

- After the death of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, Drama in England suffered a decline for two centuries.
- The appearance of new dramatist and the revival of drama begin in the last decade of the nineteenth century that has given drama again a respectable place in English literature.
- **Two important factors were responsible for the revival of drama 1890:**
  - The influence of Ibsen, the great Norwegian dramatist.
  - The Cynical atmosphere prevailing at that time.
    - First factor give rise to the comedy of Ideas
    - Second factor give rise to the comedy of manners or artificial comedy.

### **Modern Dramatists:**

#### ❖ **Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906)**

He is a great Norwegian dramatist. The father of realistic drama .He was responsible of the revival of drama in English literature. He has influenced English dramatist such as George Bernard show and Oscar Wilde. Ibsen has taught men that the real drama must deal with human emotions, with things which are near and dear to ordinary men and women.

#### **Development stages of Ibsen:**

1- First stage beginning with experimental plays which were grateful to French well-made plays of scribe and to romantic and traditional patterns. This is can be seen clearly *in lady inger of Ostrat, Love's Comedy, and The pretenders.*

2- Second stage begins with his exile to Rome which produced the poetic dramas of Brand and Peer gynt.

3-Third stage started in his stay in Germany, namely the realistic social stage which has brought him world-fame, and which has resulted in the birth of a new drama, very well presented in a *Doll's House, Ghosts, An Enemy of the people, and The wild Duck and others.*in these plays. Ibsen treated social problems that reflect "*his own inner needs* on the one hand and *the spirit of the age* on the other hand.

“Zeitgeist “means: the spirit of the age.

Technical devices such as the **Retrospective method:**

- Gives scope to the clash of ideas and narration than presentation of events.

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- Ibsen is being advance of the later; he did not try to adjust himself to his own inner needs but rather to adjust it to his own demands and values.
  - Ibsen work represents **grim and serious temperament.**
  - Ibsen whose doctrine “by thyself” was very much like Nietzsche theory of superman “Yea to Life”

### ❖ **George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950):**

The greatest among the modern dramatist .He is considered to be the father of comedy of ideas. He was born and brought up in Ireland, at the age of 20 he left Ireland for good, and went to London to make his fortune. At first he tried to hand at novel but he did not get any encouragement .then he began to debate all sorts and became the greatest debater in England. He has become socialist and **joined Fabian Society** which **was responsible of creating the British labour Party.** He was also **voracious reader** and came under the influence of **Samuel Bulter,** whom described a greatest writer .**George Bernard Shaw** was especially impressed by **Butler’s dissatisfaction** with **Darwinian Theory of Natural selection.**

Two others writers motivates the critical mind of George Bernard Shaw during his formative period were **Ibsen** and **Friedrich Nietzsche.**

### **In The new drama of ideas:**

- 1-Actions became slow and frequently
- 2-The actual life made drama more and more of ideas.
- 3-inner conflict was substituted for outer conflict which resulted that drama became quieter than romantic drama of previous years.
- 4- The new research in the field of Psychology help dramatist in the study of the soul which they had to resort to symbols.
- 5- The emphases of inner conflict led some of the modern dramatist to make their protagonist “hero” not men but unseen forces.
- 6- New dramatist dealt mainly with the problems of labour and of youth.

7- The new drama was most part of it revolutionary against; 1- past literary models 2- current social conventions. 3- The prevailing morality of Victorian England.

8-The characteristic feature of Victorianism are: 1- fighting against romantic love 2- capitalism 3- parental authority.

9-**George Bernard Show** showed men and women in society as they really are, and evoked the tragedy that may be inherent in ordinary, humdrum life.

10-**George Bernard Show** wrote his plays with deliberate purpose of propaganda.

11-All the plays of George Bernard Show deal with some problem concerning modern sociality.

12- In *widower's house* he put the blame on society and not on the individual landlord for creating abuses of the right property.

13- In *getting married*, he showed the unnaturalness of the home-life as at present constituted.

14- In *The Doctor Dilemma* he exposed the superstition that doctors are infallible.

15- He attracted attention and became the most popular and influential dramatist of his time.

16- *Caesar and Cleopatra* has no particular theme, and that is why comes near to being a play that most of show's works.

17-The apple Cart **Show** ridiculed the working of democratic form of government and hinted that it needed a superman to set things right.

18- In *ST. Joan* Show reached the highest level of his dramatic art dealing in a tragic manner a universal theme involving grand emotions.

19- He prepared the minds of the audience by written prefaces to his plays which are far more conceiving than the plays themselves.

20- Preparing the minds of audience by written prefaces to his plays resulted to be more successful when they were produced a second and a third time when audience had read them in their published forms.

21-By means of the symbolism the dramatist could raise the dark and even sordid themes to artistic levels.

22- Modern dramatists who followed the example of Bernard Shaw and wrote comedies of ideas:

1- **Granville Barker** 2- **Galsworthy** 3- **James Birdie** 4-**Priestly** 5-**Sir James Barrie** 6- **John Masefield**.

23- The main burden of his play is that the civilized man must either develop or perish.

24- Shaw was characterized by **Jet** and **Verbal wit**.

25- Besides the comedy of ideas and the comedy of manners, another type of drama was developed in England under the influence of **the Irish dramatic movement**.

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26- Originators of Irish dramatic movement are: 1-Lady George 2- W.B Yeats.

27- The two important dramatist of the Irish dramatic movement:1- J.M Synge 2- Sean O'Casey.

28- The revival of Poetic Drama whose most important practitioner was T.S Eliot.

29-other modern dramatists who have also written Poetic plays are: 1- Christopher Fry 2- Stephen Phillips and Stephen Spender.

30- Most of the poetic plays written in modern times have a religious theme.

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### ❖ **Oscar Wilde (1856-1900)**

Wilde is considered to be the father of *the comedy of manner* or *the Artificial of Comedy*.a great thinker.Oscar Wilde is a dramatist who took part of the revival of drama in the later part of the nineteenth century. Oscar Wilde has treated the moral assumptions of the Victorian age with frivolity and makes polite fun of their conventionality, prudishness or smugness. In the last five years of his life he turned his attention to **writing for stage**. During his lifetime his plays became very popular, and they were thought to **represent a high mark in English drama**.

The success of Oscar Wilde as a writer of artificial comedy or comedy of manners was due to his being a **social entertainer**, and mainly as entertainment that his plays **have survived**.

Other writers who have followed Wilde directly are *Somerset Maugham* and *Noel Coward*.

The importance of Oscar Wilde plays was exaggerated because; they are merely **the work of skilled craftsman**.

Oscar Wilde had the tact of discovering the **passing mood of the tome** and expressing it gracefully. Otherwise, his plays are **all superficial** and none of them adds to our knowledge or understanding of life.The situation he presents in his plays are **Hackneyed** and borrowed from French **plays of intrigue**.

#### **There are 4 most important comedies of Wilde:**

1- Lady Windermere's Fan

2- A woman of no importance

3-An Ideal Husband

4- The importance of being Earnest.

The first three plays are built on the model of the **conventional social melodramas** of the time.

The 4<sup>th</sup> one of his play “*the importance of being earnest* “was built on the model of the popular farce of the time.

Wilde calls the model of farce **a trivial comedy for serious people**.

Model of the popular farce has proved to Wilde that the graceful foolery of farce was **the form which was best suited** to the expression of his dramatic genius.

Trivial comedy for serious people (**farce**) was successful because of its **detachment from all meaning and models**.

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### ❖ John Galsworthy (1867-1933)

He was a great dramatist of modern times, who besides being a **novelist** of the first rank, made his mark also in the field of **drama**. He believed in the **naturalistic Technique** both in the novel and drama. According to him “Naturalistic art is like a steady lamp, held up from time to time, in whose light things will be seen for a space clearly in due proportion, freed from the mists of prejudice and partisanship. Both Prejudice and partisanship were reproducing upon the stages and in Galsworthy books.

Galsworthy delicate sympathies for the poor and unprivileged classes which make his heart melt for them.

#### The importance of Galsworthy plays are:

1- Strike

2- Justice

3- The skin Game

4- The silver Box.

➤ All these plays deal with social and ethical problems.

- **Strike:** deals with the problem with strikes which are not only futile but do immense harm to both parties.
- **The skin Game:** represents the conflict between the old-established classes.
- **Justice:** is a severe criticism of the prison administration of that period.
- **The Silver Box:** deals with the old proverbs that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor.

## ❖ Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946)

He is a dramatist belongs to that group of dramatist like Galsworthy who dealt with Domestic Tragedy and problems play. Though he wrote a number of plays of different sorts in collaboration with other playwrights. He occupied his place in modern drama mainly as a writer of four realistic plays.

### **Harley Granville Barker drama plays are:**

1- The marrying of Anne Leete.

2- The Voysey Inheritance.

3-Waste

4- The Madras House.

Each of these plays deals with dominant problem of social life.

The importance of Granville-Baker in the 20th century drama lies in his fine delineation of **character and realistic style**.

His plays seem to be excerpts of real life to greater extent than even those of Galsworthy. The dialogue is very natural and near to ordinary conversation. The life presented in those plays is the narrow and petty life lived by the upper-class in England in his days.

## ❖ John Masefield (1878-1967)

He belongs to the same school as Galsworthy and Granville-Baker. He combines in himself high imagination and sternly classical spirit; Passionate, enthusiasm, and cold logic, fantasy and realism.

### His play

The tragedy of Nan, which is the best modern example of the form of domestic tragedy.

❖ **J.M Barrie (1860-1937)**

Barrie did not belong to any school of dramatist. The best of his work is marked by imaginative fantasy, humour and tender pathos. His most characteristic and original play is the Admirable Crichton.

Barrie's last and most ambitious drama was *The Boy David* which he was given a fine picture of the candied soul of a boyhood. As the story deal with the bible, this is well-known. He is skilled technician. He discovered that in an age of affectations and pretensions, the theatre-goers needed the sincerity and innocence of childhood, and he earned his popularity by given them what they needed.

**Ibsen's contributions to the theatre**, says a critic was a threefold in each respect the drama owes more to him than any other dramatist since Shakespeare:

- 1- He broke down the social barriers which had previously bounded it.
- 2- Technical
- 3- Equally important

He was the first man to show that high tragedy could be written about ordinary people in ordinary everyday prose. Before Ibsen tragedy has concerns itself with kings and queens.