

Smokescreens by Harold Brighouse

Smokescreens by Harold Brighouse

Summary

The play "Smokescreens" has at least three basic ideas or themes. The first theme is that every character in the play has a dual personality. They hide their real personality behind smokescreens. The second theme is the bad effects of broken families on children. The third theme is the generation gap.

Susan has come to London to see her sister Lucy. Primrose is her niece and very modern. She goes to nightclubs late at night. She smokes cigarettes and wears lipstick.

Susan is conservative and does not like this. She hides her bag so that she may not go out. Actually, she wants to have a talk with her. Primrose needs her handbag because there are cigarettes and lipstick in it. Then she comes to know that her Aunt Susan has her handbag. She takes her handbag and leaves.

Susan objects that Lucy has not disciplined her daughter but Lucy defends herself. They exchange their views as how children should be brought up.

Lucy is a self-made woman. She has divorced her husband, because he is unfaithful. She starts a business of taxicabs. She gives all her time to her business and ignores her daughter. Primrose is against her mother because of that. She does not like her mother's views on the institution of marriage. She sends her friend Clarice to tell her mother and aunt that she is going to marry John. John is Clarice's brother and is very ugly.

Clarice tells Lucy and Susan about her ugly brother in detail. Later Primrose also comes there and breaks the news of her marriage. Her mother is shocked but hides her feelings. Primrose and Lucy have a talk and then Primrose leaves telling her that John is waiting in the dining room.

1. **What are the basic ideas or themes of the play "Smokescreens".**

The play "Smokescreens" has at least three basic ideas or themes. The first theme is that all the characters in the play have dual personalities. They hide their real personalities behind smokescreens. The second theme is the bad effects of broken families on children. The third theme is the generation gap.

When we read the play carefully, we see that all the three main characters hide themselves behind smokescreens. They pretend what they are not. Primrose pretends to be a rude and spoiled girl. However, later in the story she begs her aunt's forgiveness and tells her that she does so only to avoid conversation. She tells her aunt that she behaves just like a cuttlefish that squirts out a flood of ink to hide it from attack.

Aunt Susan pretends to have the Victorian morality. However, surprisingly she tells a lie about her headache just to stop Primrose from going out. Lucy pretends that she does not have any care or love for her daughter, but actually, she is a loving and caring mother. The writer shows her love for her daughter at the end of the play.

The second theme is that a broken family has very bad effects on children. They are spoiled. They are rude and disrespectful to their elders and do what they like. They are confused and do such things as are not good for them.

The third theme is the generation gap. The writer has depicted the generation gap very successfully. The old generation is hard and harsh towards the young generation and has the

Victorian morality. However, the young generation is rude. The people of this generation want to live according to the demands of their society. (285)

2. Bring out the conflict between Primrose and Aunt Susan or generation gap in the play.

The conflict between Primrose and Aunt Susan is that Aunt Susan wants Primrose not to go out at night, whereas Primrose is not ready to listen to her. Actually, they have conflict because of the generation gap.

Aunt Susan has come to London to see her sister. She is 50 and believes in the Victorian morality. She is conservative and believes that children should be treated very harshly. They should be spanked to teach discipline. She also believes that parents should use power of the purse to prevent children from doing undesirable things. Therefore, she decides to talk to Primrose rather harshly. That is why she hides to talk to Primrose's handbag just to stop her from going out and to talk to her.

Primrose is a representative of the young generation. She wants to do what she likes. She wants to go out wearing lipstick and smoking cigarettes. She is not ready to listen to her aunt and she behaves rudely to her. She wants to live own life. She is not ready to be dictated by the old generation.

Therefore, this is the conflict between Primrose and Aunt Susan. Actually, it is a conflict between the old and the young generation. (203)

3. Bring out the conflict between Lucy and Susan.

The conflict between Aunt Susan and Lucy is that Aunt Susan thinks that Lucy spoiled Primrose. She has not brought her up according to the Victorian morality. She has spoiled her by telling wrong things about her father. However, Lucy defends herself and says that what she did was right.

Aunt Susan believes in the Victorian morality. She is conservative and believes that children should be treated very harshly and they should be spanked to teach discipline. She also believes that parents should use power of the purse to prevent children from doing undesirable things.

Lucy represents old but liberal minded generation and does not believe in the Victorian morality. The people of this generation believe: "Give our children a better time than we had ourselves." Therefore, the people like Lucy do not try to discipline their children. That is why Lucy does not stop Primrose from doing anything.

Aunt Susan says that she has spoiled Primrose by telling her that her father was a scoundrel and her mother was a fool who married him. Lucy says that she did that because she had to justify her divorce before Primrose.

Therefore, we can conclude that the conflict between Aunt Susan and Lucy is that Aunt Susan thinks that Lucy has spoiled Primrose. She has not brought her up according to the Victorian morality. She has spoiled her by telling her wrong things about her father. However, Lucy defends herself and says that what she did was right. (247)

4. Why did Primrose decide to marry ugly John instead of marrying a charming man?

Primrose decided to marry ugly John instead of a charming man because of the following reasons:

Firstly, she decided to marry ugly John because it would be an insult to her mother if she married a charming man. She said, "I've not insulted you. If I'd picked a charming man...."

Actually, her father was a charming man. Probably, she had told her daughter that all charming men were unfaithful. She divorced her father because of that. In fact, Lucy had told her so to justify her divorce. Now Primrose was a grown up girl and she knew that not all men were equal. That was why she decided to marry ugly John.

Secondly, she thought that if she married a charming man, her mother would exert her influence on her and would not let her marry. She said to her mother, "Well, for a Charles, you'd have had the right to exert your influence...."

Thirdly, she thought that her mother made a mistake, when she married a charming man. She said that she was marrying an ugly man who was different from her charming father. Therefore, it was a different mistake.

Fourthly, she thought that her mother had been sentimental when she married a charming man, whereas she was not being sentimental. She meant to say that her decision of marrying an ugly man was quite sensible.

Lastly, she decided to marry ugly John because she was in love with him. She told her mother that she was going to marry ugly John because he made her feel all funny inside.

Therefore, these were the reasons behind her marrying ugly John. (271)

5. Bring out the conflict between Primrose and Lucy.

The conflict between Primrose and Lucy is on two levels and they have strained relation because of this conflict.

Firstly, there is conflict because Lucy and Primrose have different views on the institution of marriage. Lucy has been talking against the institution of marriage. That is why Primrose says, "Oh, I know what it means to talk about marriage in this house! It is like talking about something decent people don't mention." Lucy may be telling Primrose that the institution of marriage is not a good institution. Primrose says, "...I think marriage is a jolly fine institution."

She tells that Lucy will not let her marry because Lucy is very young to be a mother-in-law. She says, "I think my mother would prefer me to remain unmarried." She also thinks that she is a marrying woman, whereas her mother is not.

Secondly, Primrose thinks that her mother neglects her and gives more time to her business. Her business is more important to her than her daughter is. She says to her mother about taxicabs, "They mean more to than I do." At this Lucy says, "They have their uses." Primrose gets angry at this answer and says, "I've been an awful ass?"

Actually, Lucy has been neglecting Primrose with a purpose. She does not want to impose strict discipline on her. She wants that Primrose should have every chance of enjoying life. However, Primrose misunderstands her. At the end of the story Lucy says, "Taxicabs! Taxicabs, and she believed me!"

Therefore, we can conclude that the conflict between Primrose and Lucy is on two levels and they have strained relation because of his conflict. We can say that mostly Lucy is responsible for this conflict. (285)

6. How is an independent career a living protest against the necessary of marriage?

Lucy was a self-made woman but against the institution of marriage.

Primrose was a marrying woman like her Aunt Susan. Discuss.

When we read the play "Smokescreens" carefully, we see that Lucy and Primrose had conflicting views on the institution of marriage. She said to her mother, "I'm a marrying woman. It's tough to be a marrying woman...."

Actually, Lucy, her mother, had divorced Primrose's father and set him away. At that time, he had a car. She hired it out and drove it. She worked very hard for fifteen years. Now she owned three garages and numberless taxicabs. She did not marry again because she was trying to expand her business. She had no time for marriage. Actually, she did not need to marry a man because she had everything. It is in this sense that Primrose thought that an independent career was a living protest against the necessity of marriage.

Unlike her mother, Primrose was a marrying woman, because she had no interest in business or independent career. She said to her mother, "My mother worked, and I didn't. I haven't the brains. I think I'm like Aunt Susan in one way. I'm a marrying woman." Therefore, she compared herself with Aunt Susan because Aunt Susan did not have an independent career. She had a happy family life with a husband and two good sons. This was also according to Primrose's nature. (213)

7. Primrose is a child of a broken family. Discuss.

No doubt, Primrose is a child of a broken family. The child of a broken family is usually spoiled. He is rude and disrespectful to his elders and does whatever he likes.

When we read the play "Smokescreens" carefully, we find that Primrose is just like that. She goes out at night wearing lipstick and smoking cigarettes. She probably goes to nightclubs that are very bad places. She is rude and disrespectful to her elders. When Aunt Susan hides her handbag, she talks to her rudely. She threatens her that she will spill her on the ground if she does not give her the handbag. She does not listen to her aunt and goes out. When she talks to her mother, she calls her by her name.

We see that Primrose does what she likes. Once when she decides to go out, she does not listen to her aunt and mother. She does not give up smoking in spite of the advice of her aunt. Similarly, when she decides to marry an ugly man, she does not listen to her mother who does not like her decision.

Lucy, her mother is mainly responsible for that. She gives all her time and energies to her business. She neglects her daughter who is very sore about it. Primrose says to her mother about the taxicabs, "They mean more to you than I do?" At this Lucy says, "They have their uses." Lucy tells her sister, I couldn't be a domestic mother to my daughter while I was running a business."

Primrose sums up all this by telling her aunt that it is not particularly easy to be Primrose. Actually, she means to say that she is like that because she belongs to a broken family. (293)

8. The title of the poem is justified. Discuss.

The title of the play "Smokescreens" is quite justified. It is very meaningful and symbolic. 'Smokescreens' in the context of the play means a veil of smoke behind which a character hides his real personality and feelings.

When we read the play, we find that there are three main characters in the play and they all have their own smokescreens. They hide their real feelings and personalities and pretend to be what they are not.

The first main character is Aunt Susan. She pretends to be a very civilized and conservative woman. She pretends to have the Victorian morality. However, surprisingly she tells a lie about

her headache just to stop Primrose from going out. Apparently, she sympathizes her sister but inwardly she enjoys her sister's bad condition. Lucy notices that and asks her not to look so complacent.

The second main character is Primrose. She pretends to be a rude and spoiled girl. She is rude to her aunt and even threatens to spill her on the ground. She is not ready to listen to her aunt. She wears lipstick and goes to nightclubs. However, later in the story she begs her aunt's forgiveness and tells her that she did so only to avoid conversation. She tells her aunt that she behaved just like a cuttlefish that squirts out a flood of ink to hide it from attack.

The third main character is Lucy. She pretends that she does not have any care or love for her daughter. Actually, she is a loving mother. She wants that her daughter should have every chance of enjoying life. The writer shows her love for her daughter at the end of the play.

Therefore, we see that the title of the play is quite justified. (293)

Posted by [Tahira](#) at 1:57 AM 13 comments:

[Email This](#)[BlogThis!](#)[Share to Twitter](#)[Share to Facebook](#)[Share to Pinterest](#)

Labels: [BA English](#), [Plays](#)

Something to Talk About by Eden Phillpotts

Something to Talk About by Eden Phillpotts

Summary

The play "Something to Talk About" conveys the idea that very rich people become sick of their monotonous lives. So just for a change, they welcome everything, even burglary. Secondly, we also see that it is very difficult to bear the loss of things, it does not matter how rich a person is. To save his things he ready to harm others.

At three on Christmas morning the Wolf, a burglar, comes to Sydney's residence to steal Christmas presents. Lord Redchester is the head of the family. Lady Redchester is his wife Guy and Lettice are his children. Bishop is his brother.

The Wolf is trying to open the safe when Guy comes in. Wolf levels his revolver at him, but Guy wins his confidence with his clever talk. He takes his permission to bring Lettice there. He tells him that Lettice wants to watch him at work.

Preston, the butler, comes there. The Wolf ties him. Guy promises that the butler will not do anything wrong and unties him. Soon all the members of the family come to room one by one. The Wolf tries his best to open the safe but fails.

Lord Redchester tells him the password "Sophy" and he opens the safe in no time. He brings out all the presents one by one. Everybody tries his gifts. The Wolf takes back the presents and decides to go, but Bishop tries to exploit his religious feelings.

Then he tempts him to leave their presents and take more costly things of their neighbor. They promise to help him in stealing. Guy describes the location. The Wolf agrees and gives back their presents and leaves. Everybody shakes hands with him.

1. **What is the theme of the play "Something to Talk About"?**

The theme of the play "Something to Talk About" is the attitude of very rich people. The theme is that very rich people become so tired of their monotonous lives that just for a change or some excitement they enjoy even a burglary. The title of the play also suggests that. We also see that it is very difficult to bear the loss of things. It does not matter how rich a person is. To save his things he is ready to harm others.

The Sydney family lives outside a Cathedral town. This family's next-door neighbor lives at a distance of three miles. This shows how isolated life this family is leading. They are living away from common people. They have nothing different or new to do. That is why, when the 'Wolf' comes to steal their Christmas presents they welcome him warmly. They treat him just like a guest of honour. Guy says to the Wolf, "You are manna in the wilderness – you are indeed." This means that they are considering the burglar a blessing from God.

We see that Sydneys are very rich but in spite of being so much rich, they cannot bear the loss of their things. They are ready to harm others. On one occasion, Lettice requests the 'Wolf' to let her keep the tiara and take her Uncle Charles' crosier. Therefore, just to save her tiara she tries to harm her uncle. When the Sydneys see that the 'Wolf' is going to take the Christmas presents after all, they ask their neighbour's costly things instead. Therefore, they try to harm their neighbor. This is also the theme of the play. (276)

2. **Bring about the humour in the play "Something to Talk About".**

"Something to Talk About" is a light comedy. Discuss.

The play "Something to Talk About" is a perfect example of a light comedy. The writer has created humour through very comic comments by the characters and through some very comic situations. Although there is a revolver and a constant threat to life by the burglar, yet the situation remains light and does not become serious anytime.

When Guy asks the Wolf if he is a burglar, he gives a humorous answer. He says, "What d'you think I was. A piano-tuner?" It is also very funny to call a burglar 'manna in the wilderness'. The Wolf tells Guy about the treatment of American law with criminals with such a funny way that we cannot help laughing. He says, "It's worthwhile in the States. When they catch you, if you're bad enough, you go to Sing Sing, and they give you flower gardens and Bridge parties..." When Lord Redchester finds Wolf in his house, he says, "Who the deuce is?" When we read the words 'deuce' and 'imposter', we laugh heartily.

The play is full of many funny situations too. We see a funny situation when Guy introduces his sister, Lettice, to the Wolf as though he were a guest of honour. It is very funny when Lettice praises Wolf's tools and he explains them to her. We find another situation when they sing just to encourage the burglar. After that, we find a funny situation when Wolf leaves and everybody shakes hands with him and expresses god wishes.

Therefore, the play "Something to Talk About" is a light comedy and it is full of comic comments and situations. (268)

3. **Discuss the elements of irony in the play "Something to Talk About".**

The play "Something to Talk About" is full of elements of irony.

Firstly, we find irony when Wolf tells Guy how American law courts treat criminals. He says, "It's worthwhile in the States. When they catch you, if you're bad enough, you go to Sing Sing and they give you flower gardens and Bridge parties..." Apparently, Wolf is appreciating American law courts, but inwards he is making fun of their lenient treatment towards criminals.

Secondly, we find irony when Guy tells Wolf, "We're the most trustworthy family in England." But later in the play we find that they ask Wolf to leave their presents and take their neighbour's costly things.

Thirdly, at the start of the play, Wolf tells Guy, "The safe isn't built to beat me." However, later we see that fails to force open the safe. Fourthly, we find irony in the attitude of Bishop. He advises Wolf to leave worldly wealth and join the ranks of the trustworthy, honourable, and

virtuous, but he himself is not ready to leave his gold crosier. To save his gold crosier, he not only tries to exploit Wolf's religious feelings, but also puts temptation in his way.

Lastly, irony is found in the attitude of the Sydneys. Outwardly, they appreciate Wolf but inwardly they consider him an 'enemy of society'. They want to get rid of him to save their Christmas presents. (230)

4. **Discuss the elements of satire in the play.**

Firstly, satire is on rich people who lead a monotonous life and do nothing. They have no sense of morality and are ready to do anything to save their things.

Secondly, satire is on religious people who have become so worldly. They cannot bear the loss of worldly things and are ready even to tempt others and exploit their religious feelings. They preach one thing and practice another. When Wolf says that he does not like clergy, Lady Redchester says, "More does he – finds them most difficult and lawless." She further says, "He never criticizes anybody; and never does anything; but just sits on the fence and prays for everybody."

Thirdly, the satire is on English made things that are inferior. Lord Redchester tells Wolf, "We stick to home-made things as a rule, though they are so inferior." Fourthly, satire is on English roads. Guy says, "Rather bad roads in England, I'm afraid." At this Wolf says, "You're right. Worst roads in England."

Therefore, the play is full of satire. (170)

5. **The Sydneys' greatest desire is to have some novelty in their monotonous lives. Discuss.**

No doubt, the play "Something to Talk About" is a clever and pleasant representation of the temperament of modern English people, who might well find nocturnal alarm a matter of objective entertainment. They are so much desirous of some novelty and change in their lives that burglary is not a serious matter. The burglar with a revolver does not frighten them; rather he is "manna in the wilderness". They enjoy his presence in their home.

They are so much fond of entertainmet that everyone wants to join in. One by one all the members of the family come there. No one appears to be afraid or alarmed. To them the burglar is some sort of actor who is going to give some astounding performance.

Lettice wants her mother to join in. She says to Lord R, "Do you thing I might wake mama? She'll never forgive us if she misses this. You know how she is always yearning for something to happen. It will be cruel, papa, to enjoy Wolf without her." The words spoken by Lettice tell us about the temperament of a modern English people, who might well find nocturnal alarm a matter of objective entertainment.

They arrange chairs in a semi-circle. They thank the burglar on coming to their home for stealing. Lady Redchester says, "The terror of England! And under our roof! How nice of him! How do you do?" Therefore, they receive the burglar rather warmly. They treat him just like a guest of honour.

Therefore, from the above discussion, we can conclude that the play "Something to Talk About" is a clever and pleasant representation of the temperament of modern English people. (278)

Posted by Tahira at 1:56 AM 13 comments:

[Email This](#)[BlogThis!](#)[Share to Twitter](#)[Share to Facebook](#)[Share to Pinterest](#)

Labels: [BA English](#), [Plays](#)

The Boy Comes Home by A. A. Milne

The Boy Comes Home by A. A. Milne

Summary

The play "The Boy Comes Home" is a light comedy. It throws light on the generation gap. The old generation thinks that the young generation is immature just like a schoolboy. It should obey the old generation. In fact, the young generation is mature and it can take the right decision.

Philip is a young man of 23. He lives with Uncle James who is his patron. He has returned after four years of war. On the very first morning, he comes for breakfast at ten. Uncle James keeps a strict discipline in the house. According to his orders, breakfast is served at eight.

Philip has row with Mrs. Higgins because of this. She threatens to leave the job if she is asked to prepare breakfast at ten. Philip handles her very cleverly.

Uncle James comes to see Philip. He wants to ask him to join his jam business; however, just before Philip's entry into the room, he goes to sleep. In his dream, he meets with Philip. He orders him to join jam business. However, Philip wants to learn some profession. Uncle James thinks that Philip is just like a schoolboy and he cannot choose a career for himself.

To prove that he is mature, Philip relates his experience at Somme. However, Uncle James still insists on his own decision. He threatens to use the power of the purse. At this, Philip takes out a revolver and a bomb out of his pocket and frightens Uncle James to death. He agrees to do what Philip wants.

In the meanwhile, Uncle James wakes up. He is now a changed man. When Philip actually comes to talk to him, he is rather confused and repeats the same things what Philip has said in his dream. Philip at once agrees to join the jam business. Uncle James is not sure about his dream.

1. **What are the conflicts between Philip and Uncle James?**

The first conflict between Philip and Uncle James is that Philip does not like his Uncle's authoritative attitude and his strict discipline in the house. Philip says to Uncle James, "Well, we don't get on too well together..."

When we read the play "The Boy Comes Home" carefully, we find the authoritative attitude of Uncle James. He treats Philip as an inexperienced schoolboy. He thinks that he will decide everything for Philip. He says to Emily, "I have decided that the best thing he can do is to come into the business at once. He further says, "He'll fall in with my wishes."

He is ready to use his authority as a patron. Aunt Emily asks him to let Philip decide his career. However, he says, "He may, but I don't see how he proposes to do it so long as I hold the purse strings." This is what he has in his mind when he calls Philip. He just wants to tell Philip about his decision. Secondly, Philip wants the money left by his father to learn some profession. However, Uncle James does not want to give him the money until he is 25. Philip does not like it and says, "Look here, Uncle James do you really think that you can treat me like a boy who's just left school?" Uncle James tells Philip that he will use the power of purse if he does not submit to his orders. Then Philip uses the power of revolver and bomb. He frightens Uncle James to death and Uncle James is ready to do what Philip wants.

Therefore, these are the conflicts between Philip and Uncle James. (277)

2. **What is the importance of dream in the play "The Boy Comes Home"?**

The dream sequence has great importance in the play "The Boy Comes Home" for a number of reasons. The first and the most important reason is that it looks very awkward and immoral for a nephew to aim a revolver at his uncle and to make him kneel down and beg for his life. That is why the writer has used the dream sequence to relate this awkward and immoral situation. He makes the reader believe that all this has happened in a dream and he should not take it seriously.

Secondly, we see that dream sequence ends the conflict between Philip and Uncle James. Philip does not like Uncle James's authoritative attitude and strict discipline. He wants to live somewhere else. He wants his money and wants to learn some profession. While Uncle James does not want to give him the money until he is 25. We see that after his dream Uncle James is a new man. Now there exists no conflict between them. He is now a reasonable man. Now he understands the problems of the young generation.

Thirdly, dream sequence is a source of comedy. After the dream, Uncle James repeats the same words as Philip has spoken in his dream. In the dream sequence, Philip says, "If I'm four years behind, so is everybody else." After the dream sequence, Uncle James speaks the same words. He says, "Well, if you're four years behind, so is everybody else." These kinds of sentences create comedy and the reader laughs when he reads these sentences.

Therefore, with the help of the dream sequence, the writer has related a very awkward and immoral incident. It resolves the conflict between Philip and Uncle James and provides comedy to the play. (290)

3. **How has the war affected Philip's personality?**

The war has greatly affected Philip's personality. The words spoken by Aunt Emily are very important and meaningful. She says to Uncle James, "Well, I think that Philip's four years out there have made him more of a man, he doesn't seem somehow like a boy who can be told what to do. I'm sure they have taught him something." She further says, "You'll find him different."

Before going to the war, Philip was just like an inexperienced boy. Now he is like a grown up man. Before going to the war, he used to do what he was asked to do. Now he makes his own decisions and nobody can dictate him. Army has taught him something. He is different now.

Now he has learned how to handle people. He handles Mrs. Higgins so successfully that she is taken aback. She tells a lie to save her job. When she leaves, she is speechless. At the end of the Philip says that he does not know if he will be any good. At this, Uncle James says, "It's your experience in managing and...er...handling men which I hope will be of value."

He has also learned to use power against power. Uncle James threatens to use the power of purse, but suddenly Philip takes out a revolver and levels at him. Uncle James tells Philip that it is not good to settle arguments by force. At this, Philip tells him about war and says, "We used force to put down force. That is what I'm doing now."

Therefore, we can conclude that war has greatly affected Philip's personality. He is now like a grown up man. He has learned to handle people and to use force against force. (288)

4. **How does Philip prove himself a mature and responsible man?**

Philip proves himself a mature and responsible man to Aunt Emily by handling Mrs. Higgins and to Uncle James by relating the incident of Somme.

Philip handles Mrs. Higgins, the cook, so successfully that when she leaves she is speechless. Aunt Emily is very much impressed and tells Uncle James, "Well, I think that Philip's four years

out there have made him more of a man.” This shows that is quite convinced that Philip is mature and responsible.

Uncle James is not ready to give Philip the money left by his father until he is 25. He thinks that Philip is just like a schoolboy. To prove that he is mature enough Philip relates the event that took place at Somme during the war.

It happened that Philip’s company was in a trench. The German knew about them. The Germans killed the company commander. After his death, now Philip was the company commander. They had lost about half the company by that time. It was a very difficult situation and he had great responsibility on his shoulders. Lives of many soldiers depended on him. He took a very mature and responsible decision. He moved the company to the other trench. Then he went back to the C.O. and told him that he had moved.

Uncle James appreciated him and said, “I’m glad that you did well out there and I’m sure your colonel would speak kindly of you...” The words spoken by Uncle James show that Philip has proved himself mature and responsible very successfully. (255)

5. Relate the incident of Somme in your words.

It happened at Somme, the front, which Philip’s company was to attack next day. They were in a trench. The Germans knew about them. Therefore, they were firing at them. The company commander wanted to move from that place. He asked his C.O. about that. The C.O. ordered them to stay there and wait until the next day.

Later, the Germans killed the company commander. After his death, now Philip was the company commander. He knew something about scouting too. Therefore, he found another trench. That was better than the first trench. He sent two men one after the other to ask if he could move that trench. However, they did not come back.

They had lost about half the company by that time. Now Philip had three options. Firstly, he might stay there and wait until the next day. Secondly, he might move to that other trench against orders. Thirdly, he might go back himself and explain the situation to the C.O.

It was a very difficult situation. He had great responsibility on his shoulders at that time. Lives of many soldiers depended on him. He took a very mature and responsible decision. He moved the company to the other trench. Then he went back to the C.O. and told him that he had moved. After that, he went back to the company again. (225)

6. Discuss the comic elements in the play “The Boy Comes Home”.

The play “The Boy Comes Home” is a light comedy.

Firstly, we find comic element at the start of the play. Philip comes down for breakfast at 10 o’clock, whereas the breakfast is served at 8. Philip asks Marry, the parlor-maid, to bring breakfast. Marry tries to frighten him and says, “I’m sure I don’t know what Mrs. Higgins will say?” She starts repeating this sentence. This sentence creates a lot of humor.

Mrs. Higgins comes and shows her anger. However, Philip handles her so artfully that she has to tell a lie to save her job. She says, “Who said anything about going?” There is a great difference between how she comes and goes. This situation is very funny and makes us laugh.

Secondly, Uncle James tells about his sacrifices in a very funny way. He says that he has done his part for the country by giving his nephew to the country, by suffering the shortage of potatoes and by paying the excess profits tax. His claims are very funny.

Thirdly, in the dream sequence, Philip talks about choosing a career. He says, "If I'm four years behind, so is everybody else." After the dream, Uncle James repeats the same words. He says, "Well, if you're four years behind, so is everybody else." This is funny.

At the end of the play, Uncle James's condition creates a lot of comedy when he laughs with a forced heartiness. Philip says about the strict manager, "Perhaps I'd better bring my revolver...." At this Uncle James says, "Ha, ha! A good joke that! Ha, ha, ha! A good joke – but only a joke, of course."

Therefore, the play is full of comic elements.

Posted by Tahira at 1:55 AM 22 comments:

[Email This](#)[BlogThis!](#)[Share to Twitter](#)[Share to Facebook](#)[Share to Pinterest](#)

Labels: BA English, Plays

The Bear by Anton Chekhov

The Bear by Anton Chekhov

Summary

The play "The Bear" is a farce. It is full of many absurd situations and remarks. There are three main characters in the play and they all make us laugh with their absurd behavior and comments.

Popova is a widow. Her husband died seven months ago, but she is still in mourning. Her servant, Luka advises her to give up her mourning. He advises her to see her neighbors, but she says that she will keep on mourning until her death.

In the meanwhile, Smirnov comes to take 1200 roubles from Popova. Her husband used to buy oat from him. Popova tells him that her steward is out and she will pay him the day after tomorrow.

However, Smirnov insists on taking the money that day. He behaves rudely. He even makes fun of Popova's mourning and her state of mind. Popova also becomes rude. They speak against each other's sex and use insulting words. Smirnov thinks that he has been insulted. He challenges Popova to fight a duel.

Popova accepts the challenge and brings her husband's revolver. However, she does not know how to fire. She asks Smirnov to teach her how to fire. The situation changes and Smirnov is impressed by her boldness and beauty. He says that he does not want to fight the duel. He expresses his love for her. He offers her his hand.

First, she insists on fighting, but then asks him to go. She changes her decision repeatedly and then decides to marry him. When Luka returns with other servants to beat Smirnov, he is surprised to see them touching each other.

1. Describe the reasons behind the marriage of Popova and Smirnov.

Both Popova and Smirnov had their own reasons of marriage. We shall discuss them one by one.

Popova had been mourning the death of her husband for the last seven months. She had been leading a lonely and sad life since then. Seven months was a long period. Now time had conquered her grief. Inwardly, she wanted some change in her life. She did not want to continue this mourning any more. Besides, it is human psychology that man gets sick and tired of doing the same thing for a long period.

The second reason may be the advice of her servant Luka. He shocked her by making her understand that in ten years' time, she would not be beautiful anymore and no man would look at her. It was shocking for Popova.

The third reason was that Popova had a very romantic nature. Her mourning the death of her husband for seven months shows this. However, when Smirnov assured her of his love, she was greatly moved. It was very romantic that a man was on his knees, was offering her his hand, and was speaking very romantic dialogues. Smirnov said, "...I'm on my knees like a fool, offering you my hand..." It was all according to her romantic nature. She could not resist it and accepted the proposal.

Smirnov decided to marry Popova because he fell in love with her. He was greatly impressed by her beauty and boldness. He said, "But what a woman!" and, "That's the sort I can understand!" He further says, "I've never in my life seen one like her!" He also says, "I love you as I've never loved before!"

Therefore, these were the reasons behind the marriage of Popova and Smirnov. (289)

2. **What was the main issue or conflict between Smirnov and Popova?**

When we go through the play "The Bear", we find that at first, the main conflict between them was money, but later this conflict changed into another conflict – insult.

Popova's late husband was to pay some money to Smirnov. He used to buy oats for his horses. However, before paying the money he died. Seven months had passed. Now Smirnov and come to Popova to take his money. Unfortunately, Popova's steward was not present. Therefore, she was unable to pay his money that day. She plainly told Smirnov about this situation. She promised that she would pay his money the day after tomorrow. However, Smirnov insisted on taking the money on that day. Smirnov talked to her rudely and in an uncivilized manner. He made fun of her mourning. Popova also made fun of him. She even abuses him and calls him a bear. She said, "You're a boor! A coarse bear! A bourbon! A monster!"

Smirnov thought that Popova had insulted him. On the other hand, Popova thought that Smirnov did not know how to behave before women. She wanted to kill him for that. This was the second main conflict between them. This conflict between them grew serious and they decided to fight a duel. Popova brought her late husband's revolver.

Therefore, we can say that at first the main conflict between them was money. However, later this conflict changed into another conflict – insult. Both of them thought that they had been insulted. Luckily, these conflicts did not bring any serious consequences. (254)

3. **The play "The Bear" is a farce (ridiculous situation). Discuss.**

Describe the comic elements of the play "The Bear".

When we go through the play "The Bear", we find that it is a farce. A farce is full of many absurd situations and remarks. These situations and remarks make the readers laugh. There are three main characters in the play and they all make us laugh with their absurd comments. There are also many absurd situations. When the play starts, we see that Luka is advising Popova to leave her mourning and go out to see her neighbours. However, his way of advising her is very absurd. He gives the examples of cats, midges, and spiders. We simply laugh at these examples. Popova looks at the photograph of her husband and calls him a 'bad child'. The word 'bad child' makes us laugh.

When Popova refuses to give Smirnov the money, he says, "I have not the pleasure of being either your husband or your finance, so please don't make scenes." These remarks are very

funny and absurd and we laugh at them. When Popova accepts the challenge of duel from Smirnov, he says that he will bring her down like a chicken. The word 'chicken' is very funny. We find the most comic and absurd situation in the play when Popova brings her husband's revolvers and asks Smirnov to teach her how to fire. This is very absurd that she asks her enemy to teach her how to fire. It is also very absurd that Smirnov starts teaching her. What a funny and absurd situation it is! He not only teaches her how to fire, but he also tells her the prices of different revolvers. Another situation is very funny when Popova changes her mind repeatedly. At one time, she asks him to leave and at another asks him to stay. From the above discussion, we can conclude that it is a farce and there are many comic and absurd elements in the play. The writer has created comedy through funny comments and absurd situations. (327)

4. **Discuss the title of the play "The Bear".**

The title of the play "The Bear" is quite justified. This title suggests the attitude of Smirnov who is just like a bear. In everyday language, we call 'bear' to a person who is rude, bad mannered and bad tempered.

When we go through the play, we find that Smirnov is bad-tempered and rude. On his first appearance in the play, he calls Luka, the servant of Popova, fool and ass. Popova tells him that her steward is not present and so she cannot pay the money that day but Smirnov does not listen to her. When Popova tells him that she is in a state of mind, Smirnov makes fun of her state of mind. He even makes fun of her mourning. He makes fun of her wearing lipstick and powdering her face.

Then he talks against women. Popova is right when she says that he does not know how to behave before women. When Luka asks him to leave, he gets angry and threatens him. He says, "Shut up! Who are you talking to? I'll chop you into pieces!" these words spoken by Smirnov clearly show how bad-tempered he is.

He is so rude that he challenges Popova to fight a duel. Now it is very rude to challenge a woman to fight a duel. He is ready to kill her and says, "I'll bring her down like a chicken! I'm not a little boy or a sentimental puppy; I don't care about this "softer sex."

Therefore, from the above discussion we can conclude that the title of the play is quite justified. It suggests the attitude of Smirnov who is just like a bear in his attitude. (280)

5. **Justify the end of the play "The Bear".**

No doubt, the end of the play "The Bear" is very sudden and unexpected. We see that both Smirnov and Popova have revolvers in their hands. They are going to fight a duel and to kill each other but suddenly they decide to marry. This is unexpected. However, when we go through the play, we find that this sudden and unexpected end has many reasons. We shall discuss them one by one.

The reason of Popova's change of mind was that Popova had been mourning the death of her husband for the last seven months. She had been leading a lonely and sad life since then. Seven months was a long period. Now time had conquered her grief. Inwardly, she wanted some change in her life. She did not want to continue this mourning any more. Besides, it is human psychology that man gets sick and tired of doing the same thing for a long time.

The second reason may be the advice of Luka, her servant. He shocked her by telling her that in ten year's time, she would not be beautiful anymore and no man would look at her. It was shocking for Popova. The third reason was that Popova had a very romantic nature. When

Smirnov assured her of his love, she was greatly moved. It was all according to her romantic nature.

Smirnov decide to marry Popova because he fell in love with her. He was greatly impressed by her beauty. When Popova accepted his challenge of fighting a duel, he was greatly impressed by her boldness too. So, he changed his mind and decided to marry her.

The most important point in that it is a comedy and the end of a comedy cannot be serious. Its end must be funny and pleasant.

Therefore, we can conclude that although the end of the play is sudden and unexpected, yet it is quite justified. (318)

6. **Both Smirnov and Popova have the same qualities of character. Discuss.**

Both Popova and Smirnov are the chips off the same block. Discuss.

It is quite right to say that both Smirnov and Popova have the same qualities of character.

When we go through the play “The Bear” carefully, we find that both are rude, romantic, quarrelsome and hot-tempered. Both swear not to marry all their lives, but they change their decision.

When the play starts, we see that Smirnov comes right in without getting any permission. He calls Luka fool and ass. Later, he makes fun of Popova’s mourning and her state of mind. He speaks against women and uses insulting words. It is also very rude to challenge a woman to fight a duel. He threatens that he will chop Luka into pieces. He is romantic by nature. He falls in love with Popova. He tells Popova that he had fought duels three times because of women. He changes his decision and decides to marry Popova.

Popova is also just like Smirnov. She is rude too. She abuses Smirnov. She talks against men. When Smirnov challenges her to fight a duel, she at once accepts the challenge. She goes and brings revolvers. Smirnov wants to avoid the duel, but she insists on fighting it. This shows how quarrelsome and hot-tempered she is.

She is romantic by nature. She mourns the death of her husband for seven months. She talks to his photograph and promises to continue mourning until her death. This is romantic but she also changes her decision of mourning until her death and decides to marry Smirnov.

Therefore, we can conclude that both Smirnov and Popova are the chips off the same block and they have the same qualities of character. (272)

Posted by Tahira at 1:53 AM 29 comments:

[Email This](#)[BlogThis!](#)[Share to Twitter](#)[Share to Facebook](#)[Share to Pinterest](#)

Labels: BA English, Plays

The Little Willow by Francis Tower

The Little Willow by Francis Tower

Summary

“The Little Willow” is a story of silent love. Both Lisby and Simon love each other, but they do not express their love each other. The army officers on leave are always welcomed in courthouse. Three sisters Charlotte, Brenda, and Lisby live in that courthouse. Lisby is the youngest. She is different from her sisters. Her sisters are insincere and hollow.

When Simon Byrne comes to the courthouse for the first time, he stands there on the threshold for some time. Lisby looks at him and realizes that he was his kind of person. They have

common interests. Both Lisby and Byrne love each other, but do not express their love to each other.

When he comes to say goodbye, she gives him a little Willow tree as a gift. Later he is killed in a war prison camp. The war ends and the lovers of Charlotte and Brenda return safely.

Once a guest tells Lisby that, he was with Simon when he died. He tells her that Simon loved her girl who had given her a willow tree. Lisby tells him her secret that Simon was her love.

When she comes to know that Simon loved her she feels very good. She is waiting for this. When her sister tells her that there is no letter for her, she tells her that she has received her letter.

1. Lisby Avery is different from her sisters. Discuss.

Lisby has genuine emotions of love and sympathies for others and she loves things because of their spiritual values. Discuss.

Compare the characters of Lisby and her two elder sisters.

No doubt, Lisby Avery is different from her two elder sisters. She has genuine emotions of love and sympathies for others. She loves things because of their spiritual beauty.

When we read the story carefully, we find that Lisby loves painting, the willow tree, and Simon Byrne because of their spiritual beauty. She loves the picture for its holiness and not for aesthetic reasons. The willow tree has spiritual values too. She has bought the willow tree with her first term's salary. Its apparent beauty does not impress her. Actually, she bought it because of the idea in the mind of the Chinese artist.

She loves Simon Byrne because he also appreciates spiritual beauty of things. He is just like her. That is why she thinks: "It almost seems as if he might be my kind of person."

As for her elder sisters, they do not like things because of their spiritual values. The picture is in the room because of Lisby. Her sisters think; "Lisby would die if we banished the picture." They do not like the willow tree either. They do not like Simon Byrne because he does not talk much. They do not have genuine emotions of sympathy either. Brenda is a hypocrite and she can change the tone of her voice just to entrap others. As for Lisby, she has genuine emotions of sympathy. Sometimes, she gives company to a neglected gets just out of sympathy.

Therefore, we can conclude that Lisby Avery is different from her two elder sisters. She has genuine emotions of love and sympathies for others. She loves things because of their spiritual beauty. (272)

2. Discuss the characters of the three sisters in the light of the Charlotte's comments: "I feel we rather swamp her, you know – like two arc lamps putting out the moonlight. Now, isn't that a tribute to our Lis?"

The two elder sisters are charmers but Lisby is not. Discuss.

Discuss the characters of three sisters in comparison and tell clearly whom you like the most and why?

Write a character sketch of Lisby Avery.

Lisby Avery is not a charmer like her elder sisters. Discuss.

When we have a comparative study of the characters of the three sisters, we find that Lisby Avery is quite different from her elder sisters.

Lisby Avery is not a charmer like her elder sister. She does not try to impress others by her way of speaking. She does not like to play the cello like Brenda. She does not change the tone of her

voice just to entrap others. Brenda agrees when Charlotte says, "I feel we rather swamp her, you know – like two arc lamps putting out the moonlight. Now isn't that a tribute to our Lis?" Unlike her sisters, she is a sincere lover. She does not love Simon because of his apparent personality. She loves him because he is her kind of person. The two elder sisters are hollow and superficial. They do not love others sincerely. They do not have any taste for spiritual beauty of things.

Brenda keeps the pictures of all her dead lovers, but she feels no grief for them. She at once forgets her dead lover and starts loving a fresh one.

Charlotte is just like Brenda. She tells her sisters about the death of Simon very casually. However, Lisby takes it so seriously that her legs tremble and she hides her feelings with a great difficulty.

In short, Brenda and Charlotte are "...the types of the seductive women in any age." However, Lisby is "...like a watching a girl who holds a basket on her hand in the background of El Gore's Christ in the Temple."

I think this remark of the writer throws ample light on the character of Lisby. I like Lisby for her good qualities of character. (280)

3. Why Lisby does falls in love with Simon Byrne?

How do Lisby and Simon get attracted to each other?

What is the reason behind the love of Lisby and Simon?

Lisby loves Simon Byrne not for his physical appearance, but for his inner qualities. When Simon comes for the first time, she sees extraordinary delight on his face. Therefore, she at once senses his inner qualities. She comes to know that he is her kind of person.

Later she gives a little start when Simon appreciates the picture and tells her, "The picture has been loved by people who are dead..." She thinks, "It almost seems as if he might be my kind of person." She starts loving him passionately. When he listens to Brenda playing spellbound, she feels jealous. She does not want him impressed by Brenda. He appreciates the willow tree that nobody else has appreciated. She thinks that he is a person one can talk to him.

The things that make Lisby laugh make him laugh too. Sometimes he catches her eyes and they go off a silent fit of laughter. He hums the same tunes as are liked by her.

Therefore, we can conclude that Lisby falls in love with Simon because he is his kind of person. They have same likes and dislikes. (188)

4. What are the symbolic meanings of the picture and the willow tree?

What is the significance of the picture and the willow tree?

The picture and the willow tree have great symbolic meanings and significance in the story "The Little Willow". The picture represents the characters of Lisby and Simon. The willow tree represents not only their characters, but also the nature of love between them.

Her two elder sisters are hollow and do not like the picture and the willow tree. Lisby and Simon like them because of their spiritual values. Lisby thinks about Simon, "It almost seems as if he might be my kind of person." Therefore, it means that both Simon and Lisby are impressed by the spiritual value of things. It throws light on their characters.

The little willow tree represents not only their characters but also the nature of love between them. Lisby loves Simon because he is a man of ideas. He is a man who can look beyond the surface of things. He is not impressed by the physical appearance of things, but only by their

spiritual beauty. He is 'cool' just like the Willow tree. It does not broadcast its beauty just like Lisby and Simon.

Lisby gives the little willow tree to Simon on his departure. Therefore, it is a token of unexpected love between them.

Its breaking represents the death of physical love. It also symbolizes the strength of love that consoles and comforts lovers when they are in some kind of difficulty.

Therefore, we can conclude that the picture and the willow tree have great symbolic meaning and significance in the story. (250)

5. **"The Little Willow" is a story of silent love. Discuss.**

No doubt, "The Little Willow" is a story of silent love. When we read the story carefully, we find that both Lisby and Simon love each other very passionately, but they do not express their love to each other.

This love is so silent that Simon is not sure about Lisby's love until his death. When he comes for the last time to say good-bye, he tries to express his love, but does not. Its reason is that he is not sure about Lisby's love.

Similar is the case with Lisby. She is not sure about Simon's love. She thinks that he is in love with her sister Brenda. It was after his death she comes to know that Simon loved her and not her sister. Therefore, this is silent love.

They both fall in love with each other on first sight. When Lisby sees Simon for the first time, she thinks about Simon, "It almost seems as if he might be my kind of person." However, she does not express it to him. She starts loving him passionately. When he listens to Brenda playing the cello spellbound, she feels jealous and does not want him impressed by Brenda.

Simon appreciates the willow tree that nobody else has appreciated. She thinks that he is a person one can talk to him. The things that make Lisby laugh make him laugh too. Sometimes, he catches her eyes and they go off into a silent fit of laughter. He hums the same turns as are liked by her.

Therefore, they love each other. However, it is silent love and nobody knows about it. Lisby's elder sisters do not know about it either. Even Lisby and Simon themselves are not sure about it. (290)