

KUNTHAVAI NAACCHIYAAR GOVT.ARTS COLLEG FOR WOMEN(A), THANJAVUR- 7

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

II MA ENGLISH, V SEMESTER 2020-2021

BRITISH LITERATURE

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UNIT- III- DRAMA (DETAILED)

1. Look Back in Anger- John Osborne

Look Back in Anger

Summary

Look Back in Anger follows a young husband and wife, Alison and Jimmy Porter, as they attempt to navigate class conflict and deal with deteriorating marriage in 1950's England. Alison comes from a traditional upper class background. Act one consists of Jimmy's tirades against the upper class. Jimmy thinks that suffering is the only way to experience true human emotion, and that Alison and other upper class people are therefore less "Alive" than he is. As the act proceeds Jimmy insults his wife Alison and her family. This results in turning of the ironing board and Alison burning her arm. Jimmy apologizes but Alison yells at him and he leaves when Jimmy's friend Cliff helps Alison with the wound he reveals to him that she is carrying Jimmy's child and has not revealed it to Jimmy. The arrival of Helena Alison's friend is announced, Jimmy disapproves of this.

In act two Jimmy continues to insult Alison's mother in Helena's presence. Helena tells Alison that she has sent a message to Colonel Redfern asking him to come and pick Alison. Alison leaves with Colonel Redfern. Jimmy is furious to know that Alison has left with her father leaving behind a letter in the hands of Helena stating her decision to leave. Jimmy insults Helena and she slaps him. This causes Jimmy to collapse in despair and Helena kisses him passionately. In act three Helena and Jimmy are in a relationship. Alison arrives looking pale and sick. It is evident that she has lost the baby. Alison tells Helena that she is not angry with her will not cause the breakup of the couple (Helena and Jimmy). But Helena feels guilty about her act and decides to leave. After Helena's departure Alison apologizes to Jimmy. The play ends bringing about reconciliation between the couple (Jimmy and Alison).

Essay

Introduction to the Author:

John Osborne made his mark as a dramatist with staging of his very first play Look Back in Anger at the Royal Court Theatre in 1956, and the play has been regarded by competent critics as a turning point in the history of modern drama. This young playwright came from working class stock and so was eminent fitted to express the emotional mood of the English youth after World War II.

He was born on 12th December, 1929 in a suburb of London. His father, Thomas Godfrey Osborne, was a commercial artist and copywriter; and his mother, Nellie Beatrice, was a bar-maid. They belonged to "impoverished middle class". When he was hardly twelve years of age his father died. That was the time of the Second World War. Osborne spent much of his time with his mother in London. Eventually he was sent to Belmont College, Devon a rather cheap "Boarding school in the West of England." There he was "unhappy for most of the time." In 1946 he left school and with this ended his education. The same year his first play was produced and this to him, was a "terrible" experience. In order to make a living he worked as a journalist for a few months on trade magazines like Gas World and The Miller. He was a sort of dogsboy and sub-editor. In 1948 he worked as tutor to juvenile actors in a touring theatrical company. John Osborn continues to write. Latterly he has been taking rather a serious interest in the cinema. His film of Tom Jones has roused great expectations. The film versions of some of his plays also have been quite successful.

John Osborne's brilliant play Look Back in Anger highlights the class conflict that existed in English society and elsewhere after World War II. In essence, it is the story of an angry and frustrated young

man. This angry young man, Jimmy Porter, is educated beyond his social origin in the working classes. He has been given a liberal education. As a result, he has come to expect certain things and a set of values which he finds lacking in the society of which he is member. Jimmy falls in love with and marries Alison, the daughter of Colonel Redfern, an officer retired from the British Army in India, a man who is discontented with the changed England he sees on his return from India. Immediately after marriage Jimmy and Alison go to live in the flat of one of Jimmy's friends, Hugh Tanner. Shortage of money compels them to take this step. Unfortunately, Hugh and Alison dislike each other at first. Hugh's mother is profoundly moved by Alison's beauty, but Alison herself is too much obsessed with the old woman's ignorance and simplicity to be able to like her. On his side, Jimmy is pathetically anxious that Alison should be accepted by his social circle, but she is not.

After Hugh's departure, Jimmy and Alison take another flat, Cliff Lewis, another of Jimmy's friends, comes to live near them. Fortunately for them, Alison and Cliff become genuinely fond of each other. But, in spite of Cliff's determined efforts to prevent the conflict from flaring out, Jimmy's insult steadily becomes more and more unbearable. Whatever the subject under discussion, Jimmy twists it into a critique of either Alison or her family. There is little doubt that Jimmy loves Alison. He himself admits that even after four years of married life he is aroused by the sight of Alison doing something as leaning over the ironing board. Despite this, he cannot forgive Alison for feeling alienated from members of his social circle. The life of these three people continues in this troubled manner for sometime without any exceptional change. However, Alison announces that a friend of hers, Helena Charles, is coming to stay with them, Jimmy is furious. Helena's entry acts like a catalyst. Jimmy's remarks become even more critical. In fact, he crosses all limits of decency in debate and indulges in outrageously abusive and insulting remarks about Alison's family and Helena, and their social world in general. Helena is sickened with loathing and contempt but there is nothing she can do to stop Jimmy. She wonders how her friend Alison can bear up under such a perpetual assault upon her feelings. After a week of this, she finally sends a telegram to Alison's father, asking him to come and fetch home his daughter as she wants to return home.

The next day, Colonel Redfern arrives in response to the telegram. He arrives in Jimmy's absence. Alison begins her packing and while packing, she converses with her father, who has never been able to understand the rationale behind her marriage with Jimmy. Despite this social difference, he does not have any deep-rooted dislike for Jimmy. In fact, he appears to have a certain sympathy for the young man. Jimmy returns very soon after Alison's departure. He is terribly furious because Colonel Redfern had almost run him down by his car. The letter that Alison had left for him excites him to make some caustic remarks about her hypocrisy. Helena now takes the place of Alison in the Jimmy Porter household. She lives in sin with him, as his mistress. Apparently they get on well enough together. Helena, being more courageous than Alison, is better able to withstand Jimmy's habit of abusing everything connected with upper middle classes. At times, she admonishes him to stop talking about politics or religion at least for a day. Alison comes in quite unexpectedly. Jimmy is momentarily stunned by her reappearance but taking control of himself, tells Helena that a friend of hers is there to see her, and leaves the room.

Helena greets Alison with self-control. Alison feels guilty at having come back, but she says that she could resist the temptation. Helena then learns that Alison has lost her child, which awakens her to leave Jimmy. Alison does not want this, feeling that she should not ruin Jimmy's life, if he really has come to love Helena. But Helena is convinced that her behaviour has been wrong, according to her own moral code. She immediately packs her belongings and leaves, after informing Jimmy of her decision and explaining her reasons. Jimmy is disappointed with Alison because she had not even sent flowers for Mrs. Tanner's funeral. He feels that she dislikes poor people because of their ignorance, simplicity and lack of social grace. But Alison's

views have undergone a change due to her painful experience. She has come to realize the need for love and mutual sympathy. When her child died, she had needed Jimmy and his reassurance. She tells him that she is now completely committed to him. This brings the couple together again. The novelist does not tell us so, but we hope that the couple could live in peace ever afterwards.

Questions:

1. Write a short note on the characterisation of Osborne?
2. Write a note on life and vitality in the play Look Back in Anger?
3. Discuss Look Back in Anger a technically a traditional play?
4. Write a note on the exploration of the psychology of anger in the play?
5. Discuss Look Back in Anger as a comedy of manners and humours?

UNIT-IV- FICTION

2. Sons and lovers –D.H.Lawrence

SONS AND LOVERS

Summary:

Sons and Lovers tells the story of a man so emotionally connected to and influenced by his mother. This influence prevents him from forming a lasting relationship with other women. The protagonist Paul is unable to develop a healthy and lasting relationship with neither Miriam nor Clara because of his extreme love for his mother. Things became unreal after the death of his mother. His mother had been sustaining him all long. He got obsessed with a kind of loneliness about him. His mother was the only woman who he could love all his life.

Essay

Introduction to the Author:

David Herbert Lawrence was born in 1885 at Eastwood a colliery village in Nottinghamshire. He was the fourth child of his parents. His father Arthur Lawrence's was a miner. He was strong, lively and pleasure-loving. Lawrence's mother Lydia was a former school teacher. Lawrence grew up in the harsh degrading atmosphere of poverty and alcoholism. At an early age, he succumbed to pneumonia. It paved the way for tuberculosis. When he was thirteen, he won a scholarship from his council to Nottingham High School. There he stayed up to fifteen. Then he left to take up a job with a manufacture of surgical goods. Illness forced him to leave the job. Then he became a pupil-teacher at Eastwood. In 1903, he entered the training department of University College, Nottingham. After obtaining his teacher's certificate, he obtained a post in a school in Croydon. In 1909, some of his poems were accepted for publication in a periodical. Two years later, his first novel, 'The White Peacock' was published. It was a promising work. His mother died of cancer.

After an attack of pneumonia in 1911, Lawrence gave up teaching and became a professional writer. After the first world war, throughout the rest of his life Lawrence moved from place to place. He became restless. His restlessness took him to Germany, Italy, Australia, America and Mexico. While travelling through Germany and Italy he wrote his third autobiographical novel, 'Sons and Lovers'. At the end of February 1922, Lawrence and his wife sailed for Australia. His health continued to deteriorate. His doctor suggested that the climate of New Mexico might prove of benefit. So he along his wife arrived in New Mexico in September 1922. In 1924, he suffered from the acute illness. So he returned to Italy in 1926 and lived for two years near Florence. His health steadily worsened. On 22nd May 1930, he died in an anatorium in the south of France. Lawrence spent his last years in writing prolifically. From his pen flowed novels, poems, essays, critical studies, travelogues and Short-stories. He wrote to communicate his own vision of life to a troubled civilization.

The first part of the novel describes the early married life of the Morels. The novel opens with the description of the marriage of Paul's mother and father. Their life together in Bestwood is explained. Mrs. Morel is the centre figure who wins the battle with her husband. Deciding that her husband is not good, she turns to her eldest son, William and gives him the affection that could have been his father's. He leaves the family to make his way in London. There he meets a girl. When he brings her home, Mrs. Morel strongly disapproves of her and convinces William that she is not the right type of girl to him. After the death of William

she turns her affection towards Paul. He responds with equal passion. The delicacy, the tenderness, and sheer overwhelming sense of reality with which Lawrence presents the unfolding relationship of this mother and son make the lose any sense of morel judgement.

Loving his mother too deeply, Paul cannot get body and soul together in his relations with Miriam and Clara. Paul loves Miriam at first. As he grows up, he begins to realise that their relationship is too much a matter of mind and not enough of the body. Their relationship has been spiritual. Mrs. Morel wanted her son all for herself, disapproves of Miriam and tries to persuade Paul to stop seeing her. One day when Paul tells her that he is not in love with Miriam, she kisses him fervently. Through Miriam, Paul meets Clara Dawes, five years his seniors, separated from her blacksmith husband, Baxter Dawes. Clara is sensual and earthly. She is independent, emancipated, experienced and physically uninhabited. From Miriam Paul goes to Clara. For a brief moment the affairs appears satisfactory. The affair soon deters out and Clara returns to her husband. After the death of his mother, there determines to make his own way without his mother to guide him.

Thus 'Sons and Lovers' is a fictional version of Lawrence's own childhood and adolescence. The fiction follows the reality so closely that the novel almost seems to be an autobiography.

Questions:

1. How was the behaviour of the young child, Paul?
2. What are the modern elements in 'Sons and Lovers'?
3. What is the psychological treatment of Lawrence in 'Sons and Lovers'?
4. Why does Miriam face failure in her relationship with Paul?
5. Why is 'Sons and Lovers' considered as an autobiographical novel?

UNIT-V- FICTION

3. On Beauty- Zadie Smith

ON BEAUTY

Summary:

On beauty focuses on the besley family consisting of Howard the head of the family his wife Kiki and three children Zora, Jerome and Levi. The son Jerome when studying abroad falls in live with Monty's daughter Victoria. This relationship is broken by Howard. Kiki comes to know that her husband Howard is unfaithfull to her. She befriends carlene and they discuss about art.

The clash between Howard and Monty continue. As the novel proceeds the readers are introduced to Carlene health condition she dies of cancer. Howard overwhelmed by grief gets drunk and seduces Victoria. He tries to block Monty lectures but fails in is attempt. Howard and Kiki decide to breakup while the children are living with Howard. Although the family has been through a lot their love for each other is still there.

Essay

Introduction to the Author:

On Beauty is a 2003 novel by British author Zadie Smith, following the lives of a mixed-race British-American family living in the United States, dealing with the ethnic and cultural differences between the two countries, the nature of beauty. And the ongoing clash between liberal and conservative values in the same family and circle of friends. Described as a seriocomic novel that derives most of its power from the interaction between the characters, it also explores themes including black identity both in the US and abroad, particularly in predominantly white spaces, and the way race intersects with class, culture, and physical attractiveness. On Beauty was released to massive critical acclaim, and was shortlisted for many highly regarded awards, including the Man Booker Prize and the Orange Prize for Fiction, the latter it won in 2006.

In addition to On Beauty, Zadie Smith is the author of five novels- the best-known of which is White Teeth, which was named one of Time Magazine's 100 best English-Language novels of the 20th century. She has also written multiple acclaimed short stories and several non-fiction articles on her writing process and her view on life. She is the editor of The Book of Other People, an anthology featuring short stories from some of the most acclaimed living authors. She was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2002, and is currently a tenured professor at New York University's Creative Writing Program.

On Beauty focuses on the Besley family, which is led of white father Howard, a liberal college professor of art history, and black mother Kiki, who works at a hospital. They have three children Zora, a Freshman at Wellington College, where her father teaches; Jerome, an upperclassman at Brown University, and Levi, who is still in high school. When the story begins, Jerome is studying abroad and interning with a conservative academic named Monty Kipps. The Kipps, a British-Caribbean family, consist of Monty and his wife Carlene, their successful son Michael who works in finance, and their beautiful eighteen-years old daughter Victoria. Jerome's work with Monty causes tension between him and his father, who dislikes his son working with a conservative and has always been critical of his son's devout Christianity. Jerome is deeply in

love with Victoria Kipps and is planning to propose to her, which causes tension between Howard and Kiki. Kiki has recently discovered that Howard has been unfaithful to her, but she doesn't know the details. Howard plans to try to break up the relationship between his son Victoria, but his arrival in the UK is poorly timed and he winds up making a conflict between Jerome and Michael worse. Jerome leaves England to return to the US, devastated by the breakup.

Nine months later, Jerome and Kiki are at the town festival when they run into Claire Malcolm, a family friend and fellow professor at Wellington. She tells them that Monty Kipps is coming to Wellington to teach. This puts Howard into a bad mood. Jerome tries to take his father's mind off it by suggesting they attend a public concert in Boston. There, they meet a young black man named Carl, who no longer attends school but still has a thirst for knowledge and is an avid slam poet. Later on, it's Howard and Kiki's anniversary party. On the way to the party, Levi runs into Carlene Kipps, although he doesn't know it's her. Once the Kipps are aware of the party, Kiki invites them, and all but Carlene show up. At the party, Kiki finds out that Howard's infidelity was not a one-night stand as she believed, but an extended affair with her friend Claire. The fallout from this affects Zora directly as she begins her sophomore year of college. She is initially rejected from Claire's poetry workshop at Wellington due to the awkwardness, but she persuades Claire to let her in. Kiki, meanwhile, takes her mind off her marriage by befriending Carlene, the two bonding over their mutual love of art. Levi is heading down a dark path, as a conflict with his manager over work hours leads him to quit his job, and he finds himself pulled into the orbit of a group of Haitian hustlers who self-knock-off goods on the street.

Several of these stories coincide at a poetry café called the Bus Stop. Zora's poetry class takes a trip there, and she sees Levi and his new friends perform a loud and intimidating set about Haitian oppression. Meanwhile, Carl performs as well and wows the crowd. He's so excited after his set that he kisses the most beautiful girl he sees-Zora. Claire recruits him to her class as a special case so she can develop his talent. Both Zora and Victoria are enrolled in Howard's art history class, and Howard finds himself becoming attracted to the much-younger Victoria. Victoria invites Howard to a formal student-faculty dinner coming up, but Howard's feud with Monty is complicating affairs. Monty is attempting to bring conservative lectures to campus, which Howard is aiming to block, and Monty is aiming to shut down the discretionary students program that allowed Claire to admit Carl. Claire recruits Zora to make a speech to the faculty against Monty's proposal. Meanwhile, Carlene and Kiki are becoming good friends as the drama involving their husbands intensifies.

The Belseys spend Christmas in London, and they receive a sudden call that Carlene has died. It seems she had been living with cancer for a long time and hid it. She has left a valuable Haitian painting they both admired to Kiki, but the Kipps are outraged by this and claim it must have been a mistake. At the funeral, Howard is overwhelmed and runs out. He goes to visit his working-class father, who he has a tense relationship with. He later gets drunk and heads over to the Kipps' house, and sleeps with Victoria. As Wellington's spring semester starts, Howard fails to block Monty's lectures, and Zora makes an impassioned plea for the discretionary students. Howard is torn between his new relationship with Victoria, and his desire to repair his unravelling marriage to Kiki. Levi, meanwhile, has been becoming more and more militant with the influences of his new friends and workers. Kiki visits Monty and the two have a friendly conversation about politics, but she is startled to see one of Zora's classmates leave the house in a hurry. Carl is working at the Wellington Library, and he and Victoria are becoming closer. As Monty's conservative lectures begin, Howard sees Kiki attend one of them. The two have a fiery confrontation at home, and they eventually have sex one final time while admitting they no longer belong together. At a party during spring break, Zora discovers that Carl and Victoria are dating, and this leads to a blow-up where it comes out that Howard slept with Victoria as well, and

that Monty is sleeping a student. The next morning, Jerome and Zora discover that the valuable Haitian painting that the Kipps' were keeping from Kiki has been stolen from Monty's office. Monty accuses Carl, but it was actually Levi and his friends who stolen it. Kiki discovers it under his bed, and then discovers that it was actually left to her. By the summer, Kiki and Howard are separated, with the kids staying with Howard for the time being. Howard is on the verge of tenure at Wellington, and he sees his former wife in the back row, there to support him. Although the family has been through a lot, their love for each other is still there.

Questions:

1. Describe the significance of the title on "On Beauty"?
2. Write a short paragraph on Zadie Smith?
3. What is the main theme of the novel "On Beauty"?
4. Sketch the character of Howard?
5. Write a short paragraph on the plot construction of the novel "On Beauty"?

FACULTY MEMBER

DR.J.MARIA MONALIZA BURGESS