjective in the sense that the boundary between truth and untruth becomes a shifting rather than an absolute phenomenon growing out of the language used. Most plays of the 1960's - from "The Collection" (1962) to "The Basement" (1967) - were written first for television, and extend the paradoxes of the radio plays into a visual medium continuing the emphasis on the senses, with constant reference to sight, smell and touch, which is characteristic of so many Pinter plays. The influence of the camera has made the word subordinate to the action in all these plays except for the one play written for the stage during this period: "The Homecoming" (1965). Here action grows out of words and the form of the play is again naturalistic to force the audience to accept the characters as convincing, and hence examine their actions as real and important. At the end of the period "Landscape" (1968) is the beginning of a completely different type of play - more a lyrical poem for two voices

* These plays were first performed on radio in 1960, 1960 and 1959 respectively, but the above dates are the first stage performances.

than a drama, and using dramatic language as a non-realist frame for direct communication.

The realistic set which opens Act I of "The Birthday Party" provides the background for the seemingly total naturalism of the language. The first words demonstrate a failure of communication, and this characterises all Pinter's work up to "Landscape" at the end of the period. Of the two speakers, not only is one off stage, but at first the character the audience sees doesn't speak, and the character who speaks is not seen. The exchange opens up immediately the complexities of Pinter's dialogue with the audience:

MEG: Is that you, Petey?
(Pause)
Petey, is that you?
(Pause)
Petey?
PETEY: What?
MEG: Is that you?
PETEY: Yes, it's me.
MEG: What? *

The repetitions and use of cliché phrases and adjectives - "nice", "good", "bad", - in the short phrases of the opening action provide a sense of total authenticity for the audience, a shock of recognition and complete familiarity. The effect is to make them strongly believe in the characters. Here again is a technique used throughout Pinter's work - opening naturalistic dialogue to force the audience to accept the characters on his terms, and consequently to accept their subsequent metamorphoses of action and language. Meg's attempts to start a conversation, though largely automatic, expect more response from Petey than do the later rhetorical speeches of the other characters, and also illustrate Pinter's main use of the pause, which is simply as a punctuation point to divide the subjects which are under discussion:

MEG: Is it nice out?
PETEY: Very nice.
(Pause)
MEG: Is Stanley up yet?
PETEY: I don't know. Is he?
MEG: I don't know. **

The sequence is the first of a whole set of conversations through the plays where either two characters are on stage but one does not connect

* Act I P 9
** Act I P10

with the other, or the second character is physically or mentally absent: it is this stress on non-connection which dramatises the climactic moments when immediate understanding is achieved. Here also is found the beginnings of Pinter's gentle ironic humour, as often at the expense of the language itself as at the expense of his characters, which bypasses the characterisation to speak directly to the audience:

MEG: ... I haven't seen him down yet.
PETEY: Well then, he can't be up.
MEG: Haven't you seen him down? *

.

PETEY: Somebody's just had a baby.
MEG: Oh, they haven't! Who?
PETEY: Some girl.
MEG: Who, Petey, who?
PETEY: I don't think you'd know her.
MEG: What's her name?
PETEY: Lady May Splatt.
MEG: I don't know her. **

The inherent importance of words in Pinter's work can be shown when Meg's childish simplicity is portrayed only by her own speech - not, as in earlier drama, through description by other characters or, indeed, her own actions to any great extent. But it is in physical movement that the real communication of a subject is initiated:

PETEY: (turning to her) Oh Meg, two men came up to me on the beach last night ***

The levels of irony become more complex as Pinter makes a small joke at his own expense, a device much over-used by other playwrights:

PETEY: This is a straight show.
MEG: What do you mean?
PETEY: No dancing or singing.
MEG: What do they do there?
PETEY: They just talk. ****

Here the use is subtle enough not to mar the tone. As Meg wakes Stanley up, the shouts and laughter are off stage, foreshadowing a trend in most of Pinter's work where violent action or emotion - rather than

* Act I P 10
** Act I P 11
*** Act I P 12
**** Act I P 13

being directly portrayed - is either heard from offstage or reported by an actor to the audience, thus distancing and alienating the direct emotional effect. In the early work, such as "The Room", this technique is not perfected, but later it is used more and more, and stage effects such as blackouts obscure any action which which cannot be physically removed from the audience's direct experience. The whole development of the technique increases the sense of secrecy, of the unknown - or in other words, of the ritualistic as opposed to the naturalistic theatre.

Although both Stanley and Meg participate in the verbal games, Stanley is shown to be much more calculating:

MEG: I thought you said you didn't sleep.
 STANLEY: Day-dreaming. All night long. And now she won't give me any. Not even a crust of bread on the table.
 (Pause)
 Well, I can see I'll have to go down to one of those smart hotels on the front. *

The first swear-word in the play - Stanley's "bloody" - has no emotion behind it and seems out of place, but it gently introduces the audience to his later unbalance; the emphasis on the language, specifically the vocabulary, is continued in the discussion of "succulent", as the childish verbal games continue. It is significant that it is the decoration of the room, of his personal environment, on which Stanley fixes when he finally breaks out of the game: this preoccupation is to continue through "The Caretaker" to "The Basement":

STANLEY: (violently) Look, why don't you get this place cleaned up! It's a pigsty. And another thing, what about my room? It needs sweeping. It needs papering. I need a new room! **

Different types of conversation are mixed as a note of tension enters the play: Stanley's unrelenting series of questions about the two men degenerates into the repetitions of the "tea" conversation:

STANLEY: What do you mean, you took it away?
 MEG: I took it away.
 STANLEY: What did you take it away for? ***

Here the aggression enters, in passing, a subject to which it does not

* Act I P 15
 ** Act I P 19
 *** Act I P 21

apply. Stanley's struggle, and failure to achieve authority, is one rendered entirely through words and tone of voice:

STANLEY: ... All right. I can ask it from here just as well. (Deliberately). Tell me, Mrs Boles, when you address yourself to me, do you ever ask yourself who exactly you are talking to? Eh? *

The first of Pinter's frequent long speeches of reminiscence occurs as Stanley tries to impress Meg. It contains more connected sentences than later speeches about the past, with more orthodox language structure, but is obviously distorted, and parallels Goldberg's similar speeches in exaggeration and the 'straight talking' slang:

STANLEY: ... A fast one. They pulled a fast one. I'd like to know who's responsible for that. (Bitterly) All right, Jack, I can take a tip **

But Meg finally goes too far in treating him as a child, and his attention jolts back to her with the aggression game of the wheelbarrow, which brings the action back to the present, and introduces Lulu. Stanley's conversation with her has an intimacy, even though it is destroyed from its very inception, which contrasts with the incongruity of Goldberg and McCann. Goldberg's reminiscence speech is parallel to Stanley's earlier one, and has as little connection with real events (and even less with the play's action) except to make even more contrast between the sophisticated urbane Goldberg and the inhabitants of the house. The immediacy of McCann's uncertainty in general, reflected in his uncertainty about the house -

McCANN: How do we know this is the right house? - ***

- shows up the shallowness of Goldberg himself, and the words "true" and "fact" reverberate as symbols counterpointed against the general factual uncertainties of the play. Goldberg's 'officialese' - which says nothing, but comforts McCann by its tone - corresponds to Stanley's earlier attempt at authority, but reflects in its success the ultimate fate of each character:

GOLDBERG: The main issue is a singular issue and quite distinct from your previous work. Certain elements, however,

* Act I P 21
 ** Act I P 23
 *** Act I P 28

might well approximate in points of procedure to some of your other activities. *

This is also later recalled by the ritual of language between the characters of "The Dumb Waiter" on a similar topic. Meg's retelling of Stan's story to Goldberg magnifies the audience's lack of comprehension in her even greater distortion and misunderstanding:

MEG: They were very grateful (Pause) And then they all wanted to give him a tip. And so he took the tip. **

Where Goldberg rules the language, for example, in his use of flattery, the other characters are ruled by it. The silence as Stanley recognises Goldberg's name is beyond words. In a way reminiscent of Arden's characters when they become wordless with emotion, the progress of Stanley's breakdown is to a wordless state in which he is artificially induced into paralysis. *** The drum, at the end of the Act, becomes the symbol of his emotions when he is unable to speak, as it later does in "The Lover".

The beginning of Act II shows the first instance of Pinter moving away from the type of structured and summarised naturalistic dialogue of the first Act, as the whistling of the tune is picked up by both characters. Increasingly, the tone of voice and the rhythmic patterns become of equal importance with what is actually said, and aggression between McCann and Stanley is a current running under the conversation:

STANLEY: I've got a feeling we've met before.
McCANN: No we haven't.
STANLEY: Ever been anywhere near Maidenhead?
McCANN: No. ****

Three contrasting speech styles occur as Stanley sounds out McCann and tries to win him over: the first short, staccato, aggressive words of the 'whistling' episode are followed by Stanley's long and more intimate 'self-revelation' speeches:

STANLEY: No, I think I'll give it up. I've got a small private income, you see †

* Act I P 30
** Act I P 32
*** Stanley's state is similar to that of the son at the end of Ibsen's "Ghosts".
**** Act II P 39
† Act II P 40

Then he returns to a more personal attack on McCann, but the references to the strips of paper make it clear who is in control. It is McCann who is physically violent, and as a result Stan's attempts degenerate into the hysterical last speech before Goldberg enters, and Stan is silent and paralysed like a bird before a cat:

STANLEY: There's a pub down the road serves draught Guinness. Very difficult to get in these parts.... *

Goldberg offers intimate reminiscences:

GOLDBERG: I was telling Mr Boles about my old mum. What days. Yes. When I was a youngster on a Friday..... **

This is in contrast with the now obvious sense of menace, and the 'under-language' is being established as a variant of theatrical irony - not only the audience, but most of the characters know what is really going on. This becomes more overt as Goldberg's language develops violence in an indirect attack on Stanley. The aggression attached to the simple act of sitting down is only the first use of the movement both as an equivalent to the 'submission' stance of an animal, and as an important step in the setting up of a hierarchy; this reappears in such plays as "A Slight Ache", "A Night Out" and "The Homecoming".

The build-up of aggression begins with this simple movement, and though it becomes more obvious, it is still unrelated to the actual words used:

GOLDBERG: Why do you behave so badly, Webber? Why do you force that old man out to play cards?

STANLEY: Me?

GOLDBERG: Why do you treat that young lady like a leper? ***

The increasingly grotesque words lose the surface subjects completely, and become vehicles for an attack which is the more violent as Stan is less in control:

GOLDBERG: Did you take anything for it?

STANLEY: Yes.

GOLDBERG: What?

STANLEY: Fruit salts!

GOLDBERG: Enos or Andrews?

STANLEY: En - An - ... ****

* Act II P 42

** Act II P 43

*** Act II P 47

**** Act II P 48

This finally becomes a savage ritualistic chant, like the earlier drum-beats:

GOLDBERG: Is the number 846 possible or necessary?
 STANLEY: Neither.
 GOLDBERG: Wrong! Is the number 846 possible or necessary?
 STANLEY: Both.
 GOLDBERG: Wrong. It's necessary but not possible.
 STANLEY: Both.
 GOLDBERG: Wrong..... *

Stan is ultimately reduced to complete incoherence by the breakdown of language demonstrated and dramatised by Goldberg and McCann: violence is his only resort. But the 'game' aspect of the whole scene is stressed when Meg appears. Stanley is seen to be joined in complicity with Goldberg and McCann in deceiving her, and he can also take advantage of her presence to retrieve his glasses. The social language and sets of clichés employed by Goldberg are, however, only a pause before the next and more subtle attack on Stanley - this time with light rather than words. The shining of the torch reflects the 'theatricalism' of the more conscious use of language of Act II, where the non-naturalistic elements of the ritual overtake the commonplaces of social talk. Goldberg shows that he can use the presence of others as well as Stanley as he forces him again to sit, and his incredible set of clichés, echoed by McCann, introduce the 'party talk' in a suitably inane fashion:

GOLDBERG: How often, in this day and age, do you come across real, true warmth? Once in a lifetime. **

But even here the undercurrent emerges in the seemingly casual references to the background he shares with Stanley:

GOLDBERG: ... tea in Fullers, a library book from Boots ... ***

Yet another form of language emerges from the casual chat of the party, showing how Pinter's dialogue can be at the same time naturalistic in effect, and structured:

MCCANN: This?
 GOLDBERG: Comfortable?
 LULU: Yes thanks.
 MCCANN: (sitting) It's comfortable.
 GOLDBERG: You know, there's a lot in your eyes.... ****

* Act II P 50
 ** Act II P 56
 *** Act II P 56
 **** Act II P 58

This type of cross-current conversation, in which two dialogues are separate and yet linked, returns again and again in his work; "Landscape", indeed, is entirely composed in this pattern. Pinter can thus dramatise separate threads without losing the main flow of his subject. * The repetitions in Goldberg's reminiscence speech, remind the audience that only half his attention is on his present conversation, and the speech becomes a rehash of an earlier one, down to Lulu's response:

GOLDBERG: ...The nicest piece of roll-top and pickled cucumber you could wish to find on a plate.
LULU: I thought your name was Nat.
GOLDBERG: She called me Simey. **

All the games of the previous Act come to a climax at the end with one which involves action as well as words, and it is Pinter's understatement of action up till now which creates the impact of the scene. The flashes of light in darkness - a darkness only naturalistically explained in the next Act, and here a potent theatrical symbol for the primitive - as in "The Tea Party" - illuminate like the flashes of comprehension embedded in Pinter's enigmatic language. As Goldberg and McCann advance on Stanley, the climax is beyond words: the simple, direct language which cuts through the levels of understanding to the basic truth is ultimately superseded by the simple contrasts of light and dark, the men's silence and Stanley's giggling. ***

The opening of Act III is a repetition, with slight differences of wording, of the opening of Act I; this forms a cyclical pattern which tantalises the audience's expectation of a dénouement. The tension of the unsolved mystery, the morning light which does not dissolve the night's darkness, is relaxed by the humour of Meg's totally wrongheaded apprehensions about the car, and also her wrong-headed relief:

* See my discussion of Wesker's "Their Very Own and Golden City" earlier in this chapter.
** Act II P 59
*** "There are two silences: One when no word is spoken. The other when perhaps a torrent of language is being employed." (Pinter, "Between the Lines" Sunday Times, March 1962). These are exemplified by the language use of Stanley and Goldberg respectively. John Russell Brown makes a similar point: "Beckett and Pinter both reach moments of ultimate silence, when words have been stripped away." ("Theatre Language", P 53).

MEG: (relieved) His car? Oh, I didn't know it was his car.
 PETEY: Of course it's his car.
 MEG: Oh, I feel better. *

By his temporary superiority over the exhausted Goldberg, however, Petey now develops into a character with whom the audience can sympathise - in other words, he asks the simple and straightforward questions they want to ask:

PETEY: Stanley. Is he any better?

.

What came over him?

.

But what brought it on so suddenly? **

Goldberg is hesitant and nervous, seeking explanations:

GOLDBERG: Yes, this friend of mine - he was telling me about it - only the other day. (He stands uneasily for a moment, then brings out a cigarette case and takes a cigarette) Have an Abdullah.

PETEY: No, no, I don't take them. ***

The situation of Acts I and II is reversed. Goldberg cannot get rid of Petey, who shows a certain elementary cunning of his own:

GOLDBERG: But what about the tickets? Who's going to take the tickets?

PETEY: That's all right. That'll be all right, Mr Goldberg. Don't you worry about that. I'll be back. ****

Even McCann can rouse Goldberg to fury by unwittingly connecting the unpleasant present and the nostalgic past, in naming him "Simey". Goldberg now has to regain control, which he does by monopolising the conversation with strings of unconnected clichés, but he doesn't succeed at first: words break down for him as they did earlier for Stanley.

GOLDBERG: Because I believe that the world
 Because I believe that the world †

In the end he finds his power over McCann, and by analogy over the world, by saying nonsensical things in a very confident tone:

* Act III P 69
 ** Act III P 71
 *** Act III P 72
 **** Act III P 75
 † Act III P 78

GOLDBERG: Who came before your father's father but your father's father's mother! Your great-gran-granny. *

He then consolidates his position by a^a strange ritual with McCann which both necessitates intimacy and recalls the mutual grooming ceremonies of animals. In the same way, after the re-united Goldberg and McCann easily get rid of Lulu, their ritual chant is both a word game and a consolidation of their position vis-a-vis Stanley, while the calm, ordered tone is opposite to that of the earlier downbeat ritual.

When a repetition comes at the end:

McCANN: You'll be a magnate.
 GOLDBERG: A statesman.
 McCANN: You'll own yachts.
 GOLDBERG: Animals.
 McCANN: Animals.
 GOLDBERG: I said animals. **

The 'game' aspect is shown to be uppermost, and its light tone contrasts with the efforts of Stanley, now past all language, to express himself. Petey's last attempt to stop them is easily counteracted by the threat in Goldberg's invitation, and the language slows down to the end, over the openness of the climactic scenes, and the last impression is one of changes both unrealised by Meg and concealed by the type of domestic non-communication which opened the play:

MEG: I was the belle of the ball.
 PETEY: Were you?
 MEG: Oh yes. They all said I was.
 PETEY: I bet you were, too.
 MEG: Oh, it's true. I was.
 (Pause)
 I know I was. ***

"A Slight Ache" (1961) lacks most of the attributes of drama apart from the words themselves; its tone, as one might expect in a work conceived for radio, is set by the words of the stage-setting:

(... the action will be focussed on the scullery on the right and the study on the left, both indicated with a minimum of scenery and props.) ****

As ^{the} naturalism which opens the play diminishes, so the language, as it builds up to the climax, gains a more rhetorical and theatrical aspect.

* Act III P 78
 ** Act III P 84
 *** Act III P 87
 **** P 9

The dialogue of the whole play is presented at a fast pace, with few pauses and a generally connected and logical sentence and phrase structure. This move away from the naturalism of broken dialogue is dictated by the fact that a radio play must move onwards constantly to retain its audience, as well as being unable to portray the subject by means of the movements and physical relationships of the actors. Thus it foreshadows his work of the late sixties in direct communication from author to audience.

The same device as in "The Birthday Party" - an underlying, and at first unexplained, aggression which is unconnected with the subject of conversation is employed here:

EDWARD: Did you say - that the convolvulus was in flower?

FLORA: Yes.

EDWARD: But good God, you just denied there was any. *

This prepares the audience for the unexpected. The names of the flowers - honeysuckle, convolvulus, japonica - are chosen for their similar pattern, with the same number of syllables, and introduce familiarity with their associations as well as providing a light touch of humour to draw the audience into the play:

FLORA: (Calmly) Edward - you know that shrub outside the toolshed ...

EDWARD: Yes, yes.

FLORA: That's convolvulus.

EDWARD: That?

FLORA: Yes.

EDWARD: Oh.

(Pause)

I thought it was japonica. **

The words themselves which are used are a subject of aggression even in the wasp sequence, when Edward objects to Flora's misuse of 'bite'. In the same way, later, he insists that talking - specifically his choice of words - will solve the matchseller problem:

FLORA: It'll fly out and bite me.

EDWARD: It will not bite you! Wasps don't bite. ***

The subtle introduction of the slight ache of the title, as Edward complains of his eyes, is echoed by the imagery of blindness as he

* P 9 - 10

** P 10

*** P 12

scalds the wasp:

EDWARD: Ah, yes. Tilt the pot. Tilt. Aah ... down here
right down blinding him that's it. *

The sight and blindness metaphors, occurring at the crisis and with reference to the matchseller himself, are balanced by the communication problem, itself emphasised in various ways - from the apparent deafness of the matchseller later, to the silence with which Edward greets his shock on seeing him for the first time that morning. This is a common technique in Pinter's work, ranging from Stanley's silence of shock at hearing Goldberg's name, to the crisis of action of the later work. To introduce the matchseller motif the language of explanation and description is quite coherent when the man's habits are discussed, and his existence and nature seem assured and certain. But immediately, the unusual begins to break in, as the strangeness of Edward's retreat (the scullery) is intensified by his evasive language. His essay represents calmness and rationality to Edward:

EDWARD: I've been engaged on the dimensionality and continuity
of space and time for years. **

But Flora has never heard of the essay and this makes us doubt its very existence, as we do that of the matchseller. The tone here is reinforced by the incongruity of the peering from the scullery, and the words of Flora's speech:

FLORA: Good God, what's that? Is that a bullock let loose?
No. It's the matchseller! My goodness, you can see
him.... through the hedge. He looks bigger. Have you
been watching him? He looks like a bullock. ***

Here Flora, and the audience, are sharing Edward's viewpoint on the man, and the word "bullock" suggests a potency which is later fulfilled, at least partially, in the dénouement of the exchange of roles. There is a counterpoint of aggressive repetition of the conversation between Edward and Flora:

FLORA: He's a poor, harmless old man.
EDWARD: Aaah my eyes.
FLORA: Let me bathe them.
EDWARD: Keep away. ****

* P 14
** P 17
*** P 17
**** P 18

This includes, again, the sight images of bright and dark, which are also images for comprehension and for the vague potency exemplified by the word "bullock". Edward's long speech also uses the word, in a long tirade against the matchseller, which uses minute description to 'set the scene' and make his doubtful point:

EDWARD: A monk passed. In a loose garment. It's quite obvious he was a non-smoker but still the man made no effort. *

This building-up of the matchseller's reality as a human being is immediately undermined by Edward's laugh at the mention of the police, implying that the man is a manifestation unique to themselves, and therefore again carefully confusing the audience as to the man's physical reality. Flora's mention of the vicar (presumably to deal with apparitions) increases this feeling.

As Flora invites the man in, her words are a précis of her earlier conversation with Edward, and the matchseller already seems to be becoming a kind of alter ego for her husband:

FLORA: Here. This way. Mind now. Isn't it beautiful weather? It's the longest day of the year today.
(Pause)
That's honeysuckle. And that's convolvulus **

Edward's first conversation with the matchseller enables Pinter to use a variety of linguistic techniques, in a free pattern of monologue: in fact it is almost a soliloquy, especially in the radio version where the very existence of the matchseller is in doubt. The speech is interrupted by pauses; this divides it, as often in Pinter, into subjects, but in this case also into tone and manner of speech. The first section of this speech shows Edward talking as to an equal in a club or pub, while the second, continuing the social conversation, moves immediately into self-revelation, and is suddenly more uncertain:

EDWARD: Sally. No, no, wait a minute, no, it wasn't Sally, it was Fanny. Fanny. A flower. ***

This picks up the prevailing flower imagery. The third section is more personal, and stresses ownership of the house in an invasion by a stranger, but Edward loses his thread even more. His increasing con-

* P 19
** P 20, 21
*** P 23

fusion, as well as the description of the process of writing, reminds him to mention his work. The next section is significantly the shortest, and this stresses the unreality of its subject:

EDWARD: I write theological and philosophical essays*

The fifth section again shows Edward, as a 'well-travelled man' stressing his power over the stranger, although the actual words used show his disorientation by being completely out of context:

EDWARD: Do you by any chance know the Mombunza mountains? **

He returns to specifics with the next section, though his social politeness still forces him to accept the lack of response and not comment on it, but at the end the tone changes to the command "Sit down" - and again, this seemingly casual movement is vibrant with the overtones of conquest and submission which it achieves in "The Birthday Party" and "The Homecoming". This emboldens him to ask a direct question and wait for an answer, but in the seventh section he must immediately stress his ownership to cover up the hiatus in his verbal mastery:

EDWARD:under my canopy, at my table, by the pool. ***

The next section, about his wife, not only diminishes her in that he was reminded of her by his other chattels, but in the fact that he mixes her up with the daughters of his earlier speech. Edward now feels he has to attack the man even on his own ground of indifference to the elements and casual life, but his words become wilder and more grotesque as he flails around for a connection:

EDWARD: the rewards were few winter in hovels .. up till all hours working at your thesis ****

The longer pause, as Edward finally runs out of conversational gambits, is followed by a second string of pause-separated verbal attacks, but they are now more desperate and more aggressive; † the

* P 23

** P 23

*** P 24

**** P 24

† "...People fall back on anything they can lay their hands on verbally to keep away from the danger of knowing, and being known." (Pinter, "Paris Review" 1964).

hysterical list of names stresses both Edward's knowledge and his money:

EDWARD: Curacao Fockink Orange? Ginger beer? Tia Maria? A Fuchamantel Reisling Beeren Auslese? Gin and it? *

The second attack, while direct, is still concerned with Edward himself, but stresses his health as a contrast with the decrepitude of the matchseller. The third section of the speech changes in tone, but is still socially polite, and Edward still answers his own questions, while the isolated sentence of the fourth brings in again the ambiguities of vision and understanding of both Edward and the matchseller:

EDWARD: Do forgive me peering but is that a glass eye you're wearing? **

In the fifth section, as soon as Edward moves towards the man, using action rather than words, the matchseller sags and drops his tray, but Edward is immediately put into an inferior position as he picks up the matchboxes. He has to regain his authority by shouting commands at the man, until he is obeyed. When the matchseller finally does sit, however, it is at Edward's request and has become no victory. As a result Edward must retreat, on the note of comparison between the two which he now makes for the first time:

EDWARD: I bought all the furniture in this house at a sale. The same sale. When I was a young man. You too, perhaps, you too, perhaps.
(Pause)
At the same time, perhaps! ***

Flora leads Edward into the garden, as she led the matchseller, and feels enough in control to bolster his ego by stressing normality;

FLORA: Your own trees. Can you hear the birds?
EDWARD: No, I can't hear them.
FLORA: But they're singing, high up, and flapping. ****

Edward is now also in control of himself and can lie convincingly about his earlier conversation, but he quickly loses control as Flora supports the matchseller rather than him and his repetitions of violence degenerate into a sterile word-game:

* P 25
** P 25
*** P 27
**** P 28

EDWARD: (quietly) And I know he knows I know it. *

Flora's attempt on the man moves much more quickly from social language to intimacy than Edward's did. The reminiscence moves into the unexplained connection between the matchseller and the rapist, which is increased by the proximity of "A bit of a stinker" and "I say, you are perspiring, aren't you?". The physical closeness is reflected in intimacy of language. The perversity is increased by the interplay of sexual and dirt images, and childhood and death images:

FLORA: And little toys to play with. On your death bed. Why shouldn't you die happy? **

Edward's intensely violent language prefigures his own gradual collapse, as the wild incongruity of the language becomes more and more broken, and divided by more and more periods of silence as Edward moves to the state of life beyond language. He is no longer really trying to obtain a reaction from the matchseller, but is almost totally self-absorbed, as he reviews the images of his past life like a drowning man:

EDWARD: I was polished. I could stand on the hill and look through my telescope at the sea. And follow the path of the three-masted schooner, feeling fit, well aware of my sinews ***

He projects emotion into the blank (or non-existent) face in front of him to match his own feelings, and his physical collapse is mirrored in the collapse of his language and senses - from the 'polished' steadiness of his mind and body in the past to the manic lists of objects and hesitance about nouns and names in the present.

After the physical collapse, Edward feels relief at his subordinate position and lack of need for artifice, and so can explain, in connected and lyrical language, his agoraphobia and wish for contact with bedrock reality:

EDWARD: I lay on my side in my pale shorts, my fingers in contact with the blades of grass, the earthflowers, the petals of the earthflowers flaking, lying on my palm ... ****

As his language runs down to a stop, reminiscent of the aftermath of a stroke or nervous breakdown, and containing elements of both, but not

* P 29
** P 33
*** P 35
**** P 38

being fundamentally tied to either, so it fragments into repetition and the evocation of remembered simple images:

EDWARD: ...he - a stripling ... no more than a stripling

.

The cliff. The sea. The three-masted schooner. *

Flora's entrance contrasts with these fragments of consciousness by its return to the sense of reality of the opening scene, and recalls in concise style the whole course of the play, from the ownership emphasis of "my garden, your garden" to the names of the flowers, the weather, garden, pool and at last, most forcefully, "polishing" the house. The transfer of the match tray closes off the sequence, but seems to make too obvious the transfer of power and possession: the movement (or in the radio version the words) seem unnecessary.

"A Slight Ache" contains within its short span and simple structure both the elements of naturalistic dialogue of the early plays, and the complex and imagic 'word-painting' later exploited in "Landscape". Its use of theatrical irony to persuade the audience to examine the question of the characters' existence is, however, a technique which is not used in any other play by Pinter, though it is allied to the unidentifiable menace of "The Dumb Waiter" and "The Room". In fact in the next play under discussion, he is at pains to make the characters believable in theatrical terms, in order to increase the sense of shock of the audience at the course of events.

The scene-shifts of "The Collection" and "The Lover" are made possible by the viewpoint of the camera rather than that of the audience; here the set is subordinated to the action and grows out of it in a symbolic fashion. "The Homecoming", however, returns to the completely naturalistic setting of the early plays. This is supported by a return from the ritualistic and rhythmic balance of the language of the middle-period plays to a complete naturalism in speech. These two elements combine in the first Act to make the characters and action of the play much more familiar and believable to the audience than is usual with Pinter. Here the intention is to absorb the mental shocks of Act II as well as to make a sharper contrast between the two Acts of the play.

Max, the character who, throughout the play, is shown as

losing his position as head of the household, begins and ends the play. His persistence and repetitive speech at the beginning is used to make him seem, to the audience, a fussy old man, and it conceals the later direct struggle for power in which he is a force to be reckoned with:

MAX: ... I think I'll have a fag. Give me a fag.
 (Pause)
 I just asked you to give me a cigarette.
 (Pause)
 Look what I'm lumbered with.

.

I'm getting old, my word of honour. *

The slow, uncommunicative language at this stage of the play draws the audience into the domestic situation, and very soon the reminiscence of the past becomes important, in keeping with the evening setting and reflective tone:

MAX: Huhh! We were two of the worst hated men in the West End of London. I tell you, I still got the scars. We'd walk into a place, the whole room 'd stand up, they'd make way to let us pass. **

The shock as the calm language with its inexplicable undertones is broken by the incredible verbal violence at the end prefigures the shock of the second Act:

MAX: Mind you, she wasn't such a bad woman. Even though it made me sick just to look at her rotten stinking face, she wasn't such a bad bitch. ***

The audience, now unable to understand what is going on, is forced to rethink its first impression of the domestic situation, and thus to rethink its fundamental patterns of assumption. Even when it is made clear that this extreme violence is a commonplace of conversation, easily papered over by racing talk, the incongruity of vocabulary and tone stays in the audience's mind, and it is on the alert. The technique throughout the play is alternately to lull and then shock the audience in order to keep it at peak expectation.

As Max recalls his racing days, his monologue, directed not to Lenny but to the audience, looks forward to the technique of

* Act I P 8
 ** Act I P 8
 *** Act I P 9

"Landscape" as well as back to Goldberg in "The Birthday Party" and "Aston in "The Caretaker":

MAX: ... He talks to me about horses. You only read their names in the papers. But I've stroked their manes. I've held them, I've calmed them down before a big race. I was the one they used to call for. *

His attempt at authority, on this subject, only provokes an attack from Lenny, who is working his way towards the dominant position and cannot afford to let Max seem more knowledgeable: his questions do not expect answers, but are merely verbal signals for aggression, and he shows his mastery of words in countering a physical threat by irony, which Max cannot cope with:

KENNY: Oh, Daddy, you're not yet going to use your stick on me, are you? Eh? Don't use your stick on me, Daddy. **

His threatening to leave is only a threat and not a reality, and is accepted by both as such. The undertone of violent conflict in the Max/Lenny dialogue is shown when Sam enters; Lenny, while gently ironic - "Right up the M4?" - is not attacking him, as he is no threat to the power Lenny seeks. As soon as Lenny leaves, however, Max attacks Sam:

MAX: You leave it to others? What others? You paralysed rat! ***

Max is shown to be superior to Sam in the precarious pecking-order of the household when Sam backs out of his counter-attack, not following his "Other people" with what we later find is his revelation about MacGregor and Jessie. The play is full of these references to future events; these can only be understood after the whole performance is over. This constitutes a mixing of the time-scale, and of the usual theatrical ironic techniques, which comes to fruition in "Landscape" and "Silence". In this way Max's offhand attack on Sam's bachelorhood contains a reference to the family's later treatment of Ruth:

MAX: ... You can bring her to live here, she can keep us all happy. We'd take it in turns to give her a walk round the park. ****

As Joey enters and Lenny returns, Max tries to gain control

* Act I P 10
 ** Act I P 11
 *** Act I P 15
 **** Act I P 15

by refusing to cook, and attacking them, but is immediately nonplussed by Lenny's more assured command of satire and irony, which Max is unable to answer:

LENNY: What the boys want, Dad, is your own special brand of socking, Dad. That's what the boys look forward to. *

The hierarchy of power is created, at the moment, exclusively by words, but it is not settled in one configuration: Max can still threaten Lenny in allusive language, not having lost all control:

MAX: I'll give you a proper tuck up one of these nights, son. You mark my word. **

Sam is shown to be part of the family by his use of the same verbal technique: the soft speech leads to a violent outburst at the end, but owing to his subordinate position in the house it has no power, and Max takes no notice of it:

SAM: Old Mac died a few years ago, didn't he? Isn't he dead?
(Pause)
He was a lousy stinking rotten loudmouth. A bastard uncouth sodding runt. Mind you, he was a good friend of yours. ***

Representing no threat, Sam can take this type of liberty without provoking attack. The scene ends, at the blackout, with a return to the past, and it is the actions of his father that Max remembers, striking the nostalgic note which continues throughout the play whenever Sam and Lenny reminisce.

The slow, tentative phrases of Teddy and Ruth as they feel their way into the situation repeat in their tone and pace the audience's introduction to the house at the beginning. The references to sitting - the father's chair symbolises his role as head of the household and Ruth's sitting embodies a tacit acceptance of her status in the house - recall the emphasis on this action throughout Pinter. Here the physical positions of characters onstage are a shorthand for their temporary position in a hierarchy of power within the dramatic situation. The argument between the newcomers about who stays up, is immediately about dominance, as in the family: the fact that Ruth wins shows her control in a much wider sense, and looks forward to her ultimate position within the family. The "homecoming" of the title is shown in

* Act I P 17
** Act I P 17
*** Act I P 18

carefully separated stages: each encounter with the family is on a one-to-one basis to point up the subtle differences in approach, and so Teddy and Ruth meet Lenny separately. Lenny and Teddy, feeling their way towards a power structure, exchange no greetings but grope for a dominant verbal position, like animals sniffing each other; the subject of the words is irrelevant, but the tone is everything:

TEDDY: Have you got a clock in your room?

LENNY: Yes.

TEDDY: Well, maybe it's the clock.

LENNY: Yes, could be, I suppose.

(Pause)

Well, if it's the clock I'd better do something about it. Stifle it in some way, or something. *

The tone of Lenny and Ruth's encounter is entirely different; Lenny immediately reacts to Ruth as a challenge, and shows off his command of language with his long speeches, soon taking a tentative step towards intimacy:

LENNY: Isn't it funny? I've got my pyjamas on and you're fully dressed? **

As Lenny feels for the dominant position by his words, he has to cancel out the advantage of Ruth and Teddy's having visited Venice:

LENNY: I was only a child, I was too small, otherwise I've got a pretty shrewd idea I'd probably have gone through Venice. Yes, I'd almost certainly have gone through it with my battalion. ***

He seeks briefly for physical contact before again fighting with words in the two long speeches. Here he dramatises his own violence which he feels will make him attractive to Ruth:

LENNY: So I just gave her another belt in the nose and a couple of turns of the boot and sort of left it at that. ****

The speech is the longest so far in the play, and finally reveals to the audience the basic levels of animality over which the language is built. Lenny manages to make Teddy seem weak as he stresses his intellectuality and sensitivity, and as Ruth is unimpressed by both this and the dock episode, he makes an even longer speech, of even more gratuitous violence, before making his own use of the glass of water

* Act I P 25

** Act I P 29

*** Act I P 30

**** Act I P 31

for a further attack:

LENNY: I had a good mind to give her a workover there and then, but as I was feeling jubilant with the snow-clearing I just gave her a short-arm jab to the belly and jumped on a bus outside. *

The sharpness of the description and the physical detail of the snow shows he really does have a command of language, and puts him in a position to make direct demands. The calm, formal language of his final attempt on Ruth is furthest from violence on the surface, but nearest in essence, and at last it works. Ruth advances, and her words, as always in the play, are completely direct with no hidden meaning, but working on a sophisticated level to which Lenny cannot easily respond. Max, entering directly as a result of Lenny's shout, and therefore of his lack of control over Ruth, attacks Lenny, but is completely crushed by Lenny's effortless, pseudo-intimate command of language, and his careful choice of the one subject which will reduce Max to wordless rage.

But in the scene in the morning Max is again the funny old man - an ambivalent portrayal to remind the audience to take nothing at face value:

MAX: I don't want to bring my tea in here. I want to drink my tea in there. **

He is still in control, at least of Sam, as is shown when Sam's small verbal attack fails to provoke hostility:

SAM: How could he speak if he was dead?
MAX: Before he died, Sam, just before. ***

The crisis as Teddy and Ruth confront the head of the house into which they have penetrated is portrayed as elsewhere in Pinter in slowly-paced language, with much silence, and a gradual movement from shock to anger. Max's violence of language-

MAX: We've had a smelly scrubber in my house all night. We've had a stinking pox-ridden slut in my house all night. ****

is only incongruous until Ruth's real character later emerges, and even at the time it is stressed that the ownership of the house and Teddy's entry into it unknown, at night, is what is at stake. The

* Act I P 33
** Act I P 37
*** Act I P 39
**** Act I P 41

scene explodes into violence, significantly, as Joey implicitly rebels against Max's dominance by dismissing him:

JOEY: You're an old man. (To Teddy) He's an old man. *

At the same moment Lenny enters - the double threat provokes Max to hit out, regardless of his own weakness and whoever might get in the way. At the end of the scene the physical reunion is only implied, not seen, so leaving the violent action without a counterbalance for the audience, but at the same time it pushes the elemental conflict for the moment below the surface, in preparation for the quiet and ominous domesticity of the opening scenes of Act II.

The irony of the tone of Max's long reminiscence speech at the beginning of Act II is shown by the dichotomy between his description of the family and what we have seen as the reality:

MAX: Every single bit of the moral code they live by - was taught to them by their mother. **

The audience is almost lulled into the feeling that "everything has come right", after Max's acceptance of Teddy and Ruth, by the intimate description of the past, the evocation of normality, and the references to the "pouffe", baths and clothes. The spell is broken by Ruth's question, and Max immediately tells the story again, but his speech is completely opposite in fact and tone:

MAX: A crippled family, three bastard sons, a slutbitch of a wife - don't talk to me about the pain of childbirth - I've suffered the pain, I've still got the pangs - when I give a little cough my back collapses - and here I've got a lazy idle bugger of a brother who won't even get to work on time. ***

Finter has progressed from the rather one-sided view of such characters as Goldberg to the portrayal, in Max, of a character who includes two diametrically opposed attitudes; they are dramatised by the varying use of language, and symbolise the conflict between the conventional family situation and the underlying animal instincts for power and survival.

The rising tension in the conversation of Max, Teddy and Ruth and Joey is indicated by various methods. The pauses and broken pace of Ruth's statement -

* Act I P 42

** Act II P 46

*** Act II P 47

RUTH: I was different ... when I met Teddy first. *

- are the first sign that there is something unknown in her, a feeling reinforced by Teddy's dismissal of it. As Lenny works up to a direct attack on Teddy's own ground, their cigars go out and are not relit; concentration on the conflict supervenes. Lenny's attack on Teddy's intellectual ability is in very assured language:

LHENNY: Well, I must ask you something. Do you detect a certain logical incoherence in the central affirmation of Christian theism? **

It is the stubbornness of his continuing with the subject in the face of Teddy's dismissal which constitutes the aggression. Joey's joke, which breaks the exclusiveness of Teddy's and Lenny's circling, allows Ruth to enter the conversation with her longest speech of the play so far, which is not only specific, as always, but much more personal than before:

RUTH: Don't be too sure, though. You've forgotten something. Look at me. I ... move my leg. That's all it is. But I wear ... underwear ... which moves with me ... it ... captures your attention. ***

She manages to half-conceal the direct proposal of her words by an even more than usually hesitant delivery; at the same time she slows the action, thus focussing the attention of the audience and the actors on her first overt move in company. The importance of the speech is shown as Teddy immediately stands, and the emotional aridity of her life in America is subtly indicated by the imagery of the desert:

RUTH: It's all rock. And sand. It stretches ... so far ... Everywhere you look. And there's lots of insects there. †

The family leaves the stage to allow Teddy to attempt to win back Ruth, and he immediately suggests return. The language at the beginning is calm and commonplace:

TEDDY; I think we'll go back. Mmmn?
(Pause)
Shall we go home? ††

It degenerates, under Ruth's resistance, into a hysterical outburst -

* Act II P 50
** Act II P 51
*** Act II P 52, 3
† Act II P 53
†† Act II P 54

TEDDY: It's like a urinal. A filthy urinal. *

... and the repetition of the words 'dirty' and 'clean' points for both the audience and characters the moral breakdown which is unfolding. Ruth's most complete attack, where she adapts Lenny's earlier phrase, is lost on Teddy, but demonstrates to the audience how her allegiance is changing:

RUTH: But if I'd been a nurse in the Italian campaign I would have been there before. **

When Lenny enters, Ruth's eyes are shut in submission, and the movement, as in their previous conversation, from social to intimate language, is much more rapid and assured. The revelation of Ruth's past to the audience is made in very simple, descriptive and evocative language, in contrast with the phony reminiscences of Max. The contrast is used by Pinter to make the statements seem true, and the physicality of Ruth is stressed:

RUTH: This place ... this house ... was very big ... the trees ... there was a lake, you see ... we used to change and walk down towards the lake ... we went down a path ... on stones ... where were on this path .. ***

ending with nostalgia:

RUTH: The house was very light. ****

But when Joey comes in and refers to Ruth as a 'tart', the audience is shocked, still unwilling to accept the word, although it is increasingly being shown to be true. The heavy irony of Max's speech, in the context of events on the stage and at Teddy's expense, throws some light on how far any of his statements can be taken as true:

MAX:Look, next time you come over, don't forget to let us know beforehand whether you're married or not. †

While Max is speaking, the action of Ruth with Lenny and Joey follows the usual Pinter pattern: the climactic scene, which changes every

* Act II P 55

** Act II P 55

*** Act II P 57

**** Act II P 58

† Act II P 59

relationship and the course of the play, is presented in action rather than words, as it is ultimately beyond the power of words to express. But the result of the action is shown in words: the shift of power to Ruth is total, as she is now in control and orders the rest of the family about, having accepted the rôle which Jessie vacated by death:

RUTH: I'd like something to eat. I'd like a drink. Did you get a drink? *

From her position of power, Ruth now attacks Teddy, as Lenny did earlier, in his one advantage left over the family - his work:

RUTH: Have your family read your critical works? **

Teddy's speech is one of retreats from his dilemma with the family, in attempting to assert that he is superior to mundane questions, such as Ruth's affections:

TEDDY: see how certain people can view ... things .. how certain people can maintain ... intellectual equilibrium. ***

and His real emotionality is shown as he repeats the phrase "intellectual equilibrium" as a litany to hold on to the dissolving world.

After the blackout, new positions within the family hierarchy having been established, Sam appeals to Teddy as an equal, which puts him on the same level: he has lost all power over the rest of the family. The long and trivial conversation about the cheese roll leads Lenny to re-assert his authority and superiority as Teddy tries to fight back, at least in some way, by demonstrating his continued independence. Lenny's authority is one of words rather than physical strength, and lies both in his knowledge of America, Teddy's province, and in the felicity of his linguistic skill:

LENNY: ... I mean with the sun and all that, the open spaces, on the old campus, in your position, lecturing ... down by the pool, the Greyhound buses and all that, tons of iced water, all the comfort of those Bermuda shorts and all that ****

Lenny and Joey's description of their night out emphasises their superiority over Teddy in a much more direct way, while the light touch of humour at the end only serves to make Max's brutal language more of

* Act II P 60
 ** Act II P 61
 *** Act II P 62
 **** Act II P 64

a shock:

JOEY: ... Now and again you can be happy ... without going any hog.

MAX: Where's the whore? Still in bed? She'll make us all animals. *

This directs the audience's attention forcibly to the word "animals", which has turned out to be true - as, indeed, have all Max's statements and intuition about Ruth. The family's conversation about her, in the direct language of economic planning, is ironically broken by Max:

MAX: There are the human considerations. Don't forget them. **

He immediately proceeds to forget them. The final solution to the problem, discussed, even by Teddy, in direct and brutal language, is followed by the euphemisms which lead up to the proposal. Teddy has again become one of the family unit at this point, with the same aims:

TEDDY: Ruth ... the family have invited you to stay, for a little while longer, As a ... as a kind of guest. If you like the idea I don't mind. ***

The gentleness of the introduction to prostitution, as Max and Teddy work towards the proposal, is shown to be unnecessary by the rapidity with which Ruth accepts it, and agrees about the details of the business. Again, her position within the family allows her to get her way with Lenny as far as the capital and the flat are concerned, and Lenny is now acting as head of the family. Ruth's parody of business language shows this:

RUTH: All aspects of the agreement and conditions of employment would have to be clarified to our mutual satisfaction before we finalised the contract. ****

Sam's interpolation, again bearing out the more aggressive description by Max of his past, is ignored, although the physical facts of death and life are described in relaxed terms - a parallel to the cold business language applied to prostitution. The incident is completely glossed over in the ridiculously polite social language used when the family tries to get rid of Teddy:

* Act II P 68

** Act II P 71

*** Act II P 75

**** Act II P 77

MAX: Thanks, son. Listen. I want to tell you something. It's been wonderful to see you. *

This passage of bankrupt language introduces the last scene, and shows how only actions now have any meaning: Max's last attempt to assert his authority within the family is a failure, dramatised by his hesitant words, his silences, and his physical collapse. The tableau at the end reveals the new situation by the actors' positions on stage, and the hierarchy of the power structure within the family is reinforced by the degree of Ruth's attention to each member. The play has finally moved beyond language to a more physical and animal state.

The more overtly theatrical elements of the language of the middle-period plays are not utilised in "The Homecoming", so that the naturalism of dialogue and plot in the first Act and of character throughout, persuade the audience to accept the events of the play at face value. The basis of the play in the shifting power struggles within the family is dramatised above all by each character's use of words, although the shifts of the plot are conveyed by *mimed* action. It is this dichotomy of approach which Pinter later avoids by the verbal concentration - at the expense of action - of the late plays.

The stage set of "Landscape" (1968) still contains a certain amount of realism to tie down the audience's expectations to something specific, but the action throughout is one of direct communication between author and audience, with the actors retaining just enough reality as characters to differentiate them and provide a framework for the reminiscence. The past, which is important in all the other plays, is now everything.

Beth begins and ends the play, and is the anchor of the dialogue as her speeches are much more connected throughout than those of Duff. She concentrates on one subject, and one short period of time, although the time-scale jumps back and forth to preserve the novelty and freshness of the evocation for the audience. The movement of tense of the first speech, from conditional - "I would like to stand" to past - "I've done it", future - "I'll stand on the beach", and then back to past - "But it was hot, in the dunes" - acts like the narrowing of a telescope field. The attention of Beth and the audience is focussed on a particular and specific movement in time, after

showing its context with relation to past, present and future. Once the incident is fixed in time, the repetition of key words and phrases - "people", "men", "dune", and above all the conjunction of "I" and "would" - establish the tone of the subject in a static form, more like a picture than an action remembered. The certainty of phrases such as -

BETH: I am beautiful. *

- is balanced and undermined by the constant use of the conditional. This dichotomy, which increases the uncertainty of the audience as to the truth of the memory, is continued throughout the play in Beth's speeches, whereas Duff's always have a more concrete semblance of reality. The sentence and phrase structure from both characters is similar, with the alternation of long, connected speeches of description and short, separated phrases. This alternation is fixed by the rhythm and feeling of the drama as a whole, rather than, as in Pinter's earlier work, emerging from the individual characterisation. The connection between the two characters on stage is one of tone, rather than subject; in other words, it is theatrical rather than naturalistic.

Duff's first speech establishes the play's use of contrast, which is a reflection of the male/female difference in damp and cold opposed to sun and heat, action opposed to passivity, and reason opposed to emotion. His words are always in the past, but in a much more recent and concrete past:

DUFF: I had to shelter under a tree for twenty minutes yesterday. **

Subtle connections between seemingly opposed subjects are made in the vocabulary, as Duff's bread is followed by Beth's grains of sand, and Duff's speculation about the "man and woman under the trees" is reflected in Beth's return to the watching woman of her first speech. The first "movement", (which can be thought of as a free verse "stanza") ends at the first silence, with an increase in linguistic contrast, and a greater separation of the two:

* P 10

** P 10

BETH: ... If they touched the back of my neck, or my hand, it was done so lightly. Without exception. With one exception.

DUFF: Mind you, there was a lot of shit all over the place, all along the paths *

The sudden crudity of Duff's language shocks the audience, but also makes Beth's preoccupations seem slightly anaemic. The section ends in the dramatic present:

BETH: ... I dress differently, but I am beautiful. **

The return to the present of the play leads Duff to address Beth directly, and this diverts Beth's attention from the beach incident to the flower-arranging. Duff's puzzled reference to the people in the park introduces just enough of the uncertain into his speech to return Beth to her main interest, although she still reflects Duff's park people in her man on the breakwater, and her doubt of his real existence. The sudden worldliness of -

BETH: I wasn't a fool, on that occasion. ***

- again returns the audience to a more immediate dramatic reality at the end of the section. The hesitant tone of the next section, between silences, leads again to the double subject of public eating and drinking in the hotel and the pub: in this case it is Beth who opens the theme, and Duff who follows:

BETH: I knew there must be a hotel near, where we could get some tea.
(Silence)
Anyway ... luck was on my side for a change. By the time I got out of the park the pubs were open. ****

Duff's crudity about the man in the pub with the beer now drowns out Beth completely, with the result that she is allowed a short section to herself which equates the sea, in a lyrical fashion, with her lover:

BETH: The waves were very light, delicate. They touched the back of my neck. †

It is Duff who explains to the audience about their more mundane conditions of life:

* P 12
** P 12
*** P 14
**** P 15
† P 16

DUFF: To live in Mr Sykes' house in peace..... *

as the tense of his verbs returns to the present and specific references about everyday life - the garden, the people from the village. The tone continues in Beth's speech, where the incident of her very first speech is re-described, but in a much more connected and logical way. The finally complete memory makes her, for a change, much more certain than Duff:

DUFF: I tried to listen, to find out what they were laughing about, but I couldn't work it out. **

His memory of Beth young is as hesitant as her normal speech:

DUFF: I was thinking ... when you were young ... you didn't laugh much ***

The increasingly connected and logical language of memory from both characters results in Beth's reference to drawing being followed by another revelation to the audience from Duff about his unfaithfulness, in which the whole incident of the return is carefully described. This is matched immediately by the 'internalising' of Beth -

BETH: All those darting red and black flecks, under my eyelid †
- to make a balance between the internal and external world.

The surprise at the end of Duff's speech -

DUFF: Mind you, he was a gloomy bugger. ††

- recalls "The Homecoming" in its technique of lulling the audience, and then shocking it to provide a change of tone and humour. His direct, but rhetorical, series of questions -

DUFF: Do you like me to talk to you? ... †††

- continues the technique of "A Slight Ache". The details of the prelude to the beach scene, from Beth, balance the further description from Duff of the day he returned from the north: both are describing action in a consecutive way, using few pauses and moving towards a definite point. The incident leads Duff to the house itself, and the present:

* P 17
** P 17
*** P 18
† P 20
†† P 20
††† P 21

DUFF: I think there's moths. I moved the curtain and they flew out. *

This prompts Beth to look dispassionately at herself; the last line, towards which the greater specificity of each character's speech has been leading, is a complete shock:

DUFF: with no-one to nag the shit out of me. **

This introduces another level of reality to counter that of Beth. Where Duff sees the outside world in terms of objects, Beth sees it in terms of people, and her description of the hotel bar shows her total self-involvement:

BETH: All the people were squeaking in the hotel bar. The girls had long hair. They were smiling. ***

At the same time it ^freflects in its change of tone the dramatic shock of Duff's statement.

The next long section shows the lyrical pattern of contrasting masculine word-ending from Duff with feminine ones from Beth:

DUFF: ... hike them up onto the racks.

BETH: Still misty, but thinner, thinning ****

Here the contrasts are extreme. As Duff's language becomes technical and complex, Beth's opens out into a vague outside world: here the oppositions of active/passive and intellect/emotion are at their strongest. The long silence at the end of this section introduces the concluding part of the play, which shows the most violent contrasts of all. The longer speeches and very short, staccato phrases reflect the other contrasts as the tone becomes much more personal and concrete in both characters. Beth's impersonal speech on drawing moves quickly towards her central preoccupation -

BETH: So that I never lost track. Or heart. †

and her slow, reflective and uncertain language is contrasted with the violently active speech of Duff:

DUFF: What the bloody hell are you doing banging that bloody gong? ††

At the end the positions are reversed, and the rapid and active speech

* P 23

** P 24

*** P 24

**** P 25

† P 28

†† P 28

of Duff is concealing his uncertainty -

DUFF: I thought you would come into my arms and kiss me, even .. *

- by the noise he makes, and the silence, followed by the slow certainties of Beth, shows how empty it is. However, both characters are affirming their own personalities at the end in their use of words, and the final certainty and affirmation of Beth does not include Duff: they are separated as at the beginning of the play:

BETH: Oh my true love I said. **

Although Pinter has deserted his naturalistic conversation structure by the time he wrote "Landscape", he retains enough of the naturalism of vocabulary, phrasing and tone to counteract the non-dramatic nature of the play's lyrical structure. Without the contrasts of tone and attitude between Beth and Duff, and the colloquial rendering of their separate types of speech, "Landscape" would lose its relevance to stage presentation by becoming a lyrical poem narrated to the audience. The subtle connections of the earlier subtext are here exposed directly to the audience; this contrasts with the rarity, in the earlier plays, of real breakthrough into communication. The whole course of Pinter's plays shows less and less communication of ideas or feelings between characters on the stage, but this is balanced by an increasingly direct relationship between actors and audience in the later work.

* P 29

** P 30

CHAPTER SIX

The subtle humour incapsulated in Finter's dialogue can be contrasted to the 'saturation' technique of Orton and Simpson: where one invites civilised amusement, the others' use of words verges on an attack on the audience.

"Entertaining Mr Sloane", by Joe Orton, first produced in 1964, has many affinities with other drama of the early 1960's in its use of the contrast between the realistic 'fourth wall' type of set with its naturalistic plot-line, and the curious and highly individual language in which the play is written. All Orton's plays, up to the posthumous "What the Butler Saw", use a personal stilted language which seems to have more in common with the written than the spoken word: the characters' conversations are in the sort of terms in which they might be reported by a Sunday newspaper. In this way Orton's use of words in the theatre is the opposite of that of Saunders or Stoppard. They utilise an abstract set with naturalistic dialogue - the contrast is still there, but turned upside down. Nevertheless, there are similarities in style between Orton and other playwrights: the comic technique of bathos, used to great effect by Saunders, is again found here in the farcical contrast between violent reality and the dead clichés of the newspapers:

ED: Attacking a defenceless old man!
 SLOANE: He had his stick.
 ED: He wasn't strong enough to use it.
 SLOANE: I blame that on the pills. Who prescribed them?
 ED: His doctor.
 SLOANE: Reputable, is he?
 ED: He's on the register. What more do you want?
 SLOANE: You'll find medical evidence agrees with my theory. *

In a technique further developed in "What the Butler Saw", and recalling the hysterical nonsense with which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern greet their roles in the "Hamlet" extracts from Stoppard's play, Sloane answers any criticism with a series of fantastic lies:

ED: Who went with you?
 SLOANE: Nobody.

* Act III P 81

ED: Are you being entirely honest?
(Pause)

SLOANE: Three mates come with me.

.

ED: What's this doing in the back of my motor?
(Silence)

SLOANE: (Laughs) Oh ... you jogged my memory ... yes ... Doolan's
married an' we took his wife along. **

Orton succeeds in making both life and death seem ridiculous, not by direct irony but by putting the words and attitudes of his characters firmly in a context which exposes them; in a similar way the religious elements of "Loot" are as cynically deployed as the theme of money. There is a certain similarity here with the ironic mode of ~~H. P.~~ Simpson, particularly in the Old Bailey scenes of "One Way Pendulum". But these similarities are only in terms of small points of technique, and Orton's main achievement - that of creating a new type of demotic speech, non-naturalistic but immediately familiar - is unparalleled. The atmosphere of real physical violence, the bathos of the worldly preoccupation of the characters even in death, and the pointing of the incident by the stupidity which surrounds it, show a power of black comedy unique in modern drama:

WILSON: He's shot me.
(He crashes to the floor on his knees)
My will is in my overcoat pocket. My address in my
pocket diary. Remember will you?
JOYCE: (to Mike) What've you done?
WILSON: He took it serious. How charming.
(He coughs, blood spurts from his mouth)
He's a bit of a nutter if you ask me. Am I dying? I
think Oh.....
(He falls forward. Silence)
JOYCE: He's fainted.
MIKE: (laying the gun aside) He's dead. *

Here the comic stupidity of Joyce's question immediately after Wilson's obvious and violent death is matched in incongruity by the casual comments of Wilson as he dies: "charming" "a bit of a nutter". It is the inadequacy inherent in the language - the distance between the ingrained social restraint in words and savagery in action, which

** Act II P 59

* "The Ruffian on the Stair" So 5 P 42

gives Orton's humour its bite:

KENNY: I'm going to give you a good hiding, Erpingham. I'm going to smash your face in for the gratification of those in the family way everywhere.

ERPINGHAM: I shall confiscate your luggage. What is your chalet number?
(Kenny butts Erpingham in the stomach. Erpingham crumples up in agony. Jessy Mason seizes Kenny by the arm).

MASON: You can't do that. Mr Erpingham is a gentleman. *

It is only by using his unemotional de-humanised language that Orton is able to exploit his extremely violent subjects on a naturalistic stage, and still preserve his humour. He persuades his audience to accept the completely selfish and savage characters in his plays by understatement in the words used, and through the context he provides adding new meaning to a series of clichés which in any other circumstances would be neither meaningful nor funny.

Simpson's comic writing has in common with that of Orton the mainly realistic set, consecutive plot and, above all, the use of an individual language in which all his plays are written. Simpson's technique is to use the phrasing and tone of naturalistic dialogue, but make the vocabulary wildly incongruous - a use familiar from the radio comedy show of the 1950's. The extreme aspects of this form are found when Simpson is satirising an institution, as well as a manner of speech, as in the legal language of "One Way Pendulum" (1959):

PROS. COUN: You see, Mr Groomkirby, this statement seems to be based upon a whole chain of these - to say the least of it - extraordinary coincidences. This question you put to Myra Cantry. You say it was your first. But in the course of an interview of this kind you might well have put twenty or thirty questions to her. This one, which happened - so we are asked to believe - to have been the first, could equally well it seems to me have been the seventh or the third or the twenty-ninth? **

The carefully weighed speech-rhythms and repeated stock phrases of the lawyer's profession contrast to great comic effect with the insane but logically connected subject-matter. The religious service in "A Resounding Tinkle" (1958) uses one more satiric form of contrast, in

* "The Erpingham Camp" So 11 P 84

** Act II P 38

which the arbitrary nature of the traditional subject of the service is underlined by a really arbitrary choice of words:

PRAYER: Let us give praise for woodlice and for buildings
sixty-nine feet three inches high
RESPONSE: For Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations published in
Seventeen Seventy-Six. *

The rhythmical aspects of the repetition of phrases are found as far back as the "I.T.M.A." comedy programmes during the War, the "catch-phrase" becoming a continued point of reference to tie the action together. This process which can be seen in the early "A Resounding Tinkle"†

BRO: What have you done with my gumboots?
MIDDIE: What do you want gumboots for, to go down the road a
few doors with an elephant? Where are your other shoes?
BRO: These are my other shoes I've got on. **

- shows the phrases repeated with variations, through to the end of the play, coming even further in the "dream-sequence" of the radio-broadcast:

MIDDIE'S VOICE: What do you want gumboots for to go down the
road a few doors with a dinosaur? ***

The exploitation of the comic possibilities of the ambiguity of the English language is found in almost all modern drama, from Pinter, through Orton to Saunders; but it is found at its most developed in Simpson. However, the fundamentally gentle, comfortable type of comedy found in the work of this playwright was superseded in the 1960's, with the movement towards greater realism of subject, by the type of black comedy which makes a real examination of the tragic themes at which we are made to laugh.

Three playwrights - Saunders, Stoppard and Nichols - represent the sophisticated and intellectual comedy which has taken over from the Simpson type of "non-sequitur" humour to contrast with Orton's black comedy of action. Each seems to be struggling with the same two opposing impulses, represented by the traditional naturalist situation play, "Enter a Free Man" and "Neighbours" on one side and the brilliant

* P 24
** P 31
*** P 33

exploitation of theatrical technique and cliché of "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" or "Next Time I'll Sing to You" on the other. Nichols' play, "A Day in the Death of Joe Egg", includes both impulses satisfactorily merged in one play, a happy outcome resulting from the simplicity and familiarity of his subject.

The work of Saunders, represented in the period by "Barnstable" (1960), "Next Time I'll Sing to You" (1962), "Neighbours" (1964) and "A Scent of Flowers" (1964), exhibits a theatricality and rejection of naturalism which makes it unique, even among modern English drama. "Next Time I'll Sing to You" is his most complex play, and also the one which most clearly shows how he pre-figures, as early as 1962, the type of "advance" drama which was only commonly exploited in the late 60's by such playwrights as Stoppard and Nichols. His affinities, as Elizabeth Haddon says in the introduction to the Hereford edition of the play, are more to the medieval mystery play than to any more recent drama. At a time when the major playwrights were producing plays with the emphasis still on naturalism in language, time and setting, such as "Luther" (1961), "The Collection" (1962) and "Chips With Everything" (1962), this play discards the naturalism/realism debate by direct communication to the audience from a bare stage. The author can make his points directly in the "set-pieces" of philosophy and description with the type of reservations about theatrical character familiar from Pirandello; he can also put his ideas in context by the non-aligned modes of speech of his characters, who often devalue the conventional meanings of these passages by mockery or over-logical argument.

Saunders' language is subordinated completely to the theatrical experience of the moment, as can be seen in the very first speech, which begins with stage business followed by a dry philosophical treatise to prepare the audience for the moralistic tone of the plays:

MEFF: There is a pretence, and there is a pretence behind pretence. Through the ages of the groping of man... *

The wordiness of the speech is mocked by the jokes -

MEFF: A man with a wooden leg was walking down the road on his hands **

- and the theatrical process itself is commented on:

* Act I P 1
** Act I P 1, 2

MEFF: Just warming them up. Good audience tonight.

.

DUST: Do you realise we have rather a lot to get through? *

Such devices constantly remind the audience of the physical reality of their presence in the theatre, and of the actors as actors. Saunders is taking the alienation technique to its limits: on one hand he looks towards Pirandello in discussing the reality of repeated rôle-playing:

MEFF: You say that every night.

DUST: And you say that every night. **

On the other hand he repeatedly destroys the carefully built-up evocation sequences, and the sympathies of the audience, with a completeness found in no other playwright; he withdraws from his characters rather than, as Pirandello does, coming closer to them. His concentration on props - the cigarette, the lilo bed and, above all, the beard - is matched by his drawing the audience's attention to the very words that he is using. By making them aware of his technique, he can simultaneously utilise and devalue them, thus calling into question the reality of experience itself.

The opening parts of Act I are in fact a subtle extension of the "theatre of cruelty" technique; they attack the audience by the annoyance of inaction, circular dialogue, repetition and silence. The discussion of the silence beforehand not only serves to make the audience uncomfortable enough to concentrate on it, but also to reach the bed-rock of the theatrical experience to form a basis on which to build - to match the reduction of the philosophical problem of life to a few moments in one life, that of the hermit:

DUST: Why do you think they're made to laugh? To show how funny the world is? Nonsense, even they know the world isn't funny, it isn't even tragic. No, we make them laugh to enable them to shift their bottoms on their seats without their knowing it. ***

The "cricket" game represents the ultimate in theatre about theatre, and with its fast pace and humour, introduces the next phase - the entry of Rudge, the author. The attacks of Saunders on reality, and of his characters on each other, immediately become more serious:

* Act I P 2
 ** Act I P 3
 *** Act I P 10

DUST: You are the engineer of this lopsided once-nightly little dreamworld. It's your brains they're gawping at. *

The exchanges about the lilo and the ostensibly sleeping actors serve both to unsettle and to entertain the audience, to put them into the cynical cast of mind of Meff or Dust, in preparation for the hermit's entry. The expository tone of the first mention of the hermit is continually broken by parodies of legal language and inconsequentiality:

HERMIT: If I may quote from Shakespeare -
MEFF: Let's keep it original. **

This continues until the first sustained speech on the subject (which is even then divided by Lizzie and Meff):

DUST: ... Was born on the seventh of June, 1857, in the village of Great Canfield in the County of Essex. ***

The style of the language varies from the almost scientific description of the hermit's hut to the humorous unfolding of the Fanny Bell connection, keeping the audience both interested in and detached from the subject. The quotations from other village people are as alienated as possible to persuade us that no answer is to be found in facts of this type:

MEFF: ... He kept bees, grew his few plants and - this bloody collar's killing me. ****

The central passage of Act I - the evocation of the death of the hermit - is contained in a long, sustained speech, unbroken until the end by cynical comment and using lyrical language and naturalistic lighting, thus setting up a momentary "play within a play":

RUDGE: ... In the glimmer of candlelight within the frost-covered, dust-covered cobweb-covered window, the Hermit lies ... †

The movement, in language, from the factual scene-setting of the hut to the emotion of the death scene is one towards greater involvement and sympathy, but this is brutally destroyed at the end by Lizzie's innocent interjection and the repetitive backbiting of Dust and Meff.

As a counteraction to the sensibility of this speech Saunders continues to attack the audience until the interval. First he attacks

* Act I P 17
** Act I P 22
*** Act I P 23
**** Act I P 27
† Act I P 28

their motives:

DUST: ... Of course, they want to be able to say, that's how it is. (It being Life). I don't know what they've been on about but it's all so true. Then home they go and drink their bedtime cocoa full of hope for Man's tomorrow. *

Then he ridicules their pretensions to normality, in the person of the hermit:

HERMIT: I'm just a straightforward actor --
DUST: The man's an idiot. **

Meff's long speech attacks the very purpose of existence and this flippancy is balanced by the direct seriousness of Rudge on the same subject:

RUDGE: I am a mind locked in twelve hundred grammes of brain locked in a quarter of an inch of skull and the only key to this prison is death. ***

Finally, Saunders destroys the audience's faith in the language in which they communicate by attacking his own:

MEFF: What I say is, if you don't know how to handle non-sequiturs ... they grab 'em by the head, the tail whips round and there's the result - paralysis of the brain. ****

Even the theatrical context in which the play takes place is destroyed:

RUDGE: Drop the curtain.
DUST: There is no curtain. †

At the end he works up the audience to a state of acute and unsatisfied expectation for the second Act by means of hesitation and non-explanation:

MEFF: Let me help. He was, erm
DUST: In a manner of speaking
LIZZIE: You mean sort of ††

The beginning of Act II differs from Act I in technique but serves the same purpose: the audience is reassured and settled back into the atmosphere of the play by the jokes, and also reminded of the clinical nature of the theatrical experience by the light/dark

* Act I P 32
** Act I P 32
*** Act I P 35
**** Act I P 38
† Act I P 39
†† Act I P 41

conversation. Where Brecht insisted on exposed light-sources,^{note} Saunders insists on the characters discussing and altering the quality of the stage lighting. The pace is at first slow like that of the rolling juggernaut mentioned in Act I, but builds up gradually to a climax before descending, as always in the play, into bathos. Lizzie is given a long, rambling and inconsequential speech to explain her rôle as the simple deflator of the others' pomposities; in this the clichés, euphemisms and half-referred non-sequiturs produce another small area of naturalism in the play: ~~this rivals the best work of the master of this genre, Pinter:~~

LIZZIE: ... 'Course, if you're still at school it's p'raps different; you've got your homework to consider. But take a girl going round with a chap, both working, and if they're fond of each other I don't mean like the occasional tiff ... after all, people quarrel all the time, it's human nature, I mean if you're with a chap and he says so and so *

The philosophical speech which follows from Rudge also matches the one in Act I, but is now, in the light of the experience of the play, much more seriously presented:

RUDGE: ... And if you do catch a glimpse of it, you may pretend not to notice or you may turn suddenly away and romp with your children on the grass, laughing for no reason. The name of this quality is grief. **

Although it is surrounded by theatrical devaluations, and pointed up by the stupidity of the hermit, it also introduces the first transformation of the play - from actor to character - in the simple prop of the hermit's growing beard.

Rudge's evocation of the scene at the conception of the hermit balances the death scene of Act I, but is in a posture of greater attack on the audience, using the conventional picture of the nightingale:

RUDGE: And a nightingale in a beech tree refolds one wing, stares mindlessly into space and waits mindlessly for the tiny impulse which will cause it to open its beak and emit, mindlessly and without pride or joy, the characteristic sequence of high-pitched sounds known as the song of the nightingale. ***

* Act II P 46
 ** Act II P 49
 *** Act II P 50

Here the insistent repetition of words forces the audience to realise that an examination of the natural springs of action (as in the background of screech owl in Act I and nightingale in Act II) is of no help. In the same way the complex and convoluted pastiche of Rudge's speech on marriage at the beginning of the Act leaves no room for manoeuvre. The physicality of the description is the most hard-hitting in the play, and begins the process of continuous attack by the playwright through the characters on the hermit - and, by extension, on humanity - which leads to his second 'death'. Meff and Dust attack the theatrical conventions and the pretensions of Rudge and the hermit, while Rudge's answer is a whimsy which recalls Enid Blyton more than Capability Brown:

RUDGE: ... A winding fairy footpath through a little man-made wood where no-one would ever get lost. *

^{is speech}
The hermit/degenerates into pseudo-Biblical language ?

DeConey

HERMIT: His mouth is full of deceit and fraud, under his tongue is mischief and vanity - **

- while the language of Dust and Meff becomes more dynamic and forceful as they take control:

DUST: It's all been said and it'll all be said again; true or false. A comforting thought ... ***

The end of this movement is Rudge's final dismissal, goaded by the increasingly hysterical hermit:

RUDGE: No one sees it, no one gives a damn and there's no reason why anyone should. Its name is grief and it signifies - nothing. ****

This remains as the last vital statement of the play.

The cynics end the drama, with a return to the joking "play-acting" of the beginning of Act I, and the humour becomes both grotesque and vicious; nevertheless it seems more real than the Hermit's delusions, and puts the audience in a cleft stick of identification:

DUST: 1936. Fully authenticated. It was tried on two hundred

* Act II P 55
** Act II P 54
*** Act II P 57
**** Act II P 62

pigs.

MEFF: My God, I'd forgotten. But can a pig be said to have the ability to shrug its shoulders? *

The coda of the final explanations rounds off the play, by crystallising the attitudes of each character. With unaccustomed seriousness Lust examines the philosophy of life in suitable language, and is crushed by Meff. Meff's joke defines more seriously the tragicomic combination of life than do any of his other speeches, and Fudge ends on an examination of reality itself. Lizzie's final statement, in familiar Saunders style, manages to devalue the whole process of discussion:

LIZZIE: One thing about us - at least we're not dead ... **

Saunders' answer to the problem of naturalism in the theatre is to discard the usual forms to concentrate on a series of vignettes within an alienated framework. His constantly changing structure allows his language in this play, as in "A Scent of Flowers", to range from the most colloquial and joking intimacy to lyrical description and intellectual philosophy, pastiche and word games, without destroying his play's single purpose and movement. It is this variety of linguistic types which enables him to examine such wide and complex questions of philosophy without losing the attention and enjoyment of his audience.

Stoppard's play belongs to the end of the period in both subject and style of language. His use of words on the stage is similar to that of Saunders in the alienation techniques of conscious anachronism and contrasting types of language. In "The Real Inspector Hound" (1968), the pastiche of a bad melodramatic thriller, combined with a satire on the London critics, is written in an exaggerated version of dramatic and newspaper language, and represents an extreme in the tendency of the drama of the period to be about itself. The earlier "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" (1967) is an examination of the concepts of character and rôle-playing, and uses three levels of language. Where Saunders, in "Next Time I'll Sing to You" contrasts modern idiomatic conversation with the heightened and sometimes lyrical language of his "set-pieces", Stoppard, by the device of building his play around Shakespeare's own words, has more levels at his disposal. The first

* Act II P 64

** Act II P 67

is the anachronistically modern speech of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in their "off-duty" moments, the second the rhetorical and overtly dramatic language of the set-pieces of description (as of the man who brought the message), and the third Shakespeare's words from "Hamlet", which are cleverly used to support Stoppard's view of the characters. Further complicating the picture by the device of the players and these varied levels of communication Stoppard is alternately familiarising and alienating the audience with the matter of "Hamlet" on which the play is built.

The indeterminacy of the set- "in a place without much visible character" - is familiar from Saunders as a device for opening out the references of the play from a narrow concentration in space or time. The intimacy of the opening scenes also recalls Saunders in the technique of comedy by boredom, as the impossible series of throws of the coin continues. The dead mathematical language alerts the audience to the lack of precision and relevance of the words in which mankind communicates:

GUILDENSTERN: The scientific approach to the examination of phenomena *

Constant references to the dramatic situation ensure the degree of alienation necessary for a dispassionate weighing-up of the characters and their meanings:

GUILDENSTERN: There is an art to the building up of suspense. **

The first scene of evocation, the summons, is put in a curious stilted phraseology:

ROSENCRANTZ: That's it - pale sky before dawn, a man standing on the saddle to bang on the shutters - shouts - What's all the row about?! Clear off! - But then he called our names ***

This contrasts with the rambling inconsequential language which precedes it, and brings a breath of another reality into the situation. The description is repeated twice, first in a rush of words illustrating the speed of travel:

* Act I P 4
 ** Act I P 4
 *** Act I P 5

ROSENCRANTZ: ... lights in the stable yard, saddle up and off headlong and hotfoot across the land - guides outstripped in breakneck pursuit of our duty. *

Then, in more reflective terms:

GUILDENSTERN: ... our names shouted in a certain dawn a message, a summons - **

These variations of expression, as well as underlining the importance of the summons, establish the levels of reality of the play and differentiate the two main characters, despite the confusion which they themselves feel.

The technique of confusing the audience about their presence in the theatre and about the actors' reality as characters, which is so often employed by Saunders, occurs here, with even more complexities, in the scenes with the players:

GUILDENSTERN: Aren't you going to - come on?
 PLAYER: I am on.
 GUILDENSTERN: But if you are on, you can't come on; Can you?
 PLAYER: I start on. ***

This serves to introduce the first extract from the original Shakespeare. The words: "Welcome dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern", are altered by the stage action to fit in with Stoppard's thesis of identity confusion, and the paired opposites -

CLAUDIUS: Thanks, Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern.
 GERTRUDE: Thanks Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz. ****

- are utilised to great comic effect in the same way. The words are here subordinate in meaning to the actions, ^{when each actor bows to the other's name;} yet the original lines of "Hamlet" which Stoppard declines to change by a syllable, determine the course of the play. One of the recurring rhymed couplets which punctuate the otherwise naturalistic dialogue occurs after the "Hamlet" extract; these serve to give form and direction to the rambling philosophical discussions:

ROSENCRANTZ: (An anguished cry) Consistency is all I ask!
 GUILDENSTERN: (low, wry rhetoric) Give us this day our daily mask. †

Towards the end of the Act the question game, with the comic emphasis

* Act I P 15
 ** Act I P 16
 *** Act I P 13
 **** Act I P 14
 † Act I P 16

on the words themselves, recalls Saunders' "cricket" game in "Next Time I'll Sing to You":

ROSENCRANTZ: Are you counting that?
 GUILDENSTONE: What?
 ROSENCRANTZ: Are you counting that?
 GUILDENSTONE: Foul! No repetitions. Three-love. First game to...
 ROSENCRANTZ: I'm not going to play if you're going to be like that.
 GUILDENSTONE: Whose serve?
 ROSENCRANTZ: Huh?
 GUILDENSTONE: Foul! No grunts. Love-one. *

At first casual, the game builds up to a climax of aggression about identity, and recalls similar games which become serious in Pinter's "The Birthday Party". The Act ends with another confident use of Shakespeare's words to continue the identity question: it is done so well that it becomes difficult to imagine any other reason for Hamlet's choice of words.

Act II begins, after the Shakespeare extract, with an analysis of the speech in terms which refer ironically to critical methods:

ROSENCRANTZ: Six rhetorical and two repetition, leaving nineteen of which we answered fifteen. And what did we get in return? He's depressed! **

The discussion about compass directions uses them as a symbol for the problems of identity, at the same time amusing the audience with nonsensical action. The anger of the players at being left acting to no one continues the attack on the audience as Rosencrantz shouts "Fire!" This ties the fact of the theatre, stressed by Saunders and Nichols, to the identity problems central to this play. Stoppard makes a different use of Shakespearean extracts in Act II, which has much more of the original "Hamlet" in it than Act I, by showing the actor in a mime related by the players. In this way he introduces theatrical irony by showing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern warned of their own deaths but not understanding the warnings. The mechanics of drama are stressed by the simulated deaths 'shown' by the players, and the contrast between the Elizabethan language and the modern idiom used by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern keeps a constant interest in the unfolding

* Act I P 18

** Act II P 26

of the action. In this way Stoppard erects a bridge between the modern world and that of Shakespeare: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, by their everyday speech and actions, are made to stand for us in the world of "Hamlet".

Act III begins with Stoppard satirising the "scene-setting" of naturalist drama with the long list of nautical instructions (like Arden in "The Hero Rises Up"), the language alienating and amusing the audience but still fulfilling its purpose of description. There is no more of Shakespeare to tie down the action until the very end, except for the letters, which act as reminders of the original action of the play "Hamlet". The absence of the quotations used in Acts I and II allows Stoppard's language to become more detached and reflective than before, undriven by events. Guildenstern's long speech describing the voyage recalls the language of the summons of Act I, as does his later description of their future arrival in England and of the voyage itself:

GUILDENSTERN: The perfect and absolute silence of the wet lazy slap of water against water and the rolling creak of timber. *

This is a moment of real physical evocation to counteract the increasingly unconnected and vague nature of the philosophical discussion. The end of the original "Hamlet" is mimed, almost "in passing", in order to finish it off. The last speeches round off the play while leaving the questions open. This "coda" recalls Saunders' formal speeches at the end of "Next Time I'll Sing to You" in leaving a question rather than an answer for the audience to consider. As Stoppard's subject is identity rather than communication, there are in this play none of the cross-purposes found in the conversation of much modern drama: the uncertainties which make up the plot are those of action and character, while the words themselves, whether they are Shakespeare's or Stoppard's, are clear, direct and unambiguous. He uses his different modes of expression to link the present experience of the audience, by gradual stages, with that of the original play: the jokes, games and mimes are but means to this one end.

* Act III P 54

Nichols' use of language in "A Day in the Death of Joe Egg" (1967) has much in common with that of Saunders and Stoppard. The subject, however, is much more intimate and personal than that of Stoppard. The jokes and spoof acting, which penetrate the naturalistic setting, dialogue and situation, are much more strongly tied down to the specific, and usually function as therapeutic relief rather than attack. Where Stoppard's pastiches of obsolete forms and philosophical mannerism have little connection with his audience except in the central identity problem, Nichols uses his varying linguistic modes to draw the audience into the situation as much as possible. As Ronald Bryden said in the "Observer" review of the play: "The bridge between its form and content is a simple but brilliant stroke of theatre." * The series of set-pieces, directed towards the real audience, repeat and exaggerate the portrayed behaviour of the family. This brings the style nearer to a form of naturalism than that of Saunders, whose actors consciously set up "playlets" for the audience at the time of performance. The monologues in "Joe Egg" which serve as a convenient dramatic shorthand for character-building and explanation of motives, are similar to the long speeches in "Next Time I'll Sing to You" in intent, but much less alienated by stylistic tricks or jokes: Lizzie's speech in the second half of the Saunders play is the nearest approach to this technique of Nichols:

GRACE: No, well I wouldn't have dropped in, not in the ordinary way, specially when they had company, only on Tuesday Mrs Parry and I make a habit of meeting for the pictures if there's anything nice. Well, after you've been round with a duster, there's nothing much left to fill in the afternoons **

His technique of language - his use of a number of different modes to change the pace and tone and keep the audience both entertained and concentrating on a difficult subject, yet all in a free-flowing idiomatic modern speech - is very similar to that of Saunders. But it is the overall tone and humanistic treatment of his subject, though it is similar in many ways, which make the play of a completely different

* July 1967

** Act II P 65-6

type.

Two middle-period plays by Osborne illustrate his tendency towards a more direct relationship with the audience in the style of the "illusionists", above, and Arden, below - though his earlier and later linguistic naturalism has many affinities with the work of the other naturalistic playwrights of the early sixties.

"Luther" (1961) represents his early period of naturalistic dialogue with some elements of "direct communication with the audience which may be compared with the historical work of Arden. "Inadmissible Evidence" (1964) represents the later work in its emphasis on lack of communication, and its colloquial modernity of tone is similar to that of all Osborne's major work. "Luther" can be contrasted with Arden's "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance" in its much smaller concern with the language itself, although in each case it is an idea (spoken or written) projected into a historical situation, which provides the action. The historical setting of "Luther" is realised by the free translations of the actual speeches of the time, combined with the stage-sets themselves, which are used to distance and encapsulate the speeches, which are in modern idiom. This technique is in strong contrast to that, for example, of Arden's "Armstrong's Last Goodnight" or "Left-Handed Liberty". In "Luther" the pastiche versions of the speech of the time are of great importance in keeping the audience's sense of participation alive.

The physical tableau of the kneeling Martin and the monks at the beginning of Scene I creates the effect of a closed society, withdrawn from the world, and this is supported by the use of the traditional language of investiture:

PRIOR: He whom it was your will to dress in the garb of the Order, oh Lord, invest him also with eternal life. *

But the language, as in all the early religious scenes, is sufficiently modernised to communicate what is taking place directly and simply to the audience. The contrast in Scene I between the worldly life (represented by Hans and Lucas) and the spiritual, a contrast and conflict essential to the course of the play, is made initially by the naturalistic dialogue itself. The slang and hesitation of the family scene, which make it 'available', is contrasted to the cold ritual of

the investiture:

HANS: ... You've been sitting in this arse-aching congregation all this time, you've been watching, haven't you?

.

HANS: No, you're damn right he won't. Of stature. To the Archbishop or the Duke, or -

LUCAS: Yes.

HANS: Anyone. *

The reading, which paraphrases and modernises the commandments, presents the monks' life to the audience with great simplicity and sympathy, but its gradual retreat from directness into theological obscurity foreshadows the first break in the spiritual harmony of the next section of the scene. Beginning with -

READER: Not to steal
Not to covet
Not to bear false witness **

- it soon becomes -

To keep your mouth from evil and depraved talk.
Not to love much speaking. ***

- and ends on a note of high-church ceremony:

... spreading around you by the piety of your deportment the sweet odour of Christ. ****

The first separation of Martin from the life of the others is in terms of the wild, dramatic, emotional language of his confession, which shows how trivial and stolid are the other monks:

MARTIN: I was fighting a bear in a garden without flowers, leading into a desert. His claws kept making my arms bleed as I tried to open a gate which would take me out I was a naked woman riding on a goat, and the goat began to drink my blood, and I thought I should faint with the pain and I woke in my cell, all soaking in the devil's bath. †

The surrealist imagery of the drama is later echoed in Scene II, where Luther becomes part of the dream-world. The climax of the scene with Martin's fit, which results from the irreconcilable conflict within

* Act I Sc I P 15-16
** Act I Sc I P 17
*** Act I Sc I P 18
**** Act I Sc I P 18, 19
† Act I Sc I P 19

him, is almost without words, the violent and sudden action being a mime similar to those of Pinter at his climactic moments (see Chapter 5); here language is insufficient. The continuing Office serves as the spiritual background which solves problems such as this by ignoring them.

Scene II opens with a stage-setting and dream-sequence both extremely violent in expression. Both Martin's appearance - "haggard and streaming with sweat" - and his language support the intensity of his own physical humanity in contrast to the earlier calm ceremony of the Monks. The conflict is continued in the scene with Brother Weinand, as the Creed is counterpoised against Martin's doubt, and neither can win:

BRO. WEINAND: After me. "I believe in God the Father Almighty,
maker of Heaven and Earth

MARTIN: I'm a trough, I tell you, and he's swilling about
in me. All the time. *

The physicality of the metaphors gives the lie to the spiritual generalisations, as later in the sermons. The simplicity of the last statement in the scene, which is made direct to the theatre audience, emphasises it in contrast to the previous soul-searching, and places it as central to the plot:

MARTIN: And so, the praising ended - and the blasphemy began. **

The naturalistic Scene 3, which contrasts again with the surrounding symbolism, shows Hans' inability to understand Martin building up naturally to the blasphemy which dramatises the conflict and divorces him finally from Martin's vocation:

HANS: I'll tell you:
Bread thou art and wine thou art
And always shall remain so. ***

The direction of Hans' attack is also related directly to the plot of the play as a whole: Hans is representing the German people in unconsciously attacking the literal interpretation of the Mass, and thus he foreshadows Martin's revolt. The emphasis of the play on words and forms of speech is found here in Martin's reference to the

* Act I Sc 2 P 28

** Act I Sc 2 P 30

*** Act I Sc 3 P 39

words of the Mass - "They struck at my life". The moment at which the Reformation was born is made one of linguistic analysis:

Act II Scene I relaxes and entertains the audience after the intensity of Act I with a theatrical spectacle which uses the forceful, colloquial language of the professional orator, Tetzal. The prevailing physical imagery is also found here in the rhythmic repetitions which underlie the speech:

TETZEL: However, however - just in case - just in case, mind, there is one blind, maimed midget among you today who can't hear, I will open his ears and wash them out with sacred soap for him. *

The forthright, public language of hypocrisy and commerce is immediately contrasted with the quiet, intimate atmosphere of Scene II, the humanity of which is upheld also by the humorous story of Tetzal's fate at the hands of the nobleman. But the calmness of the scene is interrupted more and more by the scatological metaphors which occur in Martin's arguments. These are directly physical rather than religious or philosophical:

MARTIN: Only last week I was lecturing on Galatians Three, verse three, and I allegorized going to the lavatory.

.

A hog waffling in its own crap is contented.

.

If I break wind in Wittenberg, they might smell it in Rome. **

Scene 3, which is again theatrical to contrast in sincerity with Scene I, continues this type of metaphor, while making its points with much the same kind of rhetorical methods as Tetzal, *** in the relentless list of relics and the artificial balance of sentences to gain effect:

LUTHER: If we are going to be deserted, let's follow the deserted Christ. ****

The long Scene 4 contains the central presentation of the

* Act II Sc I P 47
** Act II Sc II P 52 - 60
*** "The rhetoric of self-dramatization" (Kennedy, "Six Dramatists", P 204)
**** Act II Sc 3 P 63

plot and the reasons for Luther's revolt. The argument is conducted in intellectual terms which again contrast with the physicality of Scene 3, and the importance of the movement of argument is shown by its naturalistic but completely modernised dialogue, distanced from the audience neither by archaism, dyphemism nor an obtrusive set. The paternal approach of Cajetan - "Oh my dear, dear son" - disallows Martin the kind of fire he shows with Tetzel, and instead he must reply in formal terms which discount the Cardinal's appeal. The emotion of the language mounts to a climax of simplicity, all argument having failed:

CAJETAN: I beg of you, my son. I beg of you. Retract.
(Pause)
MARTIN: Most holy father, I cannot. *

Cajetan's prophecy at the end of the scene foresees the third Act and modern history, in a way which brings the act of saying "I speak Latin and am a Christian" right out of the historical context of the play: the words themselves are again central to the plot. Scene 5 briefly shows the rapid and immediate reply to Luther's rebellion; it represents the power of the Church by the list of its subjects: "Maximilian, and all the other princes of Germany, together with all communities, universities, potentates, ecclesiastic and secular". Martin's own reply follows in Scene 6 in terms of open conflict which are the strongest in the play:

MARTIN: ... Signed beneath the seal of the Fisherman's Ring
by one certain midden cock called Leo, an over-indulged
jakes' attendant to Satan himself, a glittering worm
in excrement **

Meanwhile the humanity and self-doubt of Martin are kept in sight by his private prayer at the end of Act II, which falls on God in terms much more intimate than those of Act I. In other words, Luther has already partly achieved his purpose, outlined in Act I, of speaking directly to God.

The Diet scene at the beginning of Act III continues the opposition of public and private with the theatrical spectacle of colour, robes and trumpets which is followed by a quiet, conversational tone in Martin's and Eck's speeches. Osborne abstracts the central

* Act II Sc 4 P 74

** Act II Sc 6 P 79

points of the confrontation at Worms in simple terms which place the issues squarely before the audience, who are involved in the scene by the device of the rostrum which projects into the auditorium. * The arrogance which Luther shows throughout the second half of the play, and against which he unsuccessfully fights in the monastic scenes, is demonstrated by his comparison of himself with Christ, and his acceptance, in this scene, of the role of reformer of the whole of Christendom. The Eck/Luther confrontation is portrayed as one of politics against conscience; Eck, for example, pleads the necessities of the time:

ECK: What would the Jews and the Turks and Saracens say if they heard us debating whether what we have always believed is true or not? **

Both speakers use language whose familiarity to the audience and lack of archaism brings the issues right into the present.

The Knight who has introduced the scenes as a type of narrator now enters the action and represents the audience's own response to the events which he describes. A new element embodying the language of the "common man" enters the play as the Knight argues with Luther's ceremonial words in Scene 2, and Luther's own "sermon" on Abraham gains a new linguistic dignity from the confrontation. The mime at the end expresses events in a simple form which is unencumbered by language: the play's plot really ends here, leaving the last scene as a quiet winding-down from the violence and emotion. The language is like that of the early scenes with Hans, when Martin, at the very end, speaks to the child as to the future. "Luther" shows Osborne using the long, attacking speeches of his early plays in a historical context which allows them to be seen to have a result, and which also can contain, as a counterweight, his naturalistic modern dialogue.

"Inadmissible Evidence" belongs in linguistic terms with the plays of 1968 in its modern setting and use of the jargon and mannerisms appropriate to the characters' careers. "Time Present" relies on its theatrical background to give reality to the long revelatory speeches (although this dims the boundary between truth and falsehood);

* - See stage directions to Act III Scene I
** Act III Sc I P 85

"The Hotel in Amsterdam" uses its holiday atmosphere and the casual non-hierarchy of the film world in the same way. * In contrast "Inadmissible Evidence" tackles the question of degrees of naturalism by making it completely unclear how much of the dialogue is taking place in Maitland's own mind. The whole play is concerned with barely understood signals from one person to another, and Act 2 stresses this with parodies of legal language:

CLERK: Object. Intending to vitiate and corrupt the morals of the liege subjects of our lady the Queen ... **

This is spoken by both Judge and Clerk in firm, assured tones which contrast with the hesitant, repetitious and personal words of Maitland. Against the Kafkaesque majesty of the ill-understood legal process Maitland can only set his "Modernist" creed:

BILL: more schools and universities and universities and schools, the theme of change, realistic decisions based on a highly developed and professional study of society by people who really know their subject ***

His beliefs here are made to seem inadequate and ridiculous in the face of the personal, individual facts of crisis of identity. An exchange in the early part of this section could be seen as a metaphor for Osborne's abandonment of the public issues of his early work in favour of a concentration on the problems of personality and relationships in "privative" terms: ****

BILL: Facing up realistically, the issues that are important, really central, social change, basic, burning issues.

JUDGE: I think that is evident.

BILL: I wish I could see more clearly. †

The "issues of social change" are abandoned in favour of the metaphor of sight to imply consciousness, also commonly found in Pinter's work, where individual relationships are paramount. The dream setting allows the explanations of Bill's life to be put in simple documentary terms - the story is told to the audience, the character is analysed, and the fears expressed before the action of the play proper begins.

The office scene which follows serves as a format for Bill's attacks on Shirley and Jones which at once destroy most of the

* A holiday is a familiar setting for revealing the true self: the film casualness allows intimacy between all the characters.

** Act I P 9

*** Act I P 10

**** See Part III Chapter 7

† Act I P 11

audience's sympathy with the character, only to retrieve that sympathy later despite his character. Shirley's reaction to Bill seems only reasonable, and his view of Jones is completely uncalled-for, especially in the context of Hudson's evident common sense:

BILL: He's a tent peg. Made in England. To be knocked into the ground. *

The references to modern life - the habits of ordinary people, the influence of the computer, the newspaper and politics - are piled up by Bill in every speech to Hudson, with little attempt to create an atmosphere of naturalism in the running of the office. Osborne's feelings are expressed directly to the audience in a way unusual in his plays; the attack, on practically everything, continues relentlessly - a drum-beat of sustained misanthropy. Each complaint about modern life is pointed up by a personal reference:

BILL: She married some compulent financier.
HUDSON: Who?
BILL: Betty. I'm always seeing his name on building sites, spends his time pulling down Regency squares - you know - and putting up slabs of concrete technological nougat. **

The vaguely-portrayed nature of the other characters allows Bill to make his series of attacks in more directions and a shorter time than is found in any other Osborne play. The word "object", with its phallic implication in the early scene, returns here as shorthand for the purpose of life, and although never fully realised as such, recurs through the play as a reminder of Bill's doubts about his own existence:

BILL: But what sort of object is that? Is it an enjoyment, a duty, an obligation, a necessity? ***

The linguistic muddles of his speeches reflect his lack of moral sense or psychological consistency.

The first telephone conversation, with Anna, starts the process of loss of identity and purpose: the "message" from the outside world" device is common in Osborne, and is described in Part 3. The Maitland end of each conversation is arranged so that there is very little doubt about the other half of the dialogue, while its personal

* Act I P 27
** Act I P 30
*** Act I P 35

relevance to Maitland's own feeling of reality is enhanced by the one-sided nature of the audience's perception. * The hierarchy of communication, at its most tenuous on the telephone, is manifested in the inter-office dictaphone, which separates the characters the audience sees, and ends in the dream sequences which take place entirely in Maitland's mind - communication only with the self. The second conversation, sandwiched between Shirley's leaving and Mrs Garnsey, the first client, matches the "Anna" one in lucidity, establishing the two rival women in order to develop their characters later. It soon becomes clear that Mrs Garnsey's description of her husband is in fact of Bill, and from this point onwards the naturalism of each conversation is suspect for the audience, and its attention is drawn to Bill's loss of control. The non-committal ending to Act I leaves the plot and Bill's motives in a limbo which foreshadows the ending:

BILL: Tell her: to expect me when she sees me. **

The business with the telephone connection at the beginning of Act II is the clearest dramatisation of the difficulty of communication found in a modern drama preoccupied with this theme. The contrast of Liz and Anna is more marked as conversations follow one another in the cold light of dawn. The dialogue with Liz is both more warmly personal and more lucid, while Anna's call tapers off into a loss of direction while Bill attacks her and various other targets in passing:

BILL: - Oh, something about your gold lamé hairstyle ... and, oh yes, your dress: what did she call it: chintz and sequin collage ***

.

I'll buy you an air cushion for the next Aldermaston. †

As the identities of the clients become confused and they merge into one another, the language makes a contrast between the legalities of the various petitions and concrete references to the surface appearance of modern life - the furniture, books, drinks and shops - which are all

* The process is made explicit in Pinter's "The Collection", where both participants in the conversation are heard.

** Act I P 57

*** Act II P 64

† Act II P 65

that Maitland can hold on to in the absence of personal identity. The balance of the Tonks petition and Maitland's reminiscences puts his personal experience into context, while drawing attention to the inhuman nature of the legalities involved; this may be a plea for understanding of Maitland himself, who is involved in the conduct of his profession. Maples, an older version of Jones and played by the same actor to enforce comparison, represents another aspect of the world which Maitland hates. The language of the 'statement' is admirably suited to Osborne's purpose, being expanded to include more personal reflection than is usual in legal matters, but avoiding the complications of the earlier 'statements'.

The one-sided conversation with Jane is the longest in the play, the very fast delivery and simple, intimate language being a more studied version of the Jones' attacks. The fades at each end of the speech make it uncertain whether Maitland is actually talking to Jane; the subject moves from a general discussion of his parenthood and marriage to Jane herself as representative of the youth Maitland has lost:

BILL: ... Oh, I read about you, I see you in the streets. I hear what you say, the sounds you make ... *

The emphatic repetition of key words - "kindness", "loving" - shows the importance Osborne puts on his evaluation of a way of life, and forms what little climax can be found in the play. The whole of the action can be seen as leading up to this speech. Finally Bill himself is attacked by Liz in person in terms of an intellectual aristocracy which is another facet of life that he has been shown to envy:

LIZ: You're a dishonest little creep. **

Anna's last two phone calls complete the process to immobility; a certain positive tone from Liz is unable to reverse the trend towards personal destruction. The mention of Jane and the two "Goodbye's" in the last four lines wind down the action to a stop by closing off all the loopholes; Maitland is now trapped inside himself in silence, non-communication and immobility; he is in a state familiar in Pinter's

* Act II P 104

** Act II P 110

characters, whose loss of identity is often as total. *

Bond's late work has a more interesting relevance to the period in general than his early naturalism. It shows, in contrast to Arden's work, how alienation can be entirely non-poetic. Bond's style changes during the period from the complete naturalism of "The Pope's Wedding" (1962) and "Saved" (1965), to the more conscious theatricality of "Narrow Road to the Deep North" (1968). The early plays utilise one of the most completely naturalistic linguistic forms to be found in modern drama; they achieve the same degree of audience recognition of authenticity in the rural setting as Pinter's early plays do in an urban one. But at the end of the period, Bond seems to have been drawn, like so many modern dramatists, towards an indeterminate historical period in which his language can achieve a direct communication with the audience in non-naturalistic terms. The "subtextual" meaning of the laconic, understated language of the first two plays is revealed in "Narrow Road to the Deep North", in order to concentrate the audience's attention on the events and personalities of the play in a way which is widely human rather than narrowly regional. In order to show his thesis of the behaviour of mankind in more general terms than was possible in the restricted words of "The Pope's Wedding" and "Saved" Bond can mix the seventeenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the play to make his philosophical points, ** while tying the whole action together with a modern, idiomatic speech which has no complex levels of interpretation.

The bare stage of the set is matched by Basho's bare and direct introduction of himself to the audience at the beginning of the play:

BASHO: My name is Basho. I am, as you know, the great
seventeenth-century Japanese poet ***

The theatrical structure is exposed as he gives the setting for the audience:

BASHO: Thirty years since I was here. ****

* For example, Stanley ("The Birthday Party"), Disson ("The Tea Party") etc.

** "It is also far enough removed in time and place not to bother us about whether it is realistic or not."
(J R Taylor, "The Second Wave" P 88)

*** Introduction P 7

**** Part I Sc I P 9

This puts the listener in a detached mood, alienated from direct identification with the actors. The apparently complete simplicity of the language at the outset is later shown to be part of a complex dramatic irony. The questions about God, as well as a word game, are later found to have real answers, and to take part in the plot, and Basho's growing impatience serves to introduce the audience to the complete 'attack' of the prisoners and guards scene. By putting his naturalistic conversations in the context of a non-naturalistic set, Bond can use the simple epic theatre props of songs, repetition, placards and slogans to make his points. But the direct attack on the sensibilities of the audience is balanced by the wry tenderness of the next scene:

BASHO: My old hut was by the place where they threw people in the river. Their friends and relatives used to come and stand quietly on the bank, with Shogo expressions on their faces. But when it was over they ran round looking for somewhere quiet to cry, and they always ended up behind my hut, crying on my vegetables and treading on them. *

The levels of interpretation open out from the simplicity of the words and actions, as each haiku not only serves to rest the audience from the furious pace of the play, and introduces a subtlety of feeling foreign to most of the characters, but ties the play's action, however loosely, to the actual historical background by commenting on it:

BASHO: Two soldiers came
The head of the city wants me
They waited
While I wrote this poem. **

It now begins to emerge what an asset the bare stage and non-fixed time and place setting can be to Bond in allowing him the constant contrasts of simplicity and complexity of intention, action and stillness, violence and peace. The under-stated language of Basho at his probable fate is matched by the childishness of the young priests, and the scene revolves round simple points like the hopscotch game and the pot, and contrasts the colours of saffron robes and red wine. But in case the audience should be too lulled by the scene, the phrase "It's stuck" is repeated by the Chief Police Inspector in a

* Part I Sc 2 P 13
** Part I Sc 2 P 14

much more serious context, and it is the language of Shogo rather than the bare minimum of props provided for the scene which makes the contrast between the life of religion and the life of power. A certain regard for the dynamic Shogo is increased when he saves Kiro by a typically logical solution:

SHOGO: (Points to the corpse) Bury that! (The soldier takes the corpse out. To Basho) I didn't bring you here to kill you. (Calls). Prime Minister! *

Our response is immediately counteracted, however, by his disposal of the peasant. As in "Saved", it is the violent actions of the characters which decide the course of the play, and which show up the words as fundamentally secondary, whereas in much drama of the time it is what the characters say which governs the action.

Scenes 5 and 6 make it obvious, in the anachronisms, that naturalism is unimportant: the attitude of the audience to the Western figures is directed by Basho:

BASHO: He's a barbarian - a bragging, mindless savage. **

.

His mistress, but he calls her his sister out of courtesy.

The one-dimensionality of the Western figures, re-inforced by their elaborate costumes and attitudes, continues throughout the action; although a certain amount of sympathy is extended to Georgina in the scene with the children, it is again withdrawn at the end. The repetition of the word game about God is another hint that the religion on which Kiro and Basho base their lives has not much more to be said for it than the Christianity which is ridiculed in Georgina. The similarities are stressed in the first scene of Part II, where after the humour of Georgina's speech has brought the audience comfortably back into the play, the stupidity of the priests is shown to be as great as Georgina's:

ARGI: Can I bless people?
 BASHO: Yes.
 ARGI: And tell them the're born evil?
 BASHO: Yes. †

* Part I Sc 4 P 24

** Part I Sc 5 P 31

*** Part I Sc 5 P 32

† Part II Sc I P 39

The scene leads up to the wholesale condemnation of Christianity as explained by Georgina - a speech which can only become part of the play because of the latter's relatively lax structure.

Scene 2 humanises Shogo in order to make his death more shocking at the end, whereas a one-dimensional tyrant would not make this effect. The language - hesitant, slow and vague - is in complete contrast to the rest of the play, but Shogo's remembrance of his youth and groping towards an understanding of ethics are soon broken by the black humour of the "clumsy tribesmen" section and Kiro's attack on him:

KIRO: An arrow only falls together once. *

Shogo is last seen alive as the merciless tyrant of the next scene. Georgina's madness, after the death of the children, is shown finely in the scraps of hymns distorted in her speech-

GEORGINA: ... He gave them snow in winter ... and lips that we might tell ... all things bright and ... dead all dead.... **

as Basho's prophecy of the haunting comes true. The last scene, utilising the microphone as a de-humanising agent, represents a climactic series of shocks for the audience to usher in the new life at the end. The poignant contrast between the official language of the unseen Basho, who has finally succumbed to the power structure, and Kiro's reading of the delicate verses of another Basho is continued in the insane and ridiculous words of Georgina, contrasted to the silent action of Kiro, betrayed by Shogo's death and Basho's defection. The device of representing the execution by the noise of the crowd is a theatrical masterpiece which does not diminish the shock of the exposure of the mutilated body. Kiro's suicide and the common-sense disposal of Georgina are put in the past by the entrance of the man at the end, his naked, wet body a witness that life is continuous, despite the general effect of the play. The ending, as Kiro dies and the man dries himself, takes place in that part of life beyond language which is exploited in so much modern drama, and points the simplicities of the life/death contrast. Bond has achieved a successful combination of

* Part 2 Sc 2 P 46
** Part 2 Sc 3 P 52

the naturalistic prose of his early plays and a direct exposure to the audience of his theatrical methods and meanings - the nearest modern English drama has approached to the theories of Brecht.

It is characteristic of the playwrights of the "New Wave" that each of them produces in a relatively short time a large number of different types of drama - of experiments, often successful, in many different directions. Of the major playwrights of the period, Arden is the one who has produced the most diverse work in terms of subject-matter, technique and language. As detailed analysis of each of his plays is obviated by lack of space I propose to take, as examples, three major plays which span the period in question. These are "Live Like Pigs" (1956), a play in his early semi-naturalistic style; "The Workhouse Donkey" (1963) written in a more developed combination of naturalism and elements drawn from pantomime, the music-hall and traditional melodrama; and "The Hero Rises Up" (1968), which shows Arden's virtual abandonment of the techniques of traditional theatre in favour of an amalgam of Brechtian alienation and a type of musical comedy. In each case it is the vocabulary, phrasing and timing chosen to form the poetic and prose elements of the plays which demonstrate the changing character of Arden's use of language.

The characters of "Live Like Pigs" show a more consistent and carefully worked hierarchy of dialect and metaphor than those of the earlier "Waters of Babylon": the northern setting and wide range of social backgrounds and classes allows Arden to use subtle gradations of "civilisation" * shown by the characters, with a much wider gap between the two main opposed families. This conflict is pointed and underlined by the very language in which each character speaks, and not only is each person's level of generally accepted "civilisation" shown by this method, but their feelings in a crisis are dramatised by heightened language.

The songs which introduce each scene -

* This includes social status and degree of culture; it is characterised by the differing degrees of remoteness which each character can be said to show from the savage origins of mankind. This results in the ease with which characters close to these origins can return, for the characters most remote from "civilisation", to the non- or un-social behaviour exhibited in the play.

O England was a free country
So free beyond a doubt *

- constitute Arden's first use of the outside narrator technique. In "The Waters of Babylon", songs were sung by most characters during the action, but here they act as a chorus similar to the Greek model - as a comment on the action to come. They are familiar to the audience because they are sung to well-known traditional tunes, and yet new in their use of lyrics in the modern idiom. Properly produced, they should make an immediate impact on the audience's complacency:

The first stanza of all should cut very violently into the hushed hum-and-shuffle that normally comes between the lowering of the house-lights and the rise of the curtain.
(Arden - introduction to the play)

Arden has not used this particular technique again, partly because no later play's subject could be so aptly commented on by the folk-song material, and partly because although frequent changes of scene remain in his later work, the amount of naturalism in setting, and therefore the need for "punctuation" between scenes, is later greatly reduced.

The sane, normal, everyday language of the Official's speech opens the play:

OFFICIAL: Oh, come on, Missus, I've not got all day. Blimey, you'd think I was showing you round a condemned cell or summat. **

He provides an immediate figure with whom the audience can identify, particularly when he is set against the irrational violence of Sailor and Col:

COL: Jump your bloody foot to t' other side o' that door. ***

In the first scene increasingly violent and regional dialect introduces the audience to the levels of civilisation of the participants, ranging from Rosie's scolding -

ROSIE: Shut your noise when you're told. †

- to the violent vulgarity of Col, Sailor, and Rachel:

RACHEL: How'd you like a real screaming son to raven your paunch for you, boy? ††

* Sc I P 105
** Sc I P 105
*** Sc I P 109
† Sc I P 106
†† Sc I P 109

Thus we gradually move away from the ordered world of the official to the anarchic singing Sailor at the end.

Scene 2 ties the introductory song in with Sailor's mermaid imagery, and the conversation is calm in the morning light, as the alternation of day and night is reflected in the language and psyche of people formerly "close to nature". The quiet, slow pace of the scene compared to Scene 1 brings out the imagery and "myth-making" of the hierarchical figure of Sailor:

ROSE: He came into Hull from Archangel on the ice. *

Throughout the play, complex metaphorical language emerges at moments of quiet, while violence or its threat quickens the pace with short, staccato sentences in simple vocabulary, shorn of essentials. Mrs Jackson here fulfils the same role as the Official in Scene 1: her meandering friendliness is sympathetic, but caricatured just enough to make the audience's disapproval of Rachel's attitude waver. The ambivalence of identification is already becoming established:

MRS JACKSON: Isn't it lovely here, though? ... But my husband, he reckons that's a good thing. He says -

RACHEL: Oh go to hell, you and your fizzing husband. **

The result, as Arden hopes, is that the audience cannot sympathise entirely with either side. In Scene 3 the simple peasant imagery of the children's song -

COL: Filled his pockets with oats and barley. ***

- and the mention of clothes pegs again lulls the audience into security. Here, they think, is the traditional gypsy material: even the song "Cigaretts and Whisky" represents a comfortable institutionalised anarchy. The sensitive treatment of the hesitant courtship of Col and Doreen, with the alternating aggression and kindness of the adolescent Col, also reassures the audiences. Col's descriptive humour is notable:

COL: A house a house a bit of garden. Then you've got the concrete bloody road and two blue coppers thumping up and down it. †

* Sc 2 P 111
** Sc 2 P 113
*** Sc 3 P 115
† Sc 3 P 117
~~†† Sc 3 P 119~~

This and his wild unselfconscious dance creates a sympathetic picture. The two families intermingle; Rachel herself parodies the language, and behaviour of the Sawneys as seen by the Jacksons (and probably by the audience):

RACHEL: He's voyaging to Archangel on the wave-tops of my money, mister *

.

Cross the tall tart's palm with silver **

Jackson's proposition to Rachel gives the lie to the assumptions of his household.

In Scene 4 Blackmouth's calm, everyday language as he plays the father with Sally is suddenly broken into by Sailor:

SAILOR: Is that dirty dog-fox Romany here ***

This conceals what the audience later discovers - that it is the Blackmouth trio who are violently impinging on the Sawneys. All the violence, both in act and word, is on the side of the Sawneys in this scene, and their colourful and metaphorical language is contrasted with the simple statements of Blackmouth. The Sawneys throughout are direct in their statement of feelings of aggression, *** where both Jacksons and Blackmouth's trio hide their purposes under calm words and prevarication. Even when, in Scene 6, Blackmouth is thrown out by Sailor, his psychosis is shown by understatement rather than words - as in all Arden, those who speak out their feelings are less dangerous than those who conceal them:

BLACKMOUTH: I'll tell the boys along the road, I'll tell 'em. Se ss. Good friends, good friends. I'll tell the bloody boys - ****

Blackmouth is much more polite to the authority figure of the Doctor than the Sawneys, because he is better at concealing his feelings.

Scenes 7 and 8 show Jackson's civilisation cracking in

* So 3 P 119

** So 4 P 123

*** The combination of metaphor and direct expression of feeling is not a contradiction, as it is a delusion that such people could express their strong feelings in anything other than a traditional metaphorical language, however direct the expression of emotion.

**** So 6 P 137

contact with the Sawneys:

JACKSON: And you. You mind to your own affairs. Keep your old nose out, aye. *

It is significant that Daffodil mistakes him for Blackmouth: linguistic and social barriers break down when he tacitly accepts the mores of the Sawneys and the Blackmouth group. Scene 9 shows the barriers dissolving; even more, with the Col-Doreen and the Jackson-Rachel connections, the violence of Jackson's language and actions shows the removal of distinctions, in preparation for the violence of the next scenes:

JACKSON: Cat's lost, cat's lost - all you can say. I told you before what you could do with that cat. **

The play moves towards night, and hence towards the primitive. The knife fight in Scene 10 uses quick-paced language, very simple words and great economy: there is no time for imagery here, or colourful language. The audience's relief at Blackmouth's exit on the point of real violence is broken by Sally's curious use of words, which reduces the sense of climax from this point to the final dénouement:

SALLY: My dad's gone all runny, ent he, mam? Eh with his knife and all? ***

With great delicacy Arden manages to use the ultimate economy of diction in his description to the audience of Col's night out:

COL: Why, you'd never be like - this, dancing-and-warm the one way, knives-in-the-eyes the next, crying-and-scared the third

.

There's some windows have glass in, and there's others as don't. ****

The intimacy of the house at night in Scene 12 contrasts with the previous and subsequent scenes by using slow-paced reflective language and complex metaphor:

SAILOR: I've seen the lands of glory, and the gold and the fishes and the beasts.....

RACHEL: To an old raving ghost with a wasp in his keel and a half of a split mast, voyaging God knows where. †

* Scene 8 P 140
** Scene 9 P 145
*** Scene 10 P 149
**** Scene 10 P 147
† Scene 12 P 156

The songs can be introduced quite convincingly, growing out of the action in a naturalistic way. Scene 13 immediately offers a contrast when, as a result of Jackson's violence, fear and anger, another wedge is driven into his family's precarious order. Everything is upside down in preparation for the final scenes:

JACKSON: Why didn't you let that lad lay you, while he was about it, and make a proper job of it.....? *

The violent imagery of the song in Scene 15 -

Their finger's nails are red hot coals
And their nostrils flaring white **

- introduces the final section, winding up the audience's expectation. Mrs Jackson becomes wordless with rage - the ultimate step in Arden's hierarchy of language from the rich and varied metaphor of the opening scenes to the inarticulacy of Blackmouth, Jackson and Rachel. In fact Rachel, the least "civilised" of the Sawneys, can use language to scare the attacking women, but even in her mouth it breaks into inarticulate noises:

RACHEL: You hide in your hutches in your good warm straw and you think you got thirty-two teeth in your heads; but we carry fifty three, ohoho - rho - and there's blood for each one of 'em between the leg and the neck, when we come blooding, ohoho - rho - who wants us now? ***

This represents the breakdown of communication in violence. But again Arden destroys our hope that Rachel has won by using Sailor's sanity and grasp of the situation (such as Butterthwaite in "The Workhouse Donkey" destroys the effect of his own rhetoric, at the end, by flat common sense):

SAILOR: Each time you tell 'em louder ... the loudest time you tell 'em, they don't run at all. ****

The destruction of all social values, reflected in the short, simple, economical phrasing of the sentences, naturally introduces the magic spell, and the context and Sailor's belief in it give it dignity. At the end, as Sailor finally loses his "glory", he becomes one with Croaker and the child Sally: the magic chant ends the play as something

* Sc 13 P 163
** Sc 15 P 172
*** Sc 16 P 178
**** Sc 16 P 178

old and finished, its potency gone, mirroring the fate of the characters, the family and the house:

SALLY: Mary and Jesus and the Twelve Tall Riders
CROCKER }
SALLY } Nobody else nobody else nick nack noo. *

Arden's work can be roughly divided into three linguistic types, not always corresponding with chronology, unlike that of many other modern playwrights, whose development in terms of language can often be traced by gradual steps through the period. Although the movement from "The Waters of Babylon" to "The Hero Rises Up" is basically one of decreasing naturalism in staging, technique and language, "The Workhouse Donkey" belongs in technique alongside "The Waters of Babylon", whose characters it shares, and a similar non-realistic mixture of prose, verse and song is resorted to by all characters. Gone is the necessity for the naturalistic introduction of a song into the dialogue found in plays like "Live Like Pigs", "The Happy Haven", "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance" and "Armstrong's Last Goodnight". Later plays, written with Margaretta D'Arcy, look back to Victorian melodrama and pantomime in a total "theatricality" and non-naturalism of language.

"The Workhouse Donkey" shows Blomax, the 'narrator', addressing the audience directly - a theatre technique which has already been analysed in Section 1. The blank verse, with its concealed rhyme-scheme, enhances the chorus technique of the opening, and prepares the audience for a play which is, at least in parts, consciously poetic. Act I, Scene I immediately establishes a hierarchy of sympathy similar to that of "Live Like Pigs", and equally supported by the linguistic methods used. Thus within the naturalistic prose of the ceremony, we are shown the subtle grading of Arden's sympathy (and later, the audience's) from Feng, through Boocock and the Mason, to Butterthwaite, by means of the depth and colouring of the local dialect used by each character:

FENG: The criminal today is coddled and cosseted by the fantastic jargon of mountebank psychiatry... **

BUTTERTHWAITE: You know, if any one o' you had come up to me a few years ago, and told me that this afternoon I'd find meself all set to trowel the mortar for a new

* Sc 17 P 189
** Act I Sc 1 P 18

house for t'coppers, why, I'd ha' sent him off to
t'looney-bin with a good boot up his rump. *

This first scene sets the now familiar Arden convention that heightened language represents sympathetic and open characters, while the 'Queen's English', particularly in the form of long and official words, signifies deviousness and hypocrisy. But again the audience is constantly alienated from each character by his actions, and Arden forces complex, rather than simple, liking for his people: the easy intimacy of Blomax's speech at the end of the scene is later belied as we find out his self-interest and opportunism.

Scene 2 makes the first important plot points, using short staccato sentences (familiar from "Live Like Pigs") and the hesitations and unfinished sentences of unfolding conspiracy:

2nd LADY: Of course, the people do enjoy his speeches. You do
 have to laugh at them.
1st LADY: Laugh at naughty children.
F.J.: He rehearses it, of course. **

The Feng-Sweetman plot is in blank verse to show its importance, and is also in keeping with the type of rigid stance that Feng is taking:

FENG: I can assure you without vainglory
 My testing will be thorough. ***

Although there is a shifting hierarchy of sympathy, (as I have mentioned above) the degree of dialect speech of each character is not parallel to the prose-poetry division: in this as in all Arden's later plays he gives verse or prose to a character consonant with the importance of what is said, not who says it! The result is that the prosaic Feng can, on occasion, speak as much verse as Butterthwaite or Blomax. Delineations of character rest on other than prose-poetry divisions. This is one of the main similarities between the language of Arden and that of the Elizabethan plays which are the nearest to his work in the history of English drama: his clowns do not always speak prose, nor do his heroes, even generally, speak verse.

An interesting balance between early and late verse technique can be found in Scene 3, where there is a semi-naturalistic context to Blomax's satirical song, and Butterthwaite's tongue-in-cheek reply:

* Act I Sc 1 P 19
** Act I Sc 2 P 24
*** Act I Sc 2 P 27

BUTTERTHWAITTE: We need to have a tune. And some words to it and all. Dr Wellington, oblige.
 BLOMAX: (sings) When Bonaparte assumed his crown
 BUTTERTHWAITTE: ... Hey, what about the rest of it?
 BLOMAX: You'll have to do it for yourself. I'm temporarily prevented. *

Realistically, Butterthwaite with his cronies in private speaks more normal English, not having to put on his "blunt Northerner" act, but this pose is still partly true. He is infected with the linguistic problem of all politicians - he breaks into a series of clichés:

BUTTERTHWAITTE: The pursuits of your fair lady companion
 roaring Tories insidious partisan **

These, however, cannot conceal his real character. Arden makes great efforts to make Butterthwaite (unlike Sweetman or Blomax, for example) naturalistically believable and human, within the non-naturalistic framework of the language. The other side of this dichotomy is shown in Scene 4, where Arden's disapproval of the Sweetman faction does not prevent him from allowing Sweetman a traditional "young lovers" speech, but, as always, he puts it in firm context with Blomax's song:

BLOMAX: (sings) I married my wife because I had to
 Diddle di doo: Di doo doo-doo. ***

Not only does Arden parody the inflated language of all his characters at some time but he even parodies his own tentative attempt, earlier, to account for Blomax breaking into song. The inappropriateness of verse to a police station is both accepted and pointed out:

BLOMAX: ... This song he used to sing
 That he cared for nobody, no, not he,
 And nobody cared for him.

WIPER: Do you have to do that in here?

.

BLOMAX: And where and how the money goes
 Is fruitless to inquire,
 For base and fruitless ever must be
 The fruits of man's desire.

WIPER: Don't start on the third stanza. ****

Scene 6 shows Arden's use of differing types of language to

* Act I Sc 3 P 30
 ** Act I Sc 3 P 34
 *** Act I Sc 4 P 40
 **** Act I Sc 5 P 44 - 5

create violent contrast, to confuse the audience's sympathy. At the beginning of the scene Blomax makes a direct and personal appeal to the audience in intimate and romantic language:

BLOMAX: The days they have been in the green of my garden
When between us was neither a 'beg your pardon'
Nor a 'stopit', nor 'give over': but 'here I am, here'...*

In contrast the verse at the end shows very simple words expressing a very complex conception, and the middle-aged doctor and night-club hostess dancing and singing a parody of a nursery-rhyme is a grotesque spectacle:

BLOMAX: I look to the left
And I look to the right
I'm a dirty old devil
Alone in the notions

Of politics and progress
And high-minded soaring
With a little bit to drink
And a slice of good hope **

Arden's sense of balance and linguistic compromise demands Eoccock's verse speech in Scene 7, where the short simple lines and vocabulary recall Blomax's song and dance:

BLOMAX: We lead the whole West Riding
In our public schemes of housing,
And for the drainage of the town,
In pre-stressed concrete firm and strong
That not an H-bomb can ding down,
The Borough Engineer's contrived
A revolutionary outfall:
And add to that we've built
A splendid new Town Hall. ***

Here the humour is gentle rather than bitingly ironic, as with Blomax, and the contrast is, in Arden's terms, between black and white, or experience and innocence.

The scenes leading up to and at the Copocabana Club are in prose, continuing the Arden tradition that conspiracy and plans, love and chorus narration should be in verse, but the actual working out of the plot in prose - just as in "The Happy Haven", reflective and self-revealing speeches are in verse, but action in prose. Thus not

* Act I Sc 6 P 49
** Act I Sc 6 P 51
*** Act I Sc 7 P 54

until the Copocabana incident has closed, in Act 2 Scene 1, does verse re-appear in Sweetman's monologue, where he speaks in the traditional style of the melodramatic villain, albeit with flashes of Arden's human insight:

SWEETMAN: I am a prince, I am a baron, sirs!

.

I am too expert. And in their good time
I turn to the electorate and they turn
In my good time, to me! and turn for ever! Yes ...

As often, the verse section does not advance the plot, but reveals the character: Arden's monologues and soliloquies have the function of descriptive vignettes, except in the cases of chorus narration. Thus Scene 3 gives Feng a long and complex free verse speech of explanation and description, after the press conference has established facts. The parody of biblical language -

FENG: and I say to this man 'go' and he goeth, and to another 'come' and he cometh **

- is in keeping with Feng's inflexible moral stance, while the description of police history is sympathetically written. As the language of direct speech and fast pace shows, Feng, if something of a monster, is at least a consistent one:

FENG: We are not armed. I fear we shall be soon.
I hope we must be. There are too many dead.
But then how can we say we only serve
Civilian purposes? The pay is low
So nobody will join. Then raise the pay
And bad recruits will join for money only?
I have no hope, and therefore walk alone:
Only alone can I know I am right. ***

The Feng/Wellesley scene is an attempt to endow Feng with more human qualities, and its slow, reflective phrasing is contrasted with the fast-paced direct speech of Scene 5, where more complexities of the plot are worked out. In fact so prosaic is the language that Gloria's metaphor has to be explained:

GLORIA: But it is very unwise to fall asleep too soon in so dangerous an orchard. Keep hold on the fruit-basket - watch out for what drops.

* Act II Sc I P 74
** Act II Sc 3 P 77 - 8
*** Act II Sc 3 P 78

WIPER: What drops? Where?
 GLORIA: Butterthwaite. He's ripe enough. *

The short verse is realistically put in context as euphemism:

GLORIA: We want an answer from you before you go to bed.
 BLOMAX: Bed?
 GLORIA: Aye, bed
 And the shape of your answer
 Will doubtless decide
 Whether that bed
 Will be narrow or wide! - hubby! **

Scene 6 uses a new technique, that of verse conversation, where the councillors discuss Butterthwaite's demands for money:

BOOCOCK: I can't imagine Charlie
 Running really short o' money.
 He hasn't said a word to me.
 HOPEFAST: I think there's summat funny.
 LEFTWICH: He's lost it on the horses ***

They then take their refusal up as a sort of refrain in strong rhythm. This type of verse is Arden's answer to the problem of describing Butterthwaite's demands and their result without becoming boring, and is one of a variety of techniques to vary reported speech. The fast pace of the regular beat leads the audience on to the councillors' later parody of council business in the quorum, while also pointing to their inhumanity when it is contrasted to the self-revelation of Butterthwaite later in the scene. The anarchic language of his song -

BUTTERTHWAITE: I thanked my benefactors thus
 Hee-haw hee-haw haw ****

- comments on his actions while singing and stealing the money, and flinging it about the stage. Again, even at a moment of crisis, Arden makes the audience laugh by making fun of his own technique:

BLOMAX: But how are we going to cover all this up?
 BUTTERTHWAITE: Do you mean to tell me you haven't been listening to a word I was singing? I have just given you my entire and lamentable autobiography and all you can say is 'How do we cover it up!' †

Act 3 Scene 2 shows Butterthwaite, discovered falling back on a caricature of himself in desperation:

* Act II Sc 5 P 87
 ** Act II Sc 6 P 90
 *** Act II Sc 6 P 91
 **** Act II Sc 6 P 99
 † ACT II Sc 6 P 102

BUTTERTHWAITE: By solid class defence and action of the mass
alone can we hew out and line with timbered strength
a gallery of self-respect beneath the faulted rock
above the subsidence of water *

Here he is shown in a bad light against the matter-of-fact Feng. But sympathy is retrieved by the action of the councillors in getting rid of him in the next scene, where the humour of the tremendous pace allows the audience a breathing-space after the exposures of Scene 2:

HOPEFAST: Councillor Hickleton deputy secretary, change about
places Councillor Hardnutt i't'chair

HARDNUTT: Minutes of previous meeting

ALL: Etcetera etcetera

HARDNUTT: Motion before etcetera etcetera Who's
to replace him?

Mrs BOCCOCK: I move that Councillor Hartwright be deputed to do
so.

HARDNUTT: Seconded. Passed Parks Playgrounds and Public
Baths committee.

HICKLETON: Councillor Hickleton i't'chair **

This interlude allows Arden to work up, through the scene of revelations at what is now the Art Gallery, to a climax which shows Butterthwaite speaking in prose. There is a return, at the end, to complete realism; the language is entirely naturalistic, in contrast with the still bombastic actions of Butterthwaite with the chain, cloth and flowers:

BUTTERTHWAITE: I'll tell you who they were: they drank and
slept and skived and never punched a bloody clock
when clocks was for the asking. We piped to them
and they did not dance, we sang them our songs
and they spat into t' gutter. ***

His biblical language, in particular the metaphor of the James I version, is both a parody and to a certain extent, a revelation of his larger-than-life character:

BUTTERTHWAITE: ... Rotherham also is the strength of my head,
Osset is my lawgiver ****

But it is Butterthwaite himself who injects the cold light of reality into the fervour at the end:

LITTLE DEMONSTRATOR: Hey ey, we're going, we're going forth
together.

BUTTERTHWAITE: No. Oh no. Oh no you aren't. The only
place you're going is into t'black maria. †

* Act III Sc 2 P 112

** Act III Sc 3 P 115

*** Act III Sc 4 P 129

**** Act III Sc 4 P 129

† Act III Sc 4 P 130

Butterthwaite's strong verse in his parting song gives the lie to the comfortable tying up of loose ends of the last scene, with the result that the final chorus, in all its uncompromising nature, is partly destroyed in intent before it starts: Arden does not wish this to be the last word:

ALL: And if for the WORKHOUSE DONKEY
 We should let one tear down fall
 Don't think by that he's coming back
 The old sod's gone for good and all! *

The swear word of the last line is, in fact, Arden's final comment to the audience. Arden has used the alternation of song, blank verse, rhyming verse and prose to make his allegiances clear and at the same time disallow any easy audience identification: to this extent, the very variety of the language used in a technique of alienation is in keeping with the dogmatic motive of the play.

"The Hero Rises Up", Arden's last play in the period, approaches history in an entirely different way from, for example, "Armstrong's Last Goodnight". His collaboration with Margaretta D'Arcy seems to have produced a stage technique, and a language, which avoids many of the problems of his earlier mixture of verse and prose, in a complete break with theatrical naturalism. Following "The Business of Good Government", "Ars Longa, Vita Brevis" and "The Royal Pardon", the play is the complete expression of 'conscious' theatre. These plays used elements of pantomime and mystery-play technique which gradually became the most important part of the dramas, and "The Hero Rises Up" shows the authors' fascination with the panoply of traditional 'popular' theatre, incorporating elements of the music-hall, even down to the fantastical pastiche of the original playbill:

 For the Play -
 THE HERO RISES UP
 A Melo-drama by John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy
 Concerns

The Life and Death of Vice-Admiral Lord Viscount
NELSON. An Individual of many failings, but one
who never paused to Think Twice **

Arden found some difficulty in the assimilation of the poetic and musical

* Act III Sc 4 P 133
** P 10

elements in "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance", and "Soldier, Soldier", which tend to fragmentise the flow of the plot because of the great a differentiation of style as well as an uneasy balance between naturalism and popularism, realism and melodrama. The problem is resolved here by a definite rejection of realism. The same alternation and contrast of prose explanation and plot, and verse and song description and feeling, as is found in "Live Like Pigs" and "The Workhouse Donkey" is found here; but the formal 'music-hall' structure of 'turns' replaces the many scenes of the earlier drama, converting much of the speech into declamation. The audience knows what to expect in terms of extravagant language and pastiche sensationalism from the prologue itself which is written in the parody of the academic language of historians, to make a contrast with the colour and life of Arden's own story of Nelson. Such literary jokes are widespread in a modern drama plagued with pedagogic criticism, and may be found in the work of Stoppard, Simpson, Saunders, Bond and Nichols. The end of the prologue strikes a note which is to recur throughout the play, sexual allusion being Arden's most popular method of debunking the pompous, and humanising history:

ACADEMIC REPRESENTATIVE: This act, which we have reason to believe, they did not perform infrequently, was naturally the nearest approach, one to the other, which they were able to make during their lives upon this earth. So think about it. - *

At the beginning of Act I the alternation of song and off-hand explanation both brings the audience into the action, and establishes the two warring elements of the play's language - the popular history -

NELSON: I broke the rules of warfare
And the nation did forgive
But there was no forgiveness when
I broke the rules of love **

- and the author's version of the real events:

NELSON: And in the end of course the French realised that without their King they were nowhere: so they had to construct one. ***

* P 15
** Act I P 17
*** Act I P 17

The Caracciolo affair is a serious plot point, in Arden's terms, concerning Nelson's history, and the scene is set in relatively naturalistic language, although Arden is free to make the King a complete caricature:

KING: No: never never never will I condescend again in Naples to display my resplendent countenance. *

The 'conscious' nature of the language in terms of pastiche and self-parody makes fine comic effects, as when the sailors suddenly burst into a ridiculous amount of seamen-like language:

SAILING-MASTER: Aye aye sir, Bosun, all hands to make sail - courses and your topsails, lively now, you idle buggers, heave them halliards smartly, heave when you hear the call, I see you bloody tailing on at the tail-end like a white-handed parson's clerk, get to it and heave etc. etc. **

and the general Arden technique that the simpler the words the more complex the irony is borne out in the song:

SAILORS: We set him out on the quarter-deck
Sing ho for liberty
And bejassus he looks like a terrible wreck
But he knew that he was free. ***

An immediate contrast with the 'rough-and-tumble' language is found in Caracciolo's speech, as his approaching death concentrates the attention of the audience on verse of complex classical reference and extremely violent and shocking imagery, which even seems too strong for its context:

CARACCIOLO: Naples is my city and I did
Believe it the loveliest on earth:
As it were a goddess stretched out on a bed

.....

Not coral pink and white: but rotten bones
And half-chewed limbs and dripping eyes and ears
Skulls, bladders, children's foot, and I heard
Groans and bubbling cries ****

As the scenes of murder and political intrigue are unfolded, the songs and comments become increasingly staccato, violent and hard-hitting;

* Act I P 26
** Act I P 30
*** Act I P 31
**** Act I P 34

ALLEN: Yet he does not know and she does not know
 Why the politics of Naples disturb them so:
 Yet sure if they did, they would think it wrong
 That to get them to bed a man must hang.
 (Another gun fires)

SUNSET: Now then it'll be time they unhitch him from the noose
 and put weights upon his feet and drop him into the
 water. *

The realism, as opposed to naturalism, of the language, increases right up to the 'underwater' scene, and Nelson's speech on death represents the ultimate in this direction:

NELSON: I would fall flat
 On the plank of the deck
 Spew up thick sick
 Down my foul shirt
 Roll in my own dirt
 Groan moan and gibber
 For helpless terror - **

Nelson's humanity is demonstrated as a foil to his cruelty and the formal speeches in which he usually expresses it. At the end of this Act, the sea imagery of Emma's speech is first displayed, and is to be continued through the play:

EMMA: And he grappled and boarded her,
 swarming the huge side of her majestical bulk as ardent
 and valorous as when at the Battle of St. Vincent he
 had led his marines in triumph ... ***

Immediately, at the beginning of Act 2, the authors return to the public history as a context to Nelson's private life, and Nisbet sings a politically committed song which carries the action in the same way as the chorus of "Live Like Figs":

NISBET: For had they all known who he was -
 Being ragged dirty British skin-and-bone -
 It is just possible they would have cried
 For a bold Caracciolo of their own. ****

The second Act uses an increasingly fragmentary mixture of verse, prose and song to dramatise the increasing drunkenness and frenzy of the party guests, leading up to the book-burning. The combination of a non-naturalistic theatrical context, and scenes of intoxication allows Arden to parody Emma's 'attitudes' in licentious rhyming doggerel:

* Act I P 39
 ** Act I P 42
 *** Act I P 46
 **** Act II P 48

HAMILTON: The Spirit of Peace aware of the Threat of Strife.
 ENYA: (sings) But hist, bark, where all has been serene
 I hear the rumbling thunder and the lightning
 flash doth gleam.
 MRS CADOGAN: (sings) She sadly left her cottage home
 It is said with a gentleman's babe in her womb.
 ALLEN: (sings) Them gentlemen how they stripped her down *
 How they tossed and humped her around and round.

Still Arden is able to introduce the realism of Nelson's and his wife's exchange:

NELSON: You have no dignity, Lady Nelson.
 LADY NELSON: Then you will have to give up me.
 PRINCE: Dammit, this is personal, it's confoundedly private,
 dammit **

Introducing the Seaman's wife's folk-song in Lowland Scots, simple domestic details about luggage, and the politics leading up to the Danish war, are no problems in the varied linguistic contexts of the Act and the curious rendering of the Battle of Copenhagen is entirely in keeping:

PARKER: He'll never get out of it. Good God, there's his top-
 mast gone. Gracious heaven he's on fire.
 NELSON: No I'm not.
 PARKER: Well it looks like it from here. ***

The simplicity of Nisbet's final statement stands out all the more, bringing reality into the dialogue:

NISBET: Yet even as a result of this kind of shambles we do
 occasionally find ourselves at peace ****

The first scenes of Act 3, leading up to Trafalgar, show Arden able to make even the traditional popular-historical view of Nelson both credible and sympathetic:

HARDY: I have seen British Jack Tars putting their lives in
 hazard, willingly, without fear of the Frenchmen and
 without fear of the cat-o-nine-tails †

The audience is here lulled by the domestic details of the household and baby:

MRS CADOGAN: - where the nurse is in receipt of a regular weekly
 stipend plus a perfectly ruinous bonus on account of
 the secrecy ... ††

* Act II P 57
 ** Act II P 60 - 61
 *** Act II P 74
 **** Act II P 76
 † Act III P 80
 †† Act III P 81

The caricatured 'relatives' are easy bait, but Nelson's and Emma's song introduces the note, never far away, of serious political comment;

NELSON: (sings) Is to bring back to all Frenchmen -
 EMMA: (sings) Is to bring back to all Englishmen -
 EMMA AND
 NELSON: (sing) Both bloody death and fear *

In fact, it is probably only in a play of such varied technique and use of language that such seriousness in comic terms, and comedy in serious terms, could be introduced without risking the audience's puzzlement or disbelief. Even Hamilton's song of fantasy has a serious motive in stressing the reality, in contrast, of the relationship of Emma and Nelson:

HAMILTON: Male and female there they lie
 Sometimes apart sometimes entwined
 They do not itch or stink of sweat
 Their lips and loins are sweet and clean. **

The scene "For the Heroine - Nothing" illustrates the flexibility of Arden's language: the dialogue is realistic as Nelson receives his sailing orders:

NELSON: There is a child to be looked after. How can I bring you with me? Hardy - go back to London. Tell them I am ready. Be quick be quick be quick - the whole world is holding its breath - ***

This moves naturally into the formal songs of parting -

EMMA: As a blind man knows his friends or his foes ... ****

- to the complete reality of vision, of her status as it really is, at the end:

EMMA: I'm just left stupid. Fat, greedy, stupid: and the dirty bastard Frenchmen they've gone and taken all that was meant for me. †

Nisbet's speech before Trafalgar is a personal view, but also a historical one: this contrasts with the inhuman prologue at the beginning of the play. Nelson's long speech to the sailors and the human touch of setting out the flags sets the right amount of realism in place to prepare the audience:

* Act III P 86
 ** Act III P 87
 *** Act III P 92
 **** Act III P 93
 † Act III P 95

NELSON: England confides that every man will do his duty.
 NISBET: But they couldn't hand up 'confides' without using too many flags, so -
 HARDY: So what about 'expects'. I suggest to you 'expects', my Lord *

Nelson's sudden direct address to the audience -

NELSON: You are all to bear witness **

- focusses their attention on the description of the preparation for the battle. Here, for the first time, the description is a realistic evocation, which increases its impact:

NISBET: the Bosun and his gang set to work to secure the rigging and hang up nets to protect the decks from splinters The Surgeon and his mates, in the lowest level of the ship, prepare their make-shift operating theatre ***

But at the end Nisbet breaks the tension -

NISBET: I think he would have asked anyone to kiss him - except his own wife ****

- and recalls the audience to the context. The clergyman's speech, full of moralism and figures, balances the prologue in 'officialese' and practically ends the play with a reminder of the existence of the thankful society:

CLERGYMAN: ... Let us draw a discreet veil, where it is not possible entirely to condone: and let us above all not give her any money. †

The final set-piece is in the nature of an epilogue, where the artificiality of the popular view of Nelson and his family and friends is satirised:

EMMA AND (singing) No more hatred, no jealousy nor fear,
 LADY NELSON: Nelson's Paradise is here ††

The drama is fittingly ended both on a note of 'popular' pastiche, and one of slight uncertainty at the entrance of Allen: the language of the sea closes the play:

* Act III P 96
 ** Act III P 97
 *** Act III P 97
 **** Act III P 98
 † Act III P 99
 †† Act III P 100

ALLEN: Hands to the halliards! Wait for the whistle. Handsomely now - remember: we've got ladies aboard. Haul! *

The language of John Arden's plays reflects, over the period, his rejection of traditional naturalism. As increasing elements of the older popular drama enter his work, particularly that in collaboration, so his aims in linguistic differentiation change. But there are elements which all his work has in common. The first is that of rejection of the rigid division between prose and verse, or naturalist and heightened language which has obtained since the end of the Elizabethan age in the English popular theatre on which tradition - in contrast to that of work by writers such as T S Eliot and Christopher Fry - Arden draws. The second is the specificity of the language of the plays which sets them in a time and place defined by vocabulary, dialect and phrasing. Thirdly, his communication with the audience is to an overwhelming degree a direct rather than an indirect one. In other words, it is fundamentally the very simple point that Arden's characters tend to say what they mean, direct communication finding unnecessary the complexities of an 'under-language' of gesture and movement which must define meanings. The fourth trait is also quite simple but fundamental: his movement towards climax, primary or secondary, is essentially regular and of a fast pace, unbroken by the gaps, pauses and orchestrated silences of the more erratic and lyrical modern drama. Arden's technique grows out of his subject-matter, and is direct and catholic because he has something specific to say.

The best of modern drama in my period succeeds in fashioning, from the everyday speech of the time in conjunction with varying degrees of dramatic "heightening", a flexible language, which can communicate on various levels to the audience. Where the naturalism of early Bond and Pinter produces a shock of recognition, which opens the minds of the audience to the new concepts displayed, the comfortable, familiar idiom of those playwrights who exploit alienation - Nichols, Saunders, Stoppard - insinuates their philosophy and morality almost subconsciously. While in the case of Wesker, Osborne and Delaney the words themselves and their rhythms are subordinate to the subject, in most of the plays under discussion the purpose and the

* Act III P 102

language are one: the aesthetic appreciation of Arden's poetry and song is as important as the ethical appreciation of his purpose. The use of words, in general, crystallises towards the end of the period into a new mode of expression represented by dramatists as widely differing as Bond, Pinter and Arden; it ignores the merely regional and limited language of a specific time and place to convey meanings in a direct and expressive mode of language which draws on all dramatic experience but is identical to none.

P A R T I I I

C H A P T E R S E V E N

In order to show successfully the range of influences on modern drama of that of the past, and trace the origins of the subject-matter and attitude to the dramatic art of the playwrights in terms of earlier work, some system of classification must be worked out to include most previous, as well as most modern, types of dramatic content and intention.

All art is concerned with the representation, in actual or symbolic terms, of the conditions of the world, including those of the interior of the mind, and inherent in the traditional division of drama into comedy and tragedy is the basic division of art for pleasure or art for instruction, of morality and entertainment. This in turn presupposes an attitude towards the problems of the world, or evil in the macrocosm and microcosm and the possibility of the redemption of mankind or of individuals. Religion is important both in its presence and its absence; it is usually present either as an answer to problems or as a cause of them. It may be paramount either in its importance to the dramatic subject, or in the effect of a personal or collective loss of faith on the dramatic subject. Thus there is a fundamental division between those dramatists who consider that the problems of evil are not suitable to the stage - the 'entertainers' - and those who do examine these subjects in their plays. This latter group can be further divided: first, the dramatists who believe in the possibility of improvement, the capacity of the audience to understand the causes of the world's ills, and the discussion of methods by which they might be assuaged; second, those who present the problems from a standpoint of fatalism or nihilism, offering no solutions in real terms; third, those who not only reject meliorism but also deny our capacity ultimately to understand anything.

The 'entertainers' - or, as I shall designate them the 'privative' * group - write plays concerned solely with personal relationships in vacuo; plays of this kind extend from Restoration

* In the dictionary definition: 'Marked by the loss of removal or absence of some quality or attribute', i.e. in this case, of the moral, philosophical or religious meaning of drama. It also implies for me a focussing on private rather than public life.

Comedy, through those of Oscar Wilde and Noel Coward to the uncommitted comedies of modern playwrights (such as N F Simpson) with a popular undercurrent of detective thrillers and farces in the West End. Almost all musicals fall into this category, in their disregard of the social background apart from unconnected details, and their emphasis on the 'redemption' inherent in the successful outcome of purely personal relationships which one might call the 'marriage' situation; notable exceptions are Brecht's "Threepenny Opera" and the Littlewood "Oh What a Lovely War".

The second group, which I shall designate the 'fatalists', place the relationships on which the play is based in a political, social or historical context, but assert in different ways that the tragic events of the world are in the last analysis out of man's control and that understanding and acceptance of conditions are the only reactions proper to their dramatic presentation. Classical Greek drama begins the series, and the theme - that of clarity of vision combined with pessimism about man's ultimate progress - recurs till the present day. The anti-hero 'revenge' plays of the Elizabethan era make this kind of philosophical assumption, and of the many more recent examples Synge and Rudkin can be cited. Nor can Eliot be excluded, as his 'solutions', positing a religious redemption which is unexpoundable in dramatic terms and therefore cannot be said to exist on the stage, make him an uneasy member of both this and the next group. Acceptance rather than questioning is also the hall-mark of 'black' comedy, as typified by the work of Orton.

The third group of playwrights asserts not only that men are ultimately powerless to combat evil or ignorance, but that it is in the nature of man's condition that he cannot understand his own problems. This is a specifically twentieth-century phenomenon, although the attitude can be discerned in nineteenth-century naturalism; it is still in strength, after having its greatest protagonists in Pirandello, Ionesco and Beckett, and is now represented primarily by the work of Finter, with Whiting, Osborne, Stoppard and Saunders in supporting rôles.

The fourth dramatic type is also mainly a twentieth-century invention, as its origins are in the type of immediate theatre that

was rarely written down. This is a fundamentally Pelagian * type, which asserts that not only are conditions understandable, but that all causes of human tragedy can be defeated: in fact that the tragedy of past and present is itself reversible given the conditions of political and social life which are advocated, or implied, in the play. The major playwrights are O'Casey and Brecht, and in modern drama, Wesker and Arden. Personal relationships are usually subordinated to social or political exposition, and whereas alienation is not by any means essential, the posing of questions to the audience always appeals ultimately to the mind rather than the emotions, in contrast to the vast majority of other drama. The subject of this kind of drama is conflict - and by its careful balancing of opposites may be termed 'dialectic'.

The 'privative' drama is one which has existed since the separation of the entertainment and instructional aspects of plays which occurred during the Renaissance: Greek drama combined religious worship and personal morality, philosophy and entertainment, as did mediaeval English drama, though on a Christian rather than pagan basis. Elizabethan comedies were moving further from any discernable connection with real life, except in the 'manners' portrayed, and the reaction to Puritanism at the Restoration produced the drama of the seventeenth century with a classically based tragedy totally separated in form and content from a comic tradition based on caricature and the marriage dénouement. This type of drama was, and is, paramount in England in the context of 'non-committed' theatre - a division hardly apparent on the continent, although existing in America. It is typified by the emphasis of Oscar Wilde on manners, social language, wit and social conventions: there is no strand in his stage comedies parallel to the examination of social evils in "The Picture of Dorian Gray" or "The Ballad of Reading Gaol". Thus though it cannot be asserted that Wilde has no knowledge of the problems of morality and social conditions, he clearly does not consider these themes suitable

* I am using the term here in contrast to the 'Manicheism' of the fatalist group. The word 'Pelagian' includes the concept of belief in the progress of mankind as well as in the rewards of virtues or social humanitarian actions. The terms are those of struggles within the early Christian church.

for a drama based on casual entertainment. Shaw's most popular plays often tend to show the same conventions as those of Wilde in their basis on the nuances of social conventions and class structure of the time and their use of language to promote comedy rather than to explore the possibilities of communication. The emphasis on wit, and words themselves, makes the social comment very much secondary, except in the lesser-known work such as "Heartbreak House". Indeed "Pygmalion", his most famous play, is almost entirely about language, the ostensible examination of class and morals being almost crushed beneath the weight of verbiage. * Despite Shaw's Socialist views, the expression of his ideas in his plays is often stifled or made entirely secondary to the momentary entertainment of his audience. The artificiality of the proceeding looks back to Restoration comedy rather than forward to the 'committed' drama of the later twentieth century.

Noel Coward typifies early twentieth century drama in England, and bears all the hallmarks of a 'privative' dramatist: the marriage dénouement is central to his work, as is a major emphasis on particulars of social habit and language. Having worked as an actor Coward is totally absorbed by the theatre, and his themes rarely differ from the sort of theatrical narcissism which characterises "Present Laughter" or "Hay Fever". A contrast can be drawn with the treatment of the world of the theatre in Pirandello: Coward, again, considers the function of drama to be entertainment in the examination of created characters in private. They have so little relationship with the real outside world of his or any other time as to preclude any significance in a wider context. Recent 'privative' drama includes the work of N F Simpson although it is modified by the influence of the mass media. While themes such as lunacy, justice, religion and violence are touched upon, the purpose of the plays as with the previous 'privative' playwrights is to entertain. The influence of the plays ends as the curtain falls rather than continuing in the mind of the audience as in so much of modern drama. I do not imply, however, that this type of drama has no value, especially in the theatre which has in the last thirty years moved further and further away from any appeal to most of its potential audience. It can survive side by side with serious

* This impression is reinforced by the prolixity of many of his stage directions and the length of the prefaces.

drama for as long as a theatre audience can be found for amusement for its own sake. As long as the conditions of life make it necessary, escapist drama will thrive, as we can see in the continuous success of the West End farce and the detective thriller.

The beginnings of drama in Greece were of the 'fatalistic' type and represent a sphere of action in which individual effort cannot change the course of pre-ordained events; this dramatic philosophy recurs throughout the history of drama. The reaction from the optimism of the Renaissance post-feudal theatre appears where the anti-hero first emerges as a man already damned in thought and action. He must nevertheless work out a tragic destiny where innocence suffers, virtue is rarely rewarded - even intangibly - and the hope of Heaven has almost disappeared, without any possibility of changing the course of fate. It is generally agreed that the first stirrings of movements which were to culminate in modern drama took place in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The major playwrights are northern European - Chekhov, Ibsen and Strindberg - and all have an ambivalent attitude towards the use of naturalism. While Chekhov used it throughout his life, Ibsen espoused it after his early symbolism, only to reject many of its manifestations in his 'visionary' plays, and Strindberg moved steadily away from it; this is clearly shown by the difference between "Miss Julie" and "The Ghost Sonata". However, it was the naturalism of these playwrights coupled with their realism of subject which caused a sensation at the time in their treatment of substantially new subjects on the stages of nineteenth-century Europe. In spite of their radical differences in structure and style, their subject-matter shows parallel preoccupations. Ibsen's treatment of corruption and heredity, Chekhov's collapsing society and Strindberg's nuclear families and shattered maniacs are shown as symptoms of a malaise of humanity rather than of a particular society. Chekhov's cashiered aristocrats are used by him as metaphors for a whole human condition rather than a particular social phenomenon, and Ibsen's families torture each other in an only vaguely portrayed social context. Thus the pessimism and Wagnerian darkness which is the particular Hell of 'post-protestant' *

* I mean by this coinage to describe the period of failure or collapse specifically of protestantism in individuals and societies which earlier accepted it (compare later my parallel use of 'post-catholic').

northern European individuals and societies, is used by all these playwrights to extend into a world condition. While the action on the stage is always 'privative' in the sense that definite individuals with carefully authenticated histories are shown in conflict, the philosophy of the nineteenth-century naturalist group is irremediably determinist. It is the nature of the cherry orchard that it will, like the Russian aristocracy of the time, be brought to poverty and then chopped down: Chekhov's characters are trapped more in the fact of being human than in their own social environment, and according to him can do nothing to change their own circumstances. Strindberg's couples are offered no alternative to their self-destruction: indeed, his confusion of nineteenth-century Christian marriage with sexual relationships in general is never resolved; the result is that no alternative can be offered by a man who has not examined the degree to which his subjects are tied down by their environment and context. Ibsen's emphasis on the twin influences on the individual of heredity and environment leaves little room for free will, and again the restrictive society of nineteenth-century Norway was identified with the general social condition. Similar 'post-protestant' fatalism may be found in the work of more minor northern European playwrights of the time: the plays of Gerhart Hauptmann (other than "The Weavers", which will be discussed elsewhere) are 'privative' in their concentration on individual conflicts withdrawn from social background, and fatalist in their stoical acceptance of death and the impossibility of human improvement except through religion. He illustrates the ambivalence of the conflict between Protestantism and fatalism. A faith which forces examination of the individual conscience at every moment of choice in life, and encourages individual religious thought, when once lost produces its opposite: a fatalism which denies the value of thought or progress. When Hauptmann and other playwrights of the same type are not upheld by faith (as in, for example, "Anneli") then they degenerate into either fatalism or nihilism. The process still occurs in modern drama, but the circumstances and psychology of loss of faith are better understood nowadays, and this results in a more balanced presentation.

In twentieth-century drama the two important examples of 'fatalist' drama before the modern period are both far removed from the German and Scandinavian base of the late nineteenth century. The

plays of Synge and O'Neill, although as widely different in cultural reference as can be imagined, show a view of the world foreign to most other twentieth-century dramatists. Synge's view of the small, closed Irish society in "Riders to the Sea" or "The Well of the Saints", presents individuals and a society in which change is impossible: the stoic acceptance of death by Maurya, and of the tragedy of life by the two tramps, is little softened by the background Christian Catholic reference. In fact "Deirdre of the Sorrows" is set before Christian Ireland, and the other plays in some ways beyond its stretch both physically and mentally. * Synge's entirely 'privative' view of individuals, the influence of society remaining unfelt in the isolation of his characters, is fundamentally different from that of his fellow-countryman O'Casey, ** as is Synge's fatalist view of the destiny of his characters. O'Neill's semi-autobiographical later plays mirror some of the general problems of American society of the time, but however much critics have tried to interpret the family of "A Long Day's Journey Into Night" as symbols of the ills of capitalism, the fact remains that the group is intensely individualised and definitely fixed in time and place. This most 'privative' of playwrights has also the most fatalistic view of the inevitability of destruction of these particular people, while making little attempt to extend the philosophy into generalities. Here a contrast can be made with the essentially constructive tragedy of Oedipus or Miller, where individuals have more reference to a wider society than the fiercely individual and intensely felt private characters of O'Neill. This type of drama - in philosophy fatalist and pessimist, and in characterisation essentially privative and individualistic - continues to the present day in the work of Rudkin and the comedies of Orton. Orton's comic method must be carefully differentiated from that of Simpson: Simpson ignores the problems of the world in which his plays take place except in the most oblique references, while Orton joyfully accepts the anarchic reality of his dramatic context.

Professor Raymond Williams has divided tragedy in the twentieth century into two parts: *** the 'tragedy of illusion' and the 'tragedy

* The geographical setting (the Aran Islands) is far from the cultural and religious centres of Ireland, and the primitive life portrayed allows Catholicism little relevance.

** See my discussion of O'Casey below.

*** Lectures, Cambridge, 1974

of conflict'. In the first category the contention of the playwright is that all human effort towards betterment or understanding is an illusion, whereas the second deals with the fundamental conflict between classes, policies, philosophies and individuals. Both types of drama are in essence new, and not to be found in toto before the 1880's: although previous drama contains conflict, it is not the only basis on which the play is built. However, the gradual acceptance throughout the second half of the nineteenth century of Darwin's destruction of the fundamentalist religious basis of Victorian philosophy and art coupled with the twin blows to traditional political thought and personal morality of Marx and Freud, produced a climate in which uncertainty was personified and made manifest in the drama of illusion - a recurring artistic type rather than a specific movement. It paralleled the music based on new tonalities of Schonberg, Bartok and Stravinsky, and the break-up of representational art. Fundamentally different from all previous drama in content, the plays of Pirandello, Ionesco, Eliot and Beckett explore the collective self-doubt of Western society: they represent people trapped in an illusory situation. Indeed, they go further, in overturning the initial proposition of naturalism that men can know themselves, and in asserting that the nature of life is such that people necessarily enter into illusion.

This awareness that consciousness is not adequate to explain or order the world found its first real expression in the work of Pirandello. In "Cosi è, se vi pare", as in all his most typical work, he uses the conventional, even melodramatic intrigue situation of previous drama on a traditional 'fourth wall' stage as a bass line of traditionalism to counterpoint the startling melody. The family situation, the limits of a dark past and the gradual unfolding of what appears at the time to be the truth could be lifted wholesale from Ibsen or Strindberg, but the conventional hero, the figure with whom the audience identifies, discovers only that reality is indistinguishable from fantasy. The world as seen, in contradictory terms, by the different members of the family, is the only reality, and this cannot be changed by documents any more than Davies' real character in Pinter's "The Caretaker" has any connection with his hypothetical 'papers' at Sidcup. Here is found the first expression of a theatrical cliché which is still important in its influence on modern drama: that the rôle which the character is playing on the stage is the only definable

reality. The theme is developed in "Six Characters in Search of an Author", where the levels of theatrical reality - the author on stage, the author in himself, the actors both in reality and as creations of the author's mind, the 'genuine' plot and its distortion by 'acting' - are paralleled by the two plays of Saunders: "Next Time I'll Sing to You", and "A Scent of Flowers". Here also is found the assertion, continued in the work of Ionesco and Pinter, that the difference between people makes communication by language impossible, although other modes are sometimes successful. When a Nichols or Saunders character steps at will in and out of his rôle, he is only asserting the thesis of Pirandello in the twenties: that to exist people must play rôles, and that relationships must be false in a world and a drama where the boundaries between reality and illusion collapse, and the only certainty is one's internal experience. In this way the vacillation in "Henry IV" between real and false king, real and false role, with its exploitation of the problem of identity, is continued by Arden in "The Business of Good Government" and "The Royal Pardon", where the problem is examined in terms of theatrical props and their levels of reality.

The work of Ionesco takes Pirandello's propositions further. The process of illusion becomes the representation of a world in which there is no reality: in which it is absurd to question the dramatic convention that truth is not only non-communicable but fundamentally unreal. Here also emerges one of the constant themes of twentieth-century drama in a background of World Wars and general violence; in "The Bald-Headed Prima-donna", for example, the only unmistakable fact of the plot among the platitudes and games is that of sudden and violent death. A constant theme in the early work of Pinter, and Orton, and an important undertone to much of Osborne's work, death is the one reality which emerges triumphant from the drama of illusion. Its prevalence in Eliot's plays shows how little his religious conversion was able to extract him from the preoccupations of this dramatic type. The inevitable blood sacrifice of Thomas Becket, the brooding murder of the "Sweeney" fragments and the intensely violent death to which Celia is consciously sent have little relationship with the Anglo-Catholic metaphysics of the "Four Quartets". The possibility of redemption and the after-life have no effect on a dramatic world in which the prevailing unreality can only be disturbed momentarily by the fact of violent death, which creates an ephemeral interruption in the

confidence of Eliot's characters in their chosen rôles. While asserting that "a delusion is something we must return from", Eliot offers little evidence that the return is extended to more than a small élite, or that it is ever permanent. The work of Albee, exploring much the same ground in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" and "Tiny Alice", comes to much the same conclusion.

The work of Beckett is the culmination of the drama of illusion: here incomprehensible reality produces not only deadlock but paralysis. The universality of reference in his plays, unplaced in space or time, is the result of the stripping of delusion from life, which according to Beckett's dramatic convention leaves only suffering. Where the 'stalemates' of both Chekhov and Pinter are very definitely individualised in place and time, those of Beckett assert a general truth which disregards the specific Irish/French 'post-catholic'* Western twentieth-century cultural basis of his work. Where the drama of fatalism grew out of a rejection of the role of the personal conscience in decision-making, the drama of illusion in Pirandello, Ionesco and Beckett grew out of the rejection of, or lack of, reality in a collective and institutional faith: the loss of this basis for life produces absurdity or nihilistic paralysis in the drama. The uneasy relationship between Eliot's fundamental pessimism and his new faith has much the same effect. Opinions are divided as to the real influence of Beckett on modern English drama, but the symbolist and expressionist staging and the Pozzo and Lucky relationship of "Godot", combined with the intensely realistic and colloquial linguistic and dramatic relationship of Didi and Gogo, represents a dramatic form which re-appears throughout recent English drama, as in Pinter's "The Birthday Party", Whiting's "Saint's Day" and Osborne's "Inadmissible Evidence". Beckett's constant use of the imagery of repetition and the endless movements lacking significance and phrases and events constantly repeated is continued by many modern dramatists to emphasise the limitations of communication, both between actors and audience and between the characters themselves, which the authors believe is created by the conditions of life. A potent dramatic form fostered by the uncertainty of modern Western civilisation, the drama of illusion shows no signs of losing its force in dramatising the sense of powerlessness with which so many modern dramatists face the problems of personal

identity, the levels of dramatic illusion and the fundamental questions of their post-Christian and often post-humanist philosophies. But the loss of the dimension of human warmth, represented in Beckett's work by the Didi-Gogo relationship, has led him on to a paralysis in which dramatic dimensions are stripped one by one from successive plays, leaving something which is barely drama at all. This process can also be followed in the work of such diverse playwrights as Pinter, Saunders and Bond; the inclusion of this humane dimension is what redeems much modern drama from the total pessimism of the developed tragedy of illusion.

Professor Williams' second division of twentieth-century drama - the drama of conflict - deals with spatially and historically placed action which is on such a large scale that representative characters cannot be used to stand for groups or movements. The necessity for the distillation of the feelings and essential quality of a group resulted in the concept of the 'type' - a character who typifies the group while not actually existing in a real sense himself. He is characterised as a distillation of the quality of the group, losing thus in individuality, but gaining in specificity of reference. The drama of conflict moves further away from the claustrophobic family situations of the earlier plays. In fact personal relationships are often secondary to outside events, and where the 'privative' form is used of families and intimate relationships it is only to comment on the exterior action, where in other drama the large environment is used to heighten and comment on the personal relationships. Although individual conflict was the basis of much earlier drama, it was rarely widened into that of groups until the political conditions of the egalitarian philosophy and anti-clerical, rational movements which produced the French Revolution allowed this division of humanity to be widely recognised. Buchner, though not widely known until a century after his death, shows the first movement away from romantic, individualist drama. In "Danton's Death", he makes an attempt to portray the presence of the revolutionary crowd in all its changes of mood and policy in the character of Danton, but the character-type is not autonomous and its actions not decisive. "Woyzeck" shows one of the major characteristics of this type of drama: the naming of characters by type or rank - "captive", "doctor", - thus distancing them from romantic individualism: they are their professions or classes.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Hauptmann's "The Weavers" makes an attempt to put a class on the stage. Here the drama of conflict is more developed, as the action of the play takes place between groups - the weavers, the employers, the soldiers - rather than individuals. The uneasy balance between this and the individualism of, for example, the weaver's home scene in the second act, indicates the novelty of the form on the stage; such semi-documentary drama was to become more and more episodic especially in the twentieth century. Other strands of the drama of conflict penetrate into such 'privative' work as that of Strindberg, with his abstract characters dramatising a typical rather than personal consciousness, and are much used by the expressionist dramatists of the first decade of the twentieth century. The plays nowadays are little known precisely because of the very definite references to specific times, places and political problems on which expressionism is based: it is the fate of such drama to be short-lived. The method was continued in the work of Toller, as in "Hoppla" (1927). The action is set at precisely the time of writing, with a prologue in 1919, and uses an ex-political prisoner on the outside of society to explore the strange, hostile world of the Germany of the time with a view to political understanding. Here, in contrast to the 'illusionist' and 'privative' drama, the exploration is neither limited to the self, nor does it start or end with illusion. The events of the play are totally real and contemporary, and the Expressionists' break with the stage as a room brings the 'real world' into the theatre in news reels, film projections and broadcasting. There is a continual implied presence of events completely outside the characters; this has been developed in modern times by Osborne in the early plays and Wesker in his trilogy. To represent the invisible power-structure expressionism needs the 'type' and the symbol: the abstract and simplifying nature of the dramatic form itself expresses conflict in terms of dialectics - in polarized opposites - and comes to full development in Brecht. Odets in America showed the influence of German expressionism in his evocation of American working-class life. His best play, "Waiting for Lefty", dramatises the conflict between the taxi-drivers, their employers and the union bosses in a way which uses groups as characters and a rhetorical and expository style nearer to Brecht and much of modern dialectic drama than anything else of its time. Miller, however, while examining the effect on his dramatis

personae of features of twentieth-century American capitalism, presents the subject in the form of individuals - or rather of man versus a general environment: the outcome is much more 'privative' and fatalistic than dialectic, despite his subject-matter.

Earlier twentieth-century attempts at a drama of conflict must also be mentioned: Lawrence's attempts to put a large group in action, in "The Daughter-in-Law" and "Touch and Go" failed largely because of his emphasis on individualism and the lack of the impersonality necessary for such writing. When O'Casey in "The Silver Tassie" broke with the 'privative' naturalism which characterises his early plays he moved away from a centre of interest in particular families. Although there is a sense of Irish oppression in the representative nature of the type of characters he chooses in his early plays, the actual agents do not appear on the stage in either symbolic or actual form: the conflict is therefore peripheral to the action. But the central acts of "The Silver Tassie" show the conflict of the First World War in an expressionist form which recalls Toller. The necessity for the highly individualist O'Casey to resort to simplification and use of the 'type' portraying the war shows how new dramatic subjects changed the form of the drama in general. His later work moved into individualism and symbolism, although elements of dialectic drama can be found in "Red Roses for Me" with its sharply opposed types of radical churchman and political figures, whose conflict expresses that of whole groups. But the extravagance of the caricatures in, for example, "Purple Dust" encourages the audience to ignore the wider statements about the British and the Irish and to concentrate instead on the colourful individuals on the stage. German expressionism appears as a strong influence on English drama in Auden and Isherwood's "The Ascent of F.6." in the thirties, but between the wars it is only in the mature work of Brecht that an attitude to dialectics similar to that of modern drama can be found.

Brecht's rejection of Aristotelian tragedy has had a profound effect on modern drama in both staging and form. The proposition that tragedy should evoke pity and terror led Brecht to devise the 'epic' form of theatre which, by distancing the action from the spectator, produces thought rather than emotion and precludes identification. Plays of this kind have been written by modern dramatists as diverse as Arden and Orton. They represent opposing forces and ideas, but

leave the audience to choose between them. The episodic features of the early German expressionist art are made policy by Brecht; in rejecting the unfolding of a naturalistic plot he asserts that each scene must exist for itself so that the spectator can retain the capacity to act. The concept of an active rather than passive audience is central to modern drama; Saunders, Stoppard and Nichols, for example, demand one, and also show a similar lack of developed plot. But the key to Brecht's break with tradition is his opposition to the inevitability of tragedy - his insistence that there was always the possibility of a different outcome to events. This essentially Marxist optimism has, in fact, little place in modern English drama, though Wesker's "Their Very Own and Golden City" looks towards it, like Arden's "The Workhouse Donkey". Brecht's rejection of the resignation to inevitable suffering which defines the tragic view of life and drama also finds an echo in the hope expressed at the end of Arden's "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance". The failure of the audience to understand the complete identification of the characters of "The Threepenny Opera" with the bourgeois of his time, was ^{the} parallel to Theatre Workshop's "Oh What a Lovely War", which was seen by many as nothing but a musical, and was finally emasculated into a traditional 'tragedy' in the film. Actors - or directors - have also reversed Brecht's intention with "Mother Courage": the insistence of actresses on playing Mother Courage as a noble figure destroys the whole purpose of the work; such difficulties are still met with by modern dramatists dealing with romantic, tragic and naturalist interpretations of their 'dialectic' work. Similar problems arose with the interpretation of "Galileo": the conventional heroic, liberal view of a recantation necessary for truth to survive swamped the real conclusion of the play. The result of the recantation, according to Brecht, was that science became the prerogative of the élite, and its separation from the people led to many of the problems of the twentieth century. The 'complex seeing' necessary to understand the work of Arden has been helped by the groundwork laid by performances of Brecht in England, but the constant identification of audiences with one particular character still - as with productions of Brecht - destroys much of the power of his work. 'Dialectic' drama, which originates the political thought of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is still, in the context of modern drama, fighting for recognition from audiences and critics steeped in individualist and traditional dramatic forms and subjects.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A type of criticism which was recently current in scholastic circles insisted, when examining any form of literature, on emphasizing the structure of the piece above all else. Where the "practical criticism" approach to literature, particularly in the fields of poetry and drama, concentrated on the words and their effect, underplaying any motive of writing other than aesthetics, so the "structuralist" scholar will examine the build-up to a climax, in conjunction with the pattern of symbolism within the work, and assume that an aroused, excited or horrified audience reacting to a carefully orchestrated emotional appeal is the ultimate end of literature. It is true that the Aristotelian catharsis, in its widest sense of an emotional reaction to which the intellectual processes are subsidiary, has been the mainstay of the playwright's intention in both comedy and tragedy, and is still the purpose - if such a word may be used - of much contemporary drama. If for the purposes of this examination the motives of profit and material success and fame are ignored, most dramatists are concerned with inducing emotional reactions - often vague ones - in their audience. These range from the various proponents of what can only be called nihilism, such as Orton and Rudkin, through those artists who hope to change their audience's attitudes to their fellow-men by an increase in sensibility, such as Nichols and Delaney, to by far the largest group, who instil a comforting sense of the inadequacy of art, reason or understanding to explain either the world or the people in it by the simple method of portraying absurd, illogical or unexplained situations on the stage. The only possible reaction to such work - as produced, for example, by Saunders or Pinter - is an abdication of the responsibilities of understanding of events and the struggle to change them, but this is concealed by the asked-for recognition that this is "what life is really like".

This study of drama has examined the way in which modern dramatists use the fact of the live theatre, as opposed to other forces of art, in their exploitation of the direct relationship with the audience. It has studied the language used in the plays, and the multifarious ways in which English can convey character and ideas. But it would not be complete without some discussion of the purpose of

these intricate mechanisms, beyond, as I have said, the values of the market place. A watch, however beautiful and well constructed, is only of any use if it tells the time, which may seem a simplistic analogy, until it is seen that so much drama, to continue the metaphor, is concerned with the gilding on the hands or the chasing on the case, and at the very most will tell you the month, the year or the phases of the moon. In an era of the all-pervading media - films, newspapers, radio and above all, television - the theatre, to compete, must turn to a simpler and more universally acceptable purpose - and one referred to contemporary problems. The directness of the live stage, however much audience participation there may be, is unproductive if the audience so involved is as limited in class and background, even in geography, as it is at the time of writing, and, above all, if this direct communication conveys nothing but a vague and undirected benevolence, cynicism or hopelessness. If the live theatre has any place in the contemporary life of the community, it must be in its capacity for "telling the time", or utilising those qualities of personal contact which make it unique, to inform, to teach, to 'educate the emotions'.

The failure of Wesker's "Centre 42" project, designed to express similar views, was in its emphasis on aesthetics over content. Despite the patronising nature and bad quality of much of the media (repeatedly stated in Wesker's own plays) it is nevertheless true that in their vast scope, as far as both talent and audience is concerned, most of the purely aesthetic and emotional needs of the people are satisfied. The traditional cathartic role of theatre has been usurped by the intimacy of the television within every house. * If Centre 42

* To expand - any degree of realism of background and staging to create a suspension of disbelief must now be a pale reflection of the flexibility of the film camera in such work. So, in order not to invite unflattering comparisons resulting in complete disbelief, the décor must be bare, impressionist or surréaliste (similar changes have occurred in fine art since the invention of the camera). Thus the only aesthetics operating will be of recognition, of familiarity of character and situation presented to the audience, and in a wide sense, of catharsis. The very process of travelling to the theatre and experiencing it as a special place of entertainment makes it compete badly with television on the grounds of familiarity alone, which can be bolstered by devices such as daily or weekly consecutive episodes, and particularly by the domestic family situation in which viewing occurs. These conditions militate, in the theatre, against the individual emotions of sympathy, affection and identification which can easily be fostered in an atmosphere of intimacy and communication to a small group, while encouraging the arousal of generalised group-emotions such as hatred, religious fervour or a wish for action.

had concentrated on those aspects of drama which are not already catered for, at least adequately, by the other media, the project might have been a resounding success. Realising the division between the trade unions approached, and the traditional base of drama in London society, Centre 42 tried to close the gap by spreading culture to the worker, for which it received no thanks. If, instead, it had offered programmes of plays, dialogues and lectures which aroused and enlivened the struggle of the unions against their class enemy, rather than folk songs and family situation plays, success would have been immediate, and even failure an incitement to a further effort. *

Since the virtual collapse of the regional movement of the late 1950's and early 1960's, Wesker has shown little in common in aims or style with the other playwrights, and it is not proper to condemn the work of others on the same grounds. There is a place, though it is one which I personally believe to be only secondary, for dramatists who attempt to spread - if only by very little - a greater respect of man for man and a greater sympathy for mankind as a whole. But little can be said in moral terms for a drama which leaves its audience with no positive recourse, however much the thrill of recognition or the play on the emotions might convince the audience that it was, in some indefinable way, better for the experience. Drama, in fact any work of art, must finally be judged not in terms of its technique, but in terms of its purpose. Just as no mere written dialogue can become a play without being presented to an actual audience, so it is in the reaction of that audience, as foreseen and directed by the author, that the worth of the play is to be found.

Within my period, Simpson's plays are those in which the simple process of entertainment is of the most importance. The ostensible subjects or plots of his plays are, as is to be expected with purely comic work, chosen to afford the maximum use of verbal and situational comedy. But the affinities of his drama with other work of the period may be found in his themes and secondary purposes as well as his use of language. As can later be seen in the work of Orton, what is often vicious or controversial satire goes hand in hand with the "knockabout"

* As Wesker himself said in 1969 ("The Snarling Heads" lecture)
 "As artists you consider our work as the playthings and indulgences of the idle rich, of that class of people against whom you have been fighting all your lives."

verbal and visual comedy, and the repetition of attacks on certain subjects forces the recognition that Simpson has a serious purpose beyond amusing his audience, and that his attack on the forms of the English language extends to an attack on society.

The most obvious of the targets is the false piety of contemporary state religion as purveyed by the media. In both "A Resounding Tinkle" and "The Hole" the form and rhythms of devotional language are allied to nonsense; in "The Hole" the whole process of the development of religious philosophy is carefully lampooned to achieve the utmost devaluation. In the former play the religious satire is distanced by having it on the radio, a common Simpson technique, and apart from the rather out-of-place viciousness of some of the reference -

PRAYER: upon torture, upon interrogation, upon death - for their effects enlighten us. *

-it is quite a gentle irony similar to the animal jokes and "books for food" substitution of the play. But in the latter play, "The Hole", the process is much more serious. From the beginning of the play, the Visionary's long speeches seem to foreshadow the self-conscious oratory of Saunders and Stoppard:

VISIONARY: ... whose quote, or rather misquote many-coloured glass will God willing, in all probability stain the white radiance of eternity unquote, to the everlasting glory of God. **

Whereas the references to sport are neutral, or in other words, the subject is used to comic effect but not attacked, the series of visions of "The Hole" seem much too co-ordinated an attack to match the light-weight of the rest of the play. The satire on the Credo -

SOMA: I believe.
SOMA, ENDO, and CERIBRO: } In one aquarium ***

- much more direct than anything before, is followed by a demonstration the growth of the hatred of the outsider - the Visionary - and builds up into the hysterical language of a lynch mob. Death and pain are celebrated, and after a pause racial hatred and war are invoked in terms which are much too near reality to preserve the structure of a play

* P 25
** P 12
*** P 32

based on light and usually gentle verbal irony. It is because of this change of tone that the Workman's explanatory words -

WORKMAN: Cables! Junction box! Electricity! *

- destroy the mood of the play by their directness. The subject continues to be pursued seriously in Soma and Cerebro's philosophical discussion which again breaks out of the frame of the play by presenting arguments too serious for the background material. The satiric "electricity" sermon at the end, although seeming to return to the cerebral humour of the beginning of the play, is in fact a carefully written attack on the "modern" churchman. Simpson's obvious pre-occupation with the forms and illogicality of religion, while held within bounds in "A Resounding Tinkle", unbalances the structure of "The Hole" to an extent with which the audience is unable to cope.

However, "One Way Pendulum" succeeds as humorous drama by using different techniques. The characters and set are very carefully and naturalistically built up; the audience is provided with both Barnes and Stanley with whom to identify, because neither is involved in the mental and physical chaos on the stage. As with the other plays the words used are the basic comic medium, as the literalness of the long "jaws of death" and "loose end" episodes shows. The sounds off, which are essential to the play, are drawn from the technique of the radio show, like those, for example, in James Saunders' "Barnstable". The legal jokes of Act II which correspond with the religious jokes in the other plays are handled so as to fit in with the tone. It is the language of the legal profession which is attacked, and not the profession itself. Simpson's plays fulfil their role as entertainment in the satiric tradition of the radio and television shows of the 1950's and early 1960's. But when subjects, ^{such} as cruelty and war are brought up in "The Hole", the satiric tone which was adequate to deal with the easily lampooned forms of modern religion is not sufficient to prevent the structure and tone of the play from being destroyed by its theme. It is a problem which most of the playwrights have faced, from Saunders' philosophical pre-occupations to Orton's hatred of society and Nichols' concentration on a problem of life seemingly unfit for comic presentation. All have found humour essential to the presentation of such themes, but it is only Orton who, like Simpson,

has dared to make his attacks within a traditionally naturalistic stage set and a logically constructed, if zany, plot-line.

From the opening scenes of Orton's first play, "Entertaining Mr Sloane" (1964), it is clear that his comic impulse is much deeper and more wide-ranging than that of Simpson. Although the depersonalised language is used (as I have examined in Part II) to highlight the lack of sensibility of the characters and the vast gulf between what is said and what is done on the stage, it is in the characters that the comedy lies. Where Simpson's characters are ordinary recognisable people whose preoccupations and concerns have been transposed linguistically from one subject to another, Orton's plays take the audience into a world where the people themselves are only vaguely familiar, as they are merely much exaggerated caricatures of the society in which he himself moved. It is paradoxical that the humour, which seems total in its attack on humanity - its affectations and stupidities - draws, in fact, on a very limited and, in the last analysis, insignificant section of the population at a particular period of time. * Not only is Kath absurdly predatory, Eddie homosexual and Sloane psychopathic, but the house is alone in the middle of a rubbish dump, and the only connections with outside society are so vaguely indicated as to be practically non-existent. Eddie's job is never explained or given a feeling of reality, and Sloane's trips in the car seem like visits to another world. By enclosing his characters in this microcosm, Orton lessens the satiric impact of his play. The purpose, apart from entertainment, of the work is to destroy evil by laughter, but the distance between Orton's world and that of his audience can only make the solution at the end one which they will equate only with the highly individual circumstances of the play. He succeeds in making us laugh - but at "them", not at ourselves.

"Loot" is the first play in which Orton opens his attack on the Catholic religion - or at least on its outward forms - which runs through almost all his work. But whereas Simpson goes straight to its philosophical basis in "The Hole", "Loot" is not so serious in its attack as the later plays. Here Catholicism, and the contrasting

* "... the degree of human believability accorded the characters in "The Ruffian on the Stair" and "Entertaining Mr Sloane" is important to the proper functioning of Orton's drama."
(John Russell Taylor, "The Second Wave" P 131)

Protestantism of the dead woman, are used for comic effect by the withdrawal of all feeling from the outward forms. * The attack on religious "double-think" here is secondary to that on the methods of the police - within whom the violence of the play, less than that of Sloane but more unexpected, is concentrated. The setting of "Loot", almost as divorced from the recognisable world as that of "Sloane", allows Orton's humour full rein and the stage business is used to much greater effect, but the play is a step in the development to "What the Butler Saw" in its rejection of the complex characterisations of the earlier plays in favour of the rapid action of the farce. Orton's increasing use of caricature, although it is not followed in "The Ruffian on the Stair" and "The Good and Faithful Servant", destroys any humanistic purpose he might have aimed at.

In "The Ruffian on the Stair" most of Orton's dramatic technique can be found encapsulated in one short play. The mainly realistic dialogue of "Entertaining Mr Sloane" is sacrificed for what he considers essential messages to the audience; the first few lines establish the underworld connections of the characters by their references to the meeting in the toilet, the massage machines, the man on the run, Joyce's former occupation, and the first mention of Frank's death. The suppressed or reported violence of "Loot" erupts here on to the stage, after the "noises off" in Scene 3, where the shooting is in full view of the audience; this contrasts, for example, with the attack in "Entertaining Mr Sloane" which is concealed by the settee. The directness of the stage technique and action is balanced by the slow carefully orchestrated unfolding to the audience of Wilson's feelings and motives, and the strange four-cornered relationship which is set up between the three characters and the dead Frank. The play succeeds in being tragic despite such bathetic techniques as the goldfish episode, partly by using characters who are familiar in their reactions and feelings, but also in the sympathy with which we can view Wilson. His long speeches of self-explanation are similar to those

* "Nor is its leading idea, the attack on religious hypocrisy, though much has been made of its significance by some critics, really effectively put over, precisely because Orton's contracting out of human drama more or less forbids us to apply what he is saying in the real world outside the confines of the stage."
(John Russell Taylor, "The Second Wave" P 133)

of Osborne's heroes, and there is even an uncharacteristic direct attack on the British legion celebrations. Able to identify with his feelings, if not his actions, the audience can become involved in the play to a much greater extent than is possible in Orton's other work, but he discards this new and sympathetic audience-actor relationship as fatal to the type of viciously satiric throwaway humour of his later work.

"The Erpingham Camp" shows Orton moving further along the road of unreality to shock and amuse his audience. The setting, a hardly believable holiday camp, is as cut off from the world as the room in "Funeral Games" and the asylum in "What the Butler Saw", and Orton parades before the audience a series of grotesques led by the neo-fascist Erpingham and the comic Irishman Riley. There is no chance here of identification with any character - the young couples are made both violent and ridiculous as soon as they appear in Scene 2:

KENNY: ... In the end I bashed them both about the ear.
 EILFON: ... And although they got our love forbidden and made life not worth living, I'm pregnant now and they've been good parents. *

Riley's failure and Erpingham's death are made as unsympathetic as possible by their own stupidity and stubbornness. Kenny's violence has as little reason as that in "Sloane" or "Loot" but differs in also lacking rational explanation: whereas the earlier plays asked the audience to believe in a completely selfish Sloane or a totally unprincipled policeman, "The Erpingham Camp" represents meaningless violence in the light of humour. Orton's preoccupation with the funeral trappings of death in "Loot" is also found in the apocalyptic final scene of the play, and his lack of purpose can be shown by the emptiness of this scene, except as theatrical spectacle. In contrast, the business with the coffin, and the Mags, in Saunders' "A Scent of Flowers" is an essential counterpoint to the action flashbacks: a true rememento mori. There is a certain feeling of dissatisfaction about the plot of the play: it begins as a moral tale of revolution, but with Erpingham's death the campers' revolt inexplicably collapses, as do the principal protagonists, back into acceptance of the "law and order" of the camp. There are the many hilarious epigrams, such as:

* Sc 2 P 52

PADRE: It's life that defeats the Christian Church. She's always been well-equipped to deal with Death. *

Yet the extreme violence which punctuates the play prevents it from being a successful farce, and in terms of the plot, the play gives the impression of being a moral tale without a moral.

The television play "The Good and Faithful Servant" is curiously unlike anything else Orton has written except in the inconsequentiality of its language. Orton is here not so much attacking any specific target as the structure of life based on the work ethic. The description of Buchanan's retirement can only be taken as a justification for the behaviour and attitude of Orton's young heroes, from Sloane to Ray of this play: if we accept Orton's contentions about society, work and the death in life of old age, such complete self-seeking is the only logical reaction. But Orton's case is spoiled by over-emphasis. The black and white presentation of the relationship between Buchanan and the firm - the gifts, the personⁿnel officer, his workmates - build up a picture of complete uselessness which cannot be applied to the audience's own work-experience, however consistently bad this might be. Similarly, the description of old age is too exaggerated in its coldness and nihilism to be credible, unlike, for example, the well-rounded, if in some ways equally pessimistic, view of the subject in Arden's "The Happy Haven". Orton's more serious treatment prompts him to make a break with stage realism, but this is an isolated attempt and seems to be ^{an} out-of-place attempt to keep up with the dramatic times. Scene 18 contains both Buchanan's death and an immediate reading of the advertisement in the newspaper, before Edith speaks to the audience: this scene breaks the continuity of the play, which fades away in one more short scene with no satisfactory conclusion; in the same way as the unnecessary staginess at the end of "Erpingham Camp" conceals the lack of a real ending.

The last play before "What the Butler Saw", "Funeral Games", shows Orton's development towards the pure farce. The moralistic basis of the plots of "Sloane" and "The Erpingham Camp" is gone, the purposefully fantastic plot being constructed to allow as many epigrammatic statements as possible in conjunction with an attack on a religious order so ludicrous that the impact found in the earlier plays

* So II P 85 - 6

is lost. Orton's construction of "The Brotherhood" for the purpose of knocking it down demonstrates a retreat, in setting and characters, from his former approaches to reality. It must be admitted that the play is an admirable vehicle for some of Orton's most succinct epigrams on Christianity:

CAULFIELD: Love thy neighbour
 PRINGLE: The man who said that was crucified by his. *

.

MCCORQUADALE: It was my intention to represent - in a symbolic fashion - the Christian Church.
 TESSA: A bird of prey carrying an olive branch. You've put the matter in a nutshell. **

.

PRINGLE: You'd be well advised not to try your tricks here. We're Children of Light. Not criminals. Tangle with the Prince of Peace and you'll find a knife in your back. ***

But this does not make up for the vacuum left by the play's withdrawal from reality. The contrived ending when the outside world does appear is as unsuccessful a dénouement as that of the previous plays.

As "What the Butler Saw" was not performed until 1969, (although it was written within the period), it is sufficient to state that it represents the culmination of Orton's development away from the realism of his early plays. The setting is as divorced from reality as possible, and the attacks on modern psychiatric practice are only incidental to the constant frenetic action. It is based on a series of lies from Dr Prentice which take over reality, much as Simpson's logical pretext governs the second act in "One Way Pendulum": the structure of the play is drawn together by the inevitable movement towards the violent and anarchic climax. The facilities of the stage are fully used to complement the words for the first time, and it is ironic that Orton's triumph in humorous writing should be accompanied by a loss of those elements of realism which give the earlier plays a purpose beyond pure entertainment.

Peter Nichols' one play in the period - "A Day in the Death

* Sc 4 P 28
 ** Sc 8 p 43
 *** Sc 8 P 47

of Joe Egg² (1967) shows a different aspect of the dramatic comedy of the 1960's. Where Simpson's satiric attacks are secondary to his verbal humour, and Orton's targets are often chosen to provide matter for his epigrams, Nichols' subject is much more private and personal - indeed more serious in its familiarity to the audience. A plea for understanding as well as a type of autobiographical documentary, the play uses humour to soften rather than increase the impact of the events and feelings depicted. * The basis is fundamentally humanistic in its wish to make tragedy bearable, and this is an opposite impulse to that of Orton who contrives to make tragedy ridiculous. The slightly unbalanced format of the play allows the first Act to inform the audience in a series of comic set-pieces in preparation for the more eventful and realistic second Act. The constant changes of tone from farce to intense seriousness, accomplished (as I have examined in Parts I and II) by the changing stage-audience relationship and the varied linguistic modes, are also found between the two Acts in the contrast between the private, intimate family atmosphere of Act I and the irruption of the outside world in Act II. Freddie and Pam embody the audience's reactions to Act I, and the withdrawal of the play from its intense scrutiny of the family gradually brings in a context of reality in the form of the description of the car and hospital. Inasmuch as Nichols' purpose is to increase understanding and sensibility, he succeeds with his humorous approach where a more serious examination might alienate the audience. The intimacy of his subject coupled with the directness of approach is more effective in involving the audience than ^{LN}most plays of the period. The characters, individualised enough to retain a feeling of reality, and yet representative enough to include most of any possible audience in at least one personal identification, are revealed in the alternation of soliloquies and dialogue as recognisably familiar with direct reference to the audience itself. The open ending is a device familiar from much modern drama; here, however, it retains its freshness by the state of suspense in which the audience is left. This type of intensity, essential to the proper examination of such a subject, is counteracted by the impersonality of the humour in a way which suggests that Nichols'

* "(Joe) is a fact it is difficult if not impossible to face head-on."
(J R Taylor "The Second Wave" P 24)

form is an essential basis on which to build his thesis of understanding.

Humour is no longer the most important element in the work of Delaney; here the extended family is the subject, and the working out of relationships the plot. This similarity to the otherwise contrasting style of Nichols is also found, broadly, in Delaney's purpose, which can be defined as an attempt to increase sensibility by portraying character and events. A consequence of this concentration on the minute portrayal of "feeling" is that female characters are much more important in the work of Nichols and Delaney than in most other work of the period. The plays which base their subject on philosophy or politics rather than the family have few and small parts for women; this reflects the prejudices of the playwrights as to the spheres of action of the sexes, rather than any intrinsic quality.

Delaney, in "A Taste of Honey", uses a combination of naturalistic dialogue and plot with the musical entrances and exits, and a few casually introduced snippets of information directed to the audience (analysed in Part II) to produce both intimacy and typicality in much the same way as Nichols. Jo's movement from innocence to experience, the real subject of the play, is accomplished by a series of dramatic ironies in which the revelations of her ancestry to herself and her actions to her mother are sometimes known and sometimes unknown by the audience: the suspense invites close attention in the same way as Joe Egg's delayed entrance. The truth about Jo's father is suppressed until the end of Act I, and similarly the truth about the baby is only revealed, to Helen, at the end. Helen's exit here leaves the play, and Jo, in abeyance in the same way as that of Brian's in "Joe Egg", and with the same result. The audience is forced to realise that it is Jo's new-found maturity which is important, not the outcome of specific events, just as the new phrase of Bri and Sheila's relationship is hinted at in "Joe Egg". *

The simplicity of the stage action, each vignette of dialogue showing members of the family and friends in relationship to Jo in a

* The structure of "A Taste of Honey" is more subtly directed than that of "Joe Egg": the movement towards climax foreshadowed by the subsidiary climaxes, continues throughout the play, to be directed towards the actual birth of the baby and the development of Jo that this implies. Thus the audience's attention is constantly directed beyond the confines of the play itself.

two-to-one or one-to-one ratio allows the audience to concentrate on the nuances of sensibility of the characters. * "The Lion in Love", with its greater emphasis on realism and naturalism, loses the detachment and general application of "A Taste of Honey" while not achieving anything more in the intimacy of portrayal of its characters. Delaney makes the attempt to provide a wider spectrum of character-types to fill this gap, but only succeeds in losing grip on their individuality. Fundamentally it is in the lack of any recognisable purpose of this play that it fails to come up to the standard of "A Taste of Honey": where the latter does involve its audience in an increase of understanding for its characters, "The Lion in Love" seems only to exist to justify its last line:

HIT: Ah it's a bugger of a life, by Jesus. **

There are two other relatively minor playwrights whose philosophy, as opposed to their drama, is as pessimistic as that of Orton and Delaney: Rudkin and Bond. Rudkin's "Afore Night Come" (1962) shares with the four Bond plays of the period a sense of inescapable doom, of the physical presentation on the stage of death and its circumstances, and as far as the first two Bond plays are concerned, a degree of realism in staging and naturalism of dialogue unusual for the drama of the 1960's. At a time when the major playwrights were experimenting with surrealism and heightened theatricality (Arden: "The Workhouse Donkey", Pinter: "The Collection" and "The Lover", Osborne: "Luther") the impact of the events of "The Pope's Wedding", "Saved", and "Afore Night Come" is achieved (as I have suggested in Part II) by a long section of the play devoted to establishing a feeling of reality and familiarity for the audience. But the motives behind the violent action are totally different in Rudkin and Bond. Rudkin's ritual murders represent a return to the violence of primitive man, whereas Bond's two murders have no rational explanation: in fact, the drama turns on the complete meaninglessness of the acts.

* "None of the characters looks outward at life beyond the closed circle of the stage world; they all live for and in each other, and finally the rest, even Helen, seem to exist only as incidentals in Jo's world, entering momentarily into her dream of life and vanishing when they have no further usefulness for it."
(J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 133)

** Act III P 104

"Afore Night Come" approaches the violence which is the centre of its action in a different way from any other play of the period. The impulse is opposite to that of Pinter or Bond, where physical violence is equally important but is presented as suddenly arising from unknown causes, and different again from Orton, whose violence is, in his terms, a logical reaction to the world outlined in "The Good and Faithful Servant". Rudkin prepares his audience with hints, which become increasingly intelligible throughout the play, directed towards the murder at the end: the causes and background psychological build-up to the act are exposed in every detail to the audience. We are made to feel that the cycle is inevitable under these particular circumstances, and their particularity is stressed, whereas the other playwrights often contend that it is in the very nature of mankind to break sporadically into reasonless violence. The familiarity of Rudkin's subject, stressed by the contemporary references (as outlined in Part II) and by the wealth of circumstantial detail about the working environment, is used to involve the audience intimately in the action. The tragic technique familiar from the ancients, of indicating violence by noises off and then revealing the result to the audience to increase suspense, is used subtly as a dramatic irony which by its anticlimax makes the final act of the play more shocking. Thus Mrs Trevis' fall, represented by a complex series of sounds offstage and followed by her entrance on all fours, allows the audience to think for a moment that this is the promised tragedy. The black humour of the entrance then shows this to be a false alarm, thus increasing awareness and anticipation for the real tragedy, which confounds expectation by being performed on stage, in full view. The technique of Bond is similar in "Narrow Road to the Deep North", where a "sound picture" of the execution of Shogo is presented before the impact of the exposure of his body, but Rudkin's subtlety in drawing on the traditional methods of tragedy is lost. Despite Rudkin's facility in orchestrating suspense, however, it is difficult to say what his audience has learned at the end except for a vague distrust of rural humanity. The presentation of Roche as the destined victim has much in common with the fatalism, for example, of "Oedipus Rex", for no remedy other than withdrawal and ignorance of events is even hinted at.

Bond claims in the introduction to "Saved" (1965) that the play is "irresponsibly optimistic". This view is advanced on the

evidence that Len is uncorrupted by the events and characters of the play. The same might be said of the other heroes of his plays: Arthur, in "Early Morning", is as humanitarian as the rest of the cast is savage, Scopey in "The Pope's Wedding" demonstrates a greater sympathy than the other characters, and Kiro in "Narrow Road to the Deep North" is portrayed as faithful and unselfish though stupid. But the type of uncomplicated "goodness" shown by Bond's heroes in a corrupt and vicious environment is useless: it helps neither the characters themselves nor anyone else. No change is brought about in the depicted society by their actions or example; indeed, the characters with sensibility abdicate all responsibility for themselves or their world. "The Pope's Wedding" shows Scopey attracted by and in the end wishing to become the hermit, to withdraw from any meaningful contact with humanity into the self-contemplating limbo of the hut, away from the commitment to the world represented by the alternated outdoor scenes. This type of alternated interior and exterior scene operates throughout Bond's work like a natural cyclical progression of day and night or of the seasons: both "Saved" and "The Pope's Wedding" end with the interior scene in a sort of dramatic agoraphobia. This withdrawal is matched by a retreat from language as communication: in "The Pope's Wedding", "Saved", and "Narrow Road to the Deep North", the hero is reduced to silence - from the constructive mine of Len to the "life in death" of Scopey. Kiro's suicide at the end of "Narrow Road to the Deep North" represents an extreme form of this abdication of responsibility and the nihilist message to the audience is scarcely diminished by the symbolic representation of the continuance of life in the form of the naked man. "The Pope's Wedding" and "Saved" use realistic language and very simple scenery to build up an expression of complete naturalism within which the pressures of life on Scopey and the drear uselessness of the lives of the youths in "Saved" are shown as the background to the killings. But the action is generalised towards a philosophical statement about humanity rather than tied down to a specific time, place and circumstance like the murder in "Afore Night Come". The purpose is more obvious in the other two plays, where the ostensibly historical settings are destroyed as naturalism by the deliberate anachronisms, and the audience is asked to conclude that this is the natural behaviour of humanity at all times and in all circumstances. Bond shows himself

a master of both naturalist and nonrealist drama, in the complex way in which the alternating scenes reflect the opposing forces operating on his heroes, and in his capacity to reproduce exactly the debased dialect which makes his characters so familiar. But the forces which he ranges against the violent senselessness of his depicted world are represented as too weak to affect in even the slightest way the world about them, and so unresourceful, intellectually, spiritually and practically, as to be worthless, in real terms, for his heroes themselves. * By slanting the evidence in this way, Bond can put artistic pressure on his audience to accept the pessimism about life which pervades his work.

An examination of Osborne's plots, with particular reference to the endings, shows his similarity to Bond and Rudkin in fatalism and pessimism about humanity, while "Inadmissible Evidence" has more in common with the "illusionist" work of Stoppard and Saunders. His plays cover the whole period under study and are more varied in subject-matter and purpose than those which have so far been examined. It is simplistic to state that his plays are about relationships, but it is in this fact - that the progress of the members of family and professional relationships constitutes the plot - that Osborne's work can be placed in the main stream of English drama. The philosophical, political and moral aspects of his work grow out of the progress of his depicted relationships, and he has more in common in this aspect with Delaney and Nichols than other major playwrights such as Pinter and Arden. The second important aspect which Osborne has in common with the playwrights previously examined - Orton, Bond, Delaney and Rudkin - is, in wide terms, the state of mind in which he leaves his audience. Whereas the understanding of human life itself is not in the uncharacteristic "Inadmissible Evidence", his relationships are portrayed rather than examined, and worked out in pessimistic, indeed

* "... but Bond suggests that it contains at least the seeds of hope. Len maybe is "saved", or at least he has not lost himself, and perhaps he can do something to save the others."
 (J R Taylor "The Second Wave" P 82)
 I think he obviously both isn't and cannot, despite Bond's own analysis.

fatalistic terms. The deaths which are almost always central to his plots are shown as unmitigated tragedy without even the dubious benefit of an increase in understanding, and most of his characters fail either professionally or in their personal relationships. Running right through his work is an underlying philosophy which asserts that not only are genuine relationships virtually impossible in society, but that the nature of humanity is predisposed towards the expression of useless tragedy in its every endeavour. Facing the world which he portrays, his characters can only retreat at the end into various narcissistic rejections of the real world and humanity in all its aspects, sometimes qualified by a tired and cynical acceptance of the tragedies in which they have taken part.

"Epitaph for George Dillon" was written before the almost instantly successful "Look Back in Anger", and shows the birth of most of the purposes of Osborne's later drama. The establishment of the contemporary setting which is used to focus the identification and sense of familiarity of the audience is accomplished with speed and economy: Josie's scene includes the music and dress which fix it at one particular historical time, and makes clear the type of family into which Dillon later erupts. The entry of the remainder of the family is spaced out in order to allow time for character delineation, and Dillon appears in an environment which the audience already feels it knows. The breaking of the tone of domesticity, however, which seems from Dillon's character inevitable, does not occur until his remark at the end of Act I -

DILLON: You stupid looking bastard *

- which neatly dramatises the suppressed conflict. Act II introduces two constant Osborne usages: the telephone, which represents in all his plays the world beyond the domestic interior, and alcohol, which he uses to lay bare the purposes and inhibitions of his characters. The long Dillon speeches attacking the conditions of life in general flow out of this relaxation, as does the episode with Josie at the end of the Act which matches - as a subsidiary climax - the remark above. Act III slightly unbalances the play with the amount of action compared to the other two Acts, introducing the motif of physical illness which often complements the mental imbalance of Osborne's heroes, and representing Dillon's sell-out to the forces of finance and the

domesticity of Josie. There is no climax at the end to match the earlier climactic events: indeed this is true of almost all Osborne's work, and the way in which the play fades out matches the mood which is created. But it is difficult to accept that Dillon's personal tragedy is not mostly of his own making: even if his self-dramatising aesthetic strictures on his work in Act II are taken seriously, the Josie connection which forces his acceptance of Barney's offer cannot be anything but his own fault. Osborne argues from the particular of the contemporary setting to the general of the artistic conscience, but presents a hero so wilful as to forfeit the sympathy of his audience.

Many of the same techniques, although in a more concentrated form, have much the same result in "Look Back in Anger" (1956). Even more than in "Epitaph for George Dillon", the events of the play are the changing relationships, apart from the miscarriage itself which is used to reinforce the emotional climate of changes in exactly the same way as is Dillon's tuberculosis. The death of Hugh's mother, occurring immediately after Jimmy's long description of his father's death, is introduced for the same reason - it is only the effect on the hero which is of any interest to Osborne. * The extreme violence of the language prefigures that of "Luther" and acts as a substitute for the physical action which in the main is lacking in the play. The impression is given that something definite is happening, but in fact the plot is entirely cyclical when the relatively unimportant few events of the outside world are disregarded. The hatred of women expressed in the play is as complete as that in the much later "A Patriot for Me":

JIMMY: She'd drop your guts like hair clips and fluff all over the floor. You've got to be fundamentally insensitive to be as noisy and clumsy as all that. **

.

No, there's nothing left for it, me boy, but to let yourself be butchered by the women. ***

* "He tends to sympathise with his hero in his writing to such an extent that the other characters are made to capitulate to him almost without a struggle and the scope of genuine dramatic conflict is thereby reduced."
(J R Taylor "Anger and After" P45). This also applies to "Luther".

** Act I P 24

*** Act III Sc 1. P85

This feature is apparent also in "Epitaph for George Dillon". * The retreat which is to be found in every Osborne play at the end is total here: the physical reality of the miscarriage prompts a complete withdrawal from life or indeed realistic relationships. ** The attitudes which have been exposed have throughout contained no hint of movement towards real change, and the final impression, as in "Epitaph for George Dillon", is one of total pessimism about the inner and outer world.

Osborne's next play, "The Entertainer", illustrates purposes which are remarkably similar despite the greater formality and ordered nature of the dramatic format. The alternating public and domestic scenes, using the same technique used later by Bond to include in the conclusions both macro- and microcosm, conceal the same structure as in the last two plays. The early scenes establish the facts on which the drama rests and its place in time and space; these are followed by a series of attacks by Archie which recall Jimmy's and Dillon's speeches, although Archie's lack of energy makes his attacks collapse sooner under their own weight. The revelatory drinking scene of Act II matches that in "Epitaph for George Dillon", and Mick's death at the end of Act II and Billy's in Act III occupy the same position as the climactic events of the previous two plays, before the action, as usual, fades out without a final curtain climax. The music-hall background is secondary to the interplay of relationships, just as the deaths are given less importance than the emotions of surviving characters on the stage. The retreat at the end is away from the world in two directions: towards death and towards Canada, the reality of which is so vague as to constitute that withdrawal from the responsibilities of the present which is familiar from the rest of the plays.

The setting of "Luther" (1961) seems to be as public as the next major play, "Inadmissible Evidence" (1964) is private, while both represent for Osborne experiments in dramatic technique. Here the

* Ruth, the only really sympathetic female character, is really a man - she acts, thinks and speaks like a man.

** "Faced at last with a really effective example of his own handiwork, Jimmy quails, and at the last he and Alison are united again in their idyllic dream world of bears and squirrels, content, perhaps, never to make it as human beings in the real world around them." (J P Taylor "Anger and After" P 43).

unrealistic staging and alienation techniques of the Knight as narrator and the central surrealist scenes conceal (like the music-hall scenes in "The Entertainer") a purpose little different from the other plays in spite of the historical existence of Luther. The complex events of the beginning of the Reformation are telescoped into a few scenes of lengthy speeches: * again, violent speech acts as a substitute for action in exciting the audience. Although family relationships seem less important than formerly, the introductory scenes with Hans and the quiet domesticity of the final scene, bracket the public part of the play; the sermon and speech at the Diet are delivered into a vacuum just as are Jimmy's and Dillon's fulminations. The play could in fact be seen as an object-lesson in what might result if people really did take note of such characters as Jimmy. The result of the concentration on speechifying and the domestic elements is that Luther's achievements seem lessened in worth in terms of the world; The final scene, an anti-climactic end to such a rhetorical play, does not succeed in balancing the denunciation of the knight in Scene II with an affirmation of life in the form of the child; ** but it is so overwhelmed by the tone of the rest of the play that it seems to make a similar retreat - or abdication - to that in the other work. Concentration on the private aspects of Luther's life succeeds in devaluing his effect on the world; there is a manifest fatalism:

MARTIN: A man's will is like a horse standing between two riders ... And not only that, the horse can't choose its rider. ***

This destroys the element of choice, and represents the final word of the play more than the "calm after the storm" of the last scene.

"Inadmissible Evidence" breaks with naturalism in a different way from the use of music of "The Entertainer" and "The World of Paul Slickey", by representing its entire action in the form of a dream. This allows Naitland's journey towards isolation to be followed in almost as succinct a way as that of Disson in Pinter's "The Tea Party".

* "... the issues involved are scurried over in unseemly haste."
(J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 15)

** "... Luther, himself the instigator of a period of unrest and unsettled values, looks back to an earlier, happier day."
(J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 56) This is misguided - Luther is looking forward to the Second Coming (the child is a symbol for Christ), which was foreseen in the earlier conversations about the end of the world.

*** Act III Sc 3 P 98

Pinter's use of the camera viewpoint, and the sight and blindness images which alternate in his play, find a parallel in Osborne's alternating naturalistic and court-fantasy sequences. The confusion of personalities in the minor characters allows the complete supremacy of Maitland himself over the rest of the play; this technique is familiar from "Look Back in Anger" and "Luther" but Osborne avoids it in "Time Present" and "Hotel in Amsterdam". By leaving it unclear how much of the events, even in the naturalistic sequences, are only occurring within Maitland's mind, Osborne can make Jones, Hudson and the various female characters much more typical and less individual than is possible in other plays. Jones, and in a different way Jane, can represent all that Maitland, as Osborne, dislikes and fears about the youth of his time, within the context of the play. The structure is very curious; the action of the first scenes recedes into inaction, and the complex dialogue sections are reduced at the end into a soliloquy with the telephone, which here fulfils its rôle, as in "Epitaph for George Dillon" and "The Hotel in Amsterdam", as a representative of the world outside - in this case Maitland's own mind. But the uncertainty about the existence of the world with which he is communicating, despite the sanction for fantasy given by the dream context, brings this play nearer to the "illusionist" work of the late 1960's - that of Saunders, Stoppard and Pinter - than in any of the rest of Osborne's work.

The play differs from his other major drama in representing the very process of work on the stage. From "Look Back in Anger" to "The Hotel in Amsterdam", except for the excursions into the entertainment world mentioned above, the action of the plays takes place in the spare time of the characters - the Sundays, evenings and weekends. Although Jimmy's occupation has some importance in "Look Back in Anger", it is not central to the plot, and this is also true of Redl in "A Patriot for Me" (1965), and the characters of the two plays of 1968. But Maitland's world is his work, and the legal jargon which surrounds it is an essential part of his dream: his family has less influence on him than his colleagues, secretaries and clients. The play veers in one direction towards the illusionists, but in another - by its emphasis on professional relationships and the use of "types" - approaches, despite the hero-centred action, the "dialectical" drama of Wesker and Arden. Ultimately, though, the problem examined is one

of personal identity in a fragmented inner and outer world, * and this subject finds another expression in the next play.

The many short scenes which build up the history of Redl in "A Patriot for Me" allow frequent changes of mood and setting to represent a long period of time, and form a sort of theatrical shorthand to develop Redl's seemingly inexorable path towards discovery and suicide after his first fatal acknowledgement of his sexual nature. Osborne uses this play as a vehicle for the expression of his habitual hatred of women, (already examined in "Look Back in Anger" and "Epitaph for George Dillon") with a series of scenes, such as Act I Scene III, which equate women with sex and men with love. This very male-oriented play shares this attitude to women - that they are either inferior, or so different a species as to be incomprehensible by men - with "Inadmissible Evidence", which is, however, balanced by the variety of rôles for women in the plays of 1963.

The structure of "A Patriot for Me" is unusual for Osborne: the opening scene of Siczynski's death, and the corresponding suicide of Redl at the end of the play, enclose a series of dialogue scenes which have their centre at the ball, Act II Scene I. Siczynski's death is made into a small-scale theatrical tour de force, with the emptiness of the gymnasium contrasted to the warmth of Redl and Siczynski, and complemented by Kupfery's and Steinbauer's coldness, a quiet, contemplative scene which quickly builds up to a climax at the duel. But Redl's death is indicated by an offstage shot, and is both diminished and distanced by the device of the last scene, which places the entire play firmly in its historical context. The liveliness and activity of Act I becomes the ostentatious theatricality of Act II, while Act III fades into impersonality in contrast with the emotion of the first part of the play. This rather uncomfortable structure serves to produce the alienation necessary for the historical perspective of the play, as the setting and dialogue are almost entirely naturalistic. Keeping the audience conscious of their presence in the theatre by this means, Osborne achieves something of the same balance of identification and alienation which in "The Entertainer" and "Luther"

* J R Taylor calls it "his gradual, inexorable realisation that the world and he are parting company."
(J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 56).

he reached by alternating naturalistic and non-naturalistic scenes. But in the end it is difficult to know quite what impression the audience is supposed to take away from the theatre. The plea for understanding for those who do not fit in with the accepted conventions of society would seem more sincere if the central characters of the plays of 1968 did not spend most of their time attacking - seemingly with Osborne's voice - any way of life different from their own.

"Time Present" returns to the family setting of the earlier plays. In fact, in its theatrical setting, and particularly the use of the uncertainty between theatrical mannerisms and counterfeit emotions, and their counterparts in reality, it can be seen as a re-writing of "Epitaph for George Dillon", all the characters having become richer, older and more successful. While the theme of death and the discussions of physical disease represent a continuation of the deaths offstage which occur throughout Osborne, the constant drinking, laced now with references to drugs, expands to two Acts - the usual central "exposure" scenes. The casually referred and understated fact of the abortion of Act II recalls Alison's miscarriage in "Look Back in Anger": the technique of gradually hinting to the audience of a coming tragedy and then seriously underplaying the moment of revelation is a familiar Osborne method of alienation as discussed above. * Similarly, Orme's death is understood rather than centrally stated at the end of Act I, again using the familiar technique of the telephone to provide the intrusion of the real outside world into the domestic circle on the stage. The play not only looks back to the techniques and themes of the early work, but also recreates Jimmy and Dillon as Pamela, whose diatribes of hatred have as little realised source from which to be launched. ** Any achievement in the portrayal of attitudes to death which might have been made in the play is submerged in the verbose and self-conscious theatricality of the characters which

* see my discussion of "A Patriot for Me", above.

** "But this time they (Pamela's diatribes) seem a little half-hearted and perfunctory, as though they are there to meet audiences' expectations rather than driven by some real force of feeling in Osborne himself."

(J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 65).

Osborne has created. *

The second play of 1968, "The Hotel in Amsterdam", has a much simpler structure than any of the other Osborne plays of the 1960's. It has clear resemblances to "Time Present" in the constantly invoked but absent K.L. who replaces Orme as the father-figure of the "family" of professionals; but here, in the underplayed climactic announcement of the death at the end by the intrusive telephone, the play is as much one of conversation and static, cyclical relationships as "Look Back in Anger". The film rather than theatre background of the characters removes most of the element of theatrical narcissism of "Time Present", but leaves in its place a curious vacuum in the development of the action and relationships. The parasitic nature of the relationship of the other characters with K.L. makes the fulfilment of the promise of a type of commune existence in the familiar Osborne "retreat" ending an unlikely proposition. The toning-down of the central character, Laurie, in comparison with his counterparts in the other plays - the attempt, in fact, to people the stage with a group of equals - also seems to result in confusion rather than an interplay of personality. The basic Osborne play-type of drink-lubricated self-revelatory dialogue needs a rhetorical and definitely central character to hold it together. The entry of Gillian, after the various thumbnail character sketches of her, seems unnecessary and obfuscates the news of K.L.'s suicide at the end, which thus has less impact than is consonant with his importance to the group. ** The realistic settings and naturalistic dialogue of the two plays of 1968 are not complemented by the alienation devices of the other plays, and this results in a situation in which the audience can neither identify fully with any character nor relax in the enjoyment of theatrical spectacle - of which there is very little. The more traditional fourth-wall drama to which Osborne, at the end of the period, returns, needs intelligent dialogue and this is not provided by the understated news which always enters

* "Nowadays almost everyone is tainted with show business" says Osborne (quoted by J R Brown "Theatre Language" P 136) to justify his use of such characters. But this is not true: though most of us are show business consumers, Osborne is speaking for the restricted world of those who purvey it.

** "... when in the end it transpires that in their absence K.L. has killed himself, they are all shattered." (J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 66). But they are not - they hardly react. It is a beginning (of a kind), not an end.

from the outside world.

Pinter is the first and most important of the modern "illusionists" (see Chapter 7), although an equal strand of pessimism about the civilised and moral nature of mankind pervades his work until 1968. Among the work of modern English dramatists, his stands out as the most "unavailable" - the emphasis is on "showing", not examining or working out, to the audience. This is implicit in his statement:

I'm not an authoritative or reliable commentator on the dramatic scene, the social scene, any scene. *

In this he differs radically from the other major playwrights. Wesker's purpose is basically politico-ideological; Arden's is "dialectic" (in other words the presentation of conflict between groups) and Osborne's is the examination of the surface appearance of certain types of relationship and character in a specific social context. But Pinter's work only portrays: there is no examination and his drama is ultimately completely existential. ** His purpose is of a direct emotional effect on the audience:

Pinter's 'message' is the atmosphere itself: the growing fear and doubt, the sudden, savage violence as an outlet for the fear, the uselessness of the violence. ***

This^{is} achieved by the balance of words and silences (see Part II) and a separation from the audience (see Part I). The appeal is to the unconscious or subconscious feelings of the audience, and therefore a discussion of Pinter's purpose in moral or philosophical terms is not relevant as with the other playwrights. As his effect is use of the theatre, much of his technique has necessarily been discussed in Parts I and II, and the amount of criticism **** written on his drama is so great, in comparison to the others, that there is little left to be said about his comparatively small output of work.

The action of his plays embodies the dramatisation of

* "Between the Lines" Sunday Times March 1962.

** "His plays show private worlds: self-contained, obscure, 'rather sexual', instinctive, irrational, frivolous, perhaps - got moving all the time until they have worked themselves out, until the subterfuge is expended or the interplay settled." (John Russell Brown "Theatre Language" P 102)

*** W Baker and S E Tabachnick "Harold Pinter" P 29

**** See Bibliography

individual psychology. The spectator's view, reduced to that of a crowd at the zoo by the 'retreat' nature of the plays, is involved in the action by the familiarity of the naturalistic language and setting, and yet he is not allowed to develop an objective viewpoint, as the boundary between truth and falsehood on the part of both author and actors is never defined sufficiently to allow any reaction but degrees of subjectivity. In the same way as Arden allows equal weight to his opposed groups in the early work, so Pinter allows equal weight to his characters' view of reality, both in cases of conflict among themselves, and of conflict within each. There is no "outsider", no narrator figure to constitute the norm against which the action is played out and the characters demonstrated, though the audience fulfils this rôle by its outside view of the drama. The very existence of the audience, and its ability to see the drama objectively, shows how limited is the philosophy of the plays: the implied statement that the nightmare comes to everyone, that all humanity is agoraphobic, neurotic and in a constant state of subconscious or conscious unreasoning fear is destroyed by the very presence of the audience, which consists of individuals who know that their lives are not of this kind.

The restricted settings of the plays also reveal the limited nature of Pinter's vision: the narrow concentration on North London Jews and criminals of various shades destroys the universality of the message. Where Pinter seems to be saying, as in "The Homecoming", that people are basically like animals, and in all his plays that women are both completely physical and completely unprincipled, these statements, if true at all, are only true of this very restricted sector of the population. By his use in most of his work of extreme naturalism, in fact by the very credibility of his characters, Pinter's world shows itself to be as divorced from the day-to-day life of the population as that of Orton:

The danger of Pinterism is that it tries to turn the image of three men in a room into a world-view which denies the validity of language and logic, along with the notion of continuity of personality. *

His characters, despite their seeming variety, are restricted to a few types in something of the same way as Arden consciously and theatrically

* Ronald Bryden "The Unfinished Hero" P 90

represents humanity. Because of the way Pinter's drama is grounded firmly in his personal experience, including the setting of his upbringing and his racial and geographical background, he chooses only those venues, and characters, which will illustrate his thesis, and thus destroys any wider interpretation. The behaviour of people "at the extreme edge of living" is not of any general relevance to society at this time, even if it could be shown that his analysis was, in general, relevant.

Another parallel with Orton, as far as choice of characters goes, can be seen in the fact that none of them do any recognisable work. If we disregard this aspect, the plays do not "express the largest and most general issues of human existence" * but examine the most special of special cases. ** When their occupation is not actually criminal, then it is portrayed, in passing, as boring and useless in the same way as Buchanan's in Orton's "The Good and Faithful Servant". In "The Caretaker" nothing concrete is ever achieved, in "A Night Out" the work itself (insurance) is hardly mentioned, in "The Collection" the rag trade is practically ignored, the characters of "A Slight Ache" and "Landscape" are retired, "The Lover" refers merely to unspecified 'business', and when "The Tea Party", while the most explicit, exposes an actual product, sanitary ware, it seems only to have the purpose of raising a laugh. The wilful ignoring by Pinter of the major part of most peoples' lives can only produce an unbalanced drama, and ignoring the trade or profession of his characters divorces the drama from any basis in reality. Confrontations of individuals in society, which is his subject, are in my view always based on professional, status or working hierarchy terms, with the animal and physical manifestations coming very much second. Pinter avoids the ordinary facts of life, and even takes pride in doing so:

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- * J R Brown "Theatre Language" P 105. Esslin takes a similar view: "... determined to tackle his characters at the very root of their existence, he was led to a seeming neglect of the less essential aspects of their life and personality."
("The Peopled Wound" P 34)
- ** "It takes more than a gallery of special Pinter cases - nameless, homeless, lobotomised and lost - to make a society."
(Ronald Bryden "The Unfinished Hero" P 89).

A character on the stage who can present no convincing argument or information as to his past experiences, his present behaviour, or his aspirations, nor give a comprehensive analysis of his motives, is as legitimate and as worthy of attention as one who, alarmingly, can do all these things." *

But this statement is unnecessary and distorting: in real life the name and profession of people is almost always made perfectly clear at first meeting. We all have National Insurance numbers, Health cards, birth certificates and so on, and there is little point in ignoring the existence of identity within the context of modern society. The theatrical, acting background of Pinter seems to have led him to confuse life and the stage in terms of the physical nature of his drama. ** Actors do come on and off the stage from a 'limbo' of non-life in the wings, but this cannot be extended to the reality of life itself. *** Where Osborne confuses 'showbiz' - playing parts consciously - with life, Pinter confuses the metaphorical relationship of life and stage area with a real correlation between them.

Within these restrictions, Pinter's purpose, of showing primitivism erupting into 'civilised' society - his 'menace' - still leaves much to be desired. Rudkin shows the same forces in a similarly restricted environment (in time, place and circumstance) to make it clear that his subject is not humanity in general. But Pinter's references to the specific nature of his subject-matter, as in the example of his Jewish characterisation, are always by chance in the dialogue and are not made explicit enough. The forces which are unleashed by his confrontations are shown to be both inevitable, and - to a greater degree than is usually thought possible - understandable, if not by the characters themselves, then at least by the outsider (the audience). **** Pinter admits no prospect of changing oneself or one's relationships: his only solution - and his similarity with

* Pinter - programme note to Royal Court production of "The Room" and "The Dumb Waiter".

** "Pinter's characters have always had an animal instinct for territory, spacial possession. The strength of his stage craft is that their obscure warfare, however verbalized, is over the stage itself: for possession of the actual area on which they battle. To have the last word coincides with dominating the stage: the actor who ends up-staging the rest has established his barn-yard dominion over them, like a cock on a dunghill."
(R Eryden "The Unfinished Hero" P 92 - 3)

*** "The Pinter world is a stage, with nothing in the wings."
(op cit P 87)

**** See individual plays below.

Arden is at its strongest here - is in conflict, whether physical or verbal. His characters can win or lose, but savage conflict is his only solution. The characters' actions always have their own logic, although it may not immediately be apparent in their conduct. They are governed by anxiety, the power-struggle or social confrontation, but operate on a strict internal logic which is no less valid for being inexplicit. There are none of the illogical events or characters which are the central statement about the world of the 'absurdist', exemplified by Beckett, Ionesco and Pirandello. In contrast, Pinter has his Didi and Gogo, but nothing comparable to Pozzo and Lucky, even in the early work. Limited fundamentally, therefore, to fatalism and pessimism about the nature of man and relationships, as exemplified by his treatment of the female characters in his work, Pinter has much in common, philosophically, with Rudkin, Bond and Orton. A contrast can be drawn with the work of a superficially similar European playwright, Slavomir Kroyek. "Tango", which portrays a similar eruption, into a family situation, of primitive forces, is given a much wider reference than any of Pinter's work by the presence of allegorical under-currents of the political and nationalist movements of the twentieth century. The play uses the same naturalistic dialogue and setting, and the 'menace', found in Pinter, to ends well beyond those of the English dramatist's examination of an individual and very restricted mode of psychology. An examination of certain common themes and preoccupations will show how restricted is Pinter's world, and how little relevance his conclusions can therefore have outside it.

The early work illustrates the influence of Beckett in the less explicit, and more unexplained, actions onstage, a technique which he abandons in the later work. The beating of the Negro in "The Room" has only a tenuously naturalistic explanation, as does the character himself. The absurd instructions in "The Dumb Waiter" add both comedy and menace to the play, but Pinter is not concerned with rational explanation. The match-seller in the stage version of "A Slight Ache", where he was made into a real character after having had an uncertain existence in the first (radio) version, acts as a symbol and springboard for the other characters rather than requiring naturalistic explanation. But thereafter, the events of the stage, however bizarre, are related firmly to a realistic and logical background.

"The Room", unplayed until 1960 but written first of the plays, illustrates many of Pinter's traits in undeveloped form. The opening, with the minutiae of the dinner-table, occurs in varying forms in much of the early work. Its placing at the beginning of the evening can be seen in the context of Pinter's use of the day and night sequence - here at its simplest, with the activities from dusk to night of one day. His constant preoccupation with sight and blindness, a complex symbol for understanding, impotence and personal power * is reinforced by the theatricality of the stage blackouts and use of lighting in the early work, reflecting the changes in consciousness which occur in human beings with the progress of the sun. The calm, slow, almost somnambulist opening of the play at dusk represents the space after the day, while the progress of the play is towards the night, the unconscious Id, and the closing together of the walls of consciousness which comes with the preparation for sleep. Restricting the play to a single evening, as "A Slight Ache" is restricted to one day, also stresses the separateness of the action from the general movement of life: the opening becomes a birth - of all the characters - and of the situation itself. The audience is encouraged to ignore past and future and concentrate on a single climactic event which is unrelated to the usual human context of memory or planning. The third element of the scene which continues throughout Pinter's work is the emphasis on food and drink. The meals, snacks and alcoholic and other drinks which punctuated the plays are used to dramatise nuances of feeling among the characters to an extent not found elsewhere in modern drama, as the very slow pace of the plays allows such minute actions to be observed by the audience. The possession and offering of food is also related to the acute territorial consciousness of Pinter's characters, and is used by them in the same way as other possessions, including the houses and rooms themselves, to emphasise an advantage in the constant jockeying for position.

Thus in "The Room" the weak and strong tea corresponds to the characters, and Rose uses her cooking to stress her concern for Bert, but the more subtle use of food as a threat is not found until the later work. Rose's lack of knowledge about the basement is made

* See Ely and Tabachnick "Harold Pinter".
Baker

explicit here:

ROSE: ... I didn't see who moved in then. I mean the first time it was taken.

(Pause)

Anyway, I think they've gone now. *

Such basic doubts are later only expressed by avoidance of the subject, or of any answer to a question. Pinter's light touch in the absurd has not fully developed, as when Mr Kidd replies directly to Rose's question:

ROSE: How many floors you got in this house?

MR KIDD: Well, to tell you the truth, I don't count them now. **

This can produce a laugh from the audience, but has no sense of naturalism: it is overstated. The authentic Pinter touch is found a few phrases later, as Mr Kidd totally ignores the questions about his sister and the location of his bedroom. Rose's final statement -

ROSE: I don't believe he had a sister, ever. ***

- is more easily related to naturalism (she was presumably his mistress) than Pinter probably intended. His jokes with the audience are also more obvious here, and could even be said to constitute a tentative 'advance' which is later avoided:

ROSE: Clarissa? What a pretty name.

MRS SANDS: Yes, it is nice, isn't it? My father and mother gave it to me. ****

The relation of power within the group to physical position, the submission of the act of sitting down in another's territory - also occurs here but with much less reason than in the later work: Mr Sands is too shadowy a figure to engage in any recognisable power struggle. Late in the play the first overt menace to the territory Rose is defending comes from Sands, in the number of the room to let, rapidly preparing the way for the Negro himself. The total contrast which he makes with the other characters, although constituting more of a direct shock to the audience, disallows Pinter's gradual building of menace through familiar words and actions, as was done with the Sands. The confusion between naturalism and symbolism continues to the last

* P 8
 ** P 14
 *** P 16
 **** P 18

words:

ROSE: Can't see. I can't see. I can't see. *

These lend themselves, as did those of Mr Kidd's sister, to a rational interpretation (she is covering her eyes, in order not to see what is happening, and persuading herself that it is not doing so) which dilutes their symbolic force. "The Room" rests on its cathartic shock tactics; in introducing the audience to insecurity it excludes many of the uses of naturalism which give Pinter's technique a more general application.

"The Birthday Party" (1958) makes explicit the setting of the action as a unique and singular experience by beginning at the birth of the day and passing through the period of the savagery of night to a morning which both closes the action and implies some continuing future. Whereas the past is as shadowy as ever, the future of each character is made explicit in naturalistic terms by Act III. The build-up of the words and actions to the silent, dark climax of Act II has been traced in Part II of this study. Act I contrasts a certain degree of normality with the surrealism of Act II, which opens with McCann's tearing of the paper as a preparation for the verbal and physical violence of the following scenes. Act III returns to the mode of Act I, while retaining at its centre the figure of Stanley, which has lost all humanity and become a pure symbol of the forces which destroyed him. Here the "sitting and standing" theme ** is made an organic part of the struggle for mastery between the major characters, relating to the word games in its use of the rules which Stanley breaks:

STANLEY: Right. Now you've both had a rest you can get out.
MCCANN: (rising) That's a dirty trick! ***

The games themselves, with words and bodies (the blind man's buff) make the power struggle much more explicit than in any other Pinter play, and introduce elements which seem definitely out of place:

GOLDBERG: Do you recognise an external force, responsible for you, suffering for you? ****

* P 32

** "I find myself stuck with these characters who are either sitting or standing, and they've either got to walk out of the door, or come in through a door and that's about all they can do."
(Pinter "Paris Review" Vol 36 (1966)).

*** Act II P 47

**** Act II P 50

Even in a non-naturalistic context this seems unreal. * As in "The Room" and "The Dumb Waiter" the overtly symbolic or allegorical elements jar in the prevailing naturalistic setting. The free form allows Pinter to introduce jokes, in passing, which have little relevance to the play and tend to destroy the emotional tone:

GOLDBERG: No society would touch you. Not even a building society. **

That Webber's punishment is for political transgression is made clear at the end of the verbal attack:

MCCANN: You betrayed our land.
GOLDBERG: You betray our breed. ***

Despite the mystification of many critics, this cannot go much further towards the explicit in accusing Webber of betraying the cause of Ireland, and his own origins as a Jew. The stress is, from this point on, on the working out of the inevitable doom, rather than an explanation of the springs of the action, which has already been fulfilled. Pinter's lack of interest in the subject of Lulu, only used to show Goldberg's triumph over Stanley, is shown by the clichés employed in her last scene with Goldberg: similar tactics are employed by Orton, but in his case to form his own private language - Pinter is just being slapdash:

LULU: A passing fancy You quenched your ugly thirst ... You took all those liberties only to satisfy your appetite ****

The celebration of old age, at the end of Act III, contrasts its physical reality with the non-continuation of Webber's life, which is shown to be over. Lies end the play to dramatise the impossibility of understanding from any of the characters, and to spread the shock over an indefinite period of time. The play is the presentation of the fulfilment of generalised anxiety. Goldberg and McCann and the boarding-house itself, are dramatisations of Stanley's own fears and preoccupations, which gain life and destroy him as a psychosis destroys sanity. But the uneasy balance between the naturalism of the house and the ritualistic behaviour of the two men is never fully resolved:

* Esslin suggests (^{"The} "Peopled Wound" P 81) that McCann and Goldberg are Stanley's thoughts; hence there would be no incongruity. But the direct stage experience is still uncomfortable.

** Act II P 51

*** Act II P 52

**** Act III P 80

the relationship between inner fears and external reality is not exploited in a way to make it clearer, but to confuse the issues.

A much slighter piece, "The Dumb Waiter" (1960), illustrates Pinter's conflicting impulses on one hand towards the "documentary" realism of his television plays, and his use of the symbolic figures and events of the "theatre of the absurd". The dialogue is written in repetitive groups of words which produce a more comic effect on the audience than in the other plays, and recalls Simpson's comic technique derived from the 1950's radio show. The two characters are presented as stooge and comedian in the music-hall tradition. The mime at the beginning with the shoes and flattened boxes has no relation to the rest of the play except in relaxing and preparing the audience for entertainment, as well as having much affinity with the long business about the boots in Beckett's "Waiting for Godot". The importance of the food and the accompanying utensils is stressed right through the piece, but does not have the complex relationship with possession and territory which is found elsewhere, serving only to give the inactive man something to talk about. The progress of day and night is also used in a more direct way, dramatising the separation of the characters from the world of their job, which involves arriving and leaving at night and incarceration below ground. As Orton used "The Good and Faithful Servant" to excuse the behaviour of his heroes, so the profession of Ben and Gus here justifies the importance Pinter always places on the room versus the world, and the door as a means of entry of a threat. The Aristotelian peripeteia begins with the entry of the envelope with its enigmatic and useless contents, but action is only prompted by Pinter's most explicit communication from the "outside" - the dumb waiter itself and its attendant speaking-tube. Like Osborne's climactic telephone calls, it changes conditions radically, and not only provides humour but abstracts the food, on which the men's conversations (and therefore, in this context, lives) are based. The conflict between Gus and Ben, dramatised in pettifogging linguistic nuances at first and reaching the ultimate - death - at the end, is forgotten in the face of the larger threat. The repetitive rhythm of the instructions recalls "The Birthday Party" in its commonplace statement of an uncommon act, but is much more in keeping here with the general non-naturalistic tone of the conversation. The climax is,

for once, a noisy one:

GUS: WE'VE GOT NOTHING LEFT! NOTHING! DO YOU UNDERSTAND? *

The effect is only, as in "The Birthday Party", the prelude to the real climax of silence, foreshadowed by the ritual instructions:

BEN: Nobody says a word **

The play locates the generalised anxiety of the early work firmly in specific settings and characters, and thus gives point to the Pinter tricks of dialogue and silence which make it up.

"A Slight Ache", produced in 1961 but first presented on radio in 1959, belongs in style with the early plays, the Matchseller figure *** taking the place of the dumb waiter as a non-naturalistic reference around which the play revolves. Here the parallel of birth and dawn from "The Birthday Party" is made more explicit by the setting on Midsummer Day: the transfer of power within the play is a crisis-point which divides a radically different past and future. The progress of the play tends towards the primitive and away from civilisation into night and its subconscious drives, and is constantly referred to in terms of morning, afternoon and evening. The invasion of the wasp, the unpredictable stranger which foresees the Matchseller, uses the energy which might have dealt with the real threat. This occurs immediately after the philological confusion about names, and constitutes a step in the crescendo of attacks from outside, which are rapidly built up to allow for the long decline of Edward. Pinter, in his first play to a mass audience, is exposing his technique more forcefully than before. The relationship of death with Edward's eyes, the "slight ache" which foresees the pseudo-death at the end, is expressed early in the play:

FLORA: What a horrible death.

EDWARD: On the contrary.

(Pause)

Flora. Have you got something in your eyes? ****

The territorial consciousness of the characters is again overtly stated

* P 68

** P 66

*** Described by Esslin ("The Peopled Wound" P 91) as: "The co-existence of extreme realism and the symbolism of the dream."

**** P 12

as in the Matchseller's denial of Edward's forays from the garden:

EDWARD: (to himself) It used to give me great pleasure, such pleasure, to stroll along through the long grass, out through the back gate *

This passage comes immediately before his retreat into the womb-like scullery. Here he can crouch in the dark in a retreat to infancy. Owing to the food, the scullery is a favourite room for children. Even the name recalls the word "skull", or death, continuing the emphasis on names apparent in the first lines of the play.

The development of the rest of the play is one of language alone, and is discussed in Part II. The nettles inside Edward's gate gain ground gradually on his civilised enclave in the form of the Matchseller, and important elements of Pinter's constant themes are introduced in a short space of time to make Edward's collapse inevitable. The use of reversed dramatic irony is like that of "The Homecoming", where Max's attitude to Ruth at first seems unintelligible: here Edward knows what is happening to Flora before the audience does, and the violence of his attack is only justified later:

EDWARD: Ill? You lying slut. Get back to your trough. **

But the play is too short to allow any reason to be given for his attitude within the dramatic context, and the result is that Pinter seems to be tarring all women with the same brush - they are condemned as a matter of course, and the explanation is secondary. Edward shows nostalgia for his life in the morning:

EDWARD: ... my aim was perfect, I could pour water down the spoon-hole. ***

This is another simply presented aspect which has more complex manifestations elsewhere, in the reminiscences of Goldberg † and of Max. †† The unnecessary underlining of the transfer where Flora gives the tray to Edward is the most glaring example of Pinter's coarsening of his dramatic texture. "A Slight Ache", though a small-scale linguistic masterpiece, fails to convince as a dramatisation of a nightmare, owing to the overemphasis and the absence of any naturalistic reality in the

* P 15 - 16

** P 33

*** P 35

† "The Birthday Party"

†† "The Homecoming"

characters.

The obsessive detail of the stage set of "The Caretaker" (1960) contributes to the combination of feeling with which the audience approaches the play. The careful presentation of everyday objects through the concentration on insignificant appliances and pieces of equipment, takes the place of the food theme in the other plays, in serving as symbols for the development of the relationships. The attack on Davies by Mick with the Electrolux is the most overt presentation of the "nausea" with the objects of modern life which Pinter shows and here is akin to the nausea which he has said he often feels for words. * The action is both game and threat, a combination familiar from "The Birthday Party", and Mick's complexity of motive contrasts with Davies' retreat to basics with his knife. Similarly the long childish game with Davies' bag in Act II relates the passing of the sense of Davies' identity to and fro between Mick and Aston, each character's subjective view of him being considered in turn in the play, but at the end Davies returns again to basics - it isn't his bag. He has no objective identity. The play utilizes the theme of the "outsider" to show the developing, but in the end unchanged, relationships between the three characters. Each in turn is made to seem the enigmatic stranger to the audience and to one other - Mick in Act I, Aston in Act II with his mental unbalance, and Davies, inevitably, in Act III. The volubility of the characters looks forward to "The Dwarfs" of the same year in style of presentation, although the games which Mick plays with Davies recall Goldberg and McCann in the surrealist building up of comic and menacing absurdity:

MICK: Here you are. Furniture and fittings, I'll take four hundred or the nearest offer. **

Mick's speeches are all put in context by his first action in the play (after his brief appearance at curtain rise) - the vicious attack on Davies.

The audience is involved, as in the plays of Stoppard and Saunders, by the device of continual frustration as no action on the stage is ever resolved; this is a technique opposite to that of Osborne, Wesker or Arden, who fulfil their audience's expectations in terms of

* "Writing for the Theatre" P 81

** Act II P 35

both drama and the plot. Neither technique can be proved to be "like life", or naturalistic, but both can 'work' on the stage by the various methods of involving the audience. This is done emotionally, by shock tactics, in Pinter, and rationally by sympathy and identification, in Arden: both are combined in Osborne. In terms of purpose the play can be seen as a frame for Aston's speech at the end of Act II, which is completely divorced from the action by the staging technique:

(By the close of the speech only ASTON can be seen clearly.
DAVIES and all the other objects are in shadow) *

The form of the speech in its self-revelation anticipates the use of language in "Landscape" in 1968. The speech is so powerful in its indictment of the methods used on Aston that the remainder of the play retreats into insignificance, Davies' status in the house and his fate seeming irrelevant beside the reality generated by Aston's memory. The force of the reminiscence is supported by the lack of the usual Pinter mystery in the play: the past, present occupation and future of the characters is never in doubt. ** There is little attempt to conceal the real answer to Aston's question:

ASTON: You Welsh?
(Pause)

DAVIES: Well, I been around, you know ***

Davies' name and his constant use of the interjection 'man' firmly place his origins. Both the set and the action of the play serve basically to dramatise a state of mind. Aston's E.C.P. treatment, Pinter is saying, produces a world seen like this: Davies and even Mick are ultimately only important in relation to Aston as attention is focussed on his suffering.

The plays of 1960 show different aspects of the coarsening of the texture of Pinter's work by overemphasis and simplification - first seen in "A Slight Ache" - while illustrating his abandonment of the symbolic, surrealist and absurdist elements of the early work in favour of a more traditional appeal to the audience. **** The menace,

* Act II P 54

** See introduction to Pinter in this chapter: Mick's trade, Aston's incapability and the continuance of Davies' tramp through life are unequivocal, but Pinter shows little interest in them.

*** Act I P 25

**** "Once the code is deciphered, we are left with a cliché."
(Kennedy "Six Dramatists" P 173)

being explained, loses some force, as J R Taylor points out:

The menace is effective almost in inverse proportion to its degree of particularization, the extent to which it involves overt physical violence or direct threats. *

"A Night Out" (broadcast 1960) uses characters in a way which makes them little more than stock figures in the working-out of the plot. Written for radio, the play depends to a greater extent than usual on certain stock words, rather than on the delicate variations of speech between characters. The word "Grandma" in Scene I, and the emphasized and meaningless "good", "fast", "clever" in Scene II recall Simpson in their fulfilment of the audience's expectation - we expect them to recur, and they do: there is nothing unexpected here. The mother is all Pinter's maternal characters rolled into one ball of stupidity and unselfishness, and in the same way each of the characters typifies what he or she represents to an extent which would destroy the fine tone of characterisation employed elsewhere by Pinter. But on its own comic level the play works well. Each climax - the assault at the party and Sidney's attack -

SIDNEY: You're a mother's boy. **

- and the two threatened attacks with the clock - punctuates the drama with a force which carries it along through the coffee-stall scene (Scene II) - reminiscent of the "Revue Sketches" - and the intrusion of the dominance motif from the other plays in Act III Sc 2. Though the play is not restricted to Pinter's usual claustrophobic interior, it is made clear that the "room" is that of Albert's own mind, through the malapropism of the old man:

OLD MAN: Compressed. I thought he was looking compressed, didn't you, Fred - ***

Albert is compressed, or restricted, by his own emotional limitation, and at the other end, in the last scene, physically so:

(His body freezes. His gaze comes down. His legs slowly come together. He looks in front of him.) ****

The play is free to utilise a variety of interiors and exteriors, with

* J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 326
 ** Act II Sc 1 P 70
 *** Act I Sc 2 P 49
 **** Act III Sc 3 P 86

a wide outlook not found elsewhere in Pinter's work. With no attempt to portray the development of the action and character of the major plays, "A Night Out" shows him using his techniques to comic effect while subtly including clues to a deeper meaning. At the end the stress on the meaninglessness of the words recalls R D Laing's "Knots", * and is a similar expression of the cyclical and irresolvable nature of good and evil as seen throughout Pinter:

NIGHTER: It's not as if you're a bad boy ... you're a good boy ..
I know you are It's not as if you're really bad,
Albert, you're not you're not bad, you're good .. **

A television play "Night School" (1960) shows the developments in "A Night Out" to an even greater extent. The only mystery in the play, to parallel the audience's uncertainty about Albert's violent act in the former play, is the "traditional" dramatic one about Sally's character and activities. The characters are used to make jokes unrelated to the play:

ARNIE: I bet you never had a tart in prison, Wally.
WALTER: No, I couldn't lay my hands on one. ***

The full-blooded territorial struggles of the other plays are here much reduced: all that remains is Walter's inconvenience, his annoyance at the "Frills all over the place" and the matter of money. The landlord is another version of Mr Kidd, but without his humanity. The business with the aunts' eavesdropping has a purely comic intention:

MILLY: What are they talking about?
ARNIE: I can't make it out. ****

There is no suggestion here of the unknown to give it depth. They do not care, so the audience does not either, and Walter's and Sally's lies are transparent to the audience, and to each other. Walter's orders to Sally are ludicrously out of place in this context and the play's outcome, Sally's departure, is expected and therefore of no dramatic interest. The piece fails to work satisfactorily even on the slight level of "A Night Out",.

"The Dwarfs", first produced on radio in 1960, discards the

* See Appendix
**Act III Sc 3 P 87
*** P 84
**** P 104

paraphernalia of action of the other two plays to concentrate on words - particularly as they express the mind of Len. Unlike the early work, which dramatises the process of consciousness, the psychological basis for this play is only stated, rather than examined, as a result of its development from an unpublished novel, and the contrast between the vaguely portrayed scenes and characters of this play ^{and} with the taut certainties of the similar "Landscape" shows Finter's development of experience. Here the more "dramatic" elements, instead of making the drama work, interrupt the lyrical language. The linguistic jokes, often little more than puns, are not integrated into the movement of the play as they are in, for example, "The Dumb Waiter", because the play really has no movement:

LEN: Well, if I'm his gentleman's gentleman, I should have been looking after the place for him. *

The reversals of attitude later exploited in "The Homecoming" (see Part II) do not add to the characterisation here, but serve for humour and no more:

LEN: I've got the most shocking blasted cold I've ever had in all my life. (He blows his nose) Still, it's not much of a nuisance, really. **

The elements of the play which demonstrate Len's schizophrenia - his self-revelatory speeches which veer wildly from the general to the personal and action to stillness *** - are obscured rather than clarified by the semi-naturalistic inconsequentiality of the surrounding dialogue. The evocation of Len's room which is his skull, dead centre in a Beckett-like limbo, recalls the "compressed" Albert of "A Night Out":

LEN: ... There is my hundred watt bulb like a dagger. This room moves. This room is moving. It has moved. It has reached a dead half. This is my fixture ... ****

It becomes the ultimate expression of the agoraphobia of all Finter's characters. Paradoxically, while revealing the basis of the psychology of his characters in this way, Finter shows them to be ultimately only

* P 93 - also the "It's got a zip at the hips" dialogue. The emphasis is on repeated phrases.

** P 94

*** For example, "He can eat like a bullock .." and "There is my table ..."

**** P 96

concerned with word-play:

LEN: The train moves, granted, but what's a train got to do with it? *

The rationality of Pete -

PETE: Every time you walk out of this door you go straight over a cliff. **

- is put in perspective by the dream in the tube tunnel, which immediately follows, stressing the relativity of the experience of all the characters. Losing the contrast of night and day by the episodic nature of the scenes, Pinter also loses the coherence of the early plays, without replacing it with a psychological or narrative coherence. The food emphasis which recurs through the play, the constant snacks which never become meals, loses its earlier significance by over-use. The equation, by Len, of Pete and Mark with gull and spider respectively, both violent and unpredictable flesh-eaters, makes explicit by extension the animal behaviour of Pinter's other characters. But in fact it adds nothing to "The Dwarfs": the two characters have not enough reality within the play to show whether Len's attitude can be supported. ***
The meaninglessness of Len's question -

LEN: Do you believe in God? ****

- where avoidance is Mark's only possible answer, introduces Len's last long speech before his ambiguous hospital stay. † The climax of the play in Len's last speech is obscured by the confrontation of Pete and Mark: their quarrel, unsupported by any earlier development of their characters, is irrelevant to the play. Those elements of "The Dwarfs" which look forward to the plays of 1968 are obscured by an attempt at orthodox theatricality in a lyrical theme.

In the early 1960's two television plays continue the coarsening of effect and style, in the 1960 radio work, but of the two "The Collection" (Associated Rediffusion Television 1961, staged 1962)

* P 99

** P 101

*** "Pete and Mark are fairly shadowy figures; they are seen from Len's point of view." (Esslin "The Peopled Wound" P 122)

**** P 111

† Is Pete lying? Probably he has been in a mental hospital (see the last speech of the play).

is a much slighter piece which utilizes the traditional clothing and character-acting profession of the actors to show Pinter's answer, or one of his answers, to the problem of a successful relationship in the world of games he portrays. His visual joke with the audience, as the milkman at first seems to be the lover, is in keeping with the light tone. The similarity to Osborne's "Inadmissible Evidence" is only on the surface: here there is no confusion about real identity as there is in Bill Maitland's mind. Richard and Sarah are playing games with each other and the audience.

The two television plays of the later 1960's complete Pinter's excursion into mass-audience appeal, broken by the major play "The Homecoming". "The Tea Party" (BBC 1965) uses the camera, (as I have discussed in Part I) in a much more radical way than the earlier plays, reversing the sight and sound criteria of Disson's viewpoint to dramatise his retreat into his own skull. * Elements of the play stand out from the casual characterisation which Pinter employs. Wendy's leg-crossing, in her first interview, makes more explicit the sexual nature of the scenes in Pinter's other plays where such an action is ordered and looks forward to Ruth's drawing of attention to it in "The Homecoming". The anxieties and conflicts of the characters are more familiar and available than in the other work:

DISSON: Have you ever been happier? With any other man? **

Such remarks emphasise the relentless and unexplained darkness which envelopes Disson himself. The Twins, as adolescents, are a very rare character-type in Pinter, but can be seen to talk and act exactly like adults. It may be significant that Pinter is unable to write convincingly about any character under the age of twenty-five (Jane in "The Basement" is little more than a symbol for young womanhood ***), a restriction which adds to those already discussed in the introduction to this section. As he has lost here the tight structure of the other work, Pinter is unable to hold this play together in any form of development: many of the scenes seem to be completely arbitrary. An

* "In television plays like 'The Tea Party' we are more obviously ~~convinced~~ to a single distorting point of view."
(Katharine Worth "Revolutions in Modern English Drama" P94)

** P 16

*** "Jane serves - like Stella in "The Collection" - as both catalyst and object of the men's needs, a colourless rôle in the "Me Tarzan - You Jane" position to which men relegate women, according to Pinter." (Baker and Tabachnick "Harold Pinter" P 51)

example is Disson's parents in the scene in Disson's house, who only seem to be introduced here for a typical bit of Pinteresque, Jewish, inconsequential dialogue:

FATHER: Oh, your mother's had a few pains. You know, just a few.

MOTHER: Only a few, John. I haven't had many pains.

FATHER: I only said you'd had a few. Not many. *

The progress to nothingness of the last scene loses force by the lack of direction of the rest of the drama. Disson and his family are not rounded or realistic enough to hold real audience interest.

The action and language of "The Homecoming" (1965) have been extensively discussed in Parts I and II. The play is Pinter's clearest declaration that the struggle for power is conducted on a physical or simple conversational level, a theory which I feel is limited by his choice of settings and characters, as I have already said in the introductory note to Pinter in this section. Ruth is the penultimate step on the way to the complete animality of Jane in Pinter's procession of practically mindless women. It is not the lack of everyday intelligence which characterises Ruth, any more than in the case of Sarah of "The Lover" or Stella of "The Collection", but a reliance on those aspects of humanity, the directly physical, which devalue the whole hierarchical pattern which the men have set up. The use of food and drink comes to its function there in the precisely used symbols, and actualities, of the glass of water and the cheese roll. The few and spare actions onstage, of Ruth, Sam, and of the tableau at the end, are integrated with the linguistic development to a point which makes "The Homecoming" Pinter's best play (he himself said he was most satisfied with it). His condemnation of the nuclear family, however, which to a certain extent has been his constant theme through the period, fails to point to anything to take its place except mindless animality coupled with complete mercenary amorality. The achievement of the play is in its expression of the dilemma of all Pinter's characters in the most precise and dramatic terms.

"The Basement" (BBC 1967) belongs with the earlier television drama in its use of the camera to make explicit the conflicts and relationships of the characters, a process which in his earlier plays was concealed in the language itself. The alternating wordless and

wordy scenes of the play correspond to the frequent changes of décor in representing the two levels of conflict: that of the civilised dialogue, and that of primitive physical attack. The bewildering succession of winter and summer scenes and of interior and exterior breaks up the subtle progress of the room into Stott's hands and Jane into Law's: the movement is made definite, but its finer patterns are drowned by the "strobe" effect, the flicker of constant change. * The climax of the play in the scenes of the marble-throwing and the bottle fight is sufficiently different in tone from the rest of the play to seem out of place. As symbolic scenes they are too specifically naturalistic (with the details of the goldfish and Jane's domestic actions) to work, and as naturalism they fail by the illogicality of their context in the play. ** The reversal at the end is as arbitrary as that in "A Slight Ache": it closes off the sequence neatly but has no basis in symbol or naturalism.

Like "The Homecoming", "Landscape" (1968) has been discussed in Part II, and therefore needs little analysis here. The implied relationship and the movement towards climax are entirely verbal, and the naturalistic set only serves as a picture-frame for the evocation of the past. By the exclusion of the usual dramatic effects of movement, dialogue and plot the audience is encouraged to identify fully with the characters, and the catharsis of the counterpoint at the end, between male assertion (Yang) and female joyful acceptance (Yin) is entirely of the emotions. The play represents the furthest limit of "retreat" drama (see Part I) in its abandonment of any attempt to make the audience think, or alienate it from the expression of emotion on the stage. The familiarity of the expression appeals directly to the sympathy of the audience in a way more reminiscent of lyric poetry than of the stage.

Pinter's work illustrates that impulse in modern drama which is opposite to the tradition of Brecht. Throughout his plays, he concentrates attention on the development of individual relationships in situations virtually divorced from the world around them. The ultimate end of this process is the point, in many of the plays, in which the

* Bond's use of such alternating scenes, in contrast, ties the action of his plays together by a continual return to one theme as a base-line for the action.

** A character as unresponsive as Law is at the beginning could not act this way.

drama becomes representation of the events within the mind of the main character. Although the early work has affinities with that of Stoppard and Saunders in its thesis that the world is ultimately incomprehensible, the later work progresses more and more towards a pessimistic view of mankind, where impulses towards good are as weak and insignificant within the drama as they are in the work of Bond and Rudkin. "Landscape" demonstrates an entirely new and positive element but it is ironic that this is only achieved by the abandonment of those elements of naturalistic theatre which are Pinter's greatest strength. *

* It also contradicts the basis of the early work:
"The more acute the experience the less articulate its expression."
(Pinter - brochure given to audience at production of "The Room"
and "The Dumb Waiter" 8 March 1960).

CHAPTER NINE

The three plays written by Stoppard in the period:

"Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" (1967), "Enter a Free Man" (1968) and "The Real Inspector Hound" (1968) differ from each other as much in philosophical basis as in style. All show a degree of the same type of fatalism as has been found in the work of the last four playwrights. The end of "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" is their acceptance of death, the hero of "Enter a Free Man" and his family totally accept the course of events and expect no other, and the critics of "The Real Inspector Hound" are caught up, against their will, in the drama. But where "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" discusses many serious questions within a broadly comic frame, "Enter a Free Man" presents an entirely naturalistic frame where the comedy and serious purpose are inherent rather than explicit, and "The Real Inspector Hound" is pure farce, although in a conventional setting.

The alienation experienced by the audience in "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" as a result of the use of the Shakespeare context and the bare stage, is offset by the warmth and intimacy of the colloquial dialogue and, as discussed in Part I, the "advance" towards the auditorium. Stoppard uses the whole of Act I to set up the limbo of time, place and action by a linguistic humour similar to that of Simpson, allied to wide-ranging but unconnected discussions of logic, science and philosophy, in order to contrast it with the impression of reality at the end of the scene. Hamlet's greeting of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern just before the curtain contains the friendship and warmth which have been lacking in the depicted outer world. This allows the audience to feel that a degree of certainty is breaking through the miasma of doubt which has been expressed about every conceivable subject. Act II does not contain the promised activity, but disappoints the audience in a way which is used by both Stoppard and Saunders. I have already examined, in Part II, how bathos in the language of the play is used to devalue the rhetoric and high sentiment expressed: a similar technique keeps the audience constantly expecting and constantly disappointed in this play in order to convey the moral and philosophical discomfort which is Stoppard's thesis. The false death of the leading Player, and the actual death of the Players which foresees those of

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, demonstrates this constant playing on the expectations of the audience, the final withdrawal at the end of the play, in the middle of a sentence, being the ultimate expression of this technique. The resignation with which the characters approach the facts of their life and death is not counteracted by the liveliness of the "Player" episodes or eclipsed by the extracts from "Hamlet" itself, but remains the basic effect of the play. Choosing characters whose lives and deaths are already encapsulated in "Hamlet" itself allows Stoppard to make his philosophical point of apathy in the face of the events of the world without being accused of extending the attitude to humanity in general, but this viewpoint devalues the play as a moral document. The play works on several levels - as comedy, as a satire on the forms of the theatre, and as comment on critical approaches to Shakespeare. But either the discussions of identity are introduced only for comic purposes, on which grounds they fail, or Stoppard's points are sincerely meant, in which case his "illusionism" although having much in common with other twentieth-century drama, only confirms the audience in its indifference to events and stimulates a response of cynical laughter in place of understanding.

"Enter a Free Man" shows Stoppard breaking completely with the free style of the earlier play and writing a traditional "fourth wall" drama, using a realistic set and characters, and naturalistic dialogue. It may be a consequence of the unstructured nature of "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead" that Stoppard chooses the restricted form here: Saunders makes a similar excursion into traditional dramatic form in "Neighbours", as a contrast in writing technique to his other work. The play also looks back to earlier drama in portraying a family rather than the series of professional relationships which are found in his other plays, and the domesticity of the scene is matched by a new gentleness in the humour, which echoes Simpson in the use of repeated dialogue. This repetition is also found in the cyclical nature of the plot. But there is nevertheless a definite change between the beginning and end of the play, as the circle is not quite completed. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern go to their deaths, but their and our understanding is not increased. These differences, however, conceal the basic philosophy which the play shares with Stoppard's other work. Although the understanding of the world, and the problem of personal identity, are not at

stake as they are in the earlier play, the sense that both the major and minor tragedies of life must be endured but cannot be changed, indeed can only be borne by opting out of any movement towards improvement, is the same. The acceptance of disappointment by all the characters, is the keynote of the play, and the only positive fact, that the family endures, does little to counteract the prevailing pessimism about the achievements and aspirations of humanity.

"The Real Inspector Hound", a well-constructed farce which, however, is limited in its appeal owing to its basis in satire or a very restricted world - that of the London drama critics - uses many of the techniques of the first play for merely comic effect. The confusion between stage, critics and audience and later about the death of the characters, lightly exploits the theatrical traditions in a way which utilises the facilities of the live stage to the full. The success of this play shows that the audience has been educated in theatrical "advance" sufficiently to accept its conventions and this opens the way for such a tour de force of theatricality as Saunders' "The Borage Pigeon Affair" (1969).

Although written earlier in the 1960's than Stoppard's plays, the work of James Saunders follows a very similar pattern. His first play, "Barnstable" (1960), is a pure farce which corresponds to Stoppard's "The Real Inspector Hound", "Neighbours" (1964) is his excursion into realistic drama, and the two major plays, "Next Time I'll Sing to You" (1962) and "A Scent of Flowers" (1964) have much in common in technique and purpose with "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead". The dramatic technique of utilising the live theatre to the full by constantly drawing the audience's attention to it is the basis of "Next Time I'll Sing to You", as it is of both Stoppard's major plays. But Saunders' form, with its theatrical conventions and comic dialogue, only serves to enclose an expression of philosophy which is as overtly pessimistic as anything understood in, for example, Bond or Osborne. The character of Lizzie, which both debunks and transcends the philosophical gropings of the other characters, is used to inject some degree of hope for the continued existence of humanity's positive attributes into the play, but cannot eclipse the extreme force of the expressions of despair which are so prominent:

RUDGE: A zoo, a zoo with all the cage doors left open by an idiot

keeper, where the animals roam at will, devouring one another, leaving exotic and unlovely messes on the neat concrete footpaths. *

.

Here sits a parcel of flesh on a frame of bones Its name is grief and it signifies - nothing. **

DUST: His life was a joke; but his corpse has served its turn. ***

The entire complex structure of the play, dedicated to the overturning of the audience's expectations and prejudices by such means as the reversal of the Hermit's life - the description of his death preceding that of his life - and ending with his conception, is directed towards jolting the listener into a personal examination of the most profound questions of philosophy - those of personal identity and the reason for living. The episodic and anti-climactic structure succeeds in alienating the audience sufficiently to substitute thought for emotion, in the same way as is achieved by the linguistic techniques described in Part II, while the long speeches directed to the audience, as in Nichols' "A Day in the Death of Joe Egg", produce enough familiar humanity to offset the moralistic tone of the work.

The experience of writing "Next Time I'll Sing to You" seems to have prompted Saunders to make the subject-matter of the next play, "A Scent of Flowers", much less generalised. Perhaps feeling that the issues of the former play were too large to be discussed adequately on the stage, he concentrates on the variety of influences on the suicide of a character who is as particularised as Meff, Dust, Rudge and Lizzie are generalised into types. He retains, in order to make his points succinctly and clearly, the non-realistic dialogue sections are treated in much the same way as those in a film, as the audience's viewpoint is shifted from one time and place to another. The sense of the inevitability of the tragedy is built up inexorably by a chain of circumstances which increase in emotional impact until the death of Zoe at the end of Act II; this constitutes the clear climax which is lacking in the earlier play. The play works on several levels of interpretation, from

* Act II P 56
** Act II P 62
*** Act II P 66

the actual mending of a bicycle tyre onstage through the family episodes which are dramatised, to the opposed pairs of Zoe and her lover and Zoe and the priest which are monologues with unseen partners, and finally to the liturgical and impersonal background of the Mass itself. By this means the audience is drawn in to the action, and into identification, much more than in the earlier play, and the calm fade-out of Act III, with Sid's philosophical ramblings, fulfils the same object as the jokes in Nichols' "A Day in the Death of Joe Egg": it makes the experience both real and bearable. In both of these plays there is no question, as there is in Stoppard, of lack of understanding of the events and people of the world, although identity - "being oneself" - is a common problem to both the Hermit and Zoe, the "victims" of the plays. But where the common humanity which abides all disasters is lightly and concisely rendered in "A Scent of Flowers" by the workmen in Act III, Lizzie, who is the corresponding figure in the earlier play, is not a strong enough character to balance the philosophy of the play as a whole.

"Neighbours", a one-act examination of the impossibility of real communication between different races as a result of centuries of prejudice, has little in common with the other plays. The setting and dialogue are entirely naturalistic, and the problem is immediate and contemporary, in contrast to the wide historical reference of his earlier work. The play makes its impact and its plea for understanding with a greater economy than is usual with Saunders, but it is uncertain what it achieves: the woman's answer to the problem is so individual as to preclude a general interpretation, and this reduces the drama to a circumstance more specific than that of the other work. Ultimately Saunders is saying that there is really nothing that can be done about the problem of racial tension: the liberal is as useless as the bigot in the context of a group whose life-experience leads them to reject every approach as suspect.

Saunders' plays have been described as exploring different aspects of the breakdown of communication, * but on the contrary, it is always clear to the audience and the characters themselves what is being said and done. The self-expression of Meff, Dust, Zoe and the

* Back cover of James Saunders "Four Plays" (Penguin).

Negro leaves nothing vague or unexplained as far as their characters and motives are concerned, within the action as well as towards the audience. The problems examined are those of aspects of human nature itself, of the coming together, in society, of types of humanity so different that there is no common ground of sympathy or agreement to complement the abrasive finality of the ideas and emotions communicated.

John Arden's work, which is greatly varied (as has been shown in Parts I and II) in use of the stage and of words, also covers a wider variety of subjects, structures and themes than that of any other playwright of the period. Up to 1968 his purpose is different in almost every play, but can be broadly classed as political rather than concerned with individual tragedy. But the explicit message of such plays as "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance" * and "The Hero Rises Up" is not so characteristic as the mode, occurring in these but to a greater extent in the other plays, of a presentation of individual representatives of classes and other groups defined to varying extents, in conflict, in which no overt statement of support is made. "The Waters of Babylon" and "The Workhouse Donkey" are examples of this mode, opposing differing personality "types" who also represent different ways of life and thought which are as unresolved as they are in similar work by Saunders. ** "Live Like Pigs" and "Armstrong's Last Goodnight" are also examples from the major work. Occurring at intervals through the period are exercises in the purely comic, such as "When is a Door not a Door" and "Friday's Hiding", while combinations of pantomime and melodrama, which contain serious purpose, become more prominent with the collaboration with Margaretta D'Arcy, from "The Business of Good Government" to "The Royal Pardon". But these are only vague correlations of directions in his work, as it is his specific intention to produce drama which is beyond classification and unavailable to ordinary

* Despite J R Brown's contention that "Arden did not wish to argue, but to offer a fable and let the audience draw its own conclusions."

("Theatre Language" P194)

If this is true, then it is only true of the early work.

** "Next Time I'll Sing to You",
"The Borage Pigeon Affair".

critical methods. *

Arden's earliest plays, (after "The Life of Man" which is not suitable for discussion here) "Soldier Soldier", not produced on television until 1960 but written in 1957, and "The Waters of Babylon" (1957), show the beginning of two major strands in his work, and share aspects which immediately separate him from the other playwrights of the period. While the emphasis of all the other drama being written in the "New Wave" at the time was on naturalistic setting, plot and dialogue,, that of Arden is on an entertaining theatrical spectacle above all, which includes topical and moral reference within its structure. Where a serious subject is raised, as with Krank's history or Parker's anti-war politics, both sides of the question are presented without perceptible prejudice.

There is no ideological basis apparent in "The Waters of Babylon" comparable to that of the Wesker Trilogy written in the same years.** The emotive nature of the subjects touched upon, from racialism and prostitution to Nazism and political violence, is kept under control by the "conscious" nature of the audience's experience of the play. The alternating verse and prose and the clear "advance" into the auditorium, Arden's alienation techniques moving away from the conventions of naturalism, *** make a re-appraisal of those questions necessary in the light of thought rather than emotion. However, the degree to which the action of the play rides on these aspects of the plot is much less than in the later work. The mystery about Krank's past, Cassidy's I.R.A. connections and Leap's representing of the entire panoply of "Law and Order", for example, are more extensions of their individual personalities than they are representatives of these

* Author's preface to "Squire Jonathan"

"I specially desire this dedication
To warm the hearts of those whose cold devotion
In setting down the facts and piling archives
Within an air-conditioned Institute
Produces, for themselves, a Doctorate.
And for the poet, death - while he still lives."

** "Arden permits himself, in his treatment of the characters and situations in his plays, to be less influenced by moral preconceptions than any other writer in the British theatre today."

(J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 84)
(This is only true of the early work).

*** "Basic to Arden's drama is something strikingly akin to Brecht's celebrated A-effect."

(J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 89).

forces. The relationships which in the later work grow out of class and political structures, here dominate them, resulting in a much more traditional type of drama, ruled by "character". The discarding of naturalism allows Arden's characters, with his opposite purpose to that of Pinter, * to say exactly what they mean to each other and the audience. Although there is often dissimulation between characters, it is always conscious, and there is no hint of the assertion that understanding of events is ultimately unavailable, the central tenet of the "dramatists of illusion".

Krank's extremely ambiguous relationship with morality is simply and immediately expressed to the audience: he can be liked in spite of his obvious faults, laying a foundation for later understanding of his involvement with the concentration camp. The topical satire which is later the basis of more directly allegorical plays has its appearance here, in the reference to the Press:

CASSIDY: Or some praiseworthy betrothal announced combining Saxon Spectacle with warm Levantine money and money with true love - and how nice if we could keep all the teenagers off the streets." **

Considered as the lowest common denominator, the press is the common target of a drama seeking to involve its audience, as in Osborne's "Look Back in Anger" and much of Orton's work. The visit of the Russians, the Polish patriots and the I.R.A. are also used to immediate effect and to advance the mechanics of the plot, but are not integrated in the progress of the play with any conviction. The plot takes the form of a puzzle which is solved at the end, and which the audience can take pleasure in unravelling like a "whodunit". Similarly the scraps of Polish conversation, untranslated, add colour and mystification rather than advancing the plot. Deep and complex characterisations are not Arden's concern here: the inner and outer world are one as action and communication replace the concentration on inaction and non-communication of much of the other drama of the time. The play ranges as widely in place and type of scene as does "Chicken Soup With Barley" in time, with much the same result: the world and the domestic scene are inextricably linked, though there is no domestic intimacy like that which

* Clarity, not mystification.

** Act I P 28 - 9.

concentrates attention on the nuclear family of Pinter, Osborne, or early Wesker. The family itself has given way to a series of conflicting individuals, who later become more and more types who represent class and racial divisions, to form the matter of the play.

Act II shows the incompatible personalities, and to a certain extent their institutions and ideologies, ranged against each other and finally developing into a confrontation of physical violence. The scene could be an allegory for the development of Arden's work from portrayal of opposites to active partisanship. He seems to have wanted everything in the play: the series of coincidences involved in the Cassidies and the lottery, Con's traditionally Irish poetics and the love scene at the end between Caligula and Bathsheba are crowded into one Act, keeping the action fast in preparation for the dénouement, but allowing little time for development of any one theme. The third Act presents a series of revelations, of which the most important is of Kank's past, and the traditional tragic ending of his unnecessary death is distanced from its personal impact by the round-song at the end. The impression is one of well-made and active drama which raises many points, but leaves the audience with no ideological basis on which to judge the characters of the play, and therefore no moral purpose to replace that catharsis which is removed by the alienation technique.

"Soldier Soldier", a much slighter piece, shows the process taken further to produce a play depending on entertainment value above anything else. The language variation which colours the action is still there, and the casual references to the world outside the play from Parker:

PARKER: Jackbooted militarism *

.

You see the line, eh? Connived at by Government - like - excesses of military power. **

These are later expanded in "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance"; the "magic belt" sequence, which is recalled in the spell of "Live Like Pigs", prevents the plot from losing individuality. The "types" represented by the soldier himself, the landlord, Joe Parker, Mary and the rest are

* P 45
** P 48

made more representative of the generally accepted average of their professions or place in life because of the wider audience of the television, but foreshadow the later character-types in, for example, "The Workhouse Donkey".

"Live Like Figs" (1958) contrasts with "The Waters of Babylon" in its use of a much simpler plot and concentration on characters who can be seen as a group as well as individually. The level of conflict is a much more understandable, available and human one, and the inter-relations of the four groups - the officials, the Sawneys, the Blackmouth group and the Jacksons - allow Arden to concentrate the audience's attention on a specific social problem, as well as to round out the characters into much more human individuals. But not only does Arden neither support nor condemn the way of life of any of his groups, he also makes the proposal, by his plot-structure, that co-operation and understanding between such differing groups is impossible. The progress towards violence, as in the "Speaker's Corner" scene in "The Waters of Babylon", is inevitable. That Arden is not trying to make a specific point allows him to view music in a way that Wesker never can: the record "Cigarettes and Whisky" relates to the Sawneys directly although it is the product of the Jackson's "civilisation". Wesker's cultural preoccupations would separate this from the "authentic" folk-culture expressed by the other songs, while Arden can take what he needs from modern sub-cultures in order to build up his picture. Scene 4, which contains the Blackmouth/Sawney power struggle, shows Arden's differences from Pinter: "The Homecoming" portrays similar primitive conflict, but at no point is this directly stated by the characters of the play.

Arden's choice of setting acts in concert with his impatience with "documentary" naturalism of dialogue. His development from "The Waters of Babylon" is shown by his use of physical violence in the two plays: the knife fight of Scene 10 in "Live Like Figs" holds the audience much more than the shooting at the end of the earlier play owing to his careful building up of the conflict of character and intention between the Blackmouth group and the Sawneys. The winding up to the climax at the end is made much more realistic by the identification which the audience is encouraged, by the representation of the springs of their action, to feel with the characters involved. The Dionysiac scene with the washing offers a momentary relief from the savage undercurrent

of Blackmouth's howls and the violence, and retreat from civilisation represented by the magic in Act III. These elements lead inexorably to the climax as Sailer breaks his leg and the "family" disperses. The traditional play form, which follows "The Waters of Babylon" in movement to a single climax of violence followed by a coda which hints at continuation, also contains his usual lack of positive direction to the audience. Although all sides are presented with some sympathy, no possible solution other than the violence is in any way indicated.

"Sergeant Musgrave's Dance", first performed in 1959, has more in common with "The Waters of Babylon" and "Live Like Pigs" than "When is a Door not a Door", which, though produced earlier, will be discussed below. The play is subtitled "An Un-historical Parable" which prepares the audience for a shift away from the non-aligned early work to the dramatisation of a specific moral: in this case, that of pacifism. The progress towards violence and its climax in the first two plays has already taken place in "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance", and the play examines a series of attitudes and solutions to the problem which are represented by the types into which the soldiers and townsfolk are divided. The obviously negative attitudes of a nihilism reminiscent of Saunders:-

SPARKY: Or an old red rag stretched over four pair o' bones
- well, what's the odds? *

- and the self-seeking cynicism of the Bargee are rejected early, and the search for answers concentrated on the conflict between Musgrave's ideas of revenge killing, the direct violence of Hurst, and Attercliffe's complete pacifism. That Hurst is the first to be killed by the forces of law and order, and his responsibility for Sparky's death, shows Arden's attitude to this type of violence at the time (modified in the later plays), and Musgrave's manic dance and religious numerology are shown to be unrelated to the real needs of the situation. Only Attercliffe, supported by the rôles of the women, wins through his own antithesis, the accidental killing of Sparky, to dominate the last scene with quiet acceptance and hope.

The means by which Arden reaches his conclusion expand themes, started in "Soldier Soldier", and relate to other drama of the time. Act I Scene 2 almost repeats the central scenes of "Soldier Soldier" with

* Act I Sc 1 P 11

its portrayal of the opposition between the soldiers, the town and its politics, and the girl, although there is greater scope here for filling out the motives of all the characters, and the much more naturalistic format and dialogue allow more direct identification and availability of emotion. Where the Tommy Scuffham there is a simple method to impose the Soldier on the household in the earlier play, the lie involved in the Billy Hicks theme is enlarged to include the whole purpose of the play. The "advance" of Arden's control of the emotions of the climax is upheld by the audience's ignorance of the skeleton in the box. Having established a freely open relationship between stage and audience by his use of language, Arden can inform the audience of past events without breaking the mood, as in Act I Scene 3 where Hurst relates their history, and can build up excitement in Act III without losing the element of alienation necessary to keep the parable in mind. The quiet coda of the last two plays is here extended into the last scene, which despite its immediate tragic impact contains the hope expressed by Attercliffe that their actions were not in vain, reflecting Mrs Hitchcock's last words:

MRS HITCHCOCK: One day they'll be full, though, and the Dragoons'll be gone, and then they'll remember. *

The play portrays the various wrong roads to a solution to the problem symbolised by the killing of the five recounted in the radical place, but differs from the other plays of the 1950's in presenting, if only tentatively, a possible solution which is not devalued by the events of the drama. Although the solution itself changes later, this format is that found in the plays of the late 1960's which complete Arden's work in the period.

Between "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance" and the next major play, "The Workhouse Donkey", (1963), Arden wrote four plays which are lighter in tone and purpose than the earlier work. "When is a Door not a Door" (1958) corresponds in its humour and naturalistic "slice of life" plot with Pinter's "Revues Sketches" of the next year - as a relief from the more serious work. "Wet Fish" (1961) utilises many of the characters of "The Waters of Babylon" while concentrating its plot on the progress

* Act III Sc 2 P 102

of one contract. These two plays are based, unlike any other by Arden, squarely on the process of work itself, and have affinities in this respect with Osborne's "Inadmissible Evidence" and Wesker's "The Kitchen". "The Happy Haven" makes a general point about human life with much incidental humour, while the commissioned "The Business of Good Government" looks forward to "Left-Handed Liberty" and "The Hero Rises Up" in humanising and creating understanding and sympathy for a historical character who is usually portrayed as beyond such identification.

The work on the door itself in "When is a Door not a Door" forms the centre of the action and the audience's interest, as a reminder of real and concrete objects, and therefore values, in the frenetic and ephemeral world of the office. Arden's impulse is similar in this to that of Wesker in "I'm Talking About Jerusalem" and "The Four Seasons", where the practical demonstration of physical acts on the stage acts as a counterweight to the verbiage surrounding it. The workmen, though typified into conventional divisions like older and younger, experienced and innocent and so on, represent a calm "centre of gravity" and disregard for pettiness, as in their smoking without rancour, but in defiance of instructions and regulations. Their treatment of all the characters as equal gives the lie to the brittle hierarchy of the office, making a tacit comment on the whole way of life into which they temporarily intrude. Workmen of this rather non-individualised type are used by many modern dramatists to represent those qualities of continuation of ordinary human existence which they feel need to be emphasised in the light of the surrounding philosophy or tragic action. The men at the beginning of "I'm Talking About Jerusalem", the grave-diggers in Saunders' "A Scent of Flowers" and the masons in Arden's own "The Workhouse Donkey" are identified with a sanity and commonsense which is lacking in, for example, the "illusionist" work of Pinter. "When is a Door not a Door" ends, however, on a note of unresolvable difference of ideas and individuals which results in conflict - in this case of the strike - a conclusion familiar from "The Waters of Babylon" and "Live Like Pigs".

"Wet Fish" charts the progress to chaos of a small architectural contract which is balanced by the meteoric rise of Krank, from "The Waters of Babylon". Ruth's personal problems of professional incapacity and

involvement with Krank are set against a lightly-presented background of complex political and social manoeuvring which can include the serious subjects of redevelopment and legal responsibility without their taking over what is basically a play about the individual. These themes, which radiate from the Garnish offices in this play to preserve the tight structure necessary for television production, occur in much greater detail in Arden's major work, "The Workhouse Donkey". "Wet Fish" is unusual in that although Ruth's work and relationships fail, Krank's rise to power is unbroken: the usual ending of irreconcilables is found here, but the overt conflict is lacking. The characters seem content to ignore one another's business operations, showing a tolerance which is unknown in the other work.

"The Happy Haven", the first collaborative work, tackles a more serious subject, and utilises methods of staging and dialogue which divorce it completely from the semi-naturalistic television plays. The subject of old age itself, complicated by the combination of truth and falsehood with which the characters regard their own lives, and dramatised by the "truth" game, is a much more emotive subject than is usually tackled by Arden. Hence, as other dramatists such as Nichols and Saunders have discovered in "Joe Egg" and "A Scent of Flowers", it is necessary to alienate the audience much more than with a play based on, for example, a historical event. This technique attempts to replace the automatic simplifying emotions aroused by such a subject with rational consideration. The use of masks, the slapstick humour of the doctor's experiments and the dog episodes and the sharp division between naturalistic and poetic dialogue, all serve to further the end of promoting an atmosphere of unemotional analysis. All the characters are sufficiently de-humanised to be as representative as is necessary for the parable form of the play. * The doctor, with his Saturday rugby and patronising attitude towards the patients, is the most rounded personality, but is more "typical" than is consonant with any real degree of naturalism. The minor characters of the assistants and the visitors are intentionally cardboard figures who represent their function on the stage like placards, while the old people themselves are differentiated

* J R Taylor calls it "the confusion of characters with concepts" ("Anger and After" P96). But it is legitimate in this form.

into the types of avaricious, selfish, stupid or devious humanity. The direct address to the audience at the end -

ALL OLD PEOPLE: Go home, and remember: your lives, too, will have their termination. *

- is more the moral than is the Faustian reduction of the ambitious Copperthwaite to babyhood. The view of old age represented by the play, neither glossed over nor despairing, shows the one-sided and limited nature of such a play as Orton's "The Good and Faithful Servant". What Orton loses sight of, and Arden has made clear, is that old age is no separate pattern of existence, but includes all the aspects of personality which are found in younger humanity. Crape is an older but mentally unchanged version of the conscious "pantomime villain" type represented by Harry Ginger in "The Waters of Babylon" and Blomax in "The Workhouse Donkey", and in the same way the other characters have not lost sufficient individualisation in the play to be identified by the audience with their own lives. The triumphant climax is, however, unusual in Arden's work, and might show the hand of M D'Arcy, as it is later also found in the other collaborative work.

"The Business of Good Government" uses similar techniques to those of "The Happy Haven" in order to present an emotive subject with new elements which cut through old patterns of thinking. The interest of the play looks forward to "Left Handed Liberty" in being centred on a universally reviled historical figure, Herod, and attempts to fulfil the almost impossible task of explaining, in rational terms, the behaviour of the historical king. It is becoming apparent by the early 1960's that Arden's avowed championship of the Dionysiac elements of the theatre * is at odds with the impulse to counter the immediate emotional impact of a presented historical event with a rational examination of political motives. Here the Shepherds, the miracle in the corn field, and the Holy Family itself, are subordinate in interest to the complex roles of Herod and the Hostess. In each case the traditional attitude to the character is overturned to make Herod sympathetic and the Hostess understandable. The entire play is oriented ^{at} towards

* Art III p 272

** "It (the theatre) will never be catholic if we do not grant pride of place to the old essential attributes of Dionysus."
(Author's Preface "The Workhouse Donkey" p 8-9)

modernity, with the many references to the political situation between Rome and Persia (West and East), and the border farm related immediately to the modern atmosphere. Arden is able to make the play follow his usual pattern of conflict leading to violence by virtually ending the play with the Massacre. The conflict situation here is between the old and new spiritual order, but it is as irreconcilable as the class struggles of the other plays, and ends in the symbolic representation of a violence greater than in the other work. As before, the emotion of the Massacre is immediately distanced and alienated from the audience by the Angel's quoting of the prophecy. The positive ending (the miracle) is dictated by the subject, but it also recalls "The Happy Haven", showing M & Arcy's influence.

The last play in the period which uses characters from "The Waters of Babylon" is "The Workhouse Donkey" (1963). It represents Arden's mature work, containing many themes and purposes which are experimented with in the earlier drama. Where other playwrights of the early 1960's ** concentrate on the situation of the family in a room or house isolated from the community, Arden's play ranges over a wide variety of venues and actions. The relationships are mainly public and professional - as is the course of the plot, at least to the extent that the private poetics between Young Sweetman and Wellesley are incidental to the course of the play. Arden makes a sharp division between the opposing political groups, and this is reflected also in class and character, in order to place Feng and Blomax uneasily in the middle. Feng's attempt to be impartial and Blomax's attempt to avoid taking sides, are both shown to be defeated by the personal complications represented by Wellesley, in concert with the unchangeably divided nature of the town's class system. The more sympathetic human rendering of the left wing group makes clear that Arden has come off the fence of impartiality, which he bestrode in "The Waters of Babylon" and "Live Like Figs". ** His portrayal of the forced choice of Feng and Blomax, who represent respectively moral inflexibility and "Krankisa" conscious self-seeking,

* Pinter, Crichton, Bond etc.

** J R Taylor considers that "the sympathy (or lack of it) is very evenly divided among the groups." ("Anger and After" P 101). But it is demonstrably not so, as far as emotional sympathy is concerned.

is his message to the audience that neutrality or indifference are impossible: that the state of the country of which the Yorkshire town is a symbol makes commitment of some kind imperative. Batterthwaite's personal downfall is, however, more one of his idiosyncratic character than of ideology. Arden's comments about Nelson in the introduction to the later "The Hero Rises Up" * which establish a division of character-types, could be applied also to Batterthwaite, and it is really only by chance that he is also a Labour politician.

The complexities of the play's plot conceal a basic movement exactly the same as that of the early work. The two political groups are also opposed in so many other ways than their politics that there can be no compromise. The plot moves to the violent demonstration at the end, where the unemployed stand in for the labour side who have become slightly too respectable, as inevitably as "Live Like Pigs" ends in physical violence. The imprisonment of Batterthwaite, Elomax's marriage and what it entails in support for the right wing, the Wellesley-Sweetman alliance and Fong's retreat, are all incidental to the fact, dramatised by the violence, that the conflict continues, and no end can be seen. The ambiguous ending allows the forces of law and order, as in "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance", to triumph, while the last song seems to wind up the episode for ever, but the depth of the division in the town is such that there can be no permanent solution:

BATTERTHWAITE: When all is washed and all is scoured
And all is garnished bright as paint,
Who will come with his six companions
And a stink to make you faint? **

"Armstrong's Last Goodnight" (1964) and "Left Handed Liberty" (1965) both examine historical figures in the light of modern experience. The former play, written by Arden as a comment on the events in the Congo, *** uses more elements of naturalism than the latter, and has

* "The play is about a man who was ... committed to a career governed by the old Roman 'rectilinear' principles. He himself was of asymmetrical 'curvilinear' temperament to an unusually passionate degree ... He was done properly: wasted his extraordinary energy, courage, and humanity upon having men killed ... "
("An Asymmetrical Authors' Preface," 1969)

** Act III Sc 4 P 130

*** "In writing this play I have been somewhat influenced by Conor Cruise O'Brien's book "To Balanga and Back" ... all I have done is to suggest here and there a basic similarity of moral, rather than political economic or racial problems."
(General Notes Bethuen 1965).

more in common with "Sergeant Masgrave's Dance" than the late plays in its general moral about the methods of diplomacy and the power complex inherent in evangelistic religion. The feuding Scots, the borderers, the crowns of Scotland and England and the various commissioners and secretaries who make up the protagonists in the conflict context of the action are so varied in motive and background as to prevent Arden's usual clear division between two opposed factions in the play. But it illustrates the tendency to divide characters into types who stand for much more than themselves: as Arden says in the introduction to the 1965 edition of the play: "Each of the characters should be immediately recognisable as a member of his respective social class".[†]

The action of the play relates immediately to modern political practice: the secretaries and clerks make policy decisions, leaving their masters as figureheads, in a way corresponding to the rôles of ministers and private secretaries in modern government. The alienation necessary to keep the audience's mind on the wider issues in the face of the theatrical action of Wamphray's death, the relationship of Armstrong and the lady, and the hanging at the end, is achieved not only by the distancing effect of the verse * (as described in Part II) but by the device of beginning the play with the deliberations of the commissioners and the political background, and ending it with a ritual scene relating the legend of the tree at Carlanrigg.

The characters of the play also recall the other work. Lindsay's black suit ~~which~~ is ornamented by various ceremonial vestments; his nature is expressed in his clothes being drawn attention to in his speech in Act I Scene 2:

LINDSAY: The rags and robes that we do wear
Express the function of our life
But the bawdy body that we do bear
Beneath them carries nocht
But shame and greed and strife **

This has the same function as that of the Angel in "The Business of Good Government" and relates to the discussion of mayoral robes at the beginning of "The Workhouse Donkey". The individuals represented by the unornamented clothes become representatives of their class, status

* In this aspect it is similar to "The Hero Rises Up".

** Act I Sc 2 P 26

† P 10

or religion, expressing their place in the dramatic situation of conflict. The "romantic" action of the play - its colour in costumes and language, verse and prose, and placing in the period of history in which the borderers are commonly popularised - prevents Arden from relating in any genuinely specific way to the present. The style of the play and its choice of famous characters makes it unsuitable for moral allegory in something of the same way as does Bond's choice of characters in "Early Morning". The next play shows, in its rejection of naturalism and unhistorical language and settings, how Arden solved the problem.

"Left Handed Liberty" looks forward to the last plays of the period in style of direct and documentary presentations of arguments and plot, but is much more serious in tone and conclusion, befitting its nature as a play commissioned by the City of London. Arden's usual humour works in very much the same way as Azdak's judgement on a similar topic in Brecht's "The Caucasian Chalk Circle", and with a similar purpose in view: to balance the politics with warmth and intimacy. As has been suggested in my analysis of "Armstrong's Last Goodnight" above, a historical drama of this type which represents large events in politics and warfare is unsuited to Arden's division into conflicting halves. But parallels can be drawn with "The Workhouse Donkey". The King and the Barons, traditionally opposed factions of feudal power, are parallel to the opposing political parties in the earlier play, and involve in their struggle an idealistic figure who is eventually forced to submit to one side; this is Stephen Langton the archbishop, who corresponds to Feng. The whole action is governed by Randolph, the Papal Legate, whose opportunism and lack of discernible partisan principle recall the whole series of Arden semi-villains, from Krank to Blomax and Lindsay.

The play's progress towards its last scenes, which both discuss the Charter and portray John's death in the familiar emotional/rational balance, is one step away from the tentative naturalism of the scene with Eleanor and those of Runnymede, towards the more direct presentation of the facts to the audience which ends the play and corresponds with Pandulph's generalised opening. Beginning the action with Eleanor's death puts the events of the Charter in their historical context, while not losing sight of the familiar humanity of the protagonists. The

colloquial modern language of the private scenes preserves this element in contrast to that of the ceremonial public occasions, where sufficient medieval vocabulary is used to keep the audience apprised of the historical context without becoming unintelligible. The spectator can thus accept the necessary non-naturalistic statements of information without their becoming intrusive. The "advance" at Act III Scene 7 which breaks into the semi-naturalism of Act III examines the Charter in the light of the experience of the play, achieving a certain positive feeling in contrast to the destruction of the Charter's principles in the earlier scenes. The departure from Arden's usually pessimistic ending is called for - as in "The Business of Good Government" - by the nature of the commission. The business with McKechnie's analysis of the Charter allows the audience to see past the confusion of John's death in the middle of the liberation of Norfolk, to whatever lasting effect the agreement, so soon repudiated by barons and Church, could be said to have. Arden uses the breakdown of all stage conventions, even putting up the house lights, to draw attention to the human reality behind the legal document and history (as Lindsay did to his own humanity in Act I Scene 2 of "Armstrong's Last Goodnight") with John's long speech to the Lady de Vespi:

JOHN: - the lady is peripheral, both to the play and to the document. Yet nevertheless she exists *

The examination of physical reality can be compared to that of Saunders in "Next Time I'll Sing to You", but here the philosophical emphasis is on the uniqueness of the mind, in contrast to Saunders' morbid reflections. Scene 8 confounds the audience's expectations in the light of Scene 7 by returning to a naturalistic mode, filling the stage with the army breaking camp. ** Instead of ending - as with "Armstrong's Last Goodnight" - on a note which withdraws from the action, here the last scene returns the audience to it, as if dramatising the duality, represented in Scene 7, between law and humanity. The Marshal's speech about the continuation of the Charter represents the same sort of hard-won optimism as is found at the end of "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance": the presentation of history and the practical defeat of the Charter allows

* Act III Sc 7 P 84

** A similar device in "The Hero Rises Up" increases the impact of Trafalgar by a sudden return to naturalism.

its tentative redemption here to fulfil the purpose of the play.

In the interval before the last major play of the period "The Hero Rises Up" (1968) are found two plays written in collaboration with M d'Arcy: "'Friday's Hiding" (1966) and "The Royal Pardon" (1966), and a vaguely autobiographical fragment of Arden only: "A True History of Squire Jonathan and his Unfortunate Treasure" (1968). "Friday's Hiding", written as Arden says in the introduction, * in response to a request for a mime, explores some of his basic preoccupations with the conditions of labour and the rigid class-system in the context of farce. Primarily written for the entertainment of actors and audience, the play nevertheless contains nuances of deeper subjects. The farmer's intelligent playing on the social habits of mankind - as he puts his hired men under an obligation by lighting their cigarettes and uses the conventions of his threshold to his own advantage - make both him and his men more than conventional caricatures. The ironic song at the end which seemingly resolves differences in fact conceals a similar continuation of irrevocable conflict, dictated by the structure of Arden's microcosm of society, to that of the major plays.

"The Royal Pardon", although a full-length play and written for children, is similar in that it can also please and interest adults in its discreet references to the fact of war and its political background, **^{like the}ly reference to the Arts Council grant:

FRENCH OFFICER: Alas, Monseigneur, the Exchequer is a little bit depleted by reason of the war - it is not possible, I fear, to expend more money this season on the arts. ***

Closer to pantomime than earlier work, it plays adroitly on the theatrical conventions of the 'reality' of props, in the 'cardboard' crowns sequences and the status of Luke and the scenery, while existing both on the level of knockabout farce and a certain documentary realism. The descriptions of the Flanders wars by Luke are by their violent realism unsuited to this type of play:

LUKE: I've just been reading a different book - in Flanders - broken bones and rotten limbs, puddles of blood, a chopped-off skull in a black ditch with a rat that played

* Author's Notes, Methuen 1967, p 12

** e.g. Luke's speech in Act I to the king: "Starving though we were and tired and ill"

*** Act II P 105

peep-bo through either eye-socket ,..... *

The presentation of the Constable also seems out of place, recalling Orton's "Loot" particularly in the gratuitously violent arrest of Luke, although the character later becomes the traditional figure of fun in his thwarted authority. The traditional heroic and villainous speeches, however, recall "The Waters of Babylon" but are much more suited to the lighter presentation given here: the typifying of the French court and English and French actors is on an appropriate level of humour here, where it was uneasy in the characterisation of the early work. "Squire Jonathan" is a soliloquy to the audience only notable for the extreme contrasts of its characterisation. The room in the tower recalls the psychologically and often physically enclosed spaces of much other modern drama, the eruption of the white woman into it and her banishment into the frightening outside world represented by the dark men symbolising a personal agoraphobia in a way unusual in Arden's work.

The last play of the period, "The Hero Rises Up" (1968) brings together the non-naturalistic "pantomime" elements of the lesser plays and the "documentary" commenting on history familiar from "Armstrong's Last Goodnight" and "Left Handed Liberty". The elements are synthesised into a politico-social parable of war, the state, and their effect on the individual, the social movements of the time being directly related to modern conflicts. The introduction to the play ** and its structure of concentration on those events which can be realised theatrically - the Caracciolo affair, the book-burning and Trafalgar itself - show Arden's new attitude to his drama in that crucial area of its direct effect on the audience:

We wanted to produce it ourselves, so that it would present the audience with an experience akin to that of running up in a crowded wet street on a Saturday night against a drunken red-nosed man with a hump on his back dancing in a puddle, his arms round a pair of bright-eyed laughing girls, his mouth full of inexplicable loud noises. ***

This can be related to the "Happening" syndrome of the late 1960's, where sensory experience for its own sake was a common dramatic purpose

* Act I p 19, (also later in the same scene, and at the French court in Act II).

** See note on "The Workhouse Donkey" (Methuen 1969)

*** An Asymmetrical Author's Preface. (Methuen 1969), p 6

in both the West End and the 'fringe' in London. It can be contrasted with Arden's early statement which implies his intent in the introduction to "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance", * and the representation of events in "The Waters of Babylon" and "Live Like Pigs" without comment. His more recent directly propagandist motives (e.g. "The Bagman" (1970)) are outside the scope of this discussion, ** but a hint of the later direction can be found in Arden's choice of the major events of Acts I and II: the Caracciolo affair and the book-burning.

The Naples excursion, of relatively small importance in Nelson's career, is chosen to show the rôle of the British state and Nelson himself as its deluded champion in the worst possible light. The grotesque portrayal of the King and Queen, and Nelson's "fantastic dance" are contrasted with the vicious murder of the Republicans and Caracciolo's dignity at his hanging. The whole event is portrayed to lead up to the theatrical spectacle of "You Can't Argue with a Dead Man" (Act I) with its simple slogans set against Nelson's question:

VOICE OF DEAD CARACCIOLO: Protect the poor people of Naples. Give heart to the poor people ... ***

Nelson's verse in Act II plays a similar rôle with its ironic juxtaposition of Nelson and Newgate's governor:

NISBET: It is just possible they would have cried
For a bold Caracciolo of their own. ****

The Copenhagen episode, shown to be an unprovoked attack on neutrals and therefore devaluing both State and Nelson, is overshadowed by the book-burning party which expresses the authors' feelings about the political backlash after the French Revolution while also making a fine theatrical scene of drunken aristocrats dancing around the fire. The early part of Act III also draws the attention of the audience to the events of the time, with the Relatives' descriptions of the social

* "I would suggest that an unwillingness to dwell upon unpleasant situations that do not immediately concern us is a general human trait, and recognition of it need imply neither cynicism nor despair." (Introduction, Methuen, 1960), p 7

** Although they obviously contradict the early motives. "But to go further and start deciding for his audience I think is rather presumptuous." (Arden "Who's for a Revolution?" Tulane Drama Review Vol IX No 2 (1966) p 46).

*** Act I p 39

**** Act II p 48

unrest in England, before concentrating on the physical reality of battle at sea. As we have seen in the earlier plays, this realism must be distanced, and therefore is followed by the Clergyman's speech representing the official attitude, and a set-piece coda which pastiches the traditional heroic finale. The character of Allen provides the unassimilable grit in the smooth current of the end, referring the audience till the last moment to the ordinary seamen and the people of Europe, the victims of the war, whom he represents. The play's complexity and variety of presentation allow the authors' comments on the events of the time, in political terms, to be assimilated without losing the momentum of the play in its purely historical context. But the conflict on which it is based is more one of irreconcilable individual ways of life, within the domestic, family preoccupation of many of the scenes, than of the fight between liberal and authoritarian social politics which formed the historical reason for the action. The result is that the play is based more on immediate emotional response than Arden's more usual invitation to considered judgement.

Arden's work, and to a certain extent that of his collaboration with M d'Arcy, is largely "dialectic" in its use of type-characters and portrayal of the conflict between social class, nations and ways of life. But unlike Wesker, the other playwright of the period who concentrates on these subjects, Arden's work rarely, except in "Sergeant Musgrave's Dance", offers any definitive solution to the conflicts which he portrays. The inevitable movement towards violence in his plots is a result of personality as well as ideological differences in his characters, and his broad assertion is that humanity's divisions are such that even the "solution" of violence provides only a temporary respite in the unending struggle.

Wesker's plays are characteristic of the early part of the period under discussion not only, as analysed in Parts I and II, in his use of the stage and language, but in his strongly socio-political purpose. The major direction in European, American and English drama in the twentieth century, as explained above, * has been towards

* See the definition of "illusionist" drama, Chapter Seven.

interesting the audience by confusing it about the assumed realities of life, death and communication: Wesker's entire drama, however, is directed towards the end of making his purpose transparently clear to his audience. There is rarely any disagreement, after the experience of seeing one of his plays, about which political and moral points he has raised, and discussion centres on his subject first and technique second. In his wish to use drama as a means to a specific and well-defined end, Wesker can be compared with Arden, particularly in the latter's later work. But while Arden's plays become, through the period, increasingly one-sided and declamatory, Wesker's later work makes the attempt to portray with some sympathy both sides of his argument. This contrast of development is not matched by the playwrights' dramatic organization; both develop away from naturalism during the 1960's and both abandon, along with stage-realism, the contained form of their earlier work, for a freer, more "documentary" style.

The Trilogy contains those of Wesker's plays which rely most heavily on naturalism and it also contains the strongest and most obvious message. "Chicken Soup with Barley" (1968) presents the Kahn family as not only representative of politically oriented intellectuals of the time, but of the progress of the entire left-wing movement through twenty years. * The large time-scale of the play is more justified than that of "Their Very Own and Golden City" (1966) by its constant referral to real historical events with which the audience is familiar, and by the balance of its parts from the hope of the 1930's to the defeat of the 1950's in a logical and easily followed sequence. Information is conveyed to the audience by simple means which are prevented by their believable naturalistic background from becoming pure declamations: the play swings rapidly into its action without the complication or obfuscation of its issues which might be the result of an artificially "balanced" viewpoint. Wesker makes it clear from the start which side he is on, and concentrates on enlisting the audience's sympathy and understanding in his cause. This is achieved by the fast action and dialogue of Scene I, which by its constant personalisation of the historic events brings them newly alive before his audience. An orchestration

* "His families are still intensely family-centred but they live in a political dimension too."
(K Worth "Revolutions in modern English Drama" P 30).

of the sound of the band, shouts and calls to arms from the street, and the list of names of the dead in the Spanish War like a ceremonial roll-call, help to build up an atmosphere of excitement and participation in events which Wesker needs to enlist his audience. The onward movement of the action helps to carry and make immediately meaningful the discussion of war and pacifism:

DAVE: When you fight men who are blind it's always unfair ... *

A similar contrast shocks the audience as Scene 2 shows the blood-stained results of the action at the climax of Scene I. The marching and shouting is suddenly cut down to size, and to reality, as physical violence. The quieter second scene allows a return to the family itself in Harry's failure, which is shown to be such by the previous descriptions of the battle in the streets. The song which the whole cast on the stage sing is shown by the emphasis on human warmth rather than struggle to be a climax more meaningful than that at the end of Scene I:

SARAH: People like that can't teach love and brotherhood. **

Having informed the audience of the family itself, and established a mood of sympathy for its hopes, Wesker can in Act II Scene 1 move into a wider sphere of political discussion. But as before he prevents the issues from becoming unrelated to humanity and undramatic by dividing the family on the lines of agrarian versus urban socialism. Thus the discussion of motives which becomes so passionate is related to both the macrocosm and the microcosm, and the entire subject is put in firm perspective by the shock of Harry's stroke at the end. The domestic note continues through the examination of Harry's failures in Scene 2, while still indicating the wider issues of the time in Ronnie's reference to Palestine. Harry's failure to find work is related again to the general conditions in the conversation about the clothing factory double-dealing, while his outburst of childish senility is superbly realistic in its effect on Ronnie and its indication of Harry's own helplessness.

Act III Scene 1 represents the lowest point for the characters:

* Act I Sc 1 P 23

** Act I Sc 2 P 29

Harry's deterioration is matched by the change in the Kahn's friends. The only note of affirmation is Sarah's "politics is living" which is drowned by the materialism of Monty and Bessie and the detailed description of Harry's physical decline. But Scene 2 manages to climb back to a kind of hope, an achievement which is the greater because of the way the play faces facts. Despite the forces ranged against all that Sarah represents of warm humanity and hope for the future - from Ronnie's new-found fear of old age to Harry's death and the events in Hungary - the play ends on a hard-won note of optimism with the hope that Ronnie, representing the next generation, will accept her humanism:

SARAH: Ronnie, if you don't care you'll die. (He turns slowly to face her).*

"Roots" (1959) which fills in another aspect of the purpose of the Trilogy, portrays a family as far divorced from the Kahns as possible. The isolated rural setting of the play shows Wesker making his own declarations in "Chicken Soup with Barley" as difficult as possible to fulfil: although Cissie's workers are difficult enough to mobilise, the agricultural labourers of Norfolk represent the ultimate in immoveability, and Wesker's conclusion that nothing can be changed except by personal contact, is bound to be borne out. Taking this extreme case, however, seems to lessen the impact of the earlier play by seeming to make the hopes and wishes of such people as the Kahns ridiculous. In my opinion "Roots" is the most popular of the plays because it justifies the view that such political energy as the Kahns exhibit is useless in the wider context, and therefore there is no need to try to change anything: it acts as an excuse for apathy. But Wesker himself would point to the more concealed but equally explicit references to the wider struggle. Beatie's dismissal of the rôle of the Territorials in Act III, and the constant cultural reference to popular and classical music are certainly available to the audience, but do not achieve the same personal reference as do similar themes in the first play. Ronnie acts as the vital catalyst which seems to affect the whole cast of the play but in fact only changes Beatie herself, a metaphor for the effect of the intellectual on the worker; but as his

* Act III Sc 2 P 76

effect is so small this militates against Wesker's whole thesis of communication. It is an ironic comment on the success of naturalism as a form for conveying a moral that it is in this play, where the environment of the family depicted is so firmly realised by traditional methods, that Wesker's political, as opposed to cultural, thesis seems to be most attenuated.

It is convenient to examine the third play of the Trilogy, "I'm Talking about Jerusalem" (1960), before the earlier "The Kitchen", as it rounds off the contrasts of the first two plays by showing urban and rural characters, civilisation and habits coming into real contact in the form of Dave and Ada's retreat to the semi-anarchic life of the craftsman in Norfolk. But the attempt to enclose the experience of the first two plays within the last results in a certain scrappiness of plot and uneven construction. The time intervals between scenes are not as regular as in the first play. In each case the actual scene, as when the removal-men typify a "man-in-the-street" reaction to the Simonndses, or when Dewhurst and Dobson disrupt in different ways, is a success in naturalism of dialogue and character; but the central characters are never made strong or indeed human enough to connect the disparate elements. The Wesker techniques familiar from "Chicken Soup with Barley" are successful in themselves - for example when Act I ends on the hopeful note of the song, and the political debate of Act II is presented simply as a clash of personality to give it humanity - but they fail to supply the sense of climax needed to hold such a chaotic play together. Similarly the comic "aunts" scene at the beginning of Act III and Ronnie's violent physical activity throughout are fine vignettes in themselves, but do not relate to the progress of Dave and Ada. Some parts of scenes, however, as in the later plays, stand out as masterpieces of naturalism and authentic humanism: Dave's stupid lies and complex ideological collapse about the lino stealing, and Dewhurst's retrained sense of hurt ring true; * the same is true of the dialogue built around the appearance of the chair itself, as the news of Sammy's desertion, Selby's retraction and Harry's illness dash one by one the hopes embodied in the chair. The only virtue celebrated

* He is a rounded character in miniature. J R Taylor sees him only as a 'type': "a rather improbable squire-figure of the old school." (J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 162)

at the end is that of endurance, which is to the credit of Wesker's honesty, but not of his ideological purpose.

"The Kitchen" shows Wesker filling the gap left by the family focus of the Trilogy, with a drama based on relationships in a working environment between widely differing individuals. The Trilogy portrays mainly the spare-time activity of its families (even when the chair itself is produced in "I'm Talking about Jerusalem", but nothing more is done to it, in contrast with the real carpentry in Arden's "When is a Door not a Door" *); "The Kitchen", however, goes straight to the heart of the experience of its workers. Its pace is governed entirely by the rhythm of the meal-serving which creates the pace of the true climaxes of action, and makes the final apotheosis of silence and stillness a theatrical tour de force. The brittle interplay of emotions and national pride allows little room for Wesker's usual carefully underlined political speeches, with the result that he has to introduce the "dream" sequence in the interlude. This fails to be an adequate naturalistic opener for Paul's statement about solidarity in the working class, as the atmosphere of political and social discussion is not created here, in contrast to the first play of the Trilogy. The events of the play, apart from the mime of the work itself, are almost entirely governed by personal idiosyncrasy, without the wider reference of the earlier plays. Peter's fight with the Cypriots, his feeding of the tramps, and the series of climactic acts at the end (from the gas-pipe cutting to the sequence of events - noises-off, report and the exposure of the result - which is familiar from the expression of violence of other dramatists **) grow out of the conditions in the kitchen which are particularised rather than referred to a wider political context. It becomes necessary to make Marango's final speech an overtly ironic statement on the quality of life, a statement which loses some force because of the lack of a rounded presentation of the character who makes it. But the play is dramatically successful mainly because of its powerful rhythm, short time-scale, crowded action and ^{lack of} overt political

* "That underworked area, work, has become the great stamping-ground of present-day realists. All kinds of working routines have been explored for dramatic interest."

(K. Worth "Revolutions in Modern English Drama" P 24).

** Orton, Bond and also Wesker himself in "Chicken Soup with Barley".

declamation, although ideologically the moral is too vague to make any more impact than to encourage a generalised humanitarianism.

The last three plays of the period differ intensely in dramatic form, style and subject, but each represents a step away from the naturalism of the early work. "Chips with Everything" (1962) draws on another aspect of Wesker's experience by making the F.A.F. conscript camp a symbol which reveals the class struggle in microcosm. Where in "The Kitchen" only the unreal figure of Marango represents the "other side", and the whole opposing system is totally fragmented among the characters themselves, here the choice of a hierarchical structure for the drama's subject allows a very clear division between the representatives of opposing classes. * But the character of Pip on whom the whole play turns is badly chosen to make Wesker's points. In contrast to that of Smiler, whose martyrdom is expressed poetically in the foot-washing scene but whose handicap seems real and immediate in the context of the camp, Pip is too divorced from the other conscripts, and too contemptuous of their way of life, to gain much sympathy from the audience. His first long speech in Act I Scene 2 which describes the café in the East End, destroys any possibility of identification from the audience by its horror not at the conditions of working-class life but at their insensitivity as people: the attack seems on the wrong grounds. Similarly, the family history, in Scene 5, is not only naturalistically unlikely to get a hearing, but irrelevant to the issues with which Wesker is concerned. Pip's change to an officer at the end seems to be expected in the light of his character-type, and the elaborate alternation of threats and flattery which Wesker shows the other officers using on him seems unnecessary. The "leadership" which he shows at the end of Act II in the "singing" and "coke" scenes is useless in real terms, but reinforces the audience's lack of surprise at his final acceptance of his rôle by his arrogance and obvious enjoyment of authority. The play's uneasy relationship with naturalism makes such symbolic scenes as Pip's change of clothes and Smiler's

* "We are not, presumably, meant to accept them primarily as human beings existing in their own right, but rather as quasi-allegorical-type figures of their respective classes."
(J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 164)

desertion out of context with the dialogue and action while not allowing the extremely unlikely choice of "The Cutty Wren" as a rebel song, at the centre of the play, to be judged by any other than naturalistic criteria. *

Realising this difficulty seems to have prompted Wesker to reject naturalism of setting, and, mostly, of dialogue, in "The Four Seasons" (1965). The play is dedicated to the Cuban revolution but has no connection with this or any other historical or political event, as Wesker concentrates on a completely isolated relationship in a highly artificial and withdrawn situation. The play, by and large, has been a failure, for many reasons; not the least of these is that the characters themselves and their situation, as in "Chips with Everything", are too divorced from ordinary experience in being upper-class, intellectual, experienced and well-off, to allow identification or even much interest from the audience. The description of their achievements and talents in the "Spring" section, though almost entirely fantasy, is too excessive to be acceptable, and places them beyond the context of ordinary humanity into the rarefied realm of the intellectual, where - considering the dedication and Wesker's avowed intent - most of his audience cannot follow them. The result is that in the "Summer" episode when the characters act like children playing, the sequence is much more uncomfortable than those of "Their Very Own and Golden City" or "I'm Talking about Jerusalem". The Apfel Strudel episode, which attempts to put something concrete into the play to make the interchanges seem more real, is too isolated and divorced from the rest of the drama to have the effect which is hoped: physical realism breaks the back of this very rarefied and symbolic play, though it does not do so in "Chips With Everything" or "I'm Talking about Jerusalem". The fine-drawn development of the relationship is unfortunately made almost unavailable to the audience by the backgrounds of the characters, whose preoccupations with the house and their lives and work are presented in such reduced terms as to make them both unreal and unsympathetic.

"Their Very Own and Golden City" (1966) returns to the political

* "(The Cutty Wren episode) leaves any conceivable reality so far behind that it can be accepted only as a wish-fulfilment fantasy." (J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 165).

and cultural subjects of the Trilogy, but retains some of the non-naturalistic elements of the other plays. The play is making a much more general point about the environment than the early work, but the concentration on the idea of the cities, with all its symbolic aspects of a new way of life in political and cultural terms, and on the hero himself, turns the progress of the play into more of a personal tragedy of dashed hopes than a general statement on the "utopian chimera"; it is a result of this chimera that the concept of the cities with its ultimate degeneration, does not involve the audience as it should. Where in "I'm Talking about Jerusalem" a similar retreat from the class struggle in the cities is strongly debated within the play, here the arguments against the concept are only heard from the industrialists, government and the unsympathetically portrayed Trade Union Officials. The main characters seem to have accepted that the conflict has already been settled, which is debatable. As occurred in "Chips With Everything" and "The Four Seasons", the hero is badly chosen to identify the hopes of the audience. His "soaring" buildings recall Pip's similar attitude in their arrogance and disregard of people themselves and to some extent also recall Beatrice's "unfolding" in "Summer", which alienates Adam. The fundamentally unsympathetic nature of Cobham militates against the emotional support from the audience which Wesker seeks. That he does strongly seek it is shown by his basically one-sided view of the conflict. His presentation of the combined forces of union and management against Cobham, when the surface realism is discarded, is as clearly prejudiced as that of Marango in "The Kitchen". The Trade Union and Labour Party conferences are shown in extremely realistic terms but the people themselves, of whom they are the representatives, are never presented on the stage: there is an abstract, rather than a concrete and humanistic, idea of whoever the city is designed for. The series of vignettes (as discussed in Part II) are successful in themselves as drama, but fail to connect in a concerted movement towards the ideological end which is the basis of the drama, and degenerate instead into a personal and private tragedy. * The tragedy is Wesker's own, and that of Centre 42, and

* "...the play is not finally one of defeat"
(J R Taylor "Anger and After" P 169). Yes it is.

this continues the autobiographical origins of the early work. As he says in "Fears of Fragmentation" (1963):

The ironic tragedy was that the suspicion or indifference of the Labour movement encouraged us to adopt the one policy which would even further alienate them from us - namely that of acquiring funds from private industry and wealthy individuals.

Wesker's work, although achieving increasing range and versatility through the period in setting and character, never again achieves the synthesis of the private and public which he reaches in "Chicken Soup with Barley".

The 1960's demonstrated a polarisation of the philosophical and political aims of the dramatists under discussion. The general retreat from overt political comment in the 1960's produced a Wesker whose inspiration dried up by the end of the period, and an Osborne extracting support from his audience for his enemies of the 1950's. Pinter's work, always a-political in intent, retreated further from connection with common humanity. Conversely, the work of Bond and Arden shows a crystallising of political basis into a committed left-wing position through the period. They sharply contrast with the rest of the dramatists of the period, though in very distinct ways, Arden in his songs and poetry, and Bond in the uncompromising nature of his view of reality; they move, in fact, in a reverse direction from the general flow. The plays of Nichols, Saunders and Stoppard were always a-political, the philosophy "privative", and this type of drama is seen at the time of writing (1975) to be - perhaps only temporarily - that of the most successful metropolitan drama. The comic voice of Simpson was drowned by the advance in television comedy, superseding the verbal "radio style", and Orton's idiosyncratic work is forever finished. The regional movement of the early 1960's, represented in this study by Rudkin and Delaney, and based uncompromisingly on a traditional naturalism of language combined with a nearly specific setting, has shown little sign of remaining a valid alternative to metropolitan drama. Part of the reason for this, disregarding the widespread retrenchment owing to lack of funds, was the general movement away from naturalism and realism already described, which tended to reduce such qualities as

regional specificity in this sense in favour of a general moral or political purpose.

The general movement of the period is away from naturalism and realism; but different directions are taken according to the temperament of the writers. The "advance" out into the audience typified by the work of Saunders, Nichols and Arden has been set back by the extravagances of the "happenings" and "the theatre of cruelty" in the late 1960's, and has yet to rediscover its Brechtian roots, except possibly in the case of Bond. The poetic and symbolist direction, however, was found to be unassimilable by such playwrights as Wesker, whose work demonstrably suffered the further it moved from the naturalism of "Roots". Some writers never left the 1950's: Osborne, after flirting with Brecht in "Luther", returns in the late 1960's firmly to his early traditional technique, and Pinter's Brechtian interlude in 1967 - 1969 only overlaid his basically naturalistic drama.

The differing usages examined in Parts I and II of this study are based ultimately on the purposes explored in Part III. Moral and philosophical motives are in the end political, and these motives inform the method. Those playwrights who are certain of their stance, whatever it is, in political terms, are usually certain in form and technique. * The drama which is being written within the present structure of society has been discovered by its writers to be committed often despite themselves, and the type of neutrality shown by Arden in the plays of the early 1960's and late 1950's has become impossible, as is demonstrated by his later work. Although such a definite opinion concerning the problems of modern society does not guarantee dramatic success, only a purely commercial or ephemeral achievement can follow from an attempt to avoid the fundamental questions of the society within which the plays are written.

* Wesker's unfortunate experiences with Centre 42 and the Trade Unions in general diluted his zeal in the 1960's with a resulting dilution of certainty of technique.

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APPENDIX

My mother loves me.

I feel good.

I feel good because she loves me.

I am good because I feel good

I feel good because I am good

My mother loves me because I am good.

My mother does not love me.

I feel bad.

I feel bad because she does not love me.

I am bad because I feel bad.

I feel bad because I am bad.

I am bad because she does not love me

She does not love me because I am bad. *

* Dr R D Laing "Knots" P 9 (Penguin Books)