on life."*

Shaw's Dialogue.
Shaw's dialogues are brilliant, flashy, sparkling and spontaneous. He is a master of dramatic dialogue. His characters are articulate and voluble in contrast to Galsworthy's characters and express themselves well in sharp and impressive dialogues. "He excels in brief, witty exchanges and, above all, in the handling of extremely long speeches when his characters put forward their carefully reasoned arguments. He had the art of making the long discourse as interesting and dramatic as action, and this was something new to the stage. His brilliance in this has never been surpassed."** "Shaw has done as much as any man to revolutionize stage dialogue. He has invented the dialogue of disquisition, and can make an argument as thrilling as a stand-up right. When people complain, as they sometimes do, that there is no action in, say, Getting Married or Too True to be Good, they forget that intellectual action may be as dramatic as a battle. Thoughts can hit like bullets, emotions can explode like shells, and a word duel between a man and a woman can be more thrilling than throwing chairs about the room."†

Shaw's Place in English Drama.
Shaw is undoubtedly a great dramatist. "If greatness consists in being irreplaceable, Bernard Shaw's greatness is assured. It was not long before people began to talk about him as the English or Irish Moliere, or the Voltaire of the twentieth century, and undoubtedly he combines in himself some of the qualities of both these great men. Shaw's name will not be forgotten as long as their's are remembered, and what is best in his influence may well become part of our common human heritage."‡

The fact is that Shaw remained an entertainer and a master of all the tricks of the entertainment trade and his wit and intellectual brilliance were never fully absorbed into a dramatic form of appropriate depth and scope. This is not to say that Shaw was a great writer whose plays do not fit into any accepted

† J. W. Marriott: Modern Drama.
‡ B. Strauss: Bernard Shaw.
category, but rather that he was a dramatist of immense talent and prodigious wit whose limited view of the nature of literary art prevented him from seeing the limitations of his own artistic imagination and so from seeking a dramatic form which could contain all he had to say about men absorbed wholly into the dramatic texture."

"When all deductions are made, and when Shakespeare has been put at the head of the roll of English dramatists, who is to be placed second it not Shaw? Benjonson, Marlowe, Congreve, Webster, Tourneur Sheridan? The failings of any one of these are no fewer than those of Shaw, though they may be different failings; their achievements seem less than his. Not one of them directed and dominated the thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth century as Shaw directed and dominated the thought of the early twentieth century in England and beyond. Not one of them was mixed by a blaze of moral passion, as Shaw was. Not one of them had a greater command of rhetoric or a more brilliant wit. Some of them were great poets—as Shaw was not; yet which of them commanded a better prose style than Shaw at his best. Shaw's place is undoubtedly next to Shakespeare."**

Q. 114. Give your estimate of Granville Barker (1877—1946) as a Dramatist and institute a comparison between Galsworthy and Barker as Realists, in modern 'drama.'

Ans. Granville Barker was one of the prominent dramatists of the twentieth century, and he belonged to the group of Realists who sought to discuss realistically the social, political, economic and industrial problems of the twentieth century. His plays are discussions of contemporary problems and his themes include the marriage conventions, the inheritance of tainted money, sex, and the position of woman. He is very serious in the presentation of the social problems, and the note of sobriety and seriousness imparts an air of heaviness to his work. His characters are well nourished at the feast of life and are life-like in the expression of their feelings.

** A. C. Ward—Twentieth Century Literature.
The main plays of Barker are *The Marrying of Ann Leete* (1899), *The Vosey Inheritance* (1905), *Waste* (1907) and *The Madras House* (1910). In *The Marrying of Ann Leete* Barker's insistence is on the Life-Force theory propounded by Shaw. His George and Ann Leete faithfully carry out the command of life-force, and are opposed to the shams and conventions of a tradition-ridden society. *The Vosey Inheritance* deals with the problem of tainted money. Mr. Vosey, senior partner of a respected and prosperous firm of solicitors leaves plenty of money for his son Edward. Later on Edward comes to know that the money left behind by his father for him has been earned dishonestly by cheating and deceiving the clients. Edward is horrified at the prospect of inheriting this tainted money. He prefers poverty and bankruptcy to the tainted money left behind by his prosperous father. He is an idealist and an honest man and his opposition to his inheritance is well marked out. The play ends on a note of lofty idealism.

In *Waste* (1907) Barker deals with the problem of sex antagonism, and in *The Madras House* (1910) he concentrates on the discussion of women in modern society. We are shown the picture of a home in which there are six marriageable girls living futile lives unless some eligible bachelors or widowers take them off their father's hands. The play possess the problem of marriage for women in aristocratic families.

Barker was a realist in the presentation of his problems, his characters and dialogues are natural, and he leaves the impression of a serious dramatist of the twentieth century.

Barker and Galsworthy are both of the same kidney. "Both hold strong views on the themes they chose to illustrate. Each revolted temperamentally,—Barker against the repression of the individual by the intimidation of Victorian convention, Galsworthy against the crushing of the individual by society. Each had a gospel to proclaim, Barker the doctrine of self-realization, Galsworthy the doctrine of tolerance. And even if they could have achieved complete impartiality they were far too clever playwrights to overlook the fact that to dispense with all emotion is to eviscerate the drama. So, like every other instinctive dramatist, they concentrated on a certain aspect of life, and selected
incident and character. But they did try to reproduce this microcosm on the stage with the utmost verisimilitude."

Q. 115. Write a note on John Masefield (1878— ) as a Dramatist.

Ans. John Masefield is not only a great poet, but also a great dramatist of the twentieth century. He has attempted a variety of plays, and has made experiments in domestic plays, historical drama, plays of supernaturalism and mysticism, and poetic plays. His plays exhibit his versatile genius as a dramatist. "Gifted with a high imagination, he is by spirit sternly classical; endowed with passion, no man is more clear-sighted and logical than he; full of the fantasy of the poetic genius, he is a confirmed realist; clinging tensely to the natural world, he is wrapped in the spirit of mysticism."**

In the sphere of domestic tragedy and realistic portrayal of life in a sombre vein, his *The Tragedy of Nan* stands on a higher pedestal than other plays belonging to this class. The story is one of unflinching realism, and pathetically presents the tragedy of a poor woman named Nan, who finds herself hard hit by tyrannical and callous social forces working against the underdogs of society. A note of sympathy is well marked out in the tragedy. It is more pathetic than heroic and seeks to win the sympathy of readers for those unfortunate victims of society who are repressed by cruel social laws. The other tragedies on the same pattern are *The Campden Wonder* (1906), *Mrs. Harrison* (1907). They are both unrelieved bourgeois tragedies, but are without the spark that gave a moving appeal to the *Tragedy of Nan*.

Among the plays of supernaturalism *Melloney Holspur* (1923) deserves a high place. The play deals with supernatural forces. *Melloney Holspur* moves in the world of spirits after her death, and leans like Rossetti's blessed Damozel from the bars of her spirit world giving blessings to her earthly lover.

* Lynnton Hudson—The Twentieth Century Drama.
** A. Nicoll—British Drama.
Pompey the Great (1910) is a historical play presenting the contrast between the idealism of Pomey and the realism of Caesar.

Plays dealing with religion and mysticism are The Trial of Jesus (1925) and The Coming of Christ (1928). These plays are saturated with religious mysticism and symbolism.

The Faithful, A King's Daughter Good Friday are romantic-cum-poetic plays and exhibit the other side of Masefield's genius.

Masefield is a dramatist essentially of the domestic school and inspite of his diversified excursions will be recognised in later years as a writer of domestic tragedies.

Q. 116. What is the significance of the work of Sir James Barrie (1860—1937) in modern drama?

Ans. Sir James Barrie was a prominent Scottish dramatist and was gifted with all those qualities that go to make a successful playwright—constructive imagination, expert craftsmanship, a mastery over dialogue, a sense of character portrayal, humour, pathos, and irony. The significance and importance of the work of Sir James Barrie mainly lies in the fact that at a time when drama was mainly occupied with themes of realism and problems of social life in the hands of Jones, Pinero, Barker and Galsworthy, he had the courage to break away from the new upsurge for naturalism and realism, and keep alive the claims of romance, fancy, fantasy and light hearted humour tempered with flashes of witticism. "He showed that naturalism was not the only way, and gave a very timely reminder that a play must do more than stimulate the brain; it must touch the heart. In an age of growing cynicism he guarded the guttering flame of romance and kept it from being quenched intellectualism."

Sir James Barrie kept studiously aloof from the world of drab and sordid realities and exploited with determination and professional assurance, the emotions, whimsies and sentimentality implicit in the Scottish Kailyard tradition, and in so much, Victorian and Edwardian middle class feeling. He was quaint

* Lynton Hudson: The Twentieth Century Drama.
and whimsical in the presentation of romantic life. He was inspired in his dramatic craftsmanship by a spirit which was akin to his own Peter Pan, 'an elusive spirit which preferred not to grow in this modern world'.

The main works of Barrie, in which romance, fantasy, whimsicality figure prominently are The Professor's Love Story (1894), The Little Minister (1902), Mary Rose (1902), Quality Street (1902), Peter Pan (1904), Admirable Crichton (1902), What Every Woman Knows (1908), A Kiss for Cinderella (1916), Dear Brutus (1917).

Except in the Admirable Crichton where Barrie tackles a problem of social life, in all other plays there is a break from the tradition which the playwrights were popularising in the Problem Plays. In Peter Pan Barrie creates a world of fairy romance appealing both to children and grown up persons. Peter Pan lives in the world of day-dreams and creates for himself the utopia of childhood. In Dear Brutus Barrie presents the mischievous pranks played by Puck on a number of English people who even in their old age seek to recapture the gaiety and mirth of their youthful days. Rose Mary deals with a strange and curious Hebridean legend about a girl who mysteriously vanishes into space, lives for sometime in a strange world of fantasy, and then comes back to live again her normal life in the midst of people who receive her without any consternation. A Kiss for Cinderella is the materialization of a dream in which the heroine finds herself in the midst of royal banquets presided by a king and a queen, seated on golden thrones.

Barrie was indeed "a skilled technician, who kept his head in an age of experiments. At a time when advanced drama threatened to degenerate into talk he never allowed his plots to stand still. His episodes grow out of each other with refreshing unexpectedness, yielding to crisp dialogue and contrasts of character. With rare insight he discovers that the theatre goers like himself, wanted the sincerity of childhood in an age of adult affectations. So he showed them more intelligibly and sympathetically than Proust. That is his title to literature."*

* Sherard Vines: A Hundred Years of English Literature.

Ans. William Gilbert was another great dramatist of the twentieth century, who like Sir James Barrie, kept away from the discussion of social problems which had been brought out in their full glare by writers like Jones, Pinero, Galsworthy, Barker and Shaw. Gilbert and Sullivan worked together in the production of Savoy operas marked with comical extravaganza. In the plays of Gilbert, such as Palace of Truth (1870), Broken Hearts (1875), Tom Cobb (1875), Patience (1881), The Mikado (1885), there is plenty of whimsicality, and refined sense of witticism and humour. "His main tendencies were cynical, witty and satirical, with a decided leaning towards parody and burlesque; but to these he added a strangely poetic fancy and a delicate whimsical humour."*

Gilbert was intellectually a witty writer and paved the way for Oscar Wilde and his satiric thrusts. He had a brilliant wit and used puns, quips, quibbles, epigrams and paradoxes in ample measure in his works. His operas and plays are highly entertaining. They are often thought of as delightful musical fantasies, and their charm will not grow stale.

Q. 118. Write a note on the revival of the Comedy of Manners during the twentieth century and evaluate the work of the prominent comedy writers of this class.

Ans. During the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century there was a revival of the comedy of manners which the Restoration comedy writers like Etherege, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, Farquhar and Congreve had perfected in their times. The twentieth century revival of the comedy of manners is generally free from the taints of obscenity and immorality which had called upon the Restoration comedy the stern voice of condemnation at the hands of writers like Dr. Johnson and Macaulay. The twentieth century comedy bears a close relation to the Restoration comedy in its witticism and sparkling dialogues. The comedy had its heyday for a period of three decades and began

* A. Nicoll: <i>British Drama.</i>
to show signs of fatty degeneration after the second world war. "It may return although it is doubtful whether the social conditions of the period after 1945 are as likely to encourage the display of theatrical wit as were those of the interbellum age; and even the most cursory knowledge of the theatrical history convinces us that for this kind of comedy to flourish the social atmosphere must possess certain qualities which are wanting in our times. The comedy of manners is a tender plant and will not bloom if cold winds are blowing."*

Among the comedy writers of the twentieth century who did yeoman’s service into the revival of comedy, the name of Bernard Shaw is certainly at the top. He was the pioneer in this direction and he sought to invest modern comedy with the same satiric vigour and reformative aim which it had enjoyed at the hands of Ben Jonson during the Elizabethan age. Shaw was considerably influenced by Meredith’s view of the comic spirit and made his comedies intellectually sharp and witty, aiming all the time at exposure of the evils rampant in our times. Shaw’s comedies inspite of their witticism and humour are serious in tone and are instruments, not so much of entertainment, as edification and social reform. Shaw is deadly in earnest in his comedies. He administers sugar coated pills. The readers enjoy the sugar coating leaving the bitter taste of the pills.

Oscar Wilde (1854—1900) was another great comedy writer of our times, and though as witty as Shaw, he did not aim at reform or moral edification through his comedies. He was the main reviver of the comedy of manners, and it was his primary object to provide entertainment and artistic delight to his readers through his comedies. Wilde was an apostle of the theory of Art for Art’s sake and was not inspired by Shaw’s crusading enthusiasm to harness art for social regeneration.

The main characteristics of Wilde’s comedies are the witticism and sparkling dialogues. Wilde did not care for cogent plots. The plots of his comedies are melodramatic and replete with hackneyed situations. They are banal in their appeal. His characters also are little more than marionettes. But what make

* A. Nicoll : British Drama.
Wilde's comedies entertaining and lovable is Wilde's style; and David D iches correctly hits the nail when he says that 'stylization is the very raison d'être of Wilde's plays.' He brought to the theatre an acute and brilliant wit, while his care for style helped to clear the drama of verbiage and to make its dialogue keen edged and clean cut.

Wilde painted the picture of the elegant and refined upper class society in his five famous plays particularly in Lady Windermere's Fan (1892), A Woman of No Importance (1893), An Ideal Husband (1894), The Importance of Being Earnest (1895) and Salome (1896). These comedies are comedies of manners in the Sheridan tradition, aristocratic in their outlook, gay and flippant in their tone, and sparkling and vivacious in their style. Beautiful words and phrases flow out from Wilde's pen and we hardly bother about the plot or the progress of the story. "Indeed" says Marriott, "In all Wilde's plays the dialogue frequently puts the story out of mind. We don't care what happens only if the characters will keep talking."

Noel Coward is another great comedy writer of the twentieth century. His comedies are lighter in vein and satirical in content. "His unerring sense of theatrical effect, his wit and dance of dialogue, his sparkling presentation of the hurly-burly of bright young moderns and their disillusioned fantastic elders delighted play goers in play after play."* His wit and flashes of scintillating dialogues are well presented in his comedies particularly in The Red Trap (1924), The Vortex (1924), Fallen Angels (1925), Easy Virtue (1926), Bitter Sweet (1929), Private Lives (1930), Cavalcade (1931), Conversation Piece (1934), Tonight at Eight Thirty (1936), Blithe Spirit (1941), Present Laughter (1943), and This Happy Breed (1943).

Somerset Maugham, the novelist, is also a comedy writer of repute, and he seeks to represent the life which he has seen and known for a number of years in his life. All his comedies are based on his observation of life. He believed that, "the foundation of drama is actuality. It must be natural above all things, and achieve the illusion of truth by reproducing the manners and

* Dr. A. S. Collins : English Literature of the 20th Century.
customs of the day as the exigencies of the theatre permit. Maugham’s comedies successfully catch the manners and ways of the upper class society. His comedies are better in plot construction and characterisation than Wilde’s comedies, though he suffers in witticism as compared to his great compere in the field of comedy. The main plays of Wilde are *A Man of Honour* (1903), *Lady Foredrick* (1907), *Mrs. Dot* (1908), *Jack Straw* (1908), *Home and Beauty* (1919), *The Circle* (1921), *Our Betters* (1917), *Constant Wife* (1927).

Sutro carried the artificial comedy of manners forward by producing a few plays: *The Walls of Jericho* (1940), *The Two Virtues* (1941). His plays have a sparkle only a few degrees less intense than Oscar Wilde’s.

James Bridie, a Scottish dramatist, produced a number of comedies marked with youthfulness, romance, and gaiety. His plays are a peculiar mixture of argument, philosophy, violent action and whimsical fancy. Inspite of certain structural weakness,* his comedies hold us in thrall, for he has several gifts as a comedy writer which are well presented in his plays. His imagination, sharpness of intellect, and fine flow of language come out in all his plays. He is known to the readers by his *John Knox, The Sleeping Clergymen and Balfry, The Anatomist*.

Fredrick Loundsdale popularised the comedy of manners. His comedies are satirical in content and flashy in dialogue. He exhibits a technical skill in the handling of the dramatic material at his disposal. His main plays are *The Lost Mrs. Cheyney* (1925) and *Spring Cleaning* (1925).

The comedies of Ervine, J. B. Fagan, H. M. Harwood, A. A. Milne are quite delightful. All these dramatists have made a notable contribution to the revival of comedy in our times.

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* "A play of Bridie gives the appearance of being unfinished. It is more like a first draft, often in urgent need of revision and structural alteration." (Fredrick Loundsdale).
Q. 119. Write a note on the Irish Literary Theatre or the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, and give an account of the Irish Dramatists who revolutionised the Irish Theatre Movement by their dramas.

Ans. Irish dramatists have played an important part in the history of English drama. From the middle of the eighteenth century down to the beginning of the twentieth, the chief additions to English drama were the work of Irishmen. Goldsmith, Sheridan, Oscar Wilde, and Bernard Shaw were Irish dramatists, and their contribution to English drama is substantial.

During the twentieth century, there was a stir among Irish dramatists to revive to old Irish drama and popularise Irish themes and legends in dramatic works. With the object of putting Ireland distinctly on the map of British drama the Irish National Literary Society was formed in Ireland by W. B. Yeats and a few other leading Irish dramatists in 1892. This society developed by 1903 into the Irish National Theatre Society and in the same year The Abbey Theatre was established with the aid of Miss A. E. F. Horniman, a rich English lady. The Irish Literary Theatre had the avowed object of dramatising Irish life; not the life of sordid realism but the Irish life of beauty and enchantment, myths and legend. No doubt there was among these dramatists a craze for the revival of Irish legends and myths, but they could not completely ignore the life of peasants and Irish country folk from their plays. There was, therefore, in Irish Theatre Movement in Dublin a combination of two motives. The first object of the dramatists was to revive old Irish life, and their second object was to give a new interpretation to the life and achievements of Irish peasants. The sponsors of this movement thus aimed at the revival of old Irish legends and mythologies as well as create a new school of native comedy centring round Irish folklore and representing Irish peasant life and character. “That imaginative idealism which has always characterized the Celtic races, that love of passionate and dreamy poetry, that only half-ashamed belief in the fairy world, all gave a particular tone to the plays produced at the Abbey theatre.”

* A. Nicoll: British Drama.
The prominent dramatists of the Abbey Theatre Dublin were W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, J. M. Synge, Lennox Robinson, T. C. Murray, Padric Colum, Edward Martyn, O'Casey and Lord Dunsany. We will briefly deal with the works and achievements of these dramatists.

W. B. Yeats (1865—1939).

The work of W. B. Yeats as a dramatist belongs to the Irish literary movement and the Abbey Theatre. Yeats was primarily a poet and it is quite natural that his dramatic work should have been imbued by the spirit of lyricism and poetic fervour. The dramas of Yeats can be divided into two groups. In the first group we can place plays dealing with Irish life in a straightforward manner without any symbolism or mysticism. These plays of this group are The Countess Cathleen (1892), The Land of Heart's Desire (1894), The Shadowy Waters (1900), Cathleen in Houlihan (1902), The King's Threshold (1904), The Hour Gla's (1904), Deirdre (1907), At the Hawk's Well (1917) and The Cat and the Moon (1926). In the second group we place Yeats's mystical and philosophical plays like Cavalry (1920), The Resurrection (1931), Purgatory (1939) and The Death of Cuchlain (1939). The plays of this group are symbolic in character. One needs some understanding and knowledge of Yeats's symbolic system to grasp them fully in all their niceties. These symbolic plays have a haunting suggestiveness about them and are highly stylized in a manner reminiscent of the Japanese 'No plays.' The language is colloquial and ritualistic; and the presentation of thought is enigmatic.

W. B. Yeats has no doubt left a rich legacy in dramatic field. Yet he did not have the gifts of a great dramatist. He was a greater poet than a dramatist, and poetry dominates his plays. There is little or no attempt at characterisation in his plays, and his characters are his own mouthpieces giving expression to his poetic ideas in a dignified manner. The plays no doubt present a love for old Irish legends and folk songs, tales of supernaturalism, angels and demons, but they lack action and sound characterisation. That is their weakness. They do not create the "illusion of possible people behaving credibly and using an appropriate speech medium."
The popularity of Yeats’s plays, “depended more upon poetic charm and strangeness than upon dramatic power. Essentially a romantic lyric poet, he did not move with ease in the dramatic form.”* In the opinion of A. Nicoll “Yeats may be regarded rather as a lyric poet than as a playwright. His delicately fragile melodies and his esoteric mysticism alike tend to weaken the theatrical element in his dramas.”

Lady Gregory (1859—932).

She is known as a comedy writer dealing with Irish life and folklore in a language that is characteristic Irish. Though her dialogue may not be as remarkable as Synge’s, yet there is a charm in her presentation of Irish characters. Her main works are Irish Folk History Plays (1912), New Comedies (1913), Seven Short Plays (1909), The White Cockade (1914), The Caravans (1917), The Wonder Plays (1922), Three Last Plays (1928).

John Millington Synge (1871—1909).

J. M. Synge was the greatest dramatist in the rebirth of the Irish Theatre. He played an important part in giving to Irish life both in its tragic and comic aspects, a tangible form and shape in his plays. He studied life objectively in its beauty, its comedy and its tragedy, and gave expression to his feelings in a language that is poetical, rich and natural. “His plays are written in prose, but they have rhythms and cadences of poetry springing from the natural idiom of the peasant. This speech, rich in natural music and full of vivid imagery, is increased in power by its compression, and by the simplicity which is only achieved by much revision. Synge’s style has the vitality of the great genius.”†

The main plays of Synge are The Shadow of Glen (1903), Riders to the Sea (1904), The Jiker’s Wedding, The Well of the Saints (1907), The Playboy of the Western World and Diedre of the Sorrows (1910).

The Shadow of the Glen is a comedy dealing with Irish peasant life. It is based on an old folk tale representing the faithlessness of an Irish woman to her husband.

* A. C. Ward: Twentieth Century Literature.
† E. Albert: A History of English Literature.
the Sea is a pathetic and grim tragedy in one Act, and brings out the life of the fisherfolk living in the west coast of Ireland in all their emotional intensity. The sea takes a heavy toll of life and the old lady Maurya loses all her sons and husband in the sea. Hers is a pathetic lot, and tears come out as we read this play. The play has grand, stark simplicity and a controlled intensity of feeling which are most impressive. The Wells of the Saints is a fantastic comedy, and The Playboy of the Western World excels it in riotous fun and comic vitality. Round the character of the playboy Christy Mahon, Synge builds "a riotously funny comedy, full of spontaneous vitality, which gives an excellent, if satirical picture of the Irish character." The Playboy gives an impressive representation of Irish peasant life and character and is full of striking and beautiful phrases heard by the dramatist on the roads from Kerry to Mayo. The Diedre of the Sorrows is based on an old Irish legend in which themes of love and death are tragically yet gloriously interwoven.

**Lennox Robinson (1886— ).**

Lennox Robinson made a departure from the main trend of Irish playwrights by presenting realistic themes instead of making excursions into the world of Irish mythology and legends. He is primarily the writer of comedies verging on farce and caricature. His main plays are The Clancy Name (1908), The Cross Roads (1909), Harvest (1910), Patriots (1912), The Dreamers (1915), The Lost Leader (1918), The Whiteheaded Boy (1920), The Round Table (1924), Crabbed Youth and Age (1924).

**T. C. Murray**

In the plays of Murray, we have poignant studies of Irish peasant life. His main works are The Wheel of Fortune (1909), Birthright (1913), Maurice Harte (1912), Spring (1918), The Briery Gap (1918), Aftermath (1921).

**Peadar Column**

With Robinson and Murray, the contribution of Peadar Column should also be taken into account. "He took Irish problems realistically and seriously but could see the humour too of Irish characteristics even when deploiring the way in which the towns, by their attractions, were emptying the Irish countryside of young people." His main works are The Kingdom of Youth
(1902), The Land (1905), The Fiddler's Home (1907), Thomas Musketry (1910).

"An air of imaginative beauty passes over the whole, so that things spiritual and things material seem to meet in a common harmony. At the same time Mr. Column's work is not by any means fanciful. His methods are at bottom as realistic as are those of his two contemporaries mentioned above"*

Edward Martyn.

He is an Irish playwright of the school of Synge. Unflinching realism is united with a vivid poetic imagination in his plays. His main plays are The Heather Field (1899), Meave (1900). These plays are marked with the spirit of poetry and supernaturalism though they are based on realistic setting.

"Martyn's real strength is seen to lie in this strange union of reality and of the supernatural. Few dramatists have succeeded as he did in welding together into a complete whole these two spheres. If he is mystically inclined in Meave, he sinks to sordid actuality in Grangacolman. If his supernatural atmosphere is perfectly achieved in An Enchanted Sea, it is somewhat vitiated in the comic atmosphere of The Dream Physician (1940). No other writer of this time, save perhaps Sir James Barrie, had quite the same power of uniting these two contraries, although in the works of Lord Dunsany, a "similar union, with a different purpose, is masterly attained."**

Lord Dunsany. (1878— )

He is the Irish dramatist who has succeeded in producing an atmosphere of awe, fear and supernaturalism in his plays. He has separated himself from the school of Synge and Yeats in not seeking to present Irish life, but the life of oriental lands. His main works are The Glittering Gate (1909), The Gods of the Mountain (1911), A Night at an Inn (1916), The Queen's Enemies (1916), The Laughter of the Gods (1919), If (1921).

"Dunsany does not belong to any school of drama. He has created a kind of play which deals with the most fantastic in a style which exactly suits them—a highly imaginative prose which produces the effect of poetry. He has extraordinary inventiveness*

* A. Nicoll: British Drama.
**Ibid
in oriental nomenclature, and his literary style is excellent, being inspired by Bunyan and the Bible. He rarely attempts long plays. He has probably found, like Mr. Sladen-Smith who seems to be the only other playwright to attempt fantasy in this vein, that the short play is the best medium for his peculiar kind of theme.”

O’Casey (1884— )

O’Casey was a worthy successor of Synge. He presented Irish life, not the Irish life of the Aran Islands, but the life of slums of Dublin bringing out all the sordidness and drunkenness of the Irish men and women. "His background, however, was not the Aran Islands but the slums of Dublin, crowded noisy tenements where women quarrelled and loafers drank and the tragic violence of civil war was ever at hand.”

O’Casey’s first play The Shadow of a Gunman brings out the slum tenements of Dublin in their crowded squalor. It reveals the bloodiness of the Anglo-Irish war of 1920. This play was produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, in 1923. The next play Juno and the Paycock was produced in 1924. It is a political play dealing with the execution of a young man by his Republican comrades who suspected him of treachery. The Plough of Stars (1926) also deals with the cruel and brutal folly of civil war. The Silver Tassie combines the naturalistic and expressionistic methods, and the skill with which the dramatist allows the one to drift into the other is really praiseworthy. “In the war scenes of The Silver Tassie, O’Casey tried to communicate the soldier’s reaction to the blood and sweat of war in a way that conveyed the universality of the experience. For this purpose he adopted a mixture of chanted verse and stylized prose put into the mouths of nameless choruses of soldiers wounded stretcher bearers.”

The other plays of O’Casey Within the Gates (1933), The Star Turns Red (1940), Purple Dust (1940), Red Rose, for Me (1946), Oak Leaves and Lavender (1946), Cockadoodle Dandy (1949) do not have the same intensity as his first three plays though the magic of language still gives them their enlivening touch.

* J. W. Marriott: Modern Drama.
** A. S. Collins: English Literature of the 20th Century.
† Lynton Hudson: The 20th Century Drama.
The plays of O'Casey are about Irish life and the tragedy and comedy of this life is well brought out in dialogues, which are vivid, sassy and rhythmical. In O'Casey comedy and tragedy sit cheek by jowl. "Comedy is seldom long absent, yet one can never forget the grim, underlying sadness. He draws what he sees with a ruthless objectivity and an impressionistic vividness of detail."

"The characters of O'Casey are weak, they are crude and pitiable. They are comic creatures speaking a rich lingo of the Dublin slums. They strut about, boasting, singing, quarrelling, drinking with unflagging vitality."

Q. 120 Give a brief account of the Provincial Repertory Theatre and the Manchester School of Dramatists in our times.

Ans. The Provincial Repertory Theatre in England like the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, owed much of its success to the efforts of Miss Horniman (1860—1937) who out of sheer disgust for the Dublin performances started a repertory theatre of her own at Manchester in 1907 which she ironically named the Gaiety Theatre. It was here that the dramatists of the Manchester School of drama, headed by Miss Horniman, got the proper opportunity for the exhibition of their dramatic skill. The main dramatists of the Manchester School of drama are Stanley Houghton, St. John Hankin and St. John Ervine. These dramatists of the Manchester School intended to produce intellectual drama; but failed to come up to their expectations. Instead of the intellectual drama we have the drama of the industrial life of Manchester. The dramatists of the Manchester Repertory Theatre sought to produce realistic problem plays in the new tradition. "Choosing generally a background of the industrial or business world, these playwrights dramatised stories which showed rebellious youth striving against repressive parents, the clash of man and master, the stupidity of convention, the needless unhappiness caused by difference of social class, and the emergence of bold independent womanhood."* In the dramas produced by the dramatists of the Manchester School we have a

* Dr. A. S. Collins—English Literature of the 20th Century.
clear and photographic picture of the social environment and industrial life of the people of Manchester. The young dramatists of the Repertory Theatre were considerably in the grip of the life they knew intimately. These young repertory playwrights—Hughton, Hankin and Ervine, “tended to restrict their interest to the narrow field of man’s relationship to his social environment; they limited his horizon to four walls of the suburban parlour where the glass gaseliers, the innumerable China ornaments, the antimacassars and wax fruit were symbolical of the outmoded shibboleths of middle class morality.”*

“The repertory movement was not only an attempt to free the theatre from the dictatorship of the financier and the actor-manager; it was also inspired by definite theories of dramatic art. (1) The ‘long-run’ system was regarded as injurious to both the play and the players, since it led to a mechanical style of acting that deadened the mind of the player and made him a machine instead of a sensitive instrument; the result being a coarsened interpretation of the play. (2) The repertory system was based upon the team principle. There were no permanent ‘stars’ among the actors: the Hamlet of one performance might be a second murderer in the next. (3) Under the old system, theatre managers ‘called in’ scene-painters, costumiers, composers, lighting experts, and others, to carry out certain separated pieces of work. The repertory system created a corporate art of the theatre—an organic whole, not a casual assemblage of disunited parts. (4) Most important of all for dramatic literature was the fact that repertory directors recognized that a play might attract only comparatively small audiences. Under former conditions such a play had practically no chance of production, since, if any profit could be expected from it. But in the repertory theatres a few performances of a play with a limited appeal were balanced financially by the production of plays of a more popular type.”**

The most successful repertory experiment in London was that conducted at the Court Theatre from 1904 to 1907 by J. E. Vedrenne and Granville Barker: Vedrenne as the man of affairs

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* Lynton Hudson—The 20th Century Drama.
** A. C. Ward—Twentieth Century Literature.
Barker the man of the theatre. During that Court season thirty-two plays (new and old, native and foreign) were staged. The outstanding feature was the unanticipated popularity of Bernard Shaw. Eleven of his plays were produced, and these accounted for 701 performances out of a total of 938 during the season. The Vedrenne-Barker programme included, also, plays by Granville Barker himself (The Voysey Inheritance), John Galsworthy (The Silver Box), Ibsen, Euripides (in Gilbert Murray's translations), Maeterlinck, John Masefield, St. John Hankin, and others. Much that is best in contemporary drama came from the Court Theatre season.* Let us briefly examine the work of the Manchester playwrights.

Granville Barker (1877—1946)

Barker, whose work has been discussed separately in another question was a dramatist who contributed a lot to the Repertory Theatre. He began his career by producing three Shakespearian plays—A Winter's Tale, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Twelfth Night in an original manner. Through his plays the audience heard for the first time Shakespeare as he should have been heard.

In later years Barker produced realistic-cum-idealistic plays, the chief of them being Marrying of Ann Leete (1899), The Voysey Inheritance (1905), Waste (1907) and The Madras House (1911).

Stanley Houghton (1881—1913).

Stanley was a writer of comedies and his fame as a dramatist is based on The Dear Departed (1908), The Master of the House (1910), Fancy Free (1911); The Younger Generation (1910) and Hindle Wakes (1912). In these plays he deals with the revolt of youth against established authority. He paints the pictures with realism though not in such hard colours as Miss Baker's plays.

St. John Hankin (1869—1909).

Hankin, who died in 1909, is known by his The Two Mr. Wetherboys (1903), The Return of the Prodigal (1905), The Cassillis Engagement (1907) and The Last of the De Mullins (1908).

* A. C. Ward—Twentieth Century Literature.
Hankin, like most of his contemporaries was a dramatist of ideas. His plays throw considerable light upon the society of his age. His understanding of human nature was in the main and hence he failed to probe the heart of his individual characters. He lacked emotional fervour and sympathetic outlook of Galsworthy. His cynicism comes out prominently in his plays. "In general, we may say that all of Hankin's plays, well constructed as they are in the main, lack naturalism, and his stage figures, seem to us rather invented than felt."* "His plays lack both wit and the sense of life."†

St. John Ervine (1883—

Ervine will be remembered by his *Mixed Marriage* (1911) and *Jane Clegg* (1913), *John Ferguson* (1915), *The First Mrs. Fraser* (1929), *Robert's Wife* (1937). He is recognised as the greatest of the Manchester or repertory dramatists. His method is strictly realistic, and like Houghton he loves to deal with the hard conventions of a narrow society. He gives expression to the class war and the narrow prejudices of a convention ridden society. In his plays there is conflict between the settled views of middle age and the predatory instincts of the young. The dramatist glorified middle age at the expense of youth. His plays would have "carried more conviction if it had been made clearer that youth, even when most self-seeking has a point of view that should in fairness be ably and fully expressed in any play in which youth is a chief protagonist." "The greatness of Mr. Ervine's work lies in his creation of stern and dignified characters. Few of his contemporaries can equal him in this."**

Allan Monkhouse (1858—1936).

Monkhouse produced a few plays of real charm. Among his plays the pride of place has to be given to *Mary Broome*, (1911), *The Education of Mr. Surriage* (1912), *The Grand Cham's Diamond* (1924) and *First Blood* (1926).

After Dublin and Manchester, Birmingham produced a repertory dramatist of wide fame. John Drinkwater (1882—1927) produced his plays at the Birmingham theatre. A study of his

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* A. Nicoll—*British Drama*.
† David Daiches—*A Critical History of English Literature*.
** A. Nicoll—*British Drama*. 
plays will be made separately later on.

"The repertory drama did much to popularize the dramas of ideas. It also helped to create a new school of naturalistic acting, which, while it was excellently adapted to the crook plays and pert comedies of the twenties has impoverished the theatre by its inability to give the natural reticence of life the necessary expressiveness of art."*

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Q. 121. "Perhaps the most hopeful and promising of all movements in the English stage of to-day is the rapid development of the historical play." (A Nicoll) In the light of this remark evaluate the work of the historical dramatists of the 20th Century.

Ans. The Historical drama of the 20th Century is of great significance and importance in the dramatic literature of the modern age. In the words of Clifford Bax, the celebrated historical dramatist of our times, "The historical dramatist stands, in relation to the playwright of modern life, somewhat as a portrait painter does in relation to a photograph. He gives or tries to give the essentials of human emotion and experience, not an exact rendering of somebody's actual speech but an impression of what somebody is feeling." The historical dramatist is a little different from the dramatists of realism and naturalism, and it appears to be his effort, "to escape from the trammels of naturalism and to bring back something of poetic expression to the theatre."

Among the dramatists who popularised historical plays the name of Bernard Shaw should certainly be placed at the top. He wrote *Caesar and Cleopatra* and *St. Joan* and blazed the track for others to follow. John Ervine sought to bring Shakespeare's characters back to life in his historical plays particularly in *The Lady of Belmont* (1924).

It was John Drinkwater (1882—1937) who really made a solid contribution to historical drama by his four plays *Abraham Lincoln* (1918), *Mary Stuart* (1921—22), *Oliver Cromwell* (1922) and *Robert E. Lee* (1923). In each one of these plays there is a central dominating personality standing heads and shoulders over the multiplicity of individually delineated characters. These

* Lynton Hudson—The Twentieth Century Drama.
historical plays of Drinkwater are not merely chronicle plays focussing all attention on events and external happenings, but plays of ideas, presenting problems of human life in a dramatic form. In *Abraham Lincoln* the problem set forth is whether a hero like Lincoln should pursue his ideals with unflinching determination or yield to external pressure and give up war for ensuring peace. *Oliver Cromwell* and *Robert Lee* “subordinate the presentation of history to a formal problem and in *Mary Stuart* we have a subtle study of moral, social question, that of woman’s or of a woman’s soul.” Mary Queen of Scots stands for a woman who seeks to find all fine qualities of character in one single lover. Her ideal is very high and it is difficult to realise it in life. The tragedy of Mary Stuart is, in fact, the tragedy of idealism and lofty ambition.

Clifford Bax (1886 -).

He is the author of several historical plays such as *Mr. Pepys* (1926), *Socrates* (1930), *The Venetian* (1931), *The Immortal Lady* (1931) and *The Rose without a Thorn* (1932). *Socrates* lacks action but it clearly unfolds the Socratic method of discussion. This play is philosophic in tone and is ‘chastely poetic in form.’ *The Venetian* is lyrical and stands poles apart from *Socrates*. *The Rose without a Thorn* is his best play. Here neither we have the exuberant lyricism of the *Venetian* nor the philosophical intensity of *Socrates*. In this play the ‘author has set himself to develop characters within a pattern, based on historical fact, but shaped by his imagination. This play is assuredly one of the most important and beautifully constructed historical dramas of our times.”* In the matured opinion of Allardyce Nicoll, “Mr. Bax is one of those dramatists of this generation whose plays will live. His effective treatment of character, his skillful wielding of material, and his delicate sense of style give prime distinction to his work.”

Ashley Duke (1885 -)

He is known for his historical play *The Man with a Load of Mischief* (1924). It is not exactly a historical play, but the word historical “is used to include costume plays of any kind and is not

* A. Nicoll : British Drama.
restricted merely to dramas in which historical figures are the chief characters.” What signalises The Man with a Load of Mischief is its beautiful prose style, and ‘the delicately polished and jewelled prose dialogue’ in which it has been presented for the delight of the readers. The story in this play is not at all significant. What attracts us is the style of the author. The same stylistic beauties are to be found in his other plays. Five plays of Other Times. One More River (1927) is a light comedy in a light blank verse. He is a craftsman and a stylist, described as ‘elegant’ by The Morning Post.

Rudolf Besier (1878—1942).

In his Barretts of Wimpole Street Besier recreated the Victorian atmosphere with great fidelity choosing for his characters the poet Robert Browning and his love with Elizabeth Barret Browning. “In Besier’s study of poetic passion and strange perverted instinct the plot develops in melodramatic form, with frail heroine in villain’s power and noble hero prepared to overcome all obstacles in order to win her love.” Biographical fact is here a little more strained and certainly more sentimental than in The Lady with the Lamp.

Among the other historical dramatists of the age mention is well deserved for the works of Shane Leslie who brought out The Delightful, Diverting and Devotional Play of Mrs. Fitzherbert (1928), Miss Joan Temple who in Charles and Mary (1930) deals with the life of the two figures of literature—Lamb and his sister Mary; Conal O Riordan who produced His Majesty’s Pleasure dealing with the period of Henri IV; Edward Thomason who wrote the Indian legend of Krishna Kumari (1924); Howard Peacey who won recognition by his Warren Hastings (1928), El Dorado (1925) and The Fifth of November (1924); G.D Gribbe who signalised his career by writing The Masque of Venice (1924) “which, although not historical is, sufficiently removed from the ordinary life around us to partake of the impression which it is the aim of the historical dramatists to produce.” tutton Vane who wrote Outward Bound (1923) and Laurence Housman who

* A. Nicoll—British Drama.
produced *Possession* (1921), *God Bless Her* (1922), *The Comforter* (1922) and *Victoria Regina* (1935).

Q. 122. Write an essay on the Poetic Drama and dramatists of the twentieth century.

Ans. In the early years of the twentieth century poetic drama could not gain much ground for most of the dramatists of this period like Barker, Galsworthy, Shaw, were more interested in the presentation of the social and economic problems of their times in a realistic manner than in making excursions to a land of poetic enchantment in their poetic plays. The drama in their hands ceased to be the representation of ‘emotional reality’ and became a handmaid of social criticism. The use of flowery language in realistic plays was out of place, and drama, dealing with social problems, was prosaic rather than poetic in the early decades of the twentieth century.

A change was noticed with the passage of time, and the dramatists who followed the early realists, were fascinated by the glamour and enchanting loveliness of poetic plays, and T. S. Eliot prepared the ground for them by stating that ‘the craving for poetic drama is permanent in human nature’. Eliot emphasised the ability of poetic drama to capture the elusive in life and make it delightful and interesting. Twentieth century poetic drama has assumed different forms and shapes in the hands of different dramatists. Poetic dramas have been written on a variety of subjects. Some plays have been written on the glorification and exaltation of religion and the church, while a good many of them have atheism and denunciation of God and priests as their subjects. Some poetic plays are symbolic and mystical in character and quite a large number of them have Celtic mythology and Irish life as their subjects. Some plays have oriental grandeur and are inspired by oriental setting and splendour, while others have aesthetic enjoyment and glorification of sex-urge as their main spring. Thus we have a wide variety of poetical plays in the twentieth century and a large number of dramatists have preferred this art form to realistic or naturalistic plays.
Stephen Phillips (1864—1915) was among the earliest of the poetical dramatists of the modern age. He produced five poetical plays between 1900 and 1908. His main works are Herod, Ulysses, Nero, Faust and Paolo and Francesca. Phillips tried to revive the old Elizabethan traditions in poetic drama. Ernest Reyonolds in Modern Poetic Drama has denounced Phillips for his decadent love for the old Elizabethan themes. In his opinion, “all that Phillips really did was to make the dying bones of pseudo Elizabethanism into a slightly more hollow rattle than Tennyson had done in Queen Mary.” This criticism against Phillips has some validity when it is applied to Herod, and other plays, but it does not at all apply to Paolo and Francesca, which has been praised and applauded for its poetic beauty and bewitching charm. Even that confirmed antagonist of poetic drama, William Archer, paid rich tribute to Phillips in the Daily Chronicle when he wrote about this play—“A thing of exquisite poetic form yet tingling from first to last with intense dramatic life Mr. Phillips has achieved the impossible.” Thus Phillips cannot be summarily dismissed as a simple imitator of Elizabethan rattle. Though he sought to reintroduce the old Elizabethan force and fire by the sonority of verse, yet his poetic plays failed to make much impression.

Oscar Wilde waved a new spurt to poetic drama by making it symbolic and aesthetic in characters. His claim as a writer of poetic drama has to be recognized particularly by his two plays Salome and The Duchess of Padua. Though Wilde had written comedies in prose, such as The Importance of Being Earnest and A Woman of No Importance, yet the play which Wilde himself considered ‘a poetic, dramatic masterpiece,’ is the controversial Salome. It is a symbolic play and here Wilde unconsciously worked against naturalist concepts. The play, in its language and atmosphere, is essentially anti-naturalist and being anti-naturalist is the first step towards a poetical play. The Princess Salome has been represented as a queen of beauty and Tetrarch is fascinated by her ravishing charms and looks at her with ‘his mole’s eyes under his shaking eyelids.’ The play is quite successful and has a distinctive place of its own in the poetical drama of the present age. In The Duchess of Padua, Wilde
marched a step ahead and advanced further in his technique against naturalism. *The Duchess of Padua* is a curious combination of Elizabethan and his own aesthete's outlook and the entire work is in blank verse. The theme is the usual Italianate subject of murder, usurpation and revenge. Wilde successfully started the reaction against naturalism and paved the way for symbolism. Between Wilde's *Salome* and the Abbey-dramatists, the main technique tried out has been 'symbolism'. It reached its culminating point in the hands of William Butler Yeats.

Davidson was another great dramatist who enriched poetic drama by his *The Theatocrat* and *Mammon Trilogy*. The importance of Davidson in the history of 20th century poetic drama lies in the fact that instead of concerting his poetic muse to the service of religion and devotion to God, Davidson turned the scales upside down and tried to build a poetic theatre on non-Christian, anti-religious and materialistic presupposition. Davidson developed his fascination for matter, and denounced dogmas and principles of the Church. He felt a repulsion towards religion, and glorified the individual and sex impulses.

The modern poetic drama had considerably been influenced by the Orient, and in James Elroy Flecker we have an exhibition of the oriental splendour and magnificence in modern poetic plays. Flecker's *Hassan* is an oriental play remarkable for all the splendour and majesty with which the East is associated. Hassan is the product of a Romanticist, and seeks to capture the spirit that pervaded the Eastern countries. *Hassan* is an oriental fantasy, sparkling with wit and richly visual imagery of the east. Another romantic dramatist influenced by the oriental theatre was Dr. Gordon Bottomley. In his youth, he was an ardent admirer of Rossetti in whom he found

*The lost Italian vision, the passionate
Vitality of art more rich than life,
More real than the day's reality.*

Later he rejected the misty world of symbolic shapes and wrote a number of plays in imitation of the poetic spirit of Shakespeare. He was one of the pioneers in modern English choric drama. His *Culbin Sands* is a remarkable play and has a place of its own in the revival of romanticism in modern
John Masefield, the poet laureate, made creditable contribution to poetic drama by writing attractive religious plays: Good Friday, The Trial of Jesus, Easter: A Play for Singers and A Play of St. George. These religious plays are most interesting in view of the treatment of the well-known theme of the trial and crucifixion of Christ. The realism which Masefield introduced in poetry is conspicuous by its absence in his poetic plays and they seek to establish the tradition of faith in modern drama against the Nihilism of Davidson. Masefield's poetic plays have beauty as well as romanticism in them. He is emotional and exuberant, and there is something childlike and unsophisticated in his attitude towards the emotional states of human life.

Laurence Binyon sought to revive the old Greek world of romance and loveliness in his poetic plays particularly in Paris and Oenone. In this work Binyon goes back to the ancient world of Homer and revives the lore of Helen, Paris and Oenone. His importance in modern poetic drama lies in introducing the old classicism in modern plays particularly in its theme.

Binyon's most ambitious poetic play is Ayuli (1924). It is a three-Act play, representing the love of an Eastern king for a beautiful lady, Ayuli, for whose sake he sacrifices his kingdom. The king is the adorer of Ayuli's beauty. "The love of the king for Ayuli is not treated as an infatuation bringing a kingdom to ruin, but as an attempt to set up beauty as the ruling principle of life." Binyon, the classicist, was at heart a Romanticist, as can be seen from his study of Ayuli.

John Drinkwater (1882—1937) who shot into immortality by his great play Abraham Lincoln written in prose, made all possible efforts for the revival of poetic drama in the 20th century. He lamented the evil days on which poetic drama had fallen, and in his four plays, The Storm (1915), The God of Quite (1916), X=O (1917) and Cophetua (1922), he established the supremacy of Poetical plays over prose comedies. Of these plays The Storm and X=O are very popular. The Storm deals with country life. It presents the suspense of a wife about the fate of her husband who is lost in the storm. The play has a
certain dignity of idea and of expression, but it is meditative rather than dramatic in its structure. \( X=O \) or A Night of Trojan War is concerned with the horrors of war, and the entire play is an exposure of the evils of war. The poetic plays of Drinkwater have a place of their own in modern poetic drama. He established the form of poetic drama on a surer footing than other dramatists of our time.

The contribution of the Irish movement, also known as Celtic revival, is remarkable to the cause of Poetic Drama in our times. Its great leaders, W. B. Yeats, and S. M. Synge "deprecated the conversion of the theatre into the lecture platform and the pulpit by realistic playwrights." These dramatists sought to poetise drama both in its thought content as well as expression. Yeats made experiments in Distance for poetic drama and tried to establish the lyrical drama as a serious rival to the realistic drama in its heyday. He deprecated the conversion of the theatre into the lecture platform and the pulpit by realistic playwrights. He rejected the superficialities of the modern period and sought continuously to retire into a world of mystic symbols through which he might be able to have a glimpse of reality, not subject to change and decay.

He determined to build up his own system of symbols and evolved almost a personal mythology. He made experiments in symbolism, presentation of self and anti-self, and almost developed an esoteric system which only those who were conversant with his ideas about soul, thought, image, body, could possibly understand. His main plays are—The Countess Cathleen, The Land of Heart's Desire. In these plays Yeats devoted his genius to the creation of symbolic dramas with lyrical spontaneity.

In 1920 Yeats published Four Plays of Dancers and with them he entered a new threshold of dramatic possibility. In them he revives the use of masks and employs the technique of the Japanese. The plays are wholly unlike the conventional British plays; the playwright's eastern inspiration rushes through them like a great wind blowing out of the waste and lying all flat before it. In his plays Yeats gave a new lease of life to national myths and legends and poetised primitive human emotions. Being at heart
a poet, Yeats presented in lyrical verse the emotions of his charac-
ters, though in laying stress on emotional expression, he missed
in giving to the story its flavour of romanticism. Yeats, however,
succeeded in imparting lyricism and symbolism to poetic drama
of the twentieth century.

Another Irish-man who made considerable contribution to mo-
dern poetic drama was J M Synge who had already achieved great
fame by his Riders to the Sea, a prose play. Later on he produced
The Playboy of the Western World and The Shadow of the Glen,
and in these two plays he presented the world of nature and
outdoor life in the best way possible. Synge had a sure dramatic
instinct and a keen insight into the motives of human nature. He
had also the gift of touching the chords of our heart by his
stirring words steeped in pathos. He had the gift of transmuting
pathos and ugliness into poetry and beauty, and his plays are rich
in presenting pathetic thoughts in poetic language. Yeats and
Synge have become names as remarkable for modern 'poetic'
drama, as Marlowe and Kyd for the Elizabethan stage.
T. S. Eliot.

The poet who was largely responsible for a new orientation
in England towards verse drama and for its rebirth is T. S. Eliot.
In a seminar at Delhi in 1963, Professor Daiches under-rated
the genius of T. S. Eliot by calling him 'A great minor poet of
the 20th century.' He might be a minor poet in poetry, but
certainly he is a major force in the poetic drama of the 20th
century. The poetical plays which have come since 1935—
Murder in the Cathedral (1935), Family Reunion (1939), Cocktail
Party (1949) and Confidential Clerk (1953), and even the latest
still unpublished, The Elder Statesman, show him to have moved
away, from even ecclesiastical tradition to a deep ritualistic
pagan faith. The success achieved by Eliot in Murder in the
Cathedral, shook off the prejudice of critics against verse drama.
The spiritual note singing throughout this play and the poetic
choruses and their mystical words, have won for the play a
name in the world of poetic drama. In this poetic play we have
dramatic intensity combined with poetic inspiration, and the
work has been acclaimed as a great success on the stage. "In
Murder in the Cathedral Eliot admirably fulfilled his own
demands for poetic drama. The chief of these was that the poetry should be a subtle regulator of mood, and here Eliot succeeds fully. The poetry is the life blood of the play: the ideas, which are, in the main abstract, are given dramatic life purely by Eliot's concrete and vivid images. It is the highest tribute to a poetic drama to say, as one can of Murder in the Cathedral, that is both intensely dramatic and inconceivable in prose "*

Some shortcomings of the play should be frankly admitted. St Thomas A. Becket strikes us lacking in depth. He appears more a symbol than a person. The other characters in the play do not seem to have an independent significance. They seem to be personifications "of various simple abstract attitudes meaningful only in relation to St. Thomas himself." The real 'action' of the play does not lie in the violent killing of St. Thomas, as it should have lain, but rather in his confrontation with and his victory over the various temptations, of which the most serious and dangerous is undoubtedly the temptation to accept his martyrdom. "The drama, in so far as there is a drama, is thus strictly "interior" and the outward value of the play is rather that of spectacle and a commemorative ritual."**

The eminent success achieved by Eliot in Murder in the Cathedral led him to write another poetic drama The Family Reunion, which though keeping something of the murder element is much different from the religious theme of the murder in the Cathedral. Eliot regarded it "as a drama of contemporary people speaking contemporary language." It deals with the problem of sin and its expiation. The setting is one of English aristocratic country-house, and the scenes are the familiar drawrooms of naturalism. The persons of the play include several "every day insignificant" characters such as Ibsen used to have in his plays. The theme or the plot takes it cue from the Furies who pursued Orestes and never let him have the rest till he had committed the crime. This theme of the Furies pursuing Orestes has been transferred to an upper class country house called Wishwood in the wind-and-rain swept countryside of the north of England. The

* Bamber Cascioigne: Twentieth Century Drama.
** Frazer: The Modern Writer and his World.
theme of the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus works ill in its English setting, and fails to satisfy the readers. "*The Family Reunion*" says A. C. Ward, "is an example of material pressed into an alien mould, and showing-up of the fallacy that poetic drama could be forced into existence."

The third play *The Cocktail Party* was produced ten years after *The Family Reunion*. It is a simpler play. Here is a play having minimum of imagery and evocation. There is no symbolism in the play. The language in this homely play is homely. The verse is of the surface, although not superficial. Statements made by characters are conscious, lucid statements without any vagueness. The play could have been written in prose, but verse form has been maintained because it imposes its control at a level which is often below conscious observation. If we try to alter almost any line in the play, the charm of the play is affected.

*The Cocktail Party* has been described a 'comedy', but in fact it is only in an ironical sense that it can be taken as a comedy. "It is the most depressing play, concerned as it is with the breakdown of a sick society and an individual's inability to seek a way out of the super-civilized maze without calling on the assistance of the nearest psychiatrist." The play opens with a Cocktail party which is a failure from the beginning. Edward and his wife Lavinia are at cross purposes and are not happy. However they are brought to a state of reconciliation by Dr. Henry Harcourt Reilly, who points out to the estranged pair that conjugal happiness depends on adjustments rather than on adamant views. They agree, and ultimately lead a good life. They begin to understand each other and are happy. But the doctor is not able to bring round Miss Celia Coplestone who also suffers from loneliness. She had been the mistress of Edward once, but now she feels alienated. The doctor advises her to marry some one and lead a happy life. Loneliness for a woman is suicidal. Celia does not listen to the doctor's advice. She remains all lonely brooding over her discomfitures. Edward and Lavinia give Cocktail parties, but poor Celia is left with no zest to join them. She reaches the end of her terrible destiny, which was none other than crucifixion. Joining a religious order she
is sent to a far off land where there is a native rebellion. She is crucified. Her body is eaten by ants. Such is the martyrdom of Celia Copleston. It is a depressing and grim play.

The play is based on the idea of atonement and is in the tradition of certain Catholic conceptions, but it cannot be accepted on aesthetic grounds in the play. *The Cocktail Party* accentuates the inhumanity of despair and makes a tragic reading. It is not a real comedy, but a tragic play.

The next play *The Confidential Clerk* (1953) is again a pessimistic and depressing play. “One has the feeling that Eliot has attempted to make his characters of flesh and blood, and yet has failed to make us identify ourselves with these characters who remain strangely aloof. The last traces of poetry disappear and Eliot has carried ‘the machine he set in motion,’ with *The Family Reunion,* when he wished to bring poetry to terms with a contemporary theme—to its logical conclusion.”

The play does not have an imposing theme. It does not deal with matters relating to life and death, but merely with our choice of what we want to do in the world. Sir Claude Mulhammer wanted to be a potter. He became a first rate power in the city. Colby is his son. He appoints him as his ‘confidential clerk’, but the young boy is not satisfied with the job of being a clerk. He decides in favour of being a church organist. His choice is for the job of a musician. He makes a safe choice for his happiness. He is not like Celia of *Cocktail Party* who prefers crucifixion to a happy life. The dramatist applauds Colby for his realistic, though unadventurous decision to be an organist, a second rate musician. The play illustrates the truth of the remark, “If you haven’t the strength to impose your own terms upon life, you must accept the terms it offers you.”

*The Elder Statesman* (1958) directs our attention to an elder Statesman in his retired life. He had been a distinguished statesman in active life. He had been honoured and applauded in his role as a statesman. The elder statesman is now on his death bed. He “sees for the first time the reflection of his true self, of a life spent avoiding reality and the sense of guilt which comes from moral cowardice.” This play is simpler in conception and more human in treatment.
T. S. Eliot is a name to conjure with in modern drama. He has dealt with religious, secular, and psychological themes in his plays in a poetic style, varying his verse according to the theme of plays. "Eliot cannot be said to have solved all the problems which arose from the decay of romantic drama and from the limitation of the naturalist drama which he replaced. But he has perhaps brought us to a point at which such a solution can be envisaged. It is a very considerable achievement, whatever the immediate future of the drama may be; and in its nature it is beyond the mode of praise."

Somewhat in the same mood that impelled T. S. Eliot to write *The Family Reunion* and other plays, W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood have collaborated to write plays. Their joint plays are *The Dog Beneath the Skin or Where Is Francis?* (1935), *The Ascent of F6* (1936) and *On the Frontier* (1938). The first play *The Dog Beneath the Skin* has a mythical theme and reads like an old story in modern context. In *Ascent of F. 6* there is a mythical atmosphere, and it is here that one notes the conscious creation of a myth out of contemporary elements. These dramatists have raised social issues to a mythological plane.

"These plays betray no neo-classical earmark beyond the choruses; but exhale a neo-romantic perfume of the strange and the remote. *The Dog Beneath the Skin* is particularly rich in symbolic imagery, characterization, stage direction, scene, and quotation. Photographically realistic incidents are blended with improbabilities into a total design." There is social propaganda in them with a left wing bias. These three plays reflect the disillusionment and despair of man in the face of the stark realities of life. The technique in these plays is borrowed from the German expressionists. They are blunt in their satire and have lost their appeal. Of the plays, *The Ascent of F.6* is the most acceptable because of its appealing theme. It presents the British expedition sent by the Government to hoist the imperial banner over a mountain marked F. 6.

Stephen Spender is the most renowned communist playwright of modern poetical plays. He is a leftist, and in his
poetic play *The Trial of a Judge* (written for Rupert Doone's Group Theatre 1938), he is definitely a 'popular front Communist.' The theme is a powerful representation of the fate of Liberals and Communists in the hands of Hitler's Nazism. He represents the frustrating condition which produced Nazism in Germany.

Sean O'Casey introduced poignant expressionism in his plays. His early plays: *Show of Gunman, Juno and the Paycock* and *Plough and the Stars* have themes thrilling enough to be poetic. Their theme is the "common slum-dweller's heroism in the face of the daily hardships of existence."

During the period of the Second World War there was a remarkable progress in poetic drama. Immediately after the war a Poet's Theatre was established in London. Norman Nicholson's *The Old man of the Mountain* had a successful run and was appreciated for its Biblical setting and nice representation of the story of Elijah and Ahab.

Christopher Fry was the only modern metaphysical verse dramatist who introduced the theme of philosophy in his plays. He has shown that modern verse drama need not be confined to the presentation of tragic and religious themes. In Fry's *Lady's not for Burning* (1949) poetic drama achieves another milestone. The play deals with the life of a young girl who is condemned to be burned at the stake for she is convicted of witchcraft. The period of the play is the fifteenth century when there was a general belief in witches and their malevolent influence on human life. A young man offers himself for the lady and says that the lady's not for burning. The girl does not accept the young man's sacrifice and persuades him to live rather than immolate himself for her sake. The appearance of the rag-man whom the girl was supposed to have turned into a dog saves the situation. The lady is pardoned and the tragedy is averted. The verse is loose, but sudden flights of poetry sown in the midst of pedestrian passages. Fry advocated verse as an appropriate medium of philosophy because it directly makes an appeal to our intuition. "Fry's plays are not so much an achievement..."
in poetic drama, as an original application of verse to familiar theatrical ends. Mr. Fry's work, that is to say, is not really a part of the revived tradition of poetic drama. It is to be related, not so much to the poetic drama of Yeats and Eliot, as to particular tradition of Comedy in which in our own country, the most successful practitioners have been writers in prose.”* Fry's verse plays are creations of mood and have a wonderful resplendence of language. What strikes one first in the plays of Fry is his completely idiosyncratic style and his felicity for words. His language has a dazzle which seems to be almost an end in itself and is nearly blinding when striving to ignore it, an attempt is made to understand the essential Fry.”**

Fry's work has been adjudged differently by different critics. A. C. Ward is of the opinion that “Christopher Fry brought light and air as well as music and warmth into the frigid charnel-house of contemporary verse drama.”† Quite opposite to Ward's view is Raymond Williams's opinion who says, “There is a definite place in modern English drama for Mr. Fry’s comedies, but, in the resonance of his success, it is important to emphasise that this place is neither innovating nor directive.”‡ The truth seems to be with Raymond Williams and we whole heartedly endorse his judgment.

In modern poetical plays, myths, religion, politics, modern life, have been well represented. Radio programmes are giving further impetus to poetical plays. The future of poetical plays is bright. If we survey the history of the last half Century of English verse drama, we cannot say that a rich poetic harvest has been garnered every year. In no period did art grow in geometrical progression. Its growth is slow and steady and the past achievement in this direction should fill us with faith and hope for the future, for it is faith that creates and hope that sustains.

No doubt, the main current of the theatre will flow in what Galsworthy has termed, “the broad and clear-cut channel

* Raymond Williams: Drama from Ibsen to Eliot.
** Fredrick Lumley: Trends in 20th Century Drama.
† A. C. Ward: Twentieth Century Literature.
‡ Raymond Williams: Drama From Ibsen to Eliot.
of naturalism.” “But there will always remain a twisting and delicious stream which will bear on its breast new barks of poetry, shaped, it may be, like prose, but a prose incarnating through its fantasy, and symbolism all the deeper aspirations, yearnings, doubts and mysterious strivings of the human spirit.”* “We may foresee, then, not only the continuance of a drama in verse, but also the growth of a poetic drama in prose—a prose either subtly suggestive, like that of Maeterlinck, or else beautiful picturesque and expressive like that of Synge and the lesser Irish dramatists.”**

Q. 123. Write a note on Expressionism in modern drama and evaluate the work of the dramatists belonging to the ‘Expressionistic School.’

Ans. Disgusted with the overtone of realism in drama, and the expression of the external life of sordid realities, certain dramatists in America, Europe and England made new experiments in producing plays not dealing with external realism but with the inner life of the characters. Expressionism in drama is just an experiment in presenting the inner life of the characters in a psychological way. “In the theatre it means a subjective instead of an objective projection of the characters. In an ordinary play they reveal themselves by what they do or say. Expressionism endeavours to project the inner working of the mind.”†

“Expressionist drama was concerned not with society but with man. It aimed to offer, subjective psychological analysis, not so much of an individual as of a type, and made much of the subconscious. For such a study established dramatic forms and methods of expression its threw overboard conventional structure in favour of an unrestricted freedom. Their dialogue was often cryptic and patterned, now verse, now prose, and was in every way as far removed from the naturalistic prose of the realistic school as can well be imagined. Symbolic figures, embodiments of inner, secret impulses were introduced on the stage in the

* John Galsworthy: Some Platitudes about Drama.
** Chandler: Aspects of Modern Drama.
† Lynton Hudson: Twentieth Century Drama.
attempt to make clear the psychological complexities of character."* "Expressionism was an all-out onslaught against any sense of values in Germany. It has been described as an exigency of the mind, a mixture of ecstasy and obscurity, both facets being peculiar to the German temperament, and let us admit it, language. No wonder and thank goodness, it has never been assimilated neat by others."** The prominent dramatists of the 'Expressionistic School' in England and America are G'Casey, Priestley, Munro, O'Neill, Rube Gstein an Elmer Rice. It should be noted that 'expressionistic drama' has not been very popular in England and extreme forms of expressionism were rarely practised and handled by British dramatists. We will briefly deal with the works of these dramatist of the 'Expressionistic School.'

Sean O'Casey (1884 — )

O'Casey, the Irish dramatist, is a worthy successor of Synge, and is interested in the presentation of Irish life, not the Irish life of the Aran Islands, but the life of slums of Dublin bringing out all the sordidness and drunkenness of the Irish men and women. "His background, however, was not the Aran Islands but the slums of Dublin, crowded noisy tenements where women quarrelled and loafers drank, and the tragic violence of civil war was ever at hand."†

O'Casey's first play The Shadow of a Gunman brings out the slum tenements of Dublin in their crowded squalor. It reveals the bloodiness of the Anglo Irish war of 1920. This play was produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, in 1923. The next play Juno and the Paycock was produced in 1924. It is a political play dealing with the execution of a youngman by his Republican comrades who suspected him of treachery. The Plough and the Stars (1926) also deals with the cruel and brutal folly of civil war. The Silver Tassie combines the naturalistic and expressionistic methods, and the skill with which the dramatist allows the one to drift into the other is really praise-worthly. "In the war scenes of The Silver Tassie, O'Casey tried to communicate the soldier's

* E. Albert : A History of English Literature.
** Fredrick Lumley : Trends in Twentieth Century Drama.
† Dr. A. S. Collins : English Literature of the 20th Century.
reaction to the blood and sweat of war in a way that conveyed the universality of the experience. For this purpose he adopted a mixture of chanted verse and stylized prose put into the mouths of nameless choruses of soldiers, wounded stretcher-bearers."

The other plays of O'Casey, *Within the Gates* (1933), *The Star Turns Red* (1940), *Purple Dust* (1940), *Red Rose for me* (1946), *Oak Leaves and Lavender* (1946), *Cockadoodle Dandy* (1949) do not have the same intensity as his first three plays though the magic of language still gives them their enlivening touch.

The plays of O'Casey are about Irish life and the tragedy and comedy of this life is well brought out in dialogues, which are vivid, racy and rhythmical. In O'Casey comedy and tragedy sit cheek by jowl. "Comedy is seldom long absent, yet one can never forget the grim, underlying sadness. He draws what he sees with a ruthless objectivity and an impressionistic vividness of detail."

The characters of O'Casey are weak. They are crude and pitiable. They are 'comic creatures speaking a rich lingo of the Dublin slums. They strut about, boasting, singing, quarrelling, drinking with an unflagging vitality.'

What kind of life is presented by O'Casey? His pictures are realistic and he tells us convincingly that in a civil war it is the poor people of the country who suffer. "Few writers have so intimately fused realism and pathos, tragedy and comedy, for his world is a basically comic one whose atmosphere is a sky laden with fate ever ready to strike almost at random and therefore it is a most pitiable world."**

C. K. Munro (1889—)

C. K. Munro tried to imitate the German expressionism in his play *Rumour* (1924). It deals with the origin of war and modern international jealousies. It is a significant play of the expressionistic school.

Reginald Berkeley. (1890—1935)

Berkeley's play *The White Chateau* (1927) is in the style of Munro's *Rumour*. It does not have the intensity and bitterness of *The Silver Tassie*, but it too has, power, dignity and distinction. His other plays are *The Quest of Elizabeth*, *Mango Island*, *The

* Lynton Hudson: The 20th Century Drama.
** Dr. A. S. Collins: English Literature of the 20th Century.
World's End.

H. F. Rubinstein (1891—)

Rubinstein made experiments in the style and manner of Berkeley. His famous play The House (1926) deals with a building having vital entity and power. "Perhaps the greatest weakness of this play lies in the fact that a theme akin to those that informed the old problem dramas has been dealt with in a style distinctly 'modern' and that consequently there is a disharmony between the subject and its treatment. Mr. Rubinstein, however, is an interesting pioneer, and in this play (The House) as well as in Isabel's Eleven (1927) he is obviously endeavouring to express something new in dramatic form."*

J. B. Priestley (1894—)

"Priestley is a playwright who has attempted to break out of the conventions of the naturalistic drama, tending sometimes towards a modified form of expressionism, at other times breaking up the illusion of the box-realism deliberately as an Ever Since Paradise.

He is the author of more than thirty plays. He commands a wide range. He has produced comedy, farce, domestic drama and expressionistic plays. His famous expressionistic play is Johnson over Jordan. It reads like a morality play. The other plays of Priestley are Time and the Conways (1937), Dangerous Corner (1932), Music At Night (1938), I have Been Here Before (1937), Laburnum Grove (1933), The Long Mirror (1940), They Came to a City (1943), Desert Highway (1943), Home is Tomorrow (1948).

"Priestley the ardent reformer, and Priestley the plain man both appear in his dramas. His typically Yorkshire humour is part of the almost aggressive 'bon hommie' of much of his work. His characters are soundly drawn, the dialogue is pungent, and his plays are always good theatre. His chief lack is the poetic insight, which alone can make the greatest drama out of the metaphysical problems that engaged his mind in his experimental work."

Elmer Rice (1892—)

This American dramatist produced Adding Machine in 1923.

* A. Nicoll: British Drama.
It is considered a fine play of the expressionistic school and is a nice ‘experiment in expressionism.’

Eugene O’Neill (1888—1953)

O’Neill is a famous American dramatist of international fame. He began as a Realist in *Anna Christie* (1922) dealing with the redemption of a prostitute, but soon came out of the realistic fold. Since then he has made experiments in new techniques of presentation, new dramatic forms and original dialogue. He has a spark of genius and his experiments in style, and expression are sometimes too bold to be easily followed by the audience. He is a serious dramatist dealing with serious subjects like religion, philosophy and scientific thought. He is the greatest exponent of the expressionist drama in the English language. His dramas are lengthy and sometimes obscure and confusing. But “he is a dramatist of immense force and powerful imagination, and his best plays show a genuine sense of the theatre.” His main plays are, *The Emperor Jones* (1920), *Beyond the Horizon* (1920), *The Hairy Ape* (1922), *Desire Under the Elms* (1924), *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* (1924), *The Great God Brown* (1926), *Lazarus Laughed* (1927), *Ah ! Wilderness* (1933), *Days without End* (1934).

“O’Neill was perhaps the only really professional playwright who in his erratic trials and errors has covered the whole artistic field up to existentialism, displaying promising competence and talent.

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Q. 124 Give a brief account of the development of Drama from 1939 to 1963.

Ans. “The history of drama since 1939 is largely the study of the effect on the theatre of the 1939—45 War. The immediate result of the imposition of the ‘black-out’ was a complete closing of London theatres for some time and gloomy forebodings about the future of the drama; but there were good things which emerged. At no time during the Second World War did theatre become so completely dominated by the frivolous gaiety of ‘leave entertainment’ as in the 1914—18 War. It was as though the immediacy of the struggle, in the bombings and blitzes, prevented the worst excesses of the ‘leave spirit’. Light entertainment there
was in plenty, in review and comedy, but its popularity never completely submerged the interest in more serious drama. Moreover, a great step forward was made in the taking of good drama into the provinces, into the smallest villages, and wherever army camps and hostels for workers brought the companies sponsored C. E. M. A. (Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts). E. N. S. A. (Entertainments National Service Association). The touring companies of these two organizations brought live theatre to untold thousands who had never before encountered it. In so doing, they created a vast new public on which the post-war dramatist has been able to rely; a public was responsible for the boom which immediately followed the war.

"Our period owes much to the work of four organizations, which have not only done much pioneer work among new audiences, but have contributed materially to the standard of dramatic production at all levels. In addition to C. E. M. A. (which was later to become The Arts Council of Great Britain), and E. N. S. A., The British Drama League (founded 1919) went on from strength to strength during the War and post-War years and of the value of a thriving dramatic tradition to the health and well-being of the professional theatre can be no question—while on the professional stage the War saw an enormous advance in the prestige of the Old Vic Theatre Company, with its training school and children's theatre company, the Young Vic. Nor must we omit the high place in public esteem which has been gained by the annual Shakespeare Festivals at the Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon."

To the work of C. E. M. A and the Old Vic is largely due the marked rise in the artistic standards of play production which has been a feature of post-War drama. The general level of acting in major professional productions is very high, while, in subtlety and aesthetic taste, staging and the general techniques of production have improved enormously. Great and gifted actors have been numerous, the names of Sir John Gielgud, Sir Lawrence Olivier, Sir Ralph Richardson, Dame Edith Evans, and Dame Sybil Thorndike leap at once to mind.

"It is, indeed, as an age of great actors and memorable productions, of the classics (and particularly of Shakespeare) that
this decade will be remembered. New dramatists of stature to compare with Shaw, Synge, or even Galsworthy, have not as yet been forthcoming. Sean O’Casey has continued to write, but though he had some success with Red Roses for Me (1946) it is doubtful whether such plays as The Star Turns Red (1940), Purple Dust (1945), and Oak Leaves and Lavender (1947) have added much to his reputation. The prolific J. B. Priestley still draws his audiences, and James Bridie went on writing till his death in 1951 with unflagging versatility and inventiveness.”

“Among the new names none is as yet numbered among the great. Four stand out among the younger generation: Peter Ustinov (1921—), author of The House of Regrets (1940), Blow Your Own Trumpet (1941), The Banbury Nose (1944), The Man behind the Statue (1945), The Indifferent Shepherd (1948), The Man in the Raincoat (1949), and The Love of Four Colonels (1951); Terence Rattigan (1911—), who has had great success with French without Tears (1936), Flare Path (1942), While the Sun Shines (1944), Love in Idleness (1944), The Winslow Boy (1946), The Browning Version (1948), and Adventure Story (1949); Denis Johnston (1901—) who followed the notable The Moon in the Yellow River (1931) with Weep for The Cyclops (1946); and Emlyn Williams (1905—), actor, and author of a number of successful plays, among them the earlier The Corn is Green (1938), and more recently, The Wind of Heaven (1945) and Tresspass (1947).”

“Yet none of these four seems to wish to create a new tradition, to give the drama the new sense of direction and purpose which it now needs, for the realist tradition of problem and discussion has gradually exhausted itself. At the moment experiments in a new direction are almost exclusively in the poetic drama, for the re-establishment of which T. S. Eliot did so much in the thirties. Since 1939 he has produced The Family Reunion (1939), The Cocktail Party (1949), and The Confidential Clerk (1953), and though they have not been as successful as Murder in the Cathedral (1935), The Cocktail Party, originally staged at the Edinburgh Festival, made a great stir. A rising dramatist, master of vivid and telling verse drama, and one of the brightest stars in the universe of contemporary drama is Christopher Fry (1907—) whose work illustrates the new vitality of the poetic medium. His
plays include *The Boy with a Cart* (1939), *A Phoenix too Frequent* (1946), *The Firstborn* (1946), *The Lady's Not For Burning* (1949) *Thor With Angels* (1949), *Venus Observed* (1950) and *A Sleep of Prisoners* (1951). Other dramatists in the poetic tradition include Ronald Ducan (1914), author of the very successful *This Way to the Tomb!* (1945); Norman Nicholson (1914—), who wrote *The Old Man of the Mountains* (1946), and Peter Yates, (1914—), author of *The Assassin* (1946), and *The Burning Mask* (1948).”

“Although the theatrical boom of the middle forties has undoubtedly passed with the growth of financial stringency, the impression of the post-1939 stage will remain as one of a vitality which should ultimately convert the present lack of direction into a new and living dramatic tradition.”*