

I. Brian Friel and His Works: An Introduction

Born on 9 January 1929, catholic, in Omagh, county Tyrone in Northern Ireland, Brian Friel is one of Ireland's most prominent playwrights. In addition to his published plays, he has written short stories, screen plays, film, TV and Radio adaptations of his plays: and several pieces of non-fiction on the role of theatre and the artist. In addition to all this, he has also translated Chekhov's *Three Sisters* (1981) and adapted Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* (1987) for the stage. He is a prodigious figure in contemporary literature. His distinction has grown in recent years with dramatic success in Ireland, London, and New York. From 1950 to 1960 he was a school teacher, but since 1960 he has been a full-time writer. His first major play, *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* was the hit to the 1964 Dublin Theatre Festival. In 1972 he was elected as a member of the Irish Academy of Letters. In 1981 *Translations*, one of his seminal pieces, was awarded the Ewart-Biggs peace prize. After co-founding *Field Day*, Friel continues his interest in the arts as a member of Aosdana, national treasure of Irish artists, to which he was elected in 1982. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Literature by the National University of Ireland in 1983, and in 1987 was nominated to the Irish Senate *Dancing at Lughnasa*, probably his most successful play so far, received three Tony Awards in 1992, including The Best Play Award.

Friel's father was a native of Derry and a primary school principal. His mother was from Donegal and Friel spent many holidays there. In 1939 the family moved to Derry, where Friel's father had a teaching position at the Long Tower school. Friel attended the same school and then went to attend secondary school at Saint Columbs College, Derry. He attended the Republic of Irelands national seminary saint Patrick's college, near Dublin but instead of going on to the priesthood, he took a post graduate

teaching course in Belfast. He started teaching in Derry in 1950 and wrote in the meantime. His first radio play *A Sort of Freedom* aired on BBC in 1958. In 1959 his first short story "The Skelper", appeared in the *New Yorker*. In 1960 he retired from teaching to write full-time.

Friel's early life had a strong influence on his writing. Though his father was a teacher, his grandparents, whose first language was Irish, were illiterate peasants from country Donegal. Donegal is another influence that features strongly in Friel's life and work. He moved there in 1969 because he always felt his roots lay in Donegal partly to get into the countryside and partly to get into the Republic. He left partly because of the political situation in the North where the sense of frustration which he felt under the tight and immovable unionist regime became distasteful. He joined the Nationalist Party in Derry but left in 1967, disappointed with its lack of initiative. Many of his plays are set in Blleebeg, a remote part of Donegal. In 1980, Friel helped to found the *Field Day Theatre Company* which is committed to the search for a middle ground between the country's entrenched positions to help the Irish explore new identities for themselves. Often compared to Anton Chekhov, Brian Friel resists all explanation and categorization.

Language for Friel is closely implicated with identity. He makes his characters' speeches rich with rhythms of everyday Irish Country life and the colour and metaphor of people whose job in language is intense and satisfying .

This research is a study of *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), the most highly recognized play of prominent Irish playwright Brian Friel. It examines the severe poverty of the Mundy family especially of Rose, Agnes, and Father Jack, and fatal cause of their death during the 1930s, the time of social disorder and anarchy. Rose and Agnes have made a life in the cottage occupation of knitting gloves to be sold

elsewhere. They make very little money that hardly support their family, and later in the play we discover that their little bit will be taken from them when the factory develops new machinery and hires only younger women. Being deserted by the factory owner, the two Maundy sisters, Agnes and Rose, move to England with a great hope for the best, but later as narrated by the narrator, Michael in the play, they die homeless in London city. Unlike his two sisters, Father Jack leaves the house to earn money. Each of these characters has carried out a great mission to drive their long line poverty out from their family, but unfortunately they all lose their lives for the sake of that incomplete mission. Jack has been used until his bad health-during his initial youth, he has been a champion to the British army and later has been hired as a missionary priest in Uganda's catholic church. He owns nothing more than diseases and is charged with dishonesty. He is repatriated without good honour and salary . He loses his own culture, language, and his good relationship with his sisters, but gets nothing in return.

Friel's plays deal with identity, the notion of truth, and communication, which he explores through the nature of language. Much of Friel's work has concerned Irish political issues such as crazy plan of Irish politicians to capitalize on the Irish specialty of holding wakes for the dead. Concerning Irish political issues, his plays are easy for non-Irish audiences to understand and appreciate.

Review of Literature

Views differ from person to person regarding a work of literature as different people have different ideas within themselves. That's why, numerous critics have diversely commented upon Brian Friel's play *Dancing at Lughnasa* since its publication.

It is generally observed that Lughnasa stands in the tradition of memory theatre epitomized by Tennessee William's *The Glass Menagerie*, but there are various accounts of Friel's purposes in utilizing the genre. Commentator David Krause criticizes the play for being "A recreation of the aura of an idyllic past, an indulgence in nostalgia that [. . .] do not lead to a very complex or profound experience" (372). For Krause, the summer days of 1936, when the narrator, Michael Mundy, was seven and especially, the wild circle dance of his mother and her four sisters one moonlit evening, form the basis of a reverie that eases the hardships of the adult Michael's everyday life. Krause complains that the audience is meant simply to "float along with Michael's sentimental reverie" (372).

Another brilliant commentator of the play is Parapassaree Kramer, who insists on reading Lughnasa as an exercise in nostalgia as the playwright makes the narrator's role too passive. According to Kramer, Michel is engaged in a reconstruction of his childhood experiences as a way of expiating the guilt he feels for having abandoned his mother and aunts as soon as he came of age. Her interpretation leans heavily on two aspects of the play which she seems to misread. The first is the fact that Michael does not play the role of his childhood self in the events portrayed, but rather, delivers the boy's lines from the narrator's position downstage left. Kramer maintains that this produces a powerful distancing effect, "which emphasizes Michel's authorial control of characters and events" (171). It seems more plausible to argue, however, that the "invisible Child" (171) created by Friel's stage directions, simply highlights the nature of memory to be subjective in a way that looking at photographs of an event is not. Awareness of self is what we have with memory just as with everyday experience, but never the perception of self as object.

The second piece of evidence given by Kramer to support her view that Michael is actively reconstructing his past is what seems to be her own reconstruction of the play's epilogue. She claims that Michael finally acknowledges the truth about memory in his closing speech when he says, "What fascinates me about [. . .] memory is that it owes nothing of fact" (1319). If Michael were really to say this, we would have to admit that Friel seems to think that memory is shreely constructed, that there is no sense in looking to the past for touch stones with which to guide one's life in the present. But Michael does not say this. Friel is clearly not denying the mimetic power of memory here; instead, he is making a distinction between memories based on what we can see with our eyes and memories that involve a different kind of seeing.

The play's title as well as the references to Celtic religion and mythology in Michael's opening speech invite us to identify Michael with a very ancient line of memory keeper. According to Kathleen Hughes, Celtic oral tradition was transmitted by a learned class of men called Filid, generally translated as "Poets" or "Seers" (166). Filid functioned as "guardians of Ireland's past, its historians, the men who remembered, recited, and taught genealogies, lore of various kinds, mythological and heroic tales, antiquarian tradition "(165). Their purpose was not to convey literal facts, but rather, what was "amusing," "beautiful" or "enchanted" about some past time (165). On this basis, Michael's memories qualify him as a contemporary filid.

Elmer Andrews interprets the dances, especially the dance to what the narrator describes as 'dream music' which closes the play as signifying a "mysterious libidinal energy [. . .] a force for change, which, through it may threaten the 'safe' world of childhood, is also the ground of hope and aspiration" (233). He rightly focuses on the dance as central to the play's meaning. Commenting on the play, he argues that nothing could be more stark than the contrast, at the end of the play, between Kate's

despair and Michel's peacefulness. Her sobbing evokes the "measureless sobbing " that starbuck hears in his own true heart" (534).

Thomas Merton argues that if one finds oneself responding to something like dream, music in a slow and languorous dance, when it seems that there is no life and no love to be celebrated, one has found it "[. . .] no despair of ours can alter the reality of things or stain the joy of the cosmic dance which is always there" (297)

Similarly, Matt Wolf Comments that the works of playwright Brian Friel, including *Dancing at Lughnasa* have an unusual authorial dynamic that makes the finest of them at once mysterious and absolutely lucid. He argues that " Lughnasa errs in playing its titular card so easily, but surely the play's true dance lies elsewhere : in the " hypnotic Movements " accompanying the surrender of language "to be in touch with some otherness" which the narrator, an authorial alter ego gently writ large, speaks wistfully of in his closing soliloquy" (105).

The review of literature shows that Brian Friel has transmuted simple events of human life into universal reveries by giving profound characterization of Mundy brother and sisters. The above mentioned critics celebrate this play as a great play of the contemporary time and are concerned towards the pathos of the characters. However, they have not paid their critical attention to explore the bitter suffering and death of the Mundy family especially of Rose, Agnes, and Father Jack. In this connection, this study attempts to prove that Rose, Agnes, and Father Jack are doomed to their death because of the boundless exploitation upon them by the overwhelming spread of petit bourgeois society.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter first deals with an introduction of the whole thesis. It defines the whole thesis along with some different critical commentaries to the text. Second chapter considers Marxism as a theoretical

tool and provides an outline of it involving the views from different Marxist literary theorists. Third chapter is an analysis of the text from Marxist perspective. The last chapter concerns with the conclusion.

II. Art, Literature, and Reflection in Marxist Literary Theory

Marxist criticism grounds on three main points: material production, historical changes in social class structure, and ideology. Marxism as a philosophical paradigm was formulated on Marx's theories of dialectical and historical materialism just in contrast to German idealism and European rationalism. Marxism totally reverses the German idealism in the sense that the first begins from real life experience to ideological reflexes and echoes to life process, whereas the second begins from spirit and ideas then comedown to life situation. According to Marx, all ideological productions are conditioned by the material factors, namely the techniques of mode of production and the relations of production resulting from it. It is evident that without a revolutionary transformation of material conditions, no revolutionary transformation in philosophical thought is possible. Class contradiction is based on the exploitation of the working class by the elite or ruling class. In any age the guiding ideas of society are the ideas of the class that has ownership over means of production. Such ideas are theorized, institutionalized and propagated through moral, religious and legal practices.

Marx explains the ideological formulation with the help of architectural metaphor 'base structure' and 'superstructure.' Economic production and social relation evolved on the basis of production system form the base and all other systems like social, moral are superstructure which evolve out of economic base. Any change in the base will ensure a change in the superstructure. Talking about capitalistic problem Marx points out "fundamental contradiction of capitalist society" emerges by "sociological production and individual ownership and appropriation" (qtd. in Salughters 38). Fredrich Engels and many later Marxists described ideology as a false consciousness.

Since the Russian revolution of 1917, Marx's thinking has been scrupulously analysed, debated and argued. Rene Wellek one of the influential critics of the twentieth century, discusses about the development of Marxist theories. He argues that "the new trends of criticism, of course have also roots in the past, are not without antecedents, and are not absolute original" (115). According to him, in the beginning Marxist criticism was rather unorthodox. Frans Mehring (1846-1916) and George Plekhnov (1856-1918) from Germany and Russia respectively are early less orthodox Marxist critics who recognize the autonomy of artistic creation of certain extent.

Soviet intellectual literary scenario was highly dominated by linguistic and literary theory known as Russian Formalism immediately before and after October revolution. As stated by David Lodge "the focus of Russian formalist upon the medium rather than the message of literary artifacts brought it into conflict with the official ideology of post revolutionary Russia and under Stalin, it was suppressed. Most of its exponents were silenced, or forced into exile" (15-16). Professor Raman Seldon states that the theory of art and literature profounded by Soviet socialist writers against formalism was founded upon the nineteenth century tradition of Russian realism. So it was not aboriginal. He explicitly states that "the combination of nineteenth century aesthetics and revolutionary politics remained the essential recipe of Soviet theory" (27).

After the success of Russian Revolution, Marxism spread not only in Asia but also in Europe and America. According to Wellek, American intellectual activities were much influenced by Marxism during the 1930s. Later especially after World War II, Marxist intellectual activities were much discouraged in America.

Both sociological and Marxist criticism, which enjoy much popularity in the twentieth century examine a work of art in relation to society. Even having examined

art with society, they have a little difference between them. The fundamental difference between sociological criticism and Marxism is that Marxist criticism examines how far a literary work embodies ability in altering human existence and lead it in the path of progress, prosperity and emancipation, whereas sociological criticism gives emphasis on interpretive function and examines whether a work is successful in interpreting life and world appropriately. For sociological of criticism, interpretation is the primary function of art and literature. But Marxism aims at revolutionizing the whole economic life establishing new political system led by proletariats.

We find contrary views about art and literature among the Marxist critics themselves. Slaughter states that "the interpretation of the relevance of Marx's theory to literature is a matter of dispute not merely between Marxists and non-Marxists but has been and is still the subject is bitter controversy between those claiming to be Marxists" (21). Lukacs judges literature as the reflection of outside reality. Adorno, who views it as the negative knowledge of the actual world, talks about revolutionizing the whole sphere of art and literature and puts all efforts on bringing newness in theatrical production. Even having controversy among those claiming to be Marxists, they all agree on the point that literature can be properly understood within a larger framework of social reality" (Forgacs 167).

Lukacs' major argument in his work is "reflection theory," i.e. literature reflects reality outside it. Lukacs' reflection theory is more refined and subtle than Aristotelian concept of mimesis. His reflection theory is influenced by "dialectical materialism," the key ideological principle of Marxism. His theory emphasizes the social and political implications of literature along with other literary values.

Reflection of reality outside is the key idea of his theory of art. Art, for him, is socio-

historical phenomenon. But the reality in literary works and the reality in the actual world need not have one to one correspondence. Artistic representation is not photographic as the art is not a machine. A photographic machine presents everything indifferently as it cannot react, whereas an artist is a sensitive creature, he feels and reacts. So, a picture presented in a literary work ultimately passes through the active and sensitive mind of the author. His interpretation of the world is influenced by the previous experience and his own likes and dislikes. For Lukacs, the world is chaos form where an artist picks up the required materials. The objective reality which lies in the chaotic state is given form and arranged in sequence. David Forgacs observes that according to Lukacs "to be reflected in literature, reality has to pass through the creative, form giving work of the writer. The result, in the case of correctly formed work, will be that the form of the literary work reflects the form of the real world" (qtd. in Forgacs 171). The process of selection and combination imposes bound to the chaos of objective reality. In Lukacs view, "Form is the aesthetic shape given to content, a shape manifested through technical features such as time and the interrelationship of characters and situation in work" (171).

Lukacs accuses the naturalist writers of neglecting the important question of life and history. In his view, naturalist writers are alienated from comprehensive social problems. They possess superficial vision of life and dismiss the inner and constant antagonism between the classes. They are unable to apprehend the basis and historical truth. He says, "the naturalist manner of portrayal in estimably blunts both popular movements and popular attitudes; it deprives one of the historical objectivity and other of consciousness" (173). He says that naturalism which appears to be more realistic in its depiction of life is unmediated.

Marxist philosophy claims that the generation of ideas and feelings in a head is not a personal phenomenon as it directly corresponds to the objective reality and is determined by it. As a true Marxist, Lukacs criticizes the modernist literary practice of separating individual from social process. The stream of consciousness as narrative method is unacceptable to him. In his view, the modernist unmediated type of reflection of reality is erroneous. The modernist writers entirely fail to present reality as they sacrifice "dynamic historical environment" in the interest of rendering subjective impression. They cut their characters away from the social and historical process and plunge them into inescapable flux. He objects such fragmentation and presentation of man as a solitary being unaffected by the social forces.

For Lukacs, reality reflected in a literary work should be similar to the one reflected in human consciousness and it is the duty of critic to examine whether it is translated correctly or not in a literary work, and to judge whether a literary work is realistic or not. The achievement of success or failure of an author depends on his greatness in capturing the objective reality through his work. In Lukacs view, a true artist is the one who is successful in depicting the social and the historical reality objectively through his literary work.

For him, all artistic creations are inseparable from the socio-historical phenomenon. Therefore, art is a special form of reflecting reality which is the sum total of socio-historical phenomenon. Art is closely connected to reality, the socio-historical situation of specific period. Art is not reality in itself, rather it is the knowledge of reality. Scientific thought as well as our everyday thinking possesses reality but art differs from them because the impression of reality in art is mixed with individual reaction. Thus, he does not believe on the emotive theory of art. He argues

that "the creation and appreciation of art is not unique and mysterious kind of knowledge" (232).

Lukacs views that the study of Marxist dialectic is impossible without a proper consideration of its relation to Hegel. Marxism provides essential remedy for Hegelian contradictions and incompleteness. Lukacs takes Hegel's concept of "Concrete totality" as the fundamental category of reality as "true is the whole". Hegel looks beyond history to the realm of "absolute spirit," art, religion and philosophy as history could not construct the living totality of the system. Lukacs points out flaws in this logic of Hegel: the identical subject-object is to be found in history in the shape of the proletariat, which becomes an identical subject-object through its self awareness.

Lukacs' logic follows the assumption that the true is the whole. If any class is to obtain its self-knowledge, if it is to know what it is, then it must have an accurate knowledge of society as a whole. For such knowledge, the bourgeois class is not capable in having a minority interest pretending that its rule is in the interests of all. The proletariat, on the other hand, is capable of seeing the society from the center, as a connected whole. It implies that the proletariat can grasp the totality of society and can possess absolute truth, when he speaks of the proletariat's self awareness-its class consciousness, he is here speaking of what he calls 'objective probability': "What they would do in a situation of a certain type and how they would grasp the situation properly" (11).

Talking about the relation between subject-object in the historical process, he says, "It is a dialectical process, not only does the object act on the subject but the subject also acts on the object. The subject does not merely reflect its object in a passive way, but it also acts on it and this action is what Lukacs calls praxis" (12). In the case of the proletariat, there exists the unity of theory and practice, for the

proletariat is the class, whose self assertion is the class struggle. It is only as a result of active struggle the proletariat can reach self consciousness. "The success of world revolution is not scientifically guaranteed but only methodologically guaranteed, that is to say by action and by the success of revolution itself" (12). He further argues, "Marxist-genuine Marxism, orthodox Marxism is a method, not a set of truths" (13).

For Lukacs, reality reflected in a literary work should be similar to the one reflected in human consciousness and it is the duty of critic to examine whether it is translated correctly or not in a literary work; and to judge whether a literary work is realistic or not. Whatever the language, style, use of images, construction of plot is, if it does not reflect the life faithfully, Lukacs does not allow it to be entitled work of art. The universality of such picture depends upon the variety of the characters depicted in a work.

Adorno criticizes Lukacs for appreciating only the dialectical totality in a classical realist work and criticizes the formal laws of literature and argues that the reality in the real world is formless. He says that there is a long gap between the reality and a work of art and this distance provides us a vantage point from where we can criticize the existing society. Adorno believes in the complexity of the work of art. The work of art does not reflect the reality but it negates the society by creating a complexity and a contradiction. He supports the idea of Franz Kafka who creates a complex picture of the society in his works.

The negative knowledge model, in Marxist theories, was developed by Theodor Adorno. He appreciates Proust and Joyce as great artists for they negate the society by creating a complexity and a contradiction with the use of the interior monologue. Interior monologue or stream of consciousness as literary technique was much criticized by Lukacs. But Adorno emphasizes that "the interior monologue, far

from cutting the literary work off from reality, can expose the way reality actually is" (qtd. in Forgacs 188). Adorno clearly states that "art is the negative knowledge of the actual world" (189).

However, according to David Forgacs, Adorno by negative knowledge "doesn't mean non-knowledge. It means knowledge which can undermine and negate a false or reified condition" (189). Adorno says that literary work does not give us a neatly shaped reflection and a knowledge of reality but works within reality to expose its contradictions. As stated by Forgacs, "Adorno opens up modernist writing to Marxist theory by showing that a different kind of relationship between the text and reality is possible" (190).

Selden observes that in contrary to the Soviet Socialist reality which totally rejects the modernist writing and refuses to recognize the writers like Joyce, Beckett, and so on. as writers and their works as literary works. Adorno is of the opinion that art and reality are not alike. Inverting the reflection theory of Lukacs he claims that "art is set apart from reality, its detachment gives it its special significance and power" (qtd. in Selden 34). Selden observing the theory of Adorno in contemporary literary theory states that for Adorno, "literary unlike the mind, doesn't have a direct contact with reality" (34). So, Adorno gives implicit value to the works of Proust, Kafka, Beckett and Joyce than Lukacs.

Another powerful Marxist literary theorist is Walter Benjamin. Slaughter discusses Benjamin's theory under quite an appropriate title "Against the Stream: Walter Benjamin." Discussing his concept about art and literature, Slaughter states:

Benjamin directed his polemical writings against all those who drew from Marx's prognoses only the conclusion that writers should take the side of working class in conceiving their subject matter, demonstrating

some automatic progressiveness of the productive forces which must be victorious against the production relations. To imagine that a common sense adoption of progressive themes within existing literary form constitutes a revolutionary line in art and literature was considered by Benjamin to be a pure non-sense. (174)

Benjamin resists the influence of bourgeois art such as cinema, which is revolutionary by nature. Selden says that "Benjamin rejects the idea that revolutionary art is achieved by attending to the correct subject-matter" (Selden 37). Benjamin is of the opinion that revolution in art can be achieved by revolutionizing the 'technique' itself. He emphasizes that "the artist needs to revolutionize the artistic forces of production of his time and this is a matter of technique. Nevertheless, the correct technique will arise in response to the complex historical combination of social and technical changes" (37). He does not agree with the cultural policies of the communist parties as he rigorously opposes politicizing the art.

Raymond Williams insists that art like another communication is social activity and it cannot be set apart from reality. It obviously is a part of our social organization. Further, he agrees that it is fatally wrong to "assume that political institutions and conventions are of a different and separate order from artistic institution and conventions. Each activity should be studied in relation to the whole, the abstraction results in suffering. William's distinctive emphasis is on 'structures of feeling' as expression of social relations between economic conditions and cultural life. He does not simply reject bourgeois culture, but argues for an expanded concept of culture, considering also the significance of new media such as film and television.

For Williams, it is not that the realist tradition has disappeared in the modern fiction but what has actually disappeared is the integration between an individual and

society and the detailed description of the physical circumstance in favour of rendering impression. There has been polarization of styles. The earlier novels were objective realist and the modernes are subjective or impressionistic i.e. the personal and social novel. According to him, a social novel generally offers the accurate observation and description of the general life, the aggregation; just the contrary, the personal novels offer the "accurate observation and description of personal units; however, none of them are perfect portrayal of reality, i.e. life like as the way of life is neither aggregation nor unit but a whole invisible" (280). Contemporary novelists are not about to apprehend the reality that personal experience is formed on the background of general way of life as each individual is a unit of society. Their attempt to separate an individual from the society neglecting the impacts of socio-economic as well as political situation on him is erroneous.

Williams thinks that no human experience is entirely subjective or objective. It is both because we cannot see things as they are apart from any reaction; it is inseparable process so it is wrong to relate science to object or physical reality and art to subject "[. . .] the conscience is part of the reality in the part of consciousness in the whole process of our living organization" (23). There has been another shift of technique and subject in the twentieth century. It is generally thought that realist novels have ceased to appear. However, Williams does not agree with such idea and insists that the contemporary novels still hold to reality. As he says that "it is not only that there is still a concentration on contemporary themes; in many ways elements of everyday experience are more evident in the modern novel than in the nineteenth century novel through the disappearance of certain taboos" (277).

Describing the feature of realistic novels, he observes that the nineteenth century tradition of realistic novel is replaced by psychological novels and the

apprehension erosion of psychological states, the consciousness of characters, has been its fundamental characteristic. As it is already stated that he does not think that the new trend has completely abandoned the association to reality. He observes that "[. . .] realism as an intentional in the description of these states (i.e. psychological states), has not been widely abandoned" (277). Though he seems much positive towards the new developments, he is not fully satisfied with them as they are not able to embody reality in the way realist works should be. He points out that "there is formal gap in modern fiction" (277). For him, a realist novel is the one which "creates and judges the quality of a whole way of life in terms of the qualities of persons" (278). Thus, aspects of general life should be embodied in personal life and individual characters should be drawn in relation to society.

The new trend has powerfully threatened the old. In such a situation, it only foolishness is to try to grip hold to the old and dismiss powerful emergence of the new. Time has come to "explore the new definition of realism" in order to "break out of the deadlock and find a creative direction" (287). Thus, in contrary to other Marxist critics and theoreticians, Williams responds positively to the new trend in fiction and observes that "the contemporary novel has both reflected and illuminated the crisis of our society [. . .]" (287). He is of the opinion that to continue the older tradition of realism, we need similar type of society which is impossible. As the fundamental problem in modern literature is extrication of individual from the whole social process and the only solution to it is to put efforts in setting back the fragments into whole.

Explaining artistic creation from Marxist perspective, he clearly justifies the inseparable relation between art and ordinary experiences. He says that art cannot be excluded from "serious practical concerns and the claim that art is special and extraordinary" is vain (291). Neither art can be dismissed as unpractical or secondary

nor it can be searted form ordinary living. The attempts to give superior position to treat it as inferior filled with snobbishness is misleading.

Terry Eagleton has expanded and elaborated the concepts of Althusser and Macherey. In his view, a literary text is a special kind for production in which ideological discourse described as any system of mental representations of lived experience is reworked into a specifically literary discourse. Raman Selden observes Eagleton's view:

Althusser criticism must break with its ideological prehistory and became a 'science'. The central problem is to define the relationship between literature and ideology. Because in his view texts do not reflect historical reality but rather work upon ideology to produce an 'effect' of the real. (42)

Hence, Eagleton means that the text may appear to be free in its relation to reality, but it is not free in its use of ideology. Ideology, here, refers not to conscious political doctrines, but to all those systems of representations which shape the individuals mental picture of lived experience. In *Marxism and Literary Criticism* Eagleton writes, "Ideology is not in the first place a set of doctrines; it signifies the way men live out their roles in class. Social values, ideas and images which tie them to their social functions and so prevent them from a true knowledge of society as a whole" (15). Here, he means that any work of art should show a man making sense of his experience in ways that prohibit a true understanding of his society, ways that are consequently false.

Eagleton rejects Althusser's view that literature can distance itself from ideology; it is a complex reworking of already existing ideological discourses. As he writes:

In any society ideology has a certain structural coherence. Because it possesses such relative coherence [. . .] and since literary texts 'belong' to ideology, they too can be the object of such scientific analysis. A scientific criticism would seek to explain the literary work in terms of the ideological structure of which it is part, yet, which transforms it in its art; it would separate out the principle which both ties the work to ideology and distances it from it. (18)

Eagleton means that literature and ideology both are the object of scientific interpretation. Because science gives us conceptual knowledge of a situation, whereas art gives us the experience of that situation, which is equivalent to ideology. He argues that such attempts to disengage art and culture from socio-economic determinants lead them to unprivileged humble position. Art becomes nothing more than production of any other commodity. Regarding the anti-representational nature of modern and post modern art, Eagleton views: "If art no longer reflects, it is not because it seeks to change the world rather than mimic it, but because there is in truth nothing there to be reflected, no reality which is not itself already image, spectacle, simulacrum gratification fiction" (387).

Here, he means that in contemporary society truth itself has been subjected to power and performativity instead of reason. Nevertheless, the attempts to disintegrate art from reality, erase the influence of history on present and create art on culture devoid of all political and historical contents is nothing more than metaphysical illusion which can never be successful. For him the vital fault of modernism in bracketing off the real social world, establishing a critical negating distance between itself and the ruling social order in its bracketing off the political forces which seek to transform that order.

In *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983), Eagleton discusses that in the present world of nuclear power everything has been politicized, and literature is not exception to it. Regarding the history of modern literary theory he observes that it is part of the political beliefs and ideological values. He further writes that it is not an independent phenomenon, so pure literary theory devoid of all historical, social and sexual relevance is entirely impossible. As he writes that literary theory without any relevance to socio-economic situation is only 'an academic myth.' According to him, "literary theory has the most particular relevance to this political system. It has helped wittingly or not to sustain and reinforce its assumptions" (196).

Regarding the utility of studies, he observes "perhaps literary criticism and literary theory just mean any kind of talk about an object not the method, which distinguishes and delimits discourse' (197). Nevertheless, the object or literature itself is not stable. He opines, "The unity of object is as illusory as the unity of the method" (197). Therefore, attempts to put boundaries to the study of literature, whether it is in terms of method or its object is liable to be misleading. In Eagleton's view, the relations between literature, literary criticism or its theory and politics is inseparable as he writes:

[. . .] all criticism is in some sense political [. . .] socialist criticism and feminist criticism are of course, concerned with developing theories and methods appropriate to their aims: theory considers questions of the relations between writing and sexuality or of text and ideology, as other theories in general do not. (212)

A common assumption of Marxist approaches to literature is that they are insufficiently attentive to the form of literature. There is also a residual suspicion

among Marxists that the aesthetic and the political are somehow antithetical- that to 'tell the truth' in literature is to refuse the excesses, the performativity.

In this way, Marxist literary theoreticians straightforwardly acknowledge literature's relevance to the society- economic situation of a society despite lots of diversities among themselves.

III. Death of the Destitute in *Dancing at Lughnasa*

Ireland's greatest living playwright, Brian Friel has been best known for his imaginative, creative energy. However, his dramas are not the outcome of his pure imagination. They demonstrate the social and biographical realities artistically. Friel's most successful play *Dancing at Lughnasa* is one appropriate example of the demonstration of the social and biographical realities through which Friel tries to draw the Irish socio-economic reality of the 1930s.

During 1930s, Irish socio-political condition was the same as it had been in the pre-Irish republic society. Irish poor had been remained as they were in the pre-republic state. Neither pre nor post Irish republic government did anything to uphold the socio-economic status of the Irish poor. The play *Dancing at Lughnasa* revolves around the cause and effect of the socio-political condition of Ireland during 1930s. The negative impact of Ireland's capitalist government depicts through the character sketch of the Mundy family, especially in the death of Rose, Agnes, Gerry, and Father Jack. The Mundy family has been the victim of poverty for a long time, therefore, they try to come out of it by doing hard labour being devoted to it. Their wish to come out is expressed through the following dialogue:

CHRIS: When are we going to get a decent mirror to see ourselves in ?

MAGGIE: You can see enough to do you.

CHRIS: I'm going to throw this aul craked thing out.

MAGGIE: Indeed you're not, Chrissie. I'm the one that broke it and the

only way to avoid seven years bad luck is to keep on using it.

CHRIS: You can see nothing in it.

AGNES: Except more and more wrinkles. (I:1321)

A tiny broken mirror has been used for seven years and it is not fixed upto when they use it. They desire to throw it away but that limits in keeping it further use. They seem more bold in their works and less bold in their future happy life. They labour hard being optimistic till the end of their life. However, as resulted in the play, their optimism remains in vain. On the one hand, Irish bourgeois society has been enjoying every world class facilities, however, on the other hand, Irish poor are lamenting the useless stuffs. Thus, Friel, through this play, has shown the dark world of Ireland's socio-economic and political structure.

They not only make wishes, but also, on the contrary, work hard to support the family and even to bring harmonious life in the future. In the course of their labour, they do not think much of their salary. Whatever salary they have, they do not mind it; what they mind is their duty, therefore, they seem pensive to improve their duty all the time. It shows genuine, honesty on their part. Agnes and Rose, the two working sisters have quitey been devoted to their knitting profession in their own residential town, Donegal. Though they earn a little, they seem more enthusiastic and energetic towards their works: "Rosie, love, would you give me a hand with this (of wool) if we don't work a bit faster we will never get two dozen pairs finished this week" (1321). The given remark shows their devotion and faithfulness toward work. They try to pick up both their economy as well as duty by the same proportion. The more they produce, the more money they will have which they hope will liberate them from their unsmotherable poverty at the end. For the future would be light, the Mundy sisters more consciously display possible risks by doing extra works in their present naked poverty. They have been patronized by the money holders of the Donegal town in that they knit gloves which are sold cheaply to the market people who enjoy cheaper

gloves and do never think of the pathetic condition of the workers. Friel shows his pity on Agnes and Rose for they make 'much ado about nothing'.

In spite of taking risks doing hard labour, they could not reform the socio-economic structure of the family. Their work somehow affords daily expenditures of their survival until the arrival of a new machine in the town. However, immediately after its establishment, their job vanishes, i.e. no one will buy hand made gloves anymore since then. Now, the knitting agent of the town, Vera McLaughlin will buy no more handmade gloves rather than machine gloves. The Mundy sisters get failure not because of themselves but due to the overwhelming spread of bourgeoisie in their native town Donegal. And the pain of loss is one of the dark undercurrents of the play. The play would seem to emphasize tragic waste, failure, a gradually diminishing life. At the same time, it refuses pessimism. The two sisters' life becomes more miserable and pathetic than earlier over which the rest of their family consider:

KATE: Tell them what?

CHRIS: She's not buying any more handmade gloves.

MAGGIE: Why not?

CHRIS: Too dear, she says.

KATE: Too dear! she pays them a pittance!

CHRIS: There's a new factory started up in Donegal Town. They make machine gloves more quickly there and far more cheaply. The people Vera used to supply buy their gloves direct from the factory now. (II: 1342)

Naked self-interest of factory owner destroys the Mundy's glove business as he pitilessly has established a machine which could produce gloves more quickly and far more cheaply to the local market. Like the two Mundy sisters, there are a number of

women glove knitters in town. However, they have not been deserted by machine for they are younger and more beautiful to the amenities of the factory. Factory has provided all the facilities to the fair women who could make the factory more attractive in its outlook. Rose and Agnes have turned in their thirties, i.e. they have neither been younger nor more beautiful, however, they have the capacity to produce more gloves than the average women of the town. In spite of having knitting capacity, they have been rejected because they cannot feed the lusty eyes of bourgeois market. For the factory owner, only physical and mental fitness do not work in the selection of factory laborers, rather outlook is equally important by the same token. The rest of the family members lament their future for even a little income has been lost which would sustain their livelihood.

Brutal exploitation over the Mundy sisters forces them to quit the profession as well as their own residential town Donegal. They do not apply for any other works even though they have not any other means to proceed their life. They even do not correspond their acute problems to their sisters, perhaps they do not like having solution, viz. they are so disgusted with the constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production that they even do not like living in the home town: "We are gone for good. This is best for all. Do not try to find us" (1345). For their future happy life, they depart to London city market making plans to release the family from its sullen poverty by earning more money but, unfortunately, their hope results quite opposite. In London city, a hard competition among workers deprives Rose and Agnes of getting good job. They have the ability but that ability does not suffice the whole demands of city market. They work as cleaning women in public toilets, in the underworld, but not for a long time as Michael says:

MICHAEL: [. . .] By the time I tracked them down — twenty-five years later, in London— Agnes was dead and Rose was dying in a hospice for the destitute in Southwark [. . .] The scraps of information I gathered about their lives during those missing years were too sparse to be coherent. (1345)

Whatever work they do is not a serious subject to the argument but what do they get in return is a subject to question. They leave their house for money, work in London's public toilet for money but unfortunately, they cannot get appropriate money anywhere, so much so that Agnes cannot support their lives while Rose can no longer get work. Ultimately, they die of exposure in a hospice for the destitute in South wark, London. Death caused by exposure in a human society is very scornful not for the capitalist but for a Marxist thinker who intends to establish a society without assuming the existence of a world or of forces beyond the natural world around us, and the society we live in. Bourgeois government, instead of contributing, has established a hospice for the dying poor only to control the city form being littered. He might have fed them by the same costs of the hospice for a long time, however, he does not because of his commercial mind where there is not any sentimental veil. Dancing at *Lughanasa* is a play about growing up, about the transition form innocence to experience in which the antidote to loss and disappointment is the ever recurring upsurge of the life force. Agnes and Rose come to know the bourgeois reality only at the end of their life.

Like the two Mundy sisters, Father Jack has been a tragic character of Friel's play. He, too, dies of heart attack infected by the cruel exploitation inflicted upon him. He left his house for money with a great hope for the best that ultimately turns in his despair. He left the family for twenty-five years to work as a hired missionary priest

in Ugandan Catholic Church. Each of these three characters has a strong vision to release the family from a long line of poverty and to clinch it, they seem to have struggled till the last drop of their energy. Father Jack has been used until his bad health. During the initial phase of his youth, he was a champion to the British army in East Africa during the First World War. Immediately after its end, he had been hired as a missionary priest in a leper colony in Uganda, South Africa. He worked for twenty-five years however he owned nothing more than diseases. He produced wealth for the Britishers so much so that he, like Rose and Agnes, could not reform the economical position of his family. The British government relates to the world only through money: for it all things, all people, are commodities. A commodity has value not in terms of what it can do but in terms of money or other commodities for which it can be treated or in terms of the social status its ownership confers.

Of course, commodification is a necessary function of buying and selling, and thus it is a necessary function of capitalism as the members of the Mundy family think:

KATE: Because they're delighted you are home.

JACK: I'm afraid I don't remember them. I couldn't name ten people in Balybeg now.

CHRIS: It will all come back to you. Don't worry.

JACK: You think so?

AGNES: Yes, it will. (I: 1328)

This conversation among the Mundy brother and sisters shows the reality on the part of Jack. Father Jack loses both his own Irish Paganism and obeys English Christianity in the course of his assigned work in Uganda. Jack lived in a difficult part of Africa' where it was a challenge for him to preserve even his own paganism and

Christianism. Jack was very loyal and genius to his works. However, even knowing the fact, he has to lose both the religions because of the complexity and overwhelming spread of natives around him. He, too, has lost his ability to express himself: "My vocabulary has deserted me" (1337). Jack has done a very risky work for the English government, which, perhaps, would not be controlled by the English themselves. Taking risks for others, he tries to complete his own mission but sorrowfully he fails.

Father Jack sacrifices everything during his profession as a hired priest such as his own customs, language, religion, and even his good relationship with his sisters. As narrated by Michael, while the Mundy sisters were dancing in their own residence, Jack shuffled from one room to the other which shows his confused mind over Lughnasa festival. "My mother and her sister [. . .] dancing [. . .] at the same time I see that forlorn figure of father Jack shuffling from room to room as if he were searching for something but could not remember what" (1321). Jack strives to remind the lost memory of Lughnasa but his attempts are in vain. Not only does he confuse one sister with another, but he has lost all sense of the importance of saying mass. When he finally agrees to perform the liturgy, he declares that he will begin it in the African way — with a gong at the moment the first cock crows. To this Kate can only respond, "He is not our Jack at all" (1338). Fascination with the life force, on the other hand, creates a perpetual state of alienation. A stunned heart cannot find itself at home anywhere. Jack's beaten heart neither gets its home at Uganda, nor in his own nation, Ireland. The irony for Jack is that, as obsessed as he is with memories of his Ugandan village, there are indications that he was as out of place there as he is in Ballybeg. When a person goes native, as Jack seems to have done, rather than rooting himself in a foreign culture, he is simply enthralled by it.

The women had prayed for him every night and scraped together a few shillings every Christmas and on his birthday to send to his mission. In the first part of act two, however, it becomes clear to the sisters that the man who has returned to them is nothing like the heroic image that each of them has in mind. All the immense attempts of Father Jack ultimately return in vain. His labour goes in vain due to the unbreakable bourgeois policy of the British government.

Michael's father, Gerry Evan, a brilliant dancer has been contemplated an animal, a creature in that he could not earn sufficient money so as to afford his marriage to Chris, the mother of Michael. Gerry promises to hold their marriage at his each visit to Chris, however, he returns begging pardon. As for his own heartbreak, the terseness of the narrator's account belies the upheaval of his spiritual landscape that must have occurred because of it. As the narrator comments that his father continues his annual visits for a few years but then the visits stop. In the mid 1950s, he received a letter informing him that the father had died recently in the family home in Wales. He died of heart disease and of mental sickness caused by the complex structure of the bourgeoisie society.

Thus, almost all the characters of the Mundy family have died in their course to maintain the social prestige idealized by the capitalist society.

Dancing at Lughnasa (1990), a play of the break up of a household at the hands of economy and emotional strain, draws the attention to the truth of Irish working class urban experience of 1936. The play shows the social bifurcation and economic depression of the 1930s, while the whole world has been haunted by social disorder and anarchy, so there is no social harmony and proper order. Concept of beauty and harmony seems empty only because capitalist society denies their realization in life. The great thinker and the realist see the inhumanity of capitalist

society that all the harmony within man, his every creative expression is being ruthlessly crushed. Friel tries to show the social anarchy through the play *Dancing at Lughnasa*.

Eamon De Valera (1882-1975) was, from 1937 to 1948, the leader of the Irish government who treated the poor workers of the nation as the commodities during the period of his governance. He was elected for eleven years without any effective interruption, however, his appetite to possess was open-ended. One of the ironies of commodification is that it creates desire even as it fulfills it. Because the sense of self-worth it fosters in us is always derived from external standards, such as fashion trends, we can never rest secure in our possessions. De Valera had been anti-liberal, only worked for his constant atrocity and for other money holders. Historical background is not totally eclipsed in *Dancing at Lughnasa* but it is kept to a supporting role. Against the backdrop of De Valera's Ireland of the 1930s, a petit-bourgeois, anti-liberal, un-inspirational, repressive state and society to be enshrined in the constitution of 1937 with its emphasis on Catholic Church as the pillar of society, Michael remembers the Mundy sisters who simply toiled hard to liberate themselves. They worked against De Valera's petit bourgeois policy, however, they seemed powerless against it: "Will you vote for De Valera, will you vote? If you don't, we'll be like Gandhi with his goat" (1322).

In their liberating force of Dance, Rose and Maggie sing these two lines which are not pleasant rather than mournful, because they sing being powerless, subordinated to the smouldering power of De Valera. They can neither protest against him, nor agreeably vote him. Hence, they have been in between a conflict which explodes into their sudden dance. Gandhi represents non-violence, peace while goat represents scapegoat and powerlessness. If they vote him, it is alright for them to be

subject to the power of De Valera; if not, they will have to follow him paying love being scapegoat. They protest against bourgeois policy peacefully in their liberating force of dance. The word dance is important for the narrator for it is the means for them to pour out their bitter traumatic feelings caused by bourgeois society. Friel strongly desires to make his audience aware of the dreadful political condition of Ireland during 1930s. He has shown the real contradiction of social domestic or personal problems.

Michael, the narrator, looks back to the Autumn of 1936, the time of the harvest festivities, when he was living with his mother and her four sisters in a small village in Donegal. The Mundy family was poor and their experience was the true Irish working class experience. Their bitter traumatic experience seems to be revealed in their dance which they performed at Lughnasa festival . Though festival was not in their support as only the young man and woman were preferable to dance at the back hilltops, throughout Ireland. A sudden broken music of a tattered wireless radio excited the Mundy sisters' emotion that resulted in their sudden burst in dance. In the dance, the Mundy sisters seem to triumphantly express their atavistic life force, their emotion far beyond the reach of words. In the liberating force of the dance, they seem to celebrate their victory over capitalist society. They do spontaneous step dance and laugh, scream like excited school girls. However, the dance is not the catalyst into a bright future for the sisters. On the contrary, it is more like the last organism manifestation of the Mundy's joy of life, the last fling of the spinsters- where hope and passion and the present meet –before the evening of their days sets in. What follows, is dismal and tragic. None of the Mundies will go to the Lughnasa dance in the back hill.

AGNES: And I don't care how young they are, how drunk and dirty and sweaty they are. I want to dance, Kate. It is the festival of Lughnasa I'm only thirty -five I want to dance.

KATE: No, no, no! we are going no where!

CHRIS: If we all want to go-

KATE: Look at yourselves, will you! just look at yourselves! Dancing at our time of day? That is for young people with no duties and no responsibilities and nothing in their hands but pleasure.

AGNES: Kate I think we-

KATE: Do you want the whole countryside to be laughing at us ? – women of our years? –Mature women dancing? (I: 1326)

The cruelty of the bourgeois commercial economy becomes so harsh that it towers over all human values like the sense of humanity, brotherhood and duty. All human relationships are converted into money relation and wealth becomes the only object that everyone desires to obtain.

The real center of Friel's play is social, not sentimental. He points out that The Mundy sisters will not go to the Lughnasa dance in the back hill because of the social system that is caused and manipulated by the ideology of bourgeois society. Any bourgeois ideology is constantly directed to the periphery of commerce that ultimately benefits them. Lughnasa festival in Irish culture is occasionally celebrated one time in autumn throughout a year. It is one golden opportunity for the Irish citizens to show their art of dance and choose their life partners in the fair of Lughnasa dance. However, that precious opportunity has not been for the Mundy sisters for they have been no longer young in the eyes of bourgeoisies, nor have they been fit to it because of their poverty. If they go to participate, the whole countryside

will laugh at them; such conception indirectly helps bourgeois fair of Lughnasa dance keep untidy. Such fair demands only young beautiful women so as the lusty eyes of the bourgeois will be satisfied and the fair will remain attractive for their commerce as well.

JACK: Did I hear the church bell ringing?

MAGGIE: A big posh wedding today.

JACK: Not one of my sisters?

MAGGIE: No such luck. A man called Austin

Morgan and girl from Carrickfad. (II: 1339)

Brian Friel, through these lines, presents the disharmony and lust for outward beauty in bourgeois society. It is the another case in the play to show that how a man becomes victim of alienation and fragmentation in a capitalist society. Regarding this aspect, Lukacs' view is very appropriate. He gives a kind of fragmented life in bourgeois society like Schiller who also talks about harmony of man by combining two opposite factors: reason and experience, intellect and passion. However, Lukacs' harmony comes not from inside but from outside reality.

Unemployment, and low payment are the common problems faced by the uneducated poor Mundy sisters. Because of their poverty caused by underpaid labour or enforced employment, they fail in managing their social standard so much so that they can never get married throughout their lives. They long for marriage that prevails only in their hope and passion. Chris begets one love child, Michael, the narrator, that has been in fact the vice and crime of a nation. On the one hand, the commercial bourgeois has been successfully accumulating huge amount of wealth making the best use of raw materials from the third countries and cheap labour at home. On the other

hand, vast mass of working class people have been undergoing immense misery. The gap between the classes in the Irish and English society is presented in the play.

Friel wants to show the selfishness what he saw in bourgeois society. Before the establishment of a machine in their native town, Donegal, the two Mundy sisters: Agnes and Rose earned a little money by knitting gloves which Vera MCLAughlin, the knitting agent, purchased to the market, the two sisters, somehow, could maintain their daily basic expenditure by their profession. However, immediately after a sudden arrival of a machine in town, their profession became subordinated: "There is a new factory started up in Donegal town. They make machine gloves more quickly there and far more cheaply. The people Vera used to supply buy their gloves direct from the factory now" (1342). They could compete no more to the bourgeois mechanical production as machine would fulfil the demand more quickly and far more cheaply. Soon after the establishment of machine, the two Mundy sisters quit their profession not willingly but with forcefulness. The naked self-interest of the machine owner does not show any respect to their survival. Even his announcement for the factory job does not list them for they are neither young nor beautiful to the factory amenity. The fact is that bourgeoisie has torn away from the family, its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation. They have no respect to the humanity, social harmony and its beauty. Whatever action they lead, they do it for their own self interest. They cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and there-by the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society:

MAGGIE: That's awful news, Chrissie.

CHRIS: She says they're organizing buses to bring the workers to the factory and back everyday. Most of the people who used to work at

home have signed on. She tried to get a job there herself. They told her she was too old. The poor women could hardly speak.

MAGGIE: Oh God . . . poor Aggie . . . poor Rose . . . What will they do? (II: 1342)

Friel, through these lines shows alienation, fragmentation caused by the capitalist society. He shows the inhumanity of capitalist society that all the harmony within the Mundy sisters, their every creative expression, are being ruthlessly crushed.

Lukacs states that there is no human emotion that is intrinsically evil. An emotion becomes evil and only as the consequence of the anarchy and inhumanity of the capitalist division of labour remain in society. Capitalist division of labour explicitly deprives the two Mundy sisters of being employed in the factory. The rest of the Mundies lament the pitiable condition of Agnes and Rose and their miserable, wretched future. Factory owner should think of their plight and thus should give a little facility so as the two sisters could proceed their livelihood in their own native town. But the naked self-interest of the factory owner does not pay any interest to these two sisters. They scorn fully, leave Donegal without hatching any credible conversation with their elder sisters regarding job money. Perhaps, they do not like add any further burden to their family. They are bold enough to use their ability in whatever place they intend to work. They believe in their ability, adventurous labour that ultimately leads them to their ruin. Because of the capitalist division of labour in London they shuffles for suitable job for a month however they cannot. London city market not only requires healthy body but also demands fairness, gold clothing and voice, of the workers. The two Mundy sisters are neither beautiful nor have good clothes to wear. They are poor workers and their target is simply to drive their poverty away. But, they cannot even manage simply their hand to mouth problem.

Competition among the labourers with all the dimensions force them to work as cleaning women in public toilets and in the underground, which shows disharmony and inhumanity prevailing in their society:

Michael : They had worked as cleaning women in public toilets, in factories, in the underground. Then when Rose could no longer get work, Agnes tried to support them both –but couldn't. From then on, I gathered, they gave up. They took to drink, slept in parks, in doorways, on the Thames Embankment. Then Agnes died of exposure. And two days after found Rose in that grim hospice-she didn't recognize me of course [. . .] She died in her sleep. (II: 1346)

Friel intends to show disrobed petit bourgeois policy that has created disharmony and injustice in their society. The two Mundy sisters plied their labours but, got death of exposure as a gift which shows naked nature of the capitalism. In the capitalistic society, no one pays any attention to those who lie on the road begging food or money. Bourgeois sense of humanity is false and illusiory. In the name of humanism, government has made a hospice for the naked poor but that humanity is still manipulated to their self interest. They have made the hospice to control the grim groan of the city and even to make the town, attractive so that their production and distribution would continue ineffectively. For them, the two sisters are no more than the sewage of the town. Money relation is only one relation in their society. Had the government managed to feed the city poor to prevent them from their death of exposure, it would have taken more money and less benefit. However, in the case of humanity, there is neither loss nor benefit.

Fear of the life force represents an inability to leave home to open oneself to the new thing that is trying to enter one's life. Father Jack leaves the house to earn

money as a hired missionary priest in Uganda. He has to assimilate the logical culture of Uganda and in his course of adopting it, he loses his own native paganism and obeyed Christianity. When he describes the ceremonies of Ugandan religion, it is clear that he is mesmerized by them, as if the power they contain has all but eclipses his native Catholicism . When Kate inquires about his saying mass, Jack discourses at length about the Ryangan ceremonies in which he participated. Kate and Maggie become frightened as he describes animal sacrifice, painted faces, lepers dancing, and the whole tribe drunk on palm wine. Their fears would seem to be confirmed when Rose's pet rooster-which Jack has been admiring –mysteriously disappears.

The reality is that Father Jack had left his house for money but could not earn sufficient money. Instead, he loses his good relationship to his family members, his native language, culture and other like. He owns nothing more than the diseases. He is infected by malaria and gets invalid that repatriates him to his own native country Ireland. He has also a heart trouble which ultimately takes his life.

Set in 1936, the play *Dancing at Lughnasa* focuses on the difficult lives of working Mundy sisters due to poverty when Ireland was on the verge of world war II and industrialization. The play stresses characters and theme, rather than plot, highlighting the relationship between classes during 1930s while all human relations and wealth become the only objects, everyone desires to obtain it. The gap between the classes winded causing direct effect upon the lives of working class people. The working class people had been dashed by the social prestige and had good wishes and were conscious towards the life and the social standard, but there was no chance to them. The great merit of *Dancing and Lughnasa* is the unmistakable tension a Marxist thinker feels between the very human desire for order and stability and the equally strong desire for equality and new experience. Such conflict is apparent

between Eamon De Valera, the Irish government of the time, and the working Mundy sisters. De Valera wanted to establish a repressive state and society to be enshrined with its emphasis on catholic church as the pillar of society, while the Mundy sisters wanted to establish a communist state by reviving their paganism, i.e. Lughnasa dance, where every tribes of the society is equally respected. For De Valera, paganism had been nothing more than a savage activity. For him, the participants of the Lughnasa festival were the practitioners of barbarism. Here, the conception that has been labelled to the working class is false and illusiory.

The social and economic problems raised by Friel in this play are real problems faced by the working class people. This play is fully based on the real historical situation and general social tension of the period. In the play, Mundy family: Rose, Agnes, and Father Jack have been struggling against all kinds of human exploitation. They have also their own desire, spirit and knowledge of life but seem very pitiable, tired out, low spirit, careless because of the touching picture of the crisis in their lives:

AGNES: Wouldn't it be a good one if we all went?

CHRIS: Went where?

AGNES: To the harvest dance.

CHRIS: Aggie! (II: 1325)

It is words that are never said and feelings that are never voiced that create the texture of Brian Friel's play set in the brief Irish summer of 1936.

Trapped by poverty, domesticity and false ideology, the unmarried Mundy sisters yearn for their lost dignity, identity and freedom. They try to establish their own identity participating in Lughnasa dance, paganism in the overwhelming Christian society. Christianity has been there only as a means of false ideology but not

in the ground of practicality. In the name of Christianity, the elites of the society restrict the poor Mundy from being participated in Lughnasa dance, charging to their age. Mundy sisters dance at their own residence Ballybeg at the Lughnasa festival. At the ecstasy of the wild and savage outburst-a moment of transforming power, the Mundy sisters seem to dance out their impassionate yearnings, seem for a moment to forget what they are otherwise painfully aware of the life is passing them by and that they are trapped in deadening routines from which no escape seems possible.

Many pagan festivals may have been hijacked by Christianity, but *Dancing at Lughnasa* more than hints at the fact that they might, particularly in Ireland, have been superseded rather than fully replaced. In the liberating force of the dance, the Mundy family seems to celebrate its victory over civilized Christianity. Paganism seems- at least temporarily- to win out over the constraints of Christian society. Their dance- individual and collective at the same time- links the Mundy sisters to the dancing which is one of the main features of the Lughnasa celebrations and thus to the hidden submerged culture which has been able to extinguish.

No one can do anything in front of the hunger and slavery. Though the working class people have good looking, well conduct and good sensitivity, they have to step towards the social evil works. The life and the situation of the working class people are driven to the inhumanity due to poverty:

JACK: And I have still to meet your husband.

CHRIS: I am not married.

JACK: Ah.

KATE: Michaels' father was here a while ago [. . .] Gerry Evan [. . .]

Mr. Evans is a Welshman [. . .] not that that's relevant to [. . .]

JACK: You were never married?

CHRIS: Never. (II: 1337)

The conversation shows that the poor people follow the evil work in their life because of poverty. Though everyone has choices and desires, the working class people cannot think to be the king or queen of Ireland but can choose general life. Friel shows a deep and genuine sympathy towards the misery of the lower class people. Though he is not able to put forth any proper solution to the situation, he displays the touching picture of the economic crisis of the proletariat. The situation, he has depicted, is not only painful but also very much realistic. The condition of Mundy sisters calls forth a deep sympathy towards the working class in general. This play, to some extent, is an unspeakable misery of the Mundy family.

Not only as a fatherless, but also as a illegitimate child, Michael is one of those children outsiders that are common to the twentieth and twenty first century literature. Gerry Evans, the father of Michael, maker two visits of Ballybeg that summer. During the first visit , he promises Michael's mother Chris to marry her on his return, but when he returns, his attempt to marry is an enactment of complete self surrender. Because of the immense development in industrialization of the market and of their acute poverty, Gerry cannot afford their marriage. In fact, the holiness of the marriage ceremony lies in the gift of self at its center, a gift which is only possible in response to the mysterious encounter of two soul. In the overwhelming bourgeois society of Ireland, the couple has been contemplated as the animals, creatures in that they have not managed to consume their love legally. Throughout their life, they remain an unmarried couple that is a criminal activity for the society. The simple sister Rose spends an afternoon in the back hills with a married man. Unlike her elder sisters, she longs for marriage which leads her to the back hill. Thus, in a capitalist

society, poor people are forced to do evil works that are prohibited to the social morality.

In fact, there was a social injustice towards the working class in the Irish society of 1936. Middle class people who are trying to rise to so called power and prosperity, lack of feelings and conscience towards the workers. The example of such characters are De Valera and the machine owner of the Donegal town.

AGNES: Where is she? what's happened to our Rosie?

KATE: What direction did she go when she left you?

AGNES: Direction?

KATE: Stop sniveling Agnes! Did she go towards home?

AGNES: I think so [. . .] yes [. . .] I don't know [. . .] Maggie [. . .]

MAGGIE: She may have gone to the town. (I: 1343)

The given dialogue shows a spirit of revolution in the character sketch of Rose and later in Agnes. The machine owner of the Donegal town has no conscience to the touching picture of Rose and Agnes. Both the sisters live a life of happy poverty until the arrival of a machine in their home town. Their universe has been a stable one until 1936, but then several factors change due to a sudden industrialization of the town. A sudden raise of machine challenges their knitting business, therefore, Rose and Agnes chuck up their profession being powerless towards it. At the same time, they have their own desire, spirit and knowledge of life which gives them the sense of returning to a life-giving source and has a powerful renewing effect on their everyday lives. The issue of leaving the family home affects all main characters, but its importance is rendered problematic by the stronger theme of alienation, a major feature of bourgeois society. The two sisters may work in other sectors of the town market however they refuse in that they do not like to be submissive to the power of middle class people of

the town. They move to London being emboldened to proceed their life and support their family but as they move further, their innocence becomes clear to them. In London, they accumulate new experience of the complexity of bourgeois market and of the division of labours, where they die of exposure in a destitute hospice.

Though death is natural and inevitable to every living beings, however, in the case of these characters: -- Rose, Agnes, Jack, and Gerry -- neither of them has died naturally, rather they die of human causes. They all have been victimized by the overwhelming spirit of bourgeois society where death has been caused by capitalist ideology.

IV. Conclusion

Brain Friel's play *Dancing at Lughnasa* evokes the social and economical problems of poor Irish people during 1930s. The various social situations depicted in it have close relation to reality. Friel is a great critic of social abuses as a great reformist and the present play is a social-historical document in artistic form. He laments the dehumanization and the fragmentation of society. He knows that such economic disparity is inimical to human welfare.

Friel shows the fragmentation, disharmony and alienation in the capitalist society. Poor Mundy family breaks up to maintain their possible mission to releasing themselves from a long line of poverty and sustaining at least the lower social prestige idealized by the capitalist society. Carrying out a simple mission, they lose their own culture, language, religion, and even their good relation among their family. However, they get nothing more than death as a punishment. Lukacs' analysis of the condition of labour and the critique of the alienated and 'reified' consciousness of a man under capitalism is quite appropriate in the case of the Mundy family especially of Agnes, Rose, and Father Jack. There is no harmony and beauty in bourgeois society but there is fragmentation and high exploitation upon the individuals.

Rose and Agnes leave their knitting profession and even their family and nation not willingly but with compulsion. Due to the over exploitation done upon them by the revolutionized mechanical production of Irish local town, they depart for England where, too, they cannot get social justice. They shuffle from one street to the other for food and shelter but neither of the doors respect their bitter feelings. At the end, they die of exposure at the hospice for destitute.

Father Jack has been victimized until his good health: once as a champion of British army and next as a hired priest in Ugandan Catholic Church. When he

becomes invalid, he is repatriated without any proper salary and trophy that infects both his mind and heart. Later, he dies of heart attack. Other characters like Chris and Gerry have not been exception to the bourgeois exploitation. The above mentioned characters except Chris are doomed to their death due to the overwhelming spread of bourgeoisie in their society.

Lukacs stresses that there must be some formal correspondence between the literary work and 'dialectical totality'. Art is originated in the society and it must have some social significance. The reproduction of reality cannot be always different. The measurement of the successful artist is his touch to reality. Brian Friel is very much concerned with social reality in the present play *Dancing at Lughnasa*. He perceives that external reality is prior to ideas in the mind and that the material world is reflected in the mind of man and translated into forms of thought. Knowledge is not a matter of making one to one correspondence between things in the world outside and ideas in the head. This play is comprised on a shape of dialectical totality of the reality in the external world, where all parts are in movement and contradictions.

Thus, the present play provides an account of socio-economic reality of Ireland during 1930s. In spite of being sincere, honest and hardworking in their works, poor Rose, Agnes and Father Jack cannot rescue their family from abject poverty. They not only lose their dreamy mission but also lose their life tragically in bourgeois community. Death is natural and inevitable that comes in every life at its end. However, in the case of these wretched characters, death is not natural rather it is an object to produce whenever and wherever it is required. Thus, Friel, through this play, has pointed out the bitter truth and the atrocity of Irish society during 1930s.

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