

## **THE INFLUENCE OF REALISM ON DRAMA AND THEATRE IN 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY**

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### **Abstract**

*A realistic play is written in colloquial prose. Its characters speak naturally. Their psychology is the psychology of men and women as we understand them today. Georg Buchner, a young German, turned away from revolutionary propaganda and started writing a play 'Leonce and Lena', a whimsical satire on the aristocracy. Fredrich Hebbel turned away momentarily from historical plays in verse, and wrote the first realistic tragedy that anticipated the social pessimism of the coming naturalists. Despotism and censorship turned a number of The coming of the Realistic social plays changed the thoughts of Dramatists in Britain. Russia especially lives at monasteries, palaces, bazaars and fairs and their meals and manners, clothing and jewelary It raised the conflict between writers of 'Art for Art sake' and the writers of socially committed in the first half of the twentieth century. Brecht's stage craft with aggressive performance in using realistic methods take the Drama into Heights. The aim of writing this paper is to tell about vicissitudes of human life and conditions of society.*

**Key words:** well-made play, Ibsen, Georgr Buchner, Fredrich Hebbel, Brecht, Marxist Theory etc.

Realism is one kind of theory which represents the actual life, culture, characters on the stage without any idealization or exaggeration. *Henrik Ibson* The Norwegian Dramatist is the pioneer of Realism. Some of his plays are *Ghosts*, *pillers of society* and *Hedda Gabbler* which deal with the concepts of the sins of the father transferring to the son resulting in syphilis, war and business, ending of life by a woman respectively. Another characteristic feature of Realism is the use of simple words and expressions to convey even a complicated subject. They use common language to describe the ordinary and simple lives. Such kind of language is the mirror of everyday ordinary speech. Some other famous writers of Realism are *Alexandre Dumas* fills in France , *George Bernard Shaw* in Ireland and *Anton Chekhov*

in Russia, *JameSyng*, a popular Irish Dramatist also belongs to this School of Realistic Writers.

*Andre Antoine* of France put forth the philosophy of Drama advocated by *Emile Zola* and *Henrick Ibsen* and carried out their spirit in his writings. This simple and humble person who worked as a clerk in a gas company teamed up with a group of amateur and opened their Theatre-Libre with four modest one-act plays, one of which was dramatization of Zola's story *Jacques Damour*. The Theatre, *Libre* had experimented new methods and new material on the stage to draw the attention of the audience in explaining scenes in Realistic manner. In the consecutive years, Antoine explored and invented new techniques of acting and paved the way for naturalistic acting in which the actors avoided unnecessary gestures. His skills exhibited on the stage realistically with the plays *The power of Darkness* by *Leo Tolstoy* in 1888, *Ghosts* and *The wild Duck* by *Ibsen* *Miss Julie* by *Strindberg* in 1891 and *The Weavers* by *Haupman* in 1893. It resulted to begin a realistic movement. Realism had got trend with all these plays. The scenes represented the actual situation outside society directly presented on the stage as it appears before our eyes.

Choice of simple words and expressions to convey even a complicated subject is a characteristic feature of the school of Realist Writers. Writers use common language to describe the ordinary and simple lives. Realist Language is the mirror of every day ordinary speech. The stories or plots they narrate are essentially the true record of the happenings at some place or the other. So there is no scope for neglecting the realities. The characters depicted in the stories or plays are also drawn from the ordinary lives. Their qualities, moods and emotions are quite real.

The characteristics of realism clearly shown in a grim play *Power of Darknes*, which projects the dark side of the lives of the peasants of Russia. It deals with the criminal instincts of the bourgeoisie that is the capitalist class who exploited the peasants to the core. The injustice meted out to this working class namely the peasants was so acute that the play had been banned in Russia. The same can be found in *Antoine's* production of *Ghosts* which was the first recorded production of any play by *Ibsen* in France. This play deals with the concept of the sins of the father transferring to his son resulting in Syphilis. In 1897 Antoine became the director of the Theatre's Antoine, and he made it the headquarters for all the young enthusiasts of the new drama. Antoine flew in the face of the established acting style of the Paris Conservatoire, the acting school of the Comedie-Francaise and the classical French theatre as a whole, which he believed had paralyzed the profession. The classical French actor was encouraged to develop a "type" to fill the needs of the repertory; he was trained in the art of elocution and was accustomed to 'recite' his part rather than live it, declaiming his lines and emphasizing key words rather than live it, declaiming his lines and emphasizing key words rather than talking naturally. He would use the same gestures what ever his character; he would never speak when he moved ; and he was expected to master this and a hundred other rules. As a result of Antoine's attack on the accepted ways, his

actor now seemed unconscious of the presence of his audience, he acted with his whole body, not just with voice and gesture. Antoine never allowed him to break character by glancing at the prompter, striking a pose or playing for effect; and he was prepared to vary his performance to meet the requirements of each individualized part. He used natural gestures and seemed to behave as in ordinary life, even to the point of acting with his back to the audience in Realistic manner.

Realism had become popular with *Antoine's* stage craftsmanship and stage direction as well as stage settings. He always had firm belief that a play would be properly executed on the stage only after rehearsals. He always worked with real furniture and real Props. He had the belief that the director is pivot of the play and his contribution is enormous. He should be an embodiment of patience and should take great care to transport the audience into a make believe world or a world of Reality. Realism had reached its heights with the great contribution of Both *Strindberg* and *Ibsen* who were contemporaries and whose careers as writers ran parallel to each other.

*Strindberg's* early plays were romantic historical dramas. But in course of time, these were replaced by the Realistic dramas full of societal issues and related problems. In 1884, He wrote *Getting Married*, two volumes of short stories with a preface on women's and men's rights, as a riposte to *A Doll's house*. Ibsen also evinced interest in writing plays based on Realism that those who followed the naturalistic movement in Europe. The Realism in the plays *The Father*, *Miss Julie* contained within itself the seeds of its own dissolution. *The Father* was an intimate study of a marital relationship, a bitter fight between the captain, a man losing his mind and his integrity, and *Laura*, the woman who tortures him with the doubt that he is not the father of his child. *Nietzsche* agreed with the young author that a state of war between the sexes was a fundamental law of life and marriage. *Strindberg* intended the play to be his *Agamenon*, the tragedy of the Greek King who fell victim to his wife's hatred, and it is true that in its classical economy and headlong rush to the final moment when the captain is cajoled into a straitjacket, *The Father* is unlike other naturalistic plays. The play actually needs none of the external details of realism to make its point.

*Strindberg* advocated realism which has strong repercussions in the modern theatre. He had avoided divided his play in to acts. *Brecht* was to advocate that the audience must be totally aware that it is in a theatre at all times. All of *Strindberg's* requirements for the intense concentration of the audience during performance clearly indicate his idea of dramatic illusion. His audience was to be completely convinced of the reality of the world of the stage and transported wholly into its sphere of influence. As for the stage setting for *Miss Julie*, *Strindberg* decided to show only part of the kitchen in which the action was to take place in making the spectator should complete what was not seen by visualizing it in his imagination. *Strindberg* also revealed that he had borrowed the idea of asymmetry and economy of the scene from impressionistic painting, another unmistakable hint of the future

disintegration of the realistic mode of Drama.

Inspired by Antoine Tehatre-Libre, Otto Brahm opened his Frei Buhne in Berlin in 1889. His first production was Ibsen's *Ghosts*. Unlike Antoine and his amateurs, Brahm was assisted by a number of well-established actors and directors in using theory of Realism, including the distinguished actor *Emanuel Reicher*. They all shared Brahm's convictions, and together they preached and practiced a concept of drama based upon a richer, more penetrating representation of human beings on the stage. As with Antoine, this concept implied the rejection of the stereotype, the dialogue of tirade and bombast, the familiar gesture and the sonorous voice.

Realism in Germany started with *Brahm and Hauptmann*. Brahm's major statement of theory, 'The old and the New Art of Acting,' focused on the essence of truth in performance. Brahm suggested that new acting techniques which came into vogue resembled the age-old traditional art of German acting suggested in his scholarly way that the new acting was no other than the traditional art of German acting, before that of the nineteenth century, and found it in the so-called "Hamburg realists" of the low German style in the eighteenth century. Brahm made another point. He believed that historically the creative arts had an inner kinship with the performing arts: the two influenced each other and developed in parallel. If exaggerated effects in painting and playwriting had been infused with genuine feeling, the actor could not long stay out of step with his fellow artists. But revolutions in a multi-art form like that of the theatre are not easy. Antoine had created his own company out of his amateurs, training them himself in his own ways. Brahm's professionals, however, proved more reluctant to form a true ensemble devoted to naturalism, and he ran into the typical conflict which arises from any attempt to change theatre practice too quickly. He tried to direct an actor of the old school like *Josef Kainz*, a performer greatly admired for the extraordinary grace of his speech and movement, *Kainz's* own concern for "Harmony" in word and action inevitably contradicted the psychological realism Brahm wanted.

The source of Brahm's greatest dissatisfaction with the old methods lay in the traditional way of acting. He had chosen the *Antigone* for its age less theme, the conflict between the needs of society and the rights of the individual, but in Brahm's view, Creon remained too cold and symbolic a figure, and not sufficiently moving as a portrait of a fallen ruler. yet any step Brahm tried to take towards making a great impersonal tragedy appear more realistic was of course strictly limited by the nature of the original. *Antigone* and *Ismene* also played too statuesquely, lacking the individuality he sought, and only the smaller parts of the Watchman and Haemon seemed in any sense human. The truth was that Brahm's realism was not suited to the exalted language of tragedy, and even less to the stylized comedy of the past.

Hauptmann's *Vor Sonnenaufgang* (*Before Sunrise*, 1889), strongly influenced by Tolstoy's squalid scene in *The power of Darkness*. It is a gloomy of brutal realism; its subject is the effect of alcoholism on the poor and incestuous bestiality. No play, however, better

exemplifies the new direction of the realistic theatre than Hauptmann's *Die Weber* (*The Weavers*, 1892). This was his most notorious naturalistic piece, a play with a wholly political object. It dealt with the unsuccessful revolt of the Silesian weavers in 1844. Hauptmann was the grandson of a Silesian weaver, and so wrote from the heart. It was particularly pertinent since Silesia had suffered a famine in 1890, and Hauptmann had visited the region in 1891 to see the piece-workers in their hovels, and witness their squalor and starvation for himself. In *The Weavers*, a playwright had dared to apply the principles of authenticity for the first time to history, treating his subject as if it were contemporary. The theory of Realism introduced in *The Weavers* by Hauptmann in describing the nature of mass hunger and universal poverty. His objective was to report the truth accurately and expose the suffering of actual social group. He explained that his drama was 'not so much the ready-made result of thought as the thinking process itself. This notion emerged in Brecht's idea of plays. The locations in *The Weavers* pass from the textile factory where the weavers try to sell their work.

Domestic Realism is progressed in the London theatre on its own. It is started by T.W. Robertson whose social comedies on satirical view of English, middle and upper class society in realistic manner. In common with his age, Robertson was a moralist, but he showed some signs of wanting to *demonstrate* his moral points in the modern way, rather than merely utter moral sentiments about the acquisitive society and the barriers of class. *caste*, examined the difficulties of Esther Eccles, a working-class girl married to a man from the upper-classes, George D'Alroy. But the play also provided explicitly English points of reference by introducing the girl's drunken father, her sister *Polly* and Polly's friend *Sam Gerridge*, a plumber-all present in order to expand the simple contrast between the world of poor Esther and the snobbery of the D'Alroy family. Like his fellows on the continent, Robertson also attacked the old theatricism, and was taken with the idea of bringing realism to the scenery and the dialogue as well as to the plot. His disciple of the next generation, *Arthur Wing Pinero*, depicted Robertson in the character of the penurious author *Wrench* in *Trelawny of the Wells*, struggling to have his new style of playwriting recognized:

"I strive to make my people talk and behave like people", he explains, 'to fashion heroes out of actual, dull, everyday men, and heroines from simple maidens in muslin frocks'.

Robertson and Edmund Gosse writings had some impact on British recognition of the new writer from Scandinavia. The works *The Spectator*, *The Academy*, *Fraser's Magazine* and *The Fortnight Review* in the years 1872 and 1873 made a mark in depicting contemporary society of that age as it appeared before our eyes with the help of Realism Technique. The coming of the Realistic social plays changed the thoughts of Dramatists in Britain. It raised the conflict between writers of 'Art for Art sake' and the writers of socially committed in the first half of the twentieth century. The new movement in Britain brought champion of writers in Realism at the right time.

The movement of Realism spreads even in Scotland. The Scottish critic William Archer



fought for Ibsen's cause where Gosse dropped it. He promoted idea of Realism of Ibsen in the most direct way possible by helping his plays on to the London stage. The first production of Ibsen in London, an adoption of *The Pillars of Society* in 1880, was the result of two years of effort by Archer. For the next few years Archer continued to write ceaselessly of Ibsen's work, pointing to his force as a realist, praising his rejection of facile idealism, naming him with considerable foresight as 'one of the great negative voices of a negative age' in the *St. James Magazine* of January 1882. Some of Archer's translations of Ibsen's plays had been published in 1889. Among them, *A doll's house* in his translation was given its first London production at the Novelty Theatre, King's Way. The use of simple words in the dialogues in Real manner and authenticity in dialogue coming in translation of *A doll's house* was avoided from dullness of Ibsen's unheroic characters made the audience easily come out from the fascination of romantic melodrama of the stage. It was clearly understood about the plight of the woman as well as their rights. At the end of the play, Nora left home for becoming individualistic. It had not been digested to some which is very realistic.

In response to the Grein's request, Bernard Shaw also tried his hand at writing a realistic play for the independent Theatre society. As it happened, Shaw had attempted collaborated writing for the Play '*Widower's houses*' with Archer before ten years. It was a polemical attack on what he called "slum landlordism". In the process, Shaw interested towards socialism and plight of the society. His characters in the play are talking about social freedom. It was the result "*Mrs. Warren's Profession*". It is Shaw's Moral study of the economics of prostitution. The play begins perversely and deceptively on a lovely summer afternoon in a cottage garden, with a pretty girl lying in a hammock. Its subject prostitution and white slave trade lies as a hidden tension behind its witty comedy. The truth is that Mr Warren is a procuress whose international chain of brothels has paid for daughter Vivie's expensive education at Cambridge. Shaw's intention was not presented Mrs. Warren as villains. He was talking about the perception of the women in choosing life which is intolerable. Behind these judgments on Shaw's jesting manner and flippant tone lie hints of what was to become his peculiar brand of realism. As dramatic critic to *The Saturday Review* from 1895 to 1898 Shaw had repeatedly condemned the pedestrian thinking of the romantic drama and the mechanics of the well-made play. Shaw was an admirer of Ibsen in presenting the theme of socialism and attacking on slavery to ideals and idealism. The basis of an Ibsen play was that human behavior should justify itself by its effect on life. Shaw's role in the history of English drama was to elevate the serious theatre in London to a status it had not known for over century. He was truly dealing in realism. The practical challenges of the new realism is especially how the actors should match his art to the new dialogue, and how the writer should adapt his writing to the new technique of the stage. It did not come from *Copenhagen or Paris or Berlin*. It came from a city generally considered to be fringes of Western Theatre.

The roots of Realism had gained its strength in Russia with Nemirovich- *Danchenko* and *Konstantin Stanislavsky* of the Moscow theatre. Vladimir Ivanovich Nemirovich-Danchenko was a respected playwright. Moscow became the new centre of the naturalistic movement. In the years that followed it was the fountainhead of the theory and method which nourished realistic acting and production everywhere. Where other companies succeeded only in imitating the surface of real life, the MAT realized its psychological depth. Danchenko is known by his autobiography *My Life in the Russian Theatre* outside Russia. He was renowned as a great director and teacher of acting. He worked to create natural speech and behavior in the actor as he called it 'sincerity of Experience'.

*Konstantin Sergeyevich Stanislavsky* worked to extract external realism in his production. The production of *The Mikado* of Gilbert and Sullivan exhibited japons manners in realistic way and also shown inner qualities of psychological honesty in evolutionary way rather than revolutionary way. New regulations had formed in Mosque Art Theatre (MAT). 'One must love art, and not oneself in Art'. 'Actors were to be chosen for their devotion to work. Rehearsals were to last as long as twelve hours a day, and would be conducted in an atmosphere of relevance for the Realistic Drama. Crickets had been brought into add realism to the stage craft. The Theatre itself projected life in old *Russia especially lives at monasteries, palaces, bazaars and fairs and their meals and manners, clothing and jewelary*. The audience was treated to replicas of rooms on Kremilin, the Cathedral and a bridge over the river Yaouza with barge passing beneath. For one device, the palace ceiling and doors were lowered to make the Boyars seem taller on their ritualistic entrance. The audience was dazzled by natural speech and realistic acting. The Production established the new theatre overnight and plays performed in realistic manner.

*Stark Young*, the most perceptive of theatre critics opinioned that The authenticity of the ensemble acting, costume and décor impressed every one. He also felt that realism of MAT had already reached a limit in showing a new degree of psychology in the playing. The MAT'S ability to embrace the subtleties of *Contemporary realism* in all its aspects marked its difference from the Meiningen company. Without a complete commitment to an ideal of Realism, the early success of Chekhov's *The seagull* in the production of 1898, *Uncle Vanya*(1899) and *The Lower Depths* (1902) by *Maxim Gorky* (1868-1936) would not have been possible. To these plays should be added Tolstoy's fierce indictment of human nature. The play *Seagull* was far more politically coloured than anything Moscow had seen on the stage before, and its portrait of human degradation in a doss-house in a provincial town on the Volga was a strong comment on social conditions in Tsarist Russia. *Realistic details of thievery, alcoholism, prostitution and violence have been clearly depicted as if they are directly appearing in front of our eyes*. The play went off to inspect some actual institutions of lower life in Moscow's notorious Khitrov Market. In performance, the actors wore real rags, so that some spectators feared they might catch lice from being too near the stage. But Gorky was not Chekov, and the characters of *The Lower Depths* are more strident, less

under-stated, than those of his friend. While remaining plot less and impressionistic in its realism. Many have commented with amusement on Stanislavsky's excesses in pursuit of surface Realism, especially the sound effects he dearly loved: the crickets and Frogs, the birds and dogs in the *Seagull*. Stanislavsky later perceived his error as he began to work towards a greater psychological realism of Character, and found it necessary for Director and actor to 'grow together' in their work on a play.

By the time of writing *The cherry Orchard*, Chekhov has subtly made each character at war with itself, so that a small cast represents a large variety of other discords-of youth and age, of financial solvency and insolvency, of contrasting social classes, of complacency and ambition, of marital needs. Chekhov's method juxtaposing individual attitudes in order to reveal an incongruous situation in its entirety is also one reason for his keen impact as a comic artist. His idea of the comedy suitable for a realistic play was by no means based upon the traditional exaggeration of character and the incongruity of situation.

In the early years of the twentieth century the search for a new direction in English playwriting after Ibsen continued fitfully. The Vedrenne –Barker years at the Royal Court represented the Edwardian consciousness on the stage but not English Ibsen. The court experiment did turn up and emerged new social and political realists. Realistic studies of Edwardian England laid path to know about the contemporary situation in England. *Harley Granville Barker's Play The Voysey Inheritance* about middle-class family life. The story is of the tragic education of Edward Voysey, who inherits money that has been made by fraud and finds him trapped into continuing the business. Another playwriting, *Waste*(1907) reflecting the activities of living politicians, mixing sex and politics even to the point of touching on the subject of abortion, illegal at that time. In this play Barker made determined use of a brilliantly dry, cultivated conversation exchanged in realistically solid, period sets in order to fill out a fastidious picture of the ruling political circle. *The Madras House, produced at the Duke of York's Theatre* is a rambling comedy of many characters that deals wittily with female repression in Edwardian Society. Henry Huxtable is a well-to-do draper running a bond street fashion-house, a man, who is blessed with six unmarried and frustrated daughters. In act I the audience learns of their pathetic lives at home in Denmark Hill:

Sometime ago a gentleman proposed to Jane. And mother said it would have been more honorable if he had spoken to father first, and that Jane was the youngest and too young anyhow to know her own mind. Well, you know she's twenty-six...

In act 2 the daughters are cleverly mirrored by a seraglio of sales girls who must 'live in', according to the practice of the day, on the premises of the dress shop, to be as rigidly supervised as slaves. In act 3 they are also likened to the fashion models who are paraded seductively in the exotic emporium in order to sell their wares. Meanwhile, in the real world outside, the realities of male-dominated marriage close in remorselessly, and the virginal middle-age of the spinster daughters grows ever nearer.



Barker's virtue was that he did not follow the conventional rules for fashioning a realistic play. the plays of John Galsworthy suffered because he followed them too closely. He was the best of English well-made playwrights and he worked to rule, selecting a solid social problem and tackling it with a well-built, musical plot. He was less interested than Barker in studying human nature, and his characters tended to be created merely in order to activate the plot. With little humor and less lyricism, he pressed his subject home with studied impartiality, and usually ended his play with a tableau curtain that represented a dramatic question mark, so passing ball to his audience. When in *The Silver Box* at the Royal Court in 1906, a down-and-out steals a silver cigarette box and gets hard labor, in contrast with a wealthy young socialite who steals a girl's purse and is discharged, this representation of the double standard for the rich and the poor made Galsworthy's reputation. When the prisoner Falder jumps to his death at the end of *Justice* (1910), it brought the audience to its feet, and the Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, felt impelled to change the law on solitary confinement. Galsworthy took themes of Playwrights from lively social topics.

The play that has been most revived is *strife* (1909) which takes as its subject the struggle between capital and labor during a strike at tin-plate foundry. The plot is presented as a battle of iron wills between these two stalwarts, but human character is of little account, even when, to raise the emotional temperature, Robert's starving the end. Robert loses his control over the men and Anthony resigns his position on the Board. In the early years of this century, poetic drama, romantic tragedy, and the subtle play of symbolic moods absorbed playwrights; Edmond Rostand, Maurice Maeterlinck, and Gabriele d'Annunzio. Italy produced no realists of any merit after Giuseppe Giacosa with his *Falling Leaves* of 1900. The post-war revival of the English theatre is associated with the enterprise of George Bernard Shaw and his revival of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre after 1956. The arts constantly renew themselves by rebellion, and the realistic theatre of the well-made play was ripe for rehabilitation, ready for a return to nature. New plays had been emerged out and created new trend with the influence of Realism. Arnold Wesker, John Arden, John Osborne had come to the surface. Their plays move around the working-class life. It includes a new quality of realistic speech, a dialogue that was in itself an attack of complacency of the middle class audience. It is clearly found in John Osborne's play *Look back in Anger* in 1956. He was an antihero, a split-minded misfit in a play whose plot was almost entirely one of discord and conflict. Its spirit caught the imagination of the fifties by pitting one generation against another, and the unromantic misalliance at the centre of the play, the marriage of working-class Jimmy to middle-class Alison, was sufficient to divide the audience against itself. Jimmy was the prototypical 'angry young man', a violent figure of love and hate, self-laceration and self-pity.

In 1956 another major event occurred that was to change the direction of English Drama even more radically in the remaining years of twentieth century. This was the London visit of the Berliner Ensemble, which for many offered a first sight of the drama of Bertolt Brecht

and its special style of aggressive performance.

Brecht's drama and his stagecraft supplied at a stroke a host of practice examples of antinaturalistic theatre, together with its theoretical rationale and its Marxist underpinning of the social relevance of good theatre. *Encore* was the London periodical that supported the new British drama, and *The Encore Reader* reported candidly,

In Brecht, the English dramatist found a writer who combined commitment with poetry; aesthetic discipline with dialectical rigour. To be 'Brechtian, then, was to be politically concerned, theatrically bold and artistically disciplined. It is little wonder he became the national paragon. (*The Encore Reader* (1965), 135)

The impact of all this is doubled and redoubled because of the inventive dramatic framework. The play the audience watches in the theatre turns out to be a film being produced in a film studio, and in turn this film is seen to be based on the fiction in reality and in real time the people in the play are the characters in the film. Hare's reality, his truth, is sharply recognizable because the audience is compelled to see the issues from first one view point and the another. In an interview the play's first designer, Hayden Griffin, indicated that the comparatively bare stage made possible its quick scene changes, which had the virtue of inducing the spectator's maximum participation:

You're saying to the audience...you're watching a real scene, its modern stage design, so you could be in a number places, not obviously a film studio, and then we suddenly move everything, and they realize. One technical thing is that we make the audience pan the shot; they are made to feel that they're the cameraman. We use about five different moving elements, including lights tracking-and the actors, as they play, are moving on a revolve.

*-Plays and Players, February 1983,13*

Realism influenced in creating new trend in dramatic setting as well as projecting common man 's suffering in realistic manner. It is developed into new forms and laid the ways in reflecting new dimensions of solving problems of life in the society. Hare's experiments with an unconfined and non-realistic stage space have continued energetically, especially in his recent trilogy on the Anglican clergy, British law and party politics in *Racing Demon* in 1990, *Murmuring Judges* in 1991 and *The Absence of War* in 1993. All produced at the national Theatre.

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