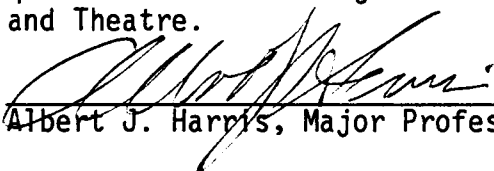
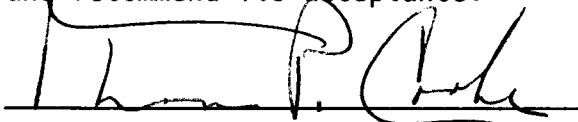
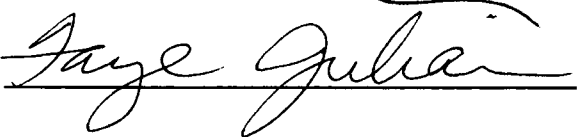


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Pamela N. Booth entitled "Christopher Hampton: Influence of the First Wave and Historically Important Playwrights." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Speech and Theatre.


Albert J. Harris, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON: INFLUENCE OF THE FIRST WAVE
AND HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT PLAYWRIGHTS

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Pamela N. Booth
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ABSTRACT

This thesis shows how Christopher Hampton was influenced by the First Wave playwrights: John Osborne, Shelagh Delaney, Arnold Wesker, John Arden, and Brendan Behan; and historically important playwrights Moliere and Pirandello. Influences of character treatment, thematic development, and language and style are discussed within the paper. Hampton's five full-length plays, When Did You Last See My Mother? (1967), Total Eclipse (1969), The Philanthropist (1970), Savages (1974), and Treats (1976), are compared with selected plays of the aforementioned playwrights.

Influences of character treatment examined are: the angry young man, the mother/incest character, the misplaced homosexual, the passive acceptor, the misguided activist, and influences of three characters in Moliere's Misanthrope. The influences of thematic development, treated in the following chapter, are: the danger of apathy, the importance of honesty, responsibility for protection, the importance of politics, the misfit in society, the importance of appearances, and the importance of fidelity. The final chapter, concerned with influences of language and style, examines caustic language, use of the song, and the play-within-the-play. The paper concludes with a brief summary.

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INTRODUCTION

During the late 1960's and early 1970's a new group of British playwrights emerged. They were christened the Second Wave in a book of the same name by John Russell Taylor. This group of playwrights includes such writers as Tom Stoppard, David Storey, David Hare, and Christopher Hampton. They have evolved, like all writers, from those who preceded them, and this group of playwrights shows the influence of their predecessors. The preceding playwrights are called, appropriately, the First Wave. The First Wave playwrights were radical; their language and characters are harsh reminders of an era of change. Sharp retorts and untenable situations are reflective of this era.

Though the Second Wave playwrights owe their debt to playwrights of the past, very little work has been done to see just what these influences have been. Because the work on this topic is scant, this thesis is written. Possibilities for an extensive study exist, which is the following: What are the influences of the First Wave playwrights on the Second Wave playwrights? For the purpose of this study, the focus is limited to a specific Second Wave playwright. His name is Christopher Hampton.

Christopher Hampton is an outstanding dramatist of the modern British theatre. Hampton's first play was written when he was seventeen; he holds the record as the youngest playwright-in-residence at the Royal Court, where he wrote from 1968-70. His five full-length

plays are When Did You Last See My Mother? (1967), Total Eclipse (1969), The Philanthropist (1970), Savages (1974), and Treats (1976). Each of his plays has received critical acclaim. The Philanthropist, which ran slightly over three years in London's West End, won the Plays and Players Award for best play of 1970 and the Evening Standard Award for best comedy, also in 1970. Hampton's plays, though successful, are quite diverse. Even Hampton admits that he is not tied to a particular subject matter or theme. Still, Hampton's plays are similar; all of his plays exhibit influence of background sources on his work.

The purpose of this thesis is to answer the following question: How did the First Wave and historically important playwrights influence Christopher Hampton? Sources for the paper include newspaper and magazine reviews, academic journal studies, books, Christopher Hampton's plays, selected First Wave plays, one play by Moliere, and two plays by Pirandello. First Wave playwrights included in this paper are John Osborne, Shelagh Delaney, Arnold Wesker, John Arden, and Brendan Behan. Two to three plays by each author are used; the playwright's better-known works were chosen. Three historical plays are dealt with. Moliere's Misanthrope is used because it is alluded to in Hampton's Philanthropist. The two plays of Pirandello's, It Is So (If You Think So) and Six Characters in Search of an Author, were chosen because they are his representative plays.

After the literature survey and a short biography about Christopher Hampton, three areas of the drama are focused on; characteristics of the playwright in his specific plays are examined in the paper. The

First Wave plays are treated by author; an examination of Hampton's plays follows. Then, the historical plays are treated by author and a comparison of Hampton follows. The influence of the First Wave and historically important playwrights is examined in these areas: influence of character treatment, influence of thematic development, and the influence of language and style. The three areas constitute the body of the paper. A short summary concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

The following literature survey examines the literature by magazines and then by books. The magazines and books are evaluated in chronological order. This method is used because magazines usually capitalize on a performance, while books review Hampton in an academic view. This chapter summarizes the literature available on Hampton and his plays. It concludes with a short summary of Hampton's life.

Survey

Plays and Players brings Hampton to the forefront with its review of The Philanthropist. Reviewer John Holmstrom is quick to make the association with the play to Moliere's Misanthrope. Hampton uses the plot of the historical French play and switches its ideas around. Holmstrom's review is favorable; he believes that Hampton's suicide scene is surprising and hilarious. Holmstrom also says that Phillip, the main character in the play, is an exaggeration of Hampton's neureoses.

In The Guardian Weekly, Nicholas de Jongh writes a short but informative article, "Toughness Beneath Fragility." De Jongh reports Hampton's saying that the only question to ask is whether or not to kill yourself. De Jongh says that Hampton is a curious writer because he is too difficult to assess. He calls Hampton's plays traditional

plays and says they are plays about anguish. According to de Jongh, Hampton thought he could change the world by wonderful writing; but he says Hampton realizes that there is a gap between what one says and what one means to say. The article quickly summarizes Hampton's first three plays and cites him as a promising writer. It reveals that Hampton does a good amount of researching for his plays dealing with history. For example, de Jongh quotes Hampton's interest in the young French poet Arthur Rimbaud and his relationship with Paul Verlaine in the subject of Total Eclipse. "I read Enid Starkie's book about him."¹ This article, though brief, is important. It is an excellent summary of Hampton's work to date.

When The Philanthropist came to America, it opened at the Barrymore Theatre in March of 1971. The New York Drama Critics' Reviews compiles a copy of reviews of leading New York critics. This paragraph concerns the opinions of these critics. Douglas Watt, Daily News critic, believes that the play is a strangely confused effort at a character study. He feels the play leaves the audience with nothing; it is merely a set of characters involved in an action which goes nowhere. The New York Post critic, Richard Watts, believes The Philanthropist is a ". . . gracefully written comedy."² Watts feels the show reveals Hampton's skill and understanding as a playwright, though

¹Nicholas de Jongh, "Toughness Beneath Fragility," The Guardian Weekly, 12 Sept. 1970, p. 21, cols. 1-5.

²Richard Watts, "Alec McCowen is Funny, but the Play Sinks Him," The Daily News, in New York Theatre Critics' Reviews, 29 March 1971, p. 329.

Watts does not believe The Philanthropist is destined to be a "great" play. Martin Gottfried, critic of Women's Wear Daily, says the play is disappointing. He finds The Philanthropist a comedy of lesser quality than the writing of Noel Coward. T. E. Kalens, reviewer for Time finds the play a collection of witticisms going nowhere.

The misfortune in his (Hampton's) own play is that the passion, conflict, and tone of voice of a playwright saying what he feels he has to say are all but inaudible.³

Another critic, Jack Kroll of Newsweek, is very impressed by The Philanthropist, saying that it represents the work of an artist. Kroll feels this play is one that the modern theatre world has been waiting for. Henry Popkin, critic for The Wall Street Journal agrees with Jack Kroll. Popkin says it is the best comedy of the Broadway season; he believes the comedy of character contained in the play is the best form of comedy writing.

This collection of short reviews is certainly varied. There are nearly as many opinions as there are critics. In spite of the collag   of opinions, these articles are important because they judge the merit of the playtext by its success as a theatrical production.

Another early reviewer of Hampton's Philanthropist is Brenden Gill of The New Yorker. Gill showers praise on the play. He says:

. . . it is evident that he (Hampton) continues to take an active interest in current events and is capable of getting

³T. E. Kalens, "The Theatre," Time, in New York Theatre Critics Reviews, 29 March 1971, p. 330.

off with some pretty slick lines, especially, when the weather is warm.⁴

Gill's biggest complaint with the play concerns the plotting. Gill feels that Hampton should have one solid idea and develop the play from his idea.

Another review of The Philanthropist appears in The Nation, and it is written by Harold Clurman. Clurman applauds Hampton's play because the characters in the play are easy to relate to. According to Clurman, the main character, Philip, is true to the concept of the unexceptional person; the concept of the non-hero applies to everyman. Clurman likes the idea of the play's university setting because it provides a desirable microcosm for the action. He sights the modesty of the play, its setting, characters, and ideas, as a plus for The Philanthropist.

It reaches for no great disclosures, no large theme, no pretentious insights. It dramatizes the plight of an untragic man.⁵

While The Philanthropist was continuing its three-year run in London's West End, Hampton's next play, Savages, caught a great deal of critical attention. Savages starred Paul Scofield and opened to mixed reviews by the critics. Perhaps the most amazing conclusion about the reviews, after reading them all, is the polemical views of the critics regarding Savages's multiple story lines.

⁵Harold Clurman, "Theatre," Nation, 5 April 1971, p. 442.

A month before Hampton's Savages premiered, Stephen Gilbert did a special article entitled "Hampton's Court" in Plays and Players. Gilbert writes about the background for Savages; Hampton's idea comes from an article in the Sunday Times colour magazine. Most importantly, Gilbert interviews Hampton, thus giving another dimension to Hampton's work. Gilbert reports that Hampton likes diversity in his work and has Robert Kidd direct all his plays. Gilbert says that Hampton believes the theatre is good, but television is the better medium for social change. Also, the English people are more interested in theatre than they are in politics. Gilbert's interview discusses Hampton's writing style. This information is extremely valuable because it allows insight into Hampton's plays and how he goes about writing them.

Plays and Players was among the earliest magazines to review Savages. Ronald Bryden, the critic, finds some objectionable points in the play. He feels that the multiple plotting in the play is harmful; Hampton does not do enough justice to his plot for the audience to discuss what the play is really about. Bryden finds some relation to Royal Hunt of the Sun by Peter Shaffer. He feels if he has drawn from this play, Hampton's play is inferior to Shaffer's. Bryden finds Savages too intellectual for the audience to understand because of its sophisticated construction; ". . . it is too sophisticated to hope for its own success."⁶

⁶Ronald Bryden, "Savages," Plays and Players, June 1973, p. 43.

One of the most valuable magazine articles concerning Savages appears in Theatre Quarterly. This unsigned article gives a great deal of factual information not only about Savages, but also about Hampton himself and how he feels about his writing. The article describes the playwrighting and directing relationship between Christopher Hampton and Robert Kidd. The article explains that Hampton toured the actual locations where his factual plays took place. The plays based on fact are Total Eclipse and Savages. The article reports that Hampton even read books by Levi-Strauss on Indian myths. The article goes on to describe how Hampton feels about the theatre in general and the direction his writing is taking. The personal interview with Hampton is perhaps the best one published.

On the page following the Theatre Quarterly interview Martin Esslin, author of Theatre of the Absurd, writes an article concerning Savages. Esslin takes the play's critics to task for writing reviews which he feels are inane and sophomoric. He takes direct quotes from the reviews and matches them with conflicting reviews, and with quotes from the play text. Esslin reports that many critics found the plotting a messy jumble of vignettes, so much so that they could not decide what the story was about. But Esslin questions these comments.

In fact, what struck me on seeing the play was its formal neatness, the subtle contrapuntal interplay of Indian myth, flash-backs, and the dialogues between the kidnapper and his victim.⁷

⁷Martin Esslin, "In Search of Savages," Theatre Quarterly, 3, No. 12 (1973), 80.

This article has a two-fold importance in the body of literature pertaining to Hampton. One, it shows how divergent criticism of Hampton's plays really is. Second, it illustrates particular qualities that the play has; that is, Savages incorporates successful intervening of plot line as it relates to a larger world outside the play.

In February 1974, Total Eclipse, Hampton's second play, opened in America at the Chelsea Theatre Center of Brooklyn. The New York Drama Critics' Reviews, while evaluating the costumes, acting, and staging also evaluate the script and make points about the background of the play. Most critics are quick to point out that the play derives from the tempestuous relationship between the French poets Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Verlaine. Critics are divided as to whether or not the play performs successfully on stage.

Clive Barnes of the New York Times finds the play a sensitive evening in the theatre. He cites Hampton's use of Enid Starkie's book, Rimbaud, and reports that the playwright is historically correct. Barnes's main criticism is that the episodic scenes of the play lapse into action similar to a television documentary. In the New York Post Richard Watts comments more on the subject matter of the play than he does the play itself. His only constructive comment is that Hampton should have revealed more about the poets as writers and less as bickering lovers. Martin Gottfried, critic of Women's Wear Daily all but tears Total Eclipse to shreds. Gottfried reports that the play is boring and unimaginative.

It is told very much in the style of those serialized BBC sagas so popular on educational television, the only real difference being its homosexual content.⁸

Jack Kroll, critic for Newsweek, does much like Richard Watts. He explains the Rimbaud-Verlaine story as it really happened, rather than reviewing the play. Near the end of the article Kroll reveals that he really likes the play. Finally, Douglas Watt, of the Daily News, says that the play is tedious. Watt advises only those who have a special interest in Total Eclipse subject matter to see the play.

These articles are important to the body of literature because they present a wide scope of opinion concerning the play's merits. The critics also reveal an American reaction to subtle British playwrighting technique.

The New Yorker published one of the only American reviews of Savages when the play made its New York debut in 1977. The play made an ephemeral appearance in America; it closed shortly after it opened. Critic Edith Oliver is quick to spot three distinct plot lines in the play: the kidnapping of Alan West, the life and death of a tribe of Amazon Indians, and the visit of West and wife by an American anthropologist. She remarks that the characters are well drawn; however, Oliver admits that there is no discernable play in Savages. "If there is a play here, I couldn't find it."⁹

⁸Martin Gottfried, "Theatre," Women's Wear Daily, in New York Theatre Critics' Reviews, 6 May 1974, p. 292.

⁹Edith Oliver, "Off Broadway," New Yorker, 14 March 1977, p. 68.

This criticism is valuable, but not because of the insights into Hampton's text or his background material. What is so important is the fact that Edith Oliver is one of the few, if not the only, American critics to react to Savages.

In the summer of 1979, Comparative Drama came out with an article on Savages by Peter Holland. Holland approaches Savages' directing requirements rather than writing a review or a critique of the play. He is quick to point out that Savages has a subtle dramatic structure and that this structure lends itself to being a director's play. Holland reports that Robert Kidd, the director, took Hampton's unconventional play and made it more conventional. He adds that Hampton did his homework as far as the background material was concerned; that is, Hampton not only read newspaper articles and went to Brazil, but also read Levi-Strauss's study of American-Indian myths. Holland also reports that the director Robert Kidd may have done the play a disservice. He feels Kidd's choices shaped an emphasis on plot line that Hampton did not intend. Again, this article does not have a direct bearing on the script itself, but it does show how a director's interpretation affects the transition from the printed playtext to the total theatre production.

Because Hampton is a relatively new playwright, there are no books dedicated solely to his contribution to the English stage. However, several recent texts on modern British drama include Hampton in their analysis of the late 1960's and early 1970's. One of the first books to include Hampton is John Russell Taylor's The Second

Wave, written in 1971. Taylor is quick to state that the Second Wave writers cannot be pegged. Taylor says that each writer has particular characteristics inherent in his writing style. For example, Taylor says that Hampton uses traditional methods to say the traditional with a subtle difference. He points out the influence of John Osborne on Hampton's first play, When Did You Last See My Mother?, "It is appreciably post-Osborne only in the sense that there seems to be some direct influence of Osborne on Hampton . . .";¹⁰ and it is borne out in the interactions of Noel Coward, on Hampton; Taylor says Coward's The Vortex is close to When Did You Last See My Mother? with regard to form. Taylor classifies Hampton as a writer of modified realism; by this he means that Hampton's characters and situations go beyond the ordinary. Taylor's section on Hampton is one of the most helpful written; it not only explains Hampton's plays, but also it relates the background Hampton comes from.

Frederick Lumley's updated New Trends in 20th Century Drama contains a short segment relating to Christopher Hampton. It does not go in much depth; it is a survey book. The book's early publication date precludes knowledge of Hampton's impact on the drama that a later book has. Lumley does capsulize The Philanthropist, remarking that it is a remarkable picture of contemporary ethos. Lumley says that the play represents polemical forces in life.

¹⁰John Russell Taylor, The Second Wave (New York: Hill and Wang, 1971), p. 198.

Post-War British Theatre, by John Elsom, is another important book that summarizes traits of the Second Wave, even though traits Elsom gives are scant. He says that the Second Wave writers work in traditional genres; they are basically sceptical and light-hearted writers dealing in social comedies. Elsom also says that the Second Wave playwrights are no less skillful than the "angry and after" men. He feels the new playwrights have profited from the technical experience of their predecessors, thereby enabling them to choose from many alternatives. Elsom also remarks that the Second Wave playwrights place heavy emphasis on the word "honesty." Elsom's book is helpful because it has the advantage of hindsight that an earlier book does not have. It concentrates more on the writer's structural similarities than other books which deal with individual play analysis.

Contemporary Dramatists, edited by James Vinson, has an outstanding summary of Hampton's career. Not only does the book give biographical facts, but also it lists all the plays, teleplays, and translations that Hampton has done through 1977. In addition, the book gives publication and production dates. The major critical study on him is listed as well as a short summary of Hampton's writing style and synopsis of his plays. This book is very useful as a starting point; it leads the reader to the most important article on Hampton. Bibliographical information contained here is also quite informative.

Oleg Kerensky's The New British Drama, like Contemporary Dramatists, also provides pertinent information about Hampton and his work.

It excels Vinson's book because it contains an interview with Christopher Hampton. After reviewing Hampton's background, the book goes on to examine his plays. Kerensky acknowledges that Hampton reflects an influence of John Osborne's Look Back in Anger. Also important in this book is the fact that Hampton is interested in Horvath, author of Tales from the Vienna Woods. This influence, according to the book, is that Hampton presents a picture to the audience and lets the audience draw their own conclusions. The book also deals with Hampton's political references in his plays; Kerensky says that Hampton's vague political references represent a lack of interest by the British in their own politics. Kerensky's book, pertinent because it provides background information on Hampton by the playwright himself, is also quotes Hampton on his reasoning behind why he has written the plays the way he has.

Douglas Colby, in As the Curtain Rises, gives an in-depth examination of The Philanthropist as well as a list of similarities between Hampton's diverse plays. The study of The Philanthropist is the most thorough in the body of literature; Colby examines characters, plot structure, theme, and even discusses these in relation to the plays of Pirandello and Moliere.

While Hampton's plays represent five distinct types of drama, there are certain recurring features that link them together as the work of one author. The first is a reference to other creative writers.¹¹

¹¹Douglas Colby, "An Act of Suicide," As the Curtain Rises (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated Univ., 1978), p. 17.

Colby's chapter on Hampton is the only entire chapter of a book that is devoted solely to one of his plays. It is an excellent book on Hampton's playwrighting characteristics and academic study of The Philanthropist.

British Theatre Since 1955 was printed shortly after Colby's book. This book does little more than overview many diverse playwrights, of which Hampton is one. Ronald Hayman, its author, does not feel that Hampton is very experimental. Hayman indicates that Savages is the most ambitious and committed play Hampton has written, but Hayman does not go into much detail as to why he believes this is true. His book only skims the subject matter.

Who's Who in the Theatre is a book similar to Vinson's Contemporary Dramatists. Who's Who in the Theatre is strictly factual and provides little in the way of bibliographical information. What the book does do, because of its current publication date, is provide the most recent list of plays, adaptations, and translations by Hampton; a current mailing address is also given. This source is helpful only as a springboard for more information.

The most recent book which includes Christopher Hampton is Contemporary English Drama, and is a compilation of chapters by several different authors. Julian Hilton's chapter, "The Court and its Favours," is very informative and includes several pages devoted to Christopher Hampton. Hilton provides information concerning Hampton's background as it fits in the place of other writers as regards Hampton's writing style. Then Hilton goes over each of Hampton's plays, except

Treats, and discusses the central themes in each play. This book is very useful not only because it examines Hampton and his plays, but, because of its current publication date, Hilton has the advantage of distancing from the period Hampton wrote. This allows the book to examine Hampton's contribution to the body of contemporary English drama.

Other sources used in this paper, other than First Wave and historical plays, are books on Rimbaud and Verlaine and histories of English culture. They help establish Hampton's plays in a time frame. The secondary sources on Christopher Hampton are relatively recent and often repetitive. Because of the lack of material available on him, some phases of study on the playwright may prove difficult. For the purpose of this study, the academic textbooks are the most helpful.

Biography

Christopher Hampton was born in Fayal in the Ayozes. His father was a cable and wireless engineer who managed in the Middle East States. The family lived grandly with servants in the home when Hampton was a boy. Hampton went to kindergarten in Arden and on to a British boy's school in Alexandria.

Although it was a British school, it followed a trend system of education, so we were very advanced, especially in languages, compared with normal English education. We had drama classes and we all had to write plays, at the age of eight! I enjoyed it very much -- Edgar Allen Poe was my source and enthusiasm at that time.¹²

¹²Oleg Kerensky, "Christopher Hampton," The New Britian Drama (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1977), p. 90.

Prep school in Reigate, England, still found Hampton writing his plays. After prep school, Hampton attended Lancing College (1959-63). Here he did not write plays but he worked with David Hare, a man who would later succeed Hampton at the Royal Court. At age seventeen Hampton wrote When Did You Last See My Mother?. According to Hampton, the idea just popped into his head in the period of half an hour. In 1964-68 Hampton attended New College at Oxford. He had a desire to be an actor. During this period Hampton's play, When Did You Last See My Mother?, was first performed as part of a school drama festival. It eventually reached the attention of Robert Kidd, who was looking for a new play to direct on a Sunday performance night at the Royal Court.

Hampton was given a year off at Oxford to go to Germany; during school he had been running back and forth to rehearsals in London when his play got started. In Germany he did translations of plays for a theatre there, but the job and pay for it fell through. At this time the idea for Total Eclipse, Hampton's second play, was born. Hampton left Germany for Brussels, which is where Verlaine shot Rimbaud. These two French poets are the main characters in Total Eclipse. From Brussels, Hampton went to Paris to do research on the poets. In Paris, Hampton also did translations for a French novelist.

While Hampton was still at Oxford, he was asked to be the resident dramatist at the Royal Court. He worked at the Royal Court from 1968-70. The rest of Hampton's biography is a series of successful

plays, adaptations, and translations. He has written five plays: When Did You Last See My Mother? (1967), Total Eclipse (1969), The Philanthropist (1970), Savages (1974) and Treats (1976). In addition, he has written eight adaptations and eight film scripts. He won the Evening Standard Awards for The Philanthropist in 1970 as well as the Plays & Players Award for 1970. In 1973, Savages was a joint winner of the Plays & Players Award.

Currently, Christopher Hampton is concentrating on translating such writers as Ibsen, Horvath, Chekhov, and Babel. His reputation in outstanding translations is burgeoning. There seems to be no indication of Hampton's returning to writing original plays; but he is still actively involved in the world of the drama.

CHAPTER II

THE INFLUENCE OF CHARACTER TREATMENT

The First Wave playwrights, who wrote for the British stage in the late 1950's, caused a revolution to take place in British and American dramatic writing because the character types had not been seen on stage before. Though the characters appear diverse, they break down into similar types, five of which are identified in this chapter: characters who strike out at others and their environment, the mother/incest character, homosexual characters who have difficulty with their roles, the characters who passively accept the world around them, and the misguided activist character. The characterization in the following plays as they influence Christopher Hampton will be discussed:

John Osborne's Look Back in Anger (1957), The Entertainer (1959), Epitaph for George Dillon (1959); Arnold Wesker's Chicken Soup with Barley (1959), Roots (1959), I'm Talking About Jerusalem (1960); Shelagh Delaney's A Taste of Honey (1959), The Lion in Love (1961); John Arden's Serjeant Musgrave's Dance (1960), Live Like Pigs (1961); and Brendan Behan's The Quare Fellow (1956), and The Hostage (1958).

The chapter concludes with a comparison of three main characters, Oronte, Alceste, and Celimene, in Moliere's Misanthrope with three main characters, Don, Philip, and Celia, in Hampton's Philanthropist. Hampton drew heavily from Moliere when he wrote this particular play; the similarities of characters reveals this.

The Angry Young Man

Characters who strike out at themselves and their environment are the hallmark characters of the First Wave playwrights. The angry young man character was so christened by John Russell Taylor in his book The Angry Theatre (1962). This character, present in many First Wave plays, is most famous in Look Back in Anger by John Osborne. The angry man, Jimmy Porter, strikes out at a world which he feels is sour and unfeeling. His way of striking out is through language; he insults, jibes, and stings everyone with which he comes in contact. Porter turns his special wrath toward sheltered people who, by virtue of their background, cling to antiquated ideas and become unthinking and unaware. During intense emotional scenes Jimmy becomes unsettled, thus his defensive veneer drops away. An example is his plea to Jimmy's wife Alison, when Jimmy learns his best friend's mother has had a stroke.

Jimmy. You're coming with me, aren't you?
 She (he shrugs) hasn't got anyone
 else now, I . . . need you . . . to come
 with me.¹

Jimmy Porter wages his personal battle against unfeeling people. Within the microcosm of his apartment the war continues -- ruthlessly, tiredly, and alone.

In The Entertainer the character is an angry young woman named Jean. Jean returns to her home because she has broken up with her

¹John Osborne, Look Back in Anger (Chicago: Dramatic Publishing, 1957), p. 62.

fiancé, who is an unfeeling spouter of advice. Her return home affords her little comfort; the family has withdrawn from each other. Jean is angry and lashes out at her family, though she is not as consistent in her verbal admonishing as Jimmy Porter. Her verbal attacks are meant to wake the family up from its slumber of apathy.

The angry young woman in Arnold Wesker's Roots is Beatie Bryant, a waitress who comes home to be with her family and to introduce her fiancé, Ronnie, to them. She immediately tries raising her family to higher standards by new baking, cleaning up their language, and encouraging them in music; actually Beatie wants Ronnie to be impressed with her family. Beatie is not as crude in her remonstrations as the other angry characters; her comments have little direction because she does not understand why she says and feels as she does. Most of her pratings are direct quotations from her supposedly intellectual boyfriend. Only at the end of the play does Beatie realize her anger and frustration must be within herself, not because of her family's inadequacies. Upon this realization, Beatie becomes not a correcting, preaching automaton, but a thinking, questioning human being.

Beatie. Listen to me someone. (As though a vision were revealed to her.) God in heaven, Ronnie! It does work, it's happening to me, I can feel its happened, I'm beginning, on my own two feet-- I'm beginning . . .²

²Arnold Wesker, Roots, in The New British Drama, ed. Henry Popkin (New York: Gove, 1964), p. 270.

In Shelagh Delaney's Taste of Honey the angry young woman is named Jo; Jo is a product of her mother's treatment. Her mother, Helen, is a prostitute who remarries and leaves her. While Jo is young she becomes involved with a black man; he leaves without knowing Jo carries his child. Jo also discovers that her father was retarded, giving her yet another reason to strike out. She is angry with her mother and ashamed of herself. Jo's comments are sharp and stinging; her verbiage is the only defense mechanism she has left. This verbiage expresses hate for an uncaring, hypocritical world which depends on money for its set of standards. Jo derives that hatred, leveled at her mother, far away with the ammunition of brutal honesty--something her mother cannot ignore.

In Live Like Pigs, by John Arden, the angry young man character is a true villain named Blackmouth, who has served several prison terms and claims himself a killer, but is enough a father/husband figure to seek out his two children and their mother Rosie. Cranky to everyone in the play except his daughter, Blackmouth cannot get what he wants. He cannot be accepted in the house in which his wife stays, except by brute force, but even brute force does not last for long. Again, the people in Blackmouth's environment do not care what happens to him. His angry retorts and commands are to no avail; Blackmouth is thrown out of the house, howling his protests of unhappiness in the streets.

Brendan Behan's Quare Fellow contains a warder named Regan who is the play's angry young man. Regan is not as vicious with his

language as are many of the other angry young men; this is attributable to Regan's environment which is the prison world. Regan does not like the prison system, especially the treatment of the prisoners. He prefers to treat the inmates more like human beings and less like animals. Also Regan abhors capital punishment; he lets the warders know this in no uncertain terms.

Warder Regan. A lot of people mightn't consider ours a very nice job, sir.

Healey. Ours?

Warder Regan. Yes, ours, sir. Mine, the Canon's, the hangman's, and if you don't mind my saying so, yours, sir.

Healey. Society cannot exist without prisons, Regan. My job is to bring what help and comfort I can to these unfortunates. Really, a man with your outlook, I cannot see why you stay in the service.

Warder Regan. It's soft job, sir, between hangings.³

Regan channels his anger; he stays to participate with and fight the system though he is caught in a position with which he is angry and can do little to change.

Behan presents the same character type in The Hostage; the angry young man is Leslie, a young English soldier being held hostage by the Irish. Behan's angry man is not changed by the volley of verbiage as are many of the other characters; this is due to the controlled environment of the boarding house, which becomes Leslie's prison. Leslie, angry at his hopeless situation, becomes more vocal as he realizes that the only escape is his own death. Leslie becomes angry at the boarders in the house because they are unfeeling concerning his senseless plight.

³Brendan Behan, The Quare Fellow, in The Quare Fellow and The Hostage (New York: Grove, 1964), p. 33.

The boarders will not change their meaningless system; therefore, the end result is an avoidable death.

Christopher Hampton is certainly influenced by the character of the angry young man; at least three of his characters come from that background. The clearest influence on Hampton is John Osborne; characters in Look Back in Anger have great similarities to characters in When Did You Last See My Mother?, supported by John Russell Taylor:

. . . the characters in his (Hampton's) central emotional triangle--mother, son, and the other man who wants the son but accepts the mother as a substitute--light into each other in passages of highly-changed invective worthy of the old master himself.⁴

Jimmy Porter seems to be the "older brother" of Ian. Ian strikes out at his environment and the people with whom he comes in contact. Ian's defense against inadequacy is to condemn pretension and apathy by using a rhetoric filled with strong barbs and cruel truths and to lash out at a world he feels is false. His special anger is directed toward the rich; ironically in Ian's case, the rich are the source of his sustenance. In this speech Ian vehemently attacks his roommate, Jimmy, who comes from a wealthy family.

Ian. I'm surprised you deign to rub shoulders with an under-privileged pauper like me. Why don't you go and live with someone rich so that you can co-exist in the style to which you are accustomed?⁵

⁴John Russell Taylor, The Second Wave (New York: Hill and Wang, 1971), p. 197.

⁵Christopher Hampton, When Did You Last See My Mother? (New York: Grove, 1967), p. 4.

Ian's anger exposes glaring truths but solves nothing; he succeeds in driving away anyone who cares about him, and as a result, is left abandoned and morose by the end of the play.

Another angry young man in Hampton's plays is Rimbaud in his second play, Total Eclipse. Rimbaud goes beyond mere anger, not only because his invective contains sharp barbs, but also because he totally changes his life and wrecks the lives of others around him. Rimbaud, himself a poet, works to disorder his senses in order to get in touch with artistic truths. He makes sharp demands of the poet Paul Verlaine and eclipses anyone in his path; he represents the destructive power of creative energy. Rimbaud's goal, like all the other angry young men, is to expose the uncaring in society, but because he is so harsh, the result of his effort is suffering. For instance, Rimbaud goes so far as to cause physical pain, as in this scene where he demands that Verlaine declare his love and trust:

Rimbaud. Do you love me?
 Verlaine. (puzzled) Yes.
 Rimbaud. Then put your hands on the table.
 Verlaine. What?
 Rimbaud. Put your hands on the table.⁶

His next action is to stab Verlaine's hands -- the result of jealousy, anger, and frustration. Ironically, after he does all the damage he can do to those with whom he comes in contact, Rimbaud stops his writing and departs for Africa to become a soldier; the remaining characters must pick up the pieces of their lives.

⁶Christopher Hampton, Total Eclipse (London: Faber, 1969), p. 43.

The most recent angry young man in Hampton's plays is the character Dave in Treats. Dave is angry because his environment has changed, and he cannot cope with it. He is consumed with Ann, the woman with whom he lives. She ignites his anger because of her selfish actions. For example, while Dave is away on a business trip, Ann invites another man, Patrick, to live with her in Dave's home. Upon returning home and discovering this, Dave viciously strikes out at the two; he is seething because he is duped by his girlfriend and is caught in a situation he neither understands nor controls.

The Mother/Incest Character

The mother/incest character is a woman who substitutes a young man for her son. This surrogate son assumes merely a son role, merely a lover role, or both, all done in an attempt to sublimate the absence of a desirable lover and/or fulfill a need for mothering that the woman, for some reason, has been denied.

John Osborne and Anthony Creighton's Epitaph for George Dillon has such a character named Mrs. Elliot, who has a whole house full of people including a husband, but she is not satisfied. At work she meets a young man named George Dillon and invites him into her home to live. Her son was killed during the war, and Mrs. Elliot uses Dillon to replace him. Mrs. Elliot's need for a surrogate son stems, in part, from her husband's treatment; he is a cold and unfeeling man who has little to do with her and little to do with the rest of his family. Actually Mrs. Elliot is as one dimensional as her husband; though she does keep

the family fed, she is unaware of what goes on in her own home. She only knows she is lonely, needs a replacement for her dead son, and frankly admits this to Dillon.

Mrs. Elliot. I've never mentioned this before, but I'm helping you all I can because I feel that in some small way I'm helping my son, Raymond. He was killed in the war, you know. That's his picture over there.⁷

Mrs. Elliot is not really in touch with her own motives for what she does; she acts on emotional impulse to alleviate her overwhelming sense of loss.

Another mother/incest character appears in Shelagh Delaney's Taste of Honey, but this character is somewhat different from Mrs. Elliot. The character, Helen, has the same motive; she operates out of a sense of loss. As a young girl Helen marries a man who believes in sex only for procreation, not as an expression of love. One night she turns to a retarded man, not because she is particularly drawn to him, but because he fulfills her needs both as a mother and as a lover. She makes love to the retarded man and becomes pregnant by him. Later, as a result of her guilt, she turns from her child. Her husband divorces her, and after her daughter Jo is born, Helen turns to prostitution as a means of financial support. However, prostitution becomes much more than a source of income for; in an odd sense, she turns to the superficial love of her clientele to sublimate the loss of the daughter she cannot accept. In short, Helen uses the retarded man/child to alleviate her initial guilt with regard to her puritannical

⁷ John Osborne and Anthony Creighton, Epitaph for George Dillon (Chicago: Dramatic Publishing, 1959), p. 29.

husband and again returns to the man/child, in the form of her customers, to compensate for the loss of her daughter. Guilt and failure are the overriding reasons that Helen behaves as she does. Helen remarries so that she will not have to face her daughter Jo and be reminded of her failure as a mother. Even as Helen's actions, driven by frustration, are misguided, her motives are quite understandable -- she operates out of an overriding sense of guilt.

Miss Gilchrist, a social worker in Brendan Behan's Hostage is another mother/incest character. Her motives are slightly different from the other two women, but her actions are the same. Miss Gilchrist, by vocation, is very interested in comforting people and alleviating their problems. She also makes vague attempts at converting sinners to Christianity. Yet, at her entrance in the play she has been making love to a man in the name of religion.

Miss Gilchrist. In nomine--please, Mr. Mulleady, let us not fall from grace again.

Mulleady. I'm very sorry Miss Gilchrist, let not the right hand know what the left hand is doing. Miss Gilchrist, can you--(the hand strays again and strokes Miss Gilchrist's tail.)

Meg (calling) Mr. Mulleady.

Mulleady. --feel our souls together.⁸

Miss Gilchrist somehow confuses her role as ministering mother; obviously, the mother image does not meet all her needs. The very fact that part of her last name Gilchrist contains Christ supports the idea of her ministrations as an absolving mother figure. She continues

⁸Brendan Behan, The Hostage in The New British Drama, ed. Henry Poplin (New York: Grove, 1964), p. 127.

this befuddled action by offering to help the boy Leslie, who is being held hostage, but her overt desires to protect the young man (Leslie is young enough to be her son) result in definite sexual overtones. Miss Gilchrist can meet her physical and spiritual needs by acting in the mother/incest role.

Christopher Hampton's mother/incest characters show distinct influences from those of the First Wave; his characters are combinations of those previously discussed. In When Did You Last See My Mother?, Mrs. Evans is the mother/incest character. Since she cannot reach her son Jimmy, she turns to Jimmy's roommate Ian for answers. Her son Jimmy is a homosexual, though whether or not Mrs. Evans suspects this is not divulged. She is hurt and confused by her son's unkind and distant behavior towards her; Jimmy closes the door on his mother's efforts to reach him. A bewildered Mrs. Evans turns to Ian, who she feels understands Jimmy the most, for answers to her dilemma. Coming to grips with her problem, Mrs. Evans goes to bed with Ian. She makes Ian her surrogate son and uses her passion, both as a mother and as a lover, to reach Jimmy. She does not understand her motives; she reacts to a pent-up emotional need, and though he is younger, Ian knows this. He explains later, quite bluntly, to Mrs. Evans that she is as lost to herself as she is lost to her son and that she is just like her son.

Mrs. E. I will. You can't just make remarks like that out of the blue. Why am I just like him?

Ian. (blurts out) Because you don't understand why you're saying yes, and he didn't understand why he said no.⁹

⁹ Hampton, When Did, p. 44.

Ian bluntly indicates that Mrs. Evans is acting out of guilt, a guilt with many layers. She feels guilty because she has failed as a mother; she can't reach Jimmy. She feels guilty because she has used Ian as a pavy and has failed as a wife; she has been unfaithful to her husband. And, she is attracted to Ian but realizes she is old enough to be his mother; she has failed as a lover. Mrs. Evans, hysterically out of control because of what she is, cannot cope with or forget her guilt, perhaps because she is more knowing than the First Wave characters. Because Mrs. Evans cannot go on functioning in her mother/incest role, she kills herself, the result of a car accident. She is the evolved mother/incest character, once blind, who sees what she is and cannot accept that truth as a part of her life.

The Misplaced Homosexual

A third character type of the First Wave playwrights is that of the homosexual who has difficulty with his place in society. This man cannot completely accept his sexuality; he is either not sure he is a homosexual or not ready to face the fact that he is. He does not like the role he must accept in society and realizes that he cannot fulfill its expected husband or son role.

Geoffrey, in A Taste of Honey by Shelagh Delaney, is just such a character. He has apparently sublimated his homosexuality, though his sexual preference is hinted at, almost at his entrance. Geoffrey elects to take care of Jo, a woman who is pregnant and left alone by her boyfriend and her mother. He reveals nothing of his past sex life

but takes on the role of mother, a role Jo has only because of her physical makeup; he buys groceries, makes clothes, cooks, cleans, and looks after Jo -- in fact, he does everything but have the baby. Geofrey knows Jo better than she knows herself. After performing all these duties, he realizes that he acts the father role and might like it after all.

Geof. Marry me, Jo.

Jo. Don't breathe all over me like that, you sound like a horse. I'm not marrying anybody.

Geof. I wouldn't ask you to do anything you didn't want to do.

Jo. Yes, you would.

Geof. Jo, I don't mind that you're having someone else's baby. What you've done, you've done. What I've done, I've done.¹⁰

Jo refuses Geoffrey because she realizes what he is, and Geoffrey realizes it too. He knows that he may love Jo, but the questions and comments about him won't die; he helps Jo with baby preparations until her mother comes and then he leaves.

Another homosexual in the First Wave plays is Rio Rita in The Hostage, by Brendan Behan. Rio Rita is much more comfortable with his homosexuality, most likely by virtue of where he lives, which is a boarding house full of whores and criminals. Yet his efforts at a valid contribution to the action of the play are ignored; his attempt to strike up a relationship with another man, such as Miss Gilchrist's Mulleady, is glossed over. Even though there are deviant characters living in the boarding house, Rio Rita is never really accepted. Only

¹⁰Shelagh Delaney, A Taste of Honey, in The New British Drama, ed. Henry Popkin (New York: Grove, 1964), p. 80.

when he assumes a policing role, such as guarding the hostage, is he more than slightly acknowledged.

Christopher Hampton, by virtue of another era, brings the idea of homosexuality in society into the forefront. One of the frustrated homosexuals is Jimmy, the young son in When Did You Last See My Mother?, who is not comfortable at his home or with his roommate Ian; he argues with Ian and eventually leaves him. Ian, who sees through him, points up the harsh truth that Jimmy is not ready to accept.

Ian. (relentlessly) You don't fool anybody, you know, with all your fake virility. All this shaving yourself every other day when there isn't a hair on your face, all this denoted attachment to birds, however crummy they are. It doesn't take me in one bit.

Jimmy. (almost hysterical) SHUT UP!¹¹

Jimmy's reaction to his sexuality is to subvert it. He not only leaves Ian, thereby withdrawing from their relationship, but also he ignores his family, and once at home, Jimmy withdraws from his family. With Ian or at home, Jimmy tries unsuccessfully to bury his sexuality, a situation he cannot accept.

The other character in Hampton's plays who has difficulty accepting his homosexuality is Paul Verlaine in Total Eclipse. Verlaine is married and has a child when he meets Arthur Rimbaud. Once Verlaine meets Rimbaud, he has difficulty in choosing either the love of his wife or Rimbaud. Very shortly after he meets Rimbaud they have an

¹¹ Hampton, When Did, p. 27.

affair, but even after declaring his love to Rimbaud, a still later scene finds Verlaine in bed with his wife Mathilde. Mathilde questions Verlaine directly on his love for Rimbaud; Verlaine is unable to give her a straight answer.

Mathilde. Why don't you want to come back?

Verlaine. I . . .

Mathilde. Why do you prefer him to me?

Verlaine. I don't, love, I don't (pause) It's just . . .¹²

Verlaine, oscillating between the woman and the man in his life, never appears comfortable with his sexuality. He does not know why he feels as he does; he just follows his emotions and eventually leaves Mathilde (who later divorces Verlaine) for Rimbaud.

The Passive Acceptor

The passive acceptor is the second most written about character in the First Wave plays. The passive acceptor is content to survive in his environment like a blob of jello; he does not undergo any character modification or realization. He merely accepts life as it is, caring little or nothing for anyone but himself. In the world of the play the passive acceptor is a one-dimensional lump of flesh.

The passive acceptor is found in John Osborne's Look Back in Anger, The Entertainer, and Epitaph for George Dillon. In Look Back in Anger, Cliff is the passive acceptor. He lives with Jimmy Porter while Porter's wife Alison lives there, when Alison leaves, and while Helena lives in the apartment. Cliff is admittedly more humane than

¹²Hampton, Total Eclipse, p. 45.

Porter, but essentially Cliff's character is flat. He fights Jimmy when he is too hard on Alison and comforts Jimmy when he is down; he keeps Jimmy and his girlfriends from going at each other too hard, still Cliff's main function is that of an arbitrator. His only real action in the whole play is his announcement that he has decided to leave Jimmy.

Cliff. (sits on the arm of his chair and rubs his feet)

Jimmy--I don't think I shall stay here much longer.

Jimmy. (rather casually) Oh, why not?

Cliff. (picking up his tone) Oh, I don't know. I've just thought of trying somewhere different.¹³

Cliff's announcement does not meet with much resistance; he has made little contribution in Jimmy's world. Cliff, so passive that even Jimmy does not try to reach him, is merely a referee for the verbal gamesmanship going on in Jimmy's apartment.

Archie, the passive acceptor in The Entertainer, is a happy-go-lucky sort that presents a likeable picture to all his acquaintances. The problem is that Archie, who gives his audience members as much personal attention as he does his family, is the entertainer at the theatre as well as at his own home. Archie's main concern is that, off stage or on stage, he comes across as a funny man. In fact, he is really an empty character, unwilling to help his family as they go through personal trials of infidelity, broken dreams, and even death. Not even phased by what goes on around him, Archie just goes about his

¹³Osborne, Look Back, p. 83.

business. An example of Archie's unfeeling quality is shown in this speech where he tells daughter Jean he is divorcing his wife.

Archie. Children (laughter) Children! They're like the bloody music hall. Don't worry about your old man-- he's still a bit worried about young Mick. At least, I suppose he is. I told you, nothing really touches me. As the man said, "I've paid me one and saxpence--I defy yez to entertain me!" Let anyone get up there and give a performance, let them get up. I don't care how good it is. Old Archie, dead behind the eyes, is sitting on his hands, he lost his responses on the way.¹⁴

Even Archie realizes he is numb; he just passively accepts his environment and keeps going on.

In Epitaph for George Dillon, the whole Elliot family acts as a passive acceptor. They are all taken in by George Dillon, but they do nothing about it. Dillon moves in their home and takes their food, their money, and makes special demands on their family, such as requesting them to get a telephone for his use. By rights the family should become angry, but they don't; the Elliots are taken advantage of and they know it. The only person that calls Dillon's hand is Mr. Elliot, and even he relents and allows Dillon to have a free rein over his home. The family is a conglomerate of burn-out cases, who do not care for each other; they merely co-exist in the same house, accept their handed lot, and keep blindly trudging on.

Arnold Wesker's trilogy of plays contains at least one passive acceptor in each play; Chicken Soup with Barley has the character Harry

¹⁴John Osborne, The Entertainer (Chicago: Dramatic Publishing, 1959), p. 75.

as its passive acceptor. Even though Harry is the father of his family and the head of the household, he accepts no responsibility for them. In the opening scene, the whole community is involved in promoting the cause of socialism; everyone is going to meetings and demonstrations. That is, everyone but Harry is active. While Harry's wife, friends, and even children go out in the streets of London, Harry sits quietly at home. Harry's report of his role in the street demonstration is a good example of his attitude, shown in the following quote.

Harry. So I saw the police were picking our boys off like flies and then I saw my policeman--his hat was missing by this time. Oooh! There was a vicious look came into his eye when he saw me. I didn't stop to ask him where he'd lost it. I just ran back to my mother's and read a book.¹⁵

Harry also has trouble finding jobs and keeping them; again he simply does not care. Also, Harry has several strokes, and his physical and mental state deteriorate rapidly. This is yet another way in which Harry is a passive acceptor: he does not even care about himself. Harry does not fight for his own life, spoils his chances for reoperation, and thus becomes a burden on his family.

Roots is the middle play in Wesker's trilogy, and the passive acceptors in this play include the whole Bryant family. Only their daughter Beatie, by virtue of moving to the city, escapes their apathetic sleep. This family does not really care for each other anymore

¹⁵Arnold Wesker, Chicken Soup with Barley, in The Wesker Trilogy (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1964), p. 33.

than the Elliot family in Epitaph for George Dillon. The Bryant family constantly argues over petty items; for example, the mother of the Bryant family is angry at her daughter-in-law purely because of a misunderstanding regarding a mail order. The Bryants, passive largely because of their limited environment, have grown up in a small rural community having little contact with the outside world. They accept life in the rural setting in which they live and are satisfied just getting by with as little trouble to themselves as possible.

I'm Talking About Jerusalem contains a carbon copy of the character of Harry; the passive acceptor is Harry's son Ronnie. The only difference in Harry and Ronnie is that Ronnie is more educated than his father. His greater education also serves to undermine Ronnie's chance for stepping out of his role. Ronnie cannot accept the world as he sees it; in fact, he runs to his mother for comfort from it. Instead of fighting to change the ills Ronnie sees, Ronnie just spouts high-blown theory. Ultimately he is like his father; he continues his father's place in the family in the role of passive acceptor.

Both of John Arden's plays, Live Like Pigs and Serjeant Musgrave's Dance, include the passive acceptor character type. For example, in Live Like Pigs, the whole Sawney household is content to run their lives with little regard for each other and less for anyone else. They pilfer from their neighbors the Jacksons and try to undermine them; for example, Big Rachel sleeps with Mr. Jackson and her son Col tries to make love to their daughter. The Sawneys feel it is their lot

in life to get the poor housing they have thrust upon them; they go about their living habits just like pigs. They accept what is handed to them, making no attempt to improve themselves and going about their existence with purely selfish goals in mind.

Serjeant Musgrave's Dance has a group of passive acceptors that act just like a family; this group is the soldiers--both Musgrave's men and the soldiers Musgrave hopes to enlist. These soldiers are interested in drinking, carousing, and having a good time, with hearty wreckless abandon. Even Musgrave's soldiers do not pay attention to the things he says; if they had, perhaps they would not have suffered the death of their fellow soldiers, because an innocent soldier dies, a result of Musgrave's twisted politics. In this case, being a passive acceptor causes not bitterness, but death.

Brendan Behan makes use of the passive acceptor character in his plays The Hostage and The Quare Fellow; in The Hostage the passive acceptor is Pat. He runs his boarding house and takes in all sorts of waifs from varying sorts of low life. Into his house comes a British hostage, Leslie, who is condemned to death if a member of the opposing I.R.A. force is shot. Pat knows that Leslie is blameless, and Leslie's death, for all practical purposes, is useless. Knowing that Leslie is likely to be killed, Pat passes the threats off as nothing.

Pat. It's bluff, propaganda! All they'll do is hold you for a few days.¹⁶

¹⁶Behan, The Hostage, p. 184.

Because Pat harbors a grudge against the British, he does nothing. He knows keeping Leslie hostage does not promote a cause he actively believes in, but Pat accepts the situation in his boarding house, nonetheless. He stands back, does nothing, and allows the death of an innocent young man.

The prisoners in The Quare Fellow are also passive acceptors, this due largely to their environment, the prison. They know that a young man, dubbed "the quare fellow," is sentenced to death by hanging. The prisoners also know that they are not treated like human beings, but instead of trying to assert their rights as individuals, they feed off the already existing system, which is to plunder for their own gain. The prisoners bet on the murderer's reprieve, trade cigarettes for favors, and, like sheep, accept their lot by not doing anything for anyone. Since they adopt this attitude, passed on like a communicable disease, the coldness of the prison system spreads.

The passive acceptor appears in two of Hampton's plays, The Philanthropist and Savages. In The Philanthropist the microcosm of the university community is the passive acceptor. They all care very little for each other, and are chiefly concerned with appearing blemish-free in their world of academia. The problem is that in the effort to hold up appearances, the characters accept only themselves and question everyone else in their society. For example, note this speech by Celia, a young woman who tries to appear sexually appealing during the course of the play.

Celia. Stylish? It was one of the clumsiest gropes I've undergone for a long time. At the beginning of the tutorial, he poured me a drink and came and sat next to me on the sofa, and I thought this is it, fasten your seat belts.¹⁷

Later, Celia reveals that none of the above is true. She is representative of virtually all the characters in the play, because Celia appears as something she is not. The microcosm of the university provides occasion for pretense; by this pretense the characters become passive and accept their roles and their defenses for what they are.

In Savages the passive acceptor is Alan West, who is involved with British politics and is captured by a Brazilian revolutionary group. West resembles George Büchner's Danton in Danton's Death. Just as Danton realizes escape from the guillotine is useless, so Alan West realizes death at the hands of the revolutionaries is inevitable. He believes his paths of escape are cut off and action is futile. He is a passive acceptor of his fate and he dies as a result of his acceptance, but West gains something by passively accepting his fate; he learns why he is kidnapped by the guerillas and he buys a bit longer to live.

The Misguided Activist

The misguided activist, often found in First Wave plays, is a politically oriented character type; he fights for a cause he believes

¹⁷Christopher Hampton, The Philanthropist (London: Faber, 1970), p. 32.

in. Though the ideals he strives to obtain are noble, they go awry; somewhere along the way he misinterprets political theory. The character, by virtue of his own misunderstanding of the cause's aim, performs the wrong action. He, often causing senseless deaths, muddles political sentiment in such a fashion that he threatens the well-being of others.

John Arden includes this character type in both Live Like Pigs and Serjeant Musgrave's Dance. The misguided activists in Live Like Pigs are the Jackson family and their friends. While their neighbors the Sawneys represent the Welfare State and the oppressed masses, the neighbors the Jacksons represent the extremes of capitalism. The Jacksons, who had previously lived in an economic condition much like their neighbors, have risen above that of the Sawneys and are members of the capitalistic system. Disgusted with the Sawneys, Mrs. Jackson believes that her family is becoming impure by living next to them. Indeed they are; Mr. Jackson goes to bed with the whore Big Rachel and the Jackson's daughter Doreen chases after Big Rachel's son Col until he attempts going to bed with her. What really happens here is that the Sawneys make the Jacksons uncomfortable; they remind the Jacksons that it has not been long since they were in the same economic condition. To further reinforce their power as respectable citizens, the Jacksons get the police on their side and, with their help, they run the Sawneys out of their house. Ironically, the police have brought the Sawneys to live in the home beside the Jacksons in the first place.

Serjeant Musgrave's Dance also has a misguided activist, Serjeant Musgrave. Musgrave, a deserter from the war, decides to go after justice. The problem is, even though the laws of soldiering seem relatively cut and dried, Musgrave muddles theology and political ideology with his own theories concerning justice. His band of men blindly accept what he says because he is their leader; when they finally realize Musgrave's intent, they recognize him for the misguided activist that he is. Musgrave believes that a man's death must be paid back by the deaths of others.

Musgrave. (as though to himself) One man, and for him five. Therefore, for five of them we multiply out, and we find it five and twenty So, as I understand Logic and Logic to me is the mechanism of God-- that means that today there's twenty-five persons will have to be--¹⁸

Musgrave's last word would be "killed." He, in his misguided way, believes that for every soldier killed, five people should die; for his mistaken views and actions he is jailed and condemned to death.

Brendan Behan includes the misguided activist in his play The Hostage. In The Hostage the misguided activists are the people who want the soldier Leslie killed. Their reasoning is as follows: because a young I.R.A. soldier is held prisoner by the British, the I.R.A. takes an innocent young man, Leslie, and holds him hostage. If the young man from the I.R.A. is hanged, they will kill Leslie, who

¹⁸John Arden, Serjeant Musgrave's Dance, in The New British Drama, ed. Henry Popkin (New York: Grove, 1964), p. 359.

is held hostage until the Irish see if the English really hang the young man. The misguided activists in this case are the officers of the Irish government who hold Leslie hostage and ultimately kill him; they know that Leslie is blameless and has committed no crime other than that of being British. Killing him solves nothing and does not bring the young I.R.A. activist held in Belfast prison back, as Leslie realizes in his speech to Pat.

Soldier. I bet that fellow in Belfast wouldn't want me plugged.

Pat. Certainly he wouldn't.

Soldier. What good's it going to do him?¹⁹

The activists who kill Leslie are misguided; nevertheless, they kill Leslie in the name of justice--their brand, which is a justice of vengeance.

Christopher Hampton also draws from the misguided activist character present in the First Wave plays, using this character type in The Philanthropist and in Savages. In The Philanthropist, the misguided activist is the character Braham, a pompous British personality. He reacts against F.A.T.A.L. (Fellowship of Allied Terrorists Against Literature); this group has a hit list of twenty-five literary figures and Braham is crushed because he is not on it. Braham also makes politics a game; he becomes a crusader for a cause only for the money he makes; he is a political and social mercenary. For example, Braham comments on a television appeal he made.

¹⁹Behan, The Hostage, p. 185.

Braham. (playing up) Oh, I don't know; it was an appeal
 on behalf of spavined children. Or something equally sordid.
 Don. And did it raise much money?
 Braham. Enough to cover my fee.²⁰

Braham is a misguided activist because his political ideologies have gotten washed up. According to him, the only cause worth fighting for is the English pound.

Savages contains the other misguided activist in the character of Carlos, the young Brazilian guerilla who holds Alan West hostage. He holds West hostage in the name of the mistreated Brazilian Indian tribes and his band of guerillas; but like the activists in The Hostage, he knows West's death will accomplish nothing. In fact, Carlos admits that West's capture was the guerilla's second choice, but security around the desired diplomat was too tight. West, who actually sides with the Indian's cause, will not bring the lives of the Indians back. Even Carlos knows this; nevertheless, at the end of the play, Carlos guns West down. Carlos is a misguided activist because he is not even clear on why his group behaves as it does; he just follows his orders and kills an innocent man.

Influence of Three Characters in Moliere's Misanthrope

The second section of this chapter is devoted to the influence that Moliere has had on Christopher Hampton. The similarities of

²⁰ Hampton, The Philanthropist, p. 27.

characters in Moliere's Misanthrope (1666) will be discussed as it relates to The Philanthropist. The very title of Hampton's play is analogous to that of Moliere; Hampton's characters parallel Moliere's.

Indeed when we compare the two plays, we realize that Hampton has, in fact, written an extraordinarily tight paraphrase . . . in which he maintains its broad structure and thematic conclusions and inverts everything else.²¹

The characters in Moliere's Misanthrope parallel three of Hampton's characters; Moliere's characters are Oronte, Alceste, and Celimene. In Hampton's play the corresponding characters are John, Philip, and Celia. All of the characters reside in a drawing room society of sorts. Oronte, a writer of bad verse in Moliere's play, reads the poetry to friends Philinte and Alceste and asks for their opinion. When Alceste pronounces it trash, the furious Oronte goes to the Academie Française to plead for its literary merit. The Academie humors Oronte, and while the resulting court case proclaims Oronte's poetry as outstanding, it debunks Alceste's criticism. The following is an example of Oronte's "fine" work. The problem is that Alceste is clearly in the right, but he is too blatantly honest about how poor the poetry is.

Oronte. (reads) "Darling, if this hot trek
to some phantasmal Mecca
of love's consummation
is some sort of Herculean labour
then I've fallen by the wayside."²²

²¹Douglas Colby, "An Act of Suicide: The Philanthropist," As The Curtain Rises (London: Associated Univ., 1978), p. 63.

²²Moliere, The Misanthrope, trans. Tony Harrison (London: Rex Collings, 1973), pp. 11-12.

John, in Hampton's play, is the parallel character of Oronte. John is a fledgling writer who reads his play to two friends, Don and Philip, both university professors, for their suggestions. Don provides constructive criticism, but Philip, attempting to be optimistic, contributes nothing. John becomes frustrated with Philip's noncommittal stance; that is, John becomes angry at Philip not for what he does say, but for what he does not say. In addition, to demonstrate how well his suicide scene works in the play, John inadvertantly shoots himself, thus taking the academic pronouncement on his play to a "higher court" than the Academie Française.

Another character that Moliere uses and Hampton draws from is Alceste, who believes in honesty at all costs. He retracts no statements he makes about anything; he is brutally honest which is precisely the reason he is unhappy. Neither his fiancée nor his friends can live up to his rigorous expectations, so Alceste is constantly disappointed with them. Philip, on the other hand, is the opposite of Alceste. Philip will not say anything that would offend anyone else, even if he personally disagrees with what is being said or done. Philip, unlike Alceste, is so intent on being liked that he will not say a bad word against anyone. Therefore, the character type is reversed because Alceste is not afraid of what anyone says, but Philip is afraid of what everyone says.

The major difference between the two characters, Philip and Alceste, is in how they cope with their circumstances. Alceste never

really changes during the course of the play; he decides that he cannot tolerate French drawing room society and resolves to spend his days in exile. Philip, in The Philanthropist, "peels the onion" of his character. Through the majority of the play Philip only wants everyone to like him, but he does this for a reason. At the end of the play Philip unearths his layers of disguise and reveals his basic dislike of people; this speech reveals this.

Philip. For instance, it's easier to like people if
it occurs to you that they're going to die.
It's difficult not to like a man if
you can envisage his flesh falling
from his bones.²³

Philip, unlike Alceste, keeps his mask of pretense and goes on living in the society of the university; Alceste chooses to spend the rest of his days in exile.

Another character that Hampton draws from is Celimene, Alceste's girlfriend in Moliere's play; Hampton's parallel character is Celia, who is engaged to Philip. Both Celimene and Celia are pretenses in their society. Celimene plays the games of drawing room intrigue until she is revealed; she writes letters professing her love to her many suitors and is found out. Surprisingly enough, Alceste says he will forgive her if she will marry him, divorce drawing room society, and live with him in exile. Celimene is horrified and will not consent.

Celimene. I'm only twenty! I'd be terrified!
Just you and me, and all that countryside!

²³Hampton, The Philanthropist, p. 66.

I'm not sufficiently high-minded to
agree to such a fate. It's simply just not me!²⁴

In The Philanthropist, Celia is deceptive with Philip, but her deception is two-fold; Celia pretends that she is the object of sexual passes by virtually everyone in the English department at the university, but at the end of the play she confesses to Philip that these are lies invented to appear sexually active and attractive. Also Celia does not love Philip because he is far too cerebral for her. Finding that Philip has spent the night with another woman, she uses the excuse of unfaithfulness to break off the engagement. Later she explains that the infidelity is only an excuse; she knows she must break off the relationship because she does not love him. In Celimene's footsteps, Celia elects to remain in the realm of university society she is accustomed to.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the First Wave British playwrights use at least five basic character types in their plays. The angry young man, the mother/incest character, the frustrated homosexual, the passive acceptors, and the misguided activists are present. Just as the character types are included in First Wave plays, so they are included in Second Wave plays. Christopher Hampton has been influenced by these character types; and he demonstrates this influence by using them in his own plays.

²⁴Moliere, The Misanthrope, p. 61.

In Moliere's Misanthrope, Christopher Hampton takes three characters, Oronte, Alceste, and Celimene, switches them around, updates them, and uses them to suit his purpose in The Philanthropist. The characters in Moliere's play are the most easily recognizable of any other character influence. Hampton has used the characters to his best advantage; his play has the same drawing room flavor as does Moliere's Misanthrope.

CHAPTER III

THE INFLUENCE OF THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT

Thematic development of the First Wave playwrights of the British drama influenced Christopher Hampton. Again, the plays are diverse, the subject matter in them differing greatly, but the major themes explored are the same. The first section of this chapter covers the following themes in the First Wave plays: the danger of apathy, the importance of honesty, the responsibility for protection, and the influence of politics. These themes, examined in selected plays of John Osborne, Shelagh Delaney, Arnold Wesker, John Arden, and Brendan Behan, will be related to similar themes in Christopher Hampton's plays.

The second section of this paper deals with the influence of Hampton's thematic development by Moliere's Misanthrope and Luigi Pirandello's It is So! (If You Think So). Three basic themes appear in these historical sources: the misfit in society, the importance of appearances, and the importance of fidelity. The play of Christopher Hampton's that is influenced by these historical plays is The Philanthropist; it will be examined in detail with regard to the influences of theme.

The Danger of Apathy

The theme of apathy occurs in virtually every First Wave play examined in this thesis. The danger of apathy pointed out in these

plays is that characters will become unthinking and unfeeling; therefore, they will sink into their own little worlds, with little regard for anyone else. Apathy not only results in alienation, but it also results in bitterness and even death. Since apathetic tendencies cause neutrality of feeling, apathetic characters tend towards a zombie-like existence, which is the real danger of apathy, not merely for the apathetic character, but for all with whom the apathetic character comes in contact.

In all three of John Osborne's plays, Look Back in Anger, The Entertainer, and Epitaph for George Dillon, the theme of the danger of apathy prevails. In Look Back in Anger, Jimmy Porter is fighting a battle against the apathetic characters who surround him; he is especially concerned about his wife Alison. He knows she has been sheltered all her life, and he tried desperately to unearth her personality. Porter realizes that if Alison does not become aroused and care about something she will become lost not only to herself but also lost to him. Jimmy's technique is harsh, employing brutal comments and accusations to disturb Alison. Porter strikes a nerve inside Alison when she reacts vocally, for usually Alison does not respond to Jimmy's attacks. She tunes him out until a comment hits too close to home. Here Jimmy wages such an attack without even knowing what he says; Alison is pregnant and she has not told him.

Jimmy. Oh, my dear wife, you've got so much to
learn. I only hope you learn it one
day. If only something--something
would happen to you, and wake you out

of your beauty sleep! (Coming in close to her.) If you could have a child and it would die.¹

The theme of apathy pervades the play; any character who merely floats along with the climate becomes neuter, and when the character becomes apathetic about life he is cut off from it. Jimmy sums it up well here: apathy deadens.

Jimmy. (in a low, resigned voice) They all want to escape from the pain of being alive. And, most of all, from love.²

In The Entertainer, the theme of apathy is represented in the character of Archie Rice, who does not care about anyone or anything. His uncaring quality does not just affect himself; his whole family is affected, though none of them really listens at all to what any of the other family members are saying. This play is characterized by people who "talk at" each other. When Archie's daughter Jean returns home after breaking with her fiancé, she receives little solace and realizes what is going on in her father's household. The family is falling apart because no one cares. Although Jean's stepbrother Mick is killed in the war, Archie does not feel remorse, nor does he bother to comfort his family. His song, performed at the bar where he works, sums up his feelings.

Archie. Why should I care?
Why should I let it touch me!

¹Osborne, Look Back, p. 37.

²Ibid., p. 93.

Why shouldn't I sit down and try
 To let it pass over me?
 Why should they stare,
 Why should I let it get me?
 What's the use of despair
 If they call you a square.
 You're a long time dead--
 Like my pal Fred
 So why, oh why should I bother to care?³

In this play the danger of apathy goes even further than alienation and loss of personal identity, for the break up of the family unit is the end result. Divorce, alienation, and death in the Rice family are the products of Archie's apathy.

Another example of the theme of apathy is in Osborne and Creighton's Epitaph for George Dillon; the result of not caring, as in The Entertainer, results in undermining the family unit. The Elliot family is mostly a receptical for burn-out cases, as daughter Josie is so self-centered and lazy that she will not so much as help her mother with the housework. At the opening of the play she is staying home from work, supposedly because she is ill; actually Josie stays home because she is bored with herself and her job. The same is true of the other members of the family; for instance, Norah, Josie's sister, is apathetic about life, because she has been jilted in love affairs twice. Mr. Elliot, content to use the television for his escape, cares nothing about his wife or the goings on of his family. Mrs. Elliot and her sister Ruth are the only characters who seem to have escaped some effects of the family's apathy; they at least make a few efforts at

³Osborne, The Entertainer, pp. 21-22.

coming alive as human beings. For instance, Mrs. Elliot brings George Dillon into the house, not only to substitute for the loss of her son, but to breathe new life into her family. Unfortunately, George turns out to be as big a failure as the other Elliot family members. Ruth makes the greatest effort of all; she realizes, by staying with the Elliot family, she is going nowhere fast and leaves the household.

Ruth. Goodbye, George. Please don't try to hurt yourself any more by trying to hit back at me. I know how you feel. You're overcome with failure. Eternal bloody failure.⁴

Ruth knows that the only way to escape the deadness of apathy, which affects all those around it, much like a cancerous disease, is to escape the source and make a fresh start.

In Delaney's Taste of Honey, apathy leads to personal unhappiness, and is passed on to the next generation. Jo's mother Helen does not care for her daughter or for her daughter's well-being and to satisfy her own whims prostitutes herself, even to the point that she kicks Jo out of the only bed in their home. Eventually, Helen remarries and leaves daughter Jo alone; in retaliation, Jo turns to a young man to fulfill needs for love and security. These needs are met only briefly, because the young man, who is a sailor, leaves her behind pregnant. Jo's pregnancy is a product of Helen's apathy toward her daughter. By virtue of her mother not caring about her, she adopts the same feelings toward her child as her mother; Jo does not eat

⁴John Osborne and Anthony Creighton, Epitaph, p. 84.

correctly or keep her home clean: she becomes hard and embittered. Here apathy causes dual problems; Jo is left without the guidance of a mother and forced to grow up too fast. Also, a result of her growing too fast, Jo becomes as hard-hearted as her mother. A Taste of Honey shows that the danger of apathy lies in its cyclical quality, for it is passed from one generation to the next.

Chicken Soup with Barley and I'm Talking About Jerusalem, both by Arnold Wesker, contain the theme of the dangers of apathy. Chicken Soup with Barley indicates several results of not caring, the father Harry being the most apathetic individual in this play. His apathy brings about several results, for just as in A Taste of Honey, Harry's uncaring attitude, concerning himself and his family, is passed on. Harry's son, Ronnie, eventually becomes a carbon copy of him, as neither of them really cares about anyone but himself. Harry's apathy destroys any hope of a happy home life; his children want to leave home as soon as they can, and Harry's wife Sarah is dissatisfied with their marriage. Another result of apathy concerns Harry himself; he becomes a stagnant human being who is not interested in the world around him. Harry, who cannot keep a job, merely roams from one form of employment to another. When Harry has a stroke, he simply gives up, bored with his own mundane existence. This is clear in Sarah's comments about him.

Sarah. You think he likes it? It's ach a nebish Harry now. It's not easy for him. But he won't do anything to help himself. I don't know, other men get ill but they fight. Harry's never fought. Funny thing.⁵

⁵Wesker, Chicken Soup, p. 60.

Harry's apathy extends to his family as well as himself; the greatest danger of apathy in this case is that it results in Harry's dehumanization.

I'm Talking About Jerusalem has virtually the same theme, but the difference is that Harry is no longer in the picture, and the rest of the family has grown older. Ronnie's apathy is now very obvious and he exhibits many of his father's traits; that is, he cannot hold down a job any more than Harry could. Just like Harry, Ronnie depends on his mother Sarah for his financial support. Ronnie does not do anything; he talks a great deal, but nothing comes of it; he is defeated by the world, he does nothing. Ronnie's sister and her husband, proponents of socialism, leave their family home to live "the simple life" on a farm. When the couple fails to make a living at farming, Ronnie totally rejects the world, seeing no chance for anyone to succeed. Near the end of the play, Ronnie realizes he is an apathetic burn-out case, just like his father.

Ronnie. There isn't anything I've seen through to the end--maybe that's why you two were so important to me. Isn't that curious? I say all the right things, but somewhere, some bloody where I fail as a human being. Like my father--just like poor old Harry. O Christ! Look at me.⁶

Here apathy leads to personal defeat; a human life is devoid of purpose and meaning. Ronnie, alive only physically, bears an empty heart and soul.

⁶Wesker, I'm Talking About Jerusalem, in The Wesker Trilogy (Baltimore, Maryland: Penquin, 1964), p. 216.

Serjeant Musgrave's Dance, by John Arden, is a play where an entire group of followers is apathetic; the soldiers and followers of Musgrave follow his dictums as blindly as sheep. In fact, they do not even know what Musgrave's plans for them are; the soldiers do not know why they are fighting. Though one of the soldiers is killed, Musgrave's followers go right on blindly accepting orders. The result of apathy is somewhat prevented because the men do wake up before it is too late; the community, ready to join Musgrave's army, realizes that he intends to carry out his own interpretation of the "eye for an eye" philosophy. Immediately refusing Musgrave's idea, the community jails Musgrave and sentences him to death. The dangers of apathy are hinted at here; the deaths of many innocent people are caused by blind acceptance to command.

Brendan Behan's Hostages uses treatment similar to Arden's in Serjeant Musgrave's Dance; both concern military situations. A young I.R.A. soldier is held in Belfast prison because of his subversive activities and is condemned to death by his British captors. In retaliation a young British soldier is held by the Irish. The Irish say that if their I.R.A. soldier is killed, then the British soldier will die also. The young British lad is held hostage in a boarding house of sorts where all the characters in the boarding house lead questionable lives--they are prostitutes, convicts, pimps, and the like. Yet even the boarders know that the British soldier is innocent of any crime and that his death solves nothing; however, they do nothing to help him and remain concerned with their own affairs. Because of their

apathy, the British soldier dies needlessly, the senseless death of an innocent man.

The theme of apathy also carries over into two of Christopher Hampton's plays, The Philanthropist and Treats. The Philanthropist has Philip for its most apathetic character. He is devoid of personality, saying only nice things to people so that they will not think badly of him. His front is his pleasant personality; actually Philip does not care what people say or think. Much happier just concentrating on his own well-being, Philip will not pronounce judgements. His reluctance to make a positive statement is partly responsible for the young playwright's (John's) suicide.

In Treats the theme of apathy is developed by the character Ann. Intent on having a lover, she will have him only on her own terms. That is, Ann only keeps her men around for her amusement. When her first boyfriend Dave leaves on business, Ann invites another man, Patrick, to move in with her. Sparks fly upon Dave's return, and the men are pitted against each other. Throughout the development of the play and the controversy between the two lovers, Ann takes a ringside seat. She really does not care what the outcome of the situation is because neither of the men matter; they are mere playthings for her. The only time she seems concerned about anything is when she is forced to make a commitment; her adherence to apathy cries out against decision. The danger in Ann's apathy lies in this: she destroys the fulfillment of the lives around her.

The Importance of Honesty

Another theme developed in the First Wave plays is that of honesty. Several playwrights maintain that the importance of honesty directly affects what happens to the characters. The plays concern honesty with self; a character must come to terms with himself and his situation. This theme is evident in at least three plays: A Taste of Honey, Roots, and The Quare Fellow. In each of these plays one of the main characters makes a personal discovery by being honest with himself.

Delaney's Taste of Honey uses honesty as its theme as evidenced by the character of Jo; Jo discovers that she is the product of a sexually promiscuous mother and a mentally retarded father. She also realizes that in fighting her mother she has become a great deal like her--Jo has become hardened to life. She is honest with her mother about the father of her baby, just as Helen was honest about Jo's father. By being honest with her mother, she is honest with herself. She has erased Helen's guilt by her own guilt; they have been absolved by confession to each other. Once the truths are revealed, Helen and her mother bond together; Helen returns to help Jo take care of her baby, thus providing a better start for the next generation.

Wesker's Roots also uses the importance of honesty as one of its themes, developed in the character of Beatie Bryant. Because Beatie has moved away from the Bryant family home, she believes that she "knows it all," and regards her family as a bunch of backward farm

people who cannot look beyond their own noses. Beatie attacks their lack of interest in the outside world while proclaiming her superiority.

Beatie. Listen Mother, let me see if I can explain something to you. Ronnie always says that's the point of knowing people. "It's no good having friends who scratch each other's back," he says. The excitement in knowing people is to hand on what you know and to learn what you don't know.⁷

In truth, Beatie merely quotes what her boyfriend Ronnie says; the quotes mean nothing to her. Only at the end of the play does Beatie realize the importance of honesty. When Ronnie calls off their engagement, Beatie begins to be honest with herself. She discovers that if she wants to change herself, she must do so on her own. Beatie realizes that she only adopted Ronnie's philosophies to please him; they never made sense to her. Before she was lying to herself; now she can improve herself.

The Quare Fellow also deals with the importance of honesty, for Warder Regan is trapped in the prison system. It is not only his job to take care of inmates who are ill but also to preside at the execution of prisoners. Regan, who is against capital punishment, detests this job. He is also against treating the inmates in the prison like animals; he wants to treat them like men. Though Regan's past outbursts are not mentioned in the play, some of the criminals remark that Regan has tried to be fair to them. During the action of this play Regan is quite vocal in his protestations against capital punishment; he thinks it is as barbarous as the crimes the inmates have committed.

⁷Wesker, Roots, p. 235.

Warder Regan. You forget the times the fellow gets caught and has to be kicked off the edge of the trap hole. You never heard of the warders down below swinging on his legs the better to break his neck, or jumping on his back when the drop was too short.⁸

Regan's honesty helps him survive his job in the prison, as he must either voice his opinions on prison abuse or he must leave his job. Regan elects to stay and fight the system.

Honesty as a theme is included in all of Hampton's plays. In fact, the theme of honesty is a distinct trait of all the Second Wave writers; John Elsom supports this idea. "They seemed, to use an unashamedly moral word, 'honest' plays--though perhaps only in their time and to those audiences."⁹

When Did You Last See My Mother? uses the theme of honesty in several ways. Jimmy needs to admit to himself that he is a homosexual; by this admission, many of his problems would go away. For example, Jimmy's mother would not feel that she is a failure and sleep with Ian; therefore, because of her confusion, she would not kill herself. In this sense, the importance of honesty is that a life would be spared, because Jimmy's mother would not feel so hopeless and useless.

Total Eclipse is another play which uses the theme of honesty concerning two French poets. Were poet Paul Verlaine honest with himself, he would realize that his lover Arthur Rimbaud is not the shining

⁸Behan, The Quare Fellow, p. 76.

⁹John Elsom, "Many Roads, Few Maps," Post-War British Theatre (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), p. 197.

example of a good poet. Verlaine puts Rimbaud on a pedestal, even though Rimbaud not only taunts him, but stabs his hands with a knife. Verlaine forgets the many cruelties; in a dream scene of Verlaine's at the end of the play, Rimbaud kisses the hands he stabs. Rimbaud effects other damage to Verlaine, by causing the divorce of Verlaine and his wife. Also Rimbaud eclipses Verlaine as a poet, thus destroying the possibilities for Verlaine's growth as a writer. Once Rimbaud makes Verlaine's life a shambles, he ultimately leaves him for another destructive quest. The importance of honesty here is shown by Rimbaud's effect on Verlaine; Verlaine's feelings and the feelings of his family would be spared if he were only honest with himself.

The Philanthropist is a play where no one character is really honest with any other character; the whole university community setting of the play lends itself to pretense. The main characters in the play pretend to be something that they are not. An example is Don, Philip's friend and colleague who pretends that he is an informed, hardworking professor, but at the end of the play, confesses that he relies on notecards prepared for his class several years ago. Don admits what he is to Philip and points out major differences between Philip and himself.

Don. You see, I always divide people into two groups.
Those who live by what they know to be a
lie, and those who live by what they believe,
falsely, to be the truth.¹⁰

¹⁰Hampton, The Philanthropist, p. 73.

The importance of honesty in this play is the necessity of being honest with oneself.

The theme of honesty runs through Savages, for few characters want to admit what is really happening in this play, and in some instances no one ever does. Those persons in higher ranks never admit what they are really doing to the Brazilian Indians. That is, the Indians are becoming extinct because of capitalistic interests. Entrepreneurs send blankets and food to help the Indians, yet the blankets and food are laden with disease; they have gone so far as to hire gunmen to mow down entire villages. No one except Alan West, the diplomat who has a vague interest in the Indians, wants to admit this fact; this devious action is a classic case of the "pass the buck" syndrome. Another evidence of the lack of honesty is the capture of Alan West. The Brazilian guerillas who capture West do not really want him; West is simply the easiest diplomat to capture. Also, ironically, West is on the side of the Indians; his death does no one any good. Though West's live aid is better than the influence of his death, he is gunned down at the end of the play. The importance of honesty here is two-fold. Blame should be taken for the brutal killings of the Indians; that would be a start for reconciling the problem. By admitting the truth, West's senseless death would be prevented. Placing importance on honesty would prevent the deaths of the Indians, the death of Alan West, and the death or imprisonment of West's captors.

In Hampton's most recent play, Treats, the theme of honesty is developed in a menage-a-trois relationship which builds to a crescendo.

Two men are trying to win the love of a girl named Ann; but she really controls them. Ann does not know what she wants, and because she is not honest with herself, she damages others. Note this example: Her old boyfriend Dave (who she has replaced with Patrick, a new boyfriend) has returned. Dave sizes up the situation in the apartment and leaves; Patrick is present with Ann while she says the following about Dave, thus revealing her true feelings about him.

Ann. He'll never forgive me now. (Pause.)

Not that he would have done anyway.

(Pause.) Jesus.¹¹

If Ann were honest with herself, she would prevent the heartache that both Dave and Patrick go through over her. Also, if Dave and Patrick were honestly looking at Ann's qualities, they would realize that she is the puppeteer of a game in which they are the puppets.

Responsibility for Protection

Another theme that appears in the First Wave plays is that of responsibility for protection. That is, one individual should look out for another member of the family or other close-knit group; when responsibility for protection is not taken, the individual either disappoints himself, the individual(s) he should protect, or both. "Protection" implies certain duties for care, such as proper food, cleanliness, and humane treatment. Epitaph for George Dillon, A Taste

¹¹Christopher Hampton, Treats (London: Faber, 1976), p. 19.

of Honey and The Quare Fellow all concentrate on the results of the absence of protection, while Chicken Soup with Barley capitalizes on the presence of active protection as one of its themes.

Epitaph for George Dillon shows a family protected by neither its father or mother. Percy Elliot, the father, could care less about his family; not wanting to be bothered by them, he just seeks solitude. Mrs. Elliot is just as bad as her husband, but in a different way. She does not want to take care of her daughters; she wants a son that she can take care of. So, she meets George Dillon, invites him to live in their home, and thereby gains her surrogate son. As a result of parental neglect, the two daughters Josie and Norah, for all practical purposes, are nothing but lumps of flesh containing little or no personality; they have given up on themselves. In fact, when George comes into their home, they shower him with attention. The girls feel the responsibility for George's protection because they have not felt protection from their own parents; in this way, they can release their pent-up feelings and mend their emotional wounds.

A Taste of Honey also explores the theme of protection through Jo, who was not protected by her mother, even as a child. Jo's mother Helen had Jo as the result of an unwanted pregnancy and she feels both guilty and repulsed by her daughter; therefore, she does little to take care of Jo. Helen perpetually moves from one cheap apartment to another and does not even keep their home clean. Also, she picks an apartment with only one bed, saying she cannot sleep alone, but Helen

does not hesitate to kick Jo out of bed when she has men over. In fact, Helen remarries one of her men friends and leaves Jo to fend for herself. The result of Helen's lack of responsibility toward her daughter is easy to see; Jo becomes just as bitter toward life as her mother is and has an unwanted pregnancy, just like her mother. By taking responsibility for her daughter, Helen would spare Jo's discovery of life's hardships.

Chicken Soup with Barley uses the theme of protection, but it shows the positive result of taking responsibility. If Sarah Kahn did not take responsibility for her husband Harry, he would die because he gives up on life and never takes responsibility for the protection of his family. It is Sarah that pushes him to continue living; she cares for Harry just like a baby after he has a stroke. Later, in the same way, Sarah cares for her son Ronnie. She sees he is becoming like his father--disillusioned with himself and the world around him. Because Sarah also assumes responsibility for her son, she tries desperately to keep him from becoming a carbon copy of his father.

Sarah. (softly) You don't want to do that, Ronnie. So what if it all means nothing? When you know that you can start again. Please, Ronnie, don't let me finish this life thinking I lived for nothing. We got through, didn't we? We got scars but we got through. You hear me, Ronnie? (She clasps him and moans.) You've got to care, you've got to care or you'll die.¹²

¹²Wesker, Chicken Soup, p. 75.

The Quare Fellow also uses the theme of responsibility for protection through Regan, a warder who feels responsible for the inmates of the prison. In a sense, he regards them as his family, feeling responsible to them, just as Sarah Kahn feels responsible for her family. He knows that conditions in the prison are less than adequate; and treats the inmates with dignity regardless of their crimes. Regan feels that his responsibility toward the men is to treat them as human beings and protect their rights as individuals.

Two of Hampton's plays have responsibility for protection as one of its themes: When Did You Last See My Mother? and Savages. In the first play, the responsibility for protection occurs in two places, resulting in opposing forces. Jimmy's mother, Mrs. Evans, feels a responsibility toward her son. She knows he is frustrated by something, but he will not allow any family member to reach him and becomes hostile when she tries to help him. Mrs. Evans feels that she has failed her son, because she cannot fulfill her responsibility to protect him. Jimmy, on the other hand, feels a responsibility to protect his mother. He is coping with his homosexuality and is having a rough time accepting it. Because he feels guilty at letting his mother down, he lashes out at her; Jimmy feels he must shelter her from the truth. Hence, the two forces clash.

The other example of responsibility for protection is Alan West in Savages. West knows what is happening to the Brazilian Indians, but he cannot find anyone who will take the responsibility for their protection, the murdering continues with no one to assume either

responsibility or protection. West realizes that even the guerillas, as represented by Carlos, are not really trying to protect the Indians. They are only getting vengeance, evident because Carlos does not really understand why he holds West hostage. He merely quotes and follows orders; for example, Carlos, who cannot outrightly tell West what his group believes in, must read its manifesto from a piece of paper.

Carlos. (He reads some of the manifesto quickly through to himself, muttering.) Hmm, Hmm, Yes, I'll miss out the first bit, this is about the heart of it, I think.¹³

The absence of responsibility for protection results in no help for the Indians and no prevention of the murder of Alan West.

The Importance of Politics

Another recurring theme is that of the importance of politics, this theme appearing in Chicken Soup with Barley, Serjeant Musgrave's Dance, Live Like Pigs, and The Hostage. The playwrights say that politics affects the way we live; but perhaps not in the way we would expect. Theories of politics suit the purpose of the participants involved; thus intent is radically changed. In these plays, politics plays a part which is very different from its expected function.

Chicken Soup with Barley deals with the cause of socialism. In the beginning of the play the Kahn's house is alive with activity; people are stopping by to report happenings in the streets. The Kahn

¹³Hampton, Savages, p. 28.

family works to promote the cause, especially mother Sarah, a banner-carrying socialist who not only faithfully attends meetings and rallies, but also bandages the wounded. During the course of the play the cause of socialism runs its course; though the cause, for all practical purposes, is defeated, Sarah still keeps on fighting. She continues long after many ardent comrades fall by the wayside, but the cause of socialism is more than a political doctrine to her. It keeps her sane and keeps her caring, preventing her from becoming unfeeling like the world around her.

Sarah. If the electrician who comes to mend my fuse
blows it instead, so I should stop having electricity?
I should cut off my light? Socialism is my
light, can you understand that? A way of life.
A man can be beautiful. I hate ugly people--
I can't bear meanness and fighting and
jealousy--I've got to have light. I'm a
simple person, Ronnie, and I've got to have
light and love.¹⁴

Because of socialism, Sarah is able to take care of her family; politics is her outlet and her release.

Serjeant Musgrave's Dance also has politics as a theme developed in a play where political ideology and theology are mixed in a strange form. Because Musgrave believes that the government is going awry, he sets out to correct those ills with his own brand of government. Musgrave's government consists of a formula: for each soldier killed, five people must die in his place, whether they are innocent or not.

¹⁴Wesker, Chicken Soup, p. 74.

Until Musgrave's followers realize what he strives for, they hail him as a great military leader. When one of Musgrave's soldiers is mysteriously killed and his followers see how twisted his politics really are, they pronounce him mad, send him to jail, and sentence him to death. The theme of politics in this play shows how quickly misguided political thinking can become accepted as lawful and right.

The Hostage, which also has politics as one of its themes, concerns a young British soldier being held captive by the Irish. The British also have an I.R.A. soldier held prisoner and plan to hang the young Irishman. In retaliation, the Irish threaten the death of the young British soldier. Though the Irish man is only eighteen, he has clearly been involved in I.R.A. activities. On the other hand, the British boy has done nothing except be a product of his native land. Both young men die, needlessly killed because of futile political grudges.

Two of Christopher Hampton's plays contain politics, though his message concerning politics is quite different. Hampton inserts comments about politics in his plays to show how little British people are interested in the government of their own land, supported by Douglas Colby. "A second link between Hampton plays is the appearance of a forceful social or political statement."¹⁵ In both The Philanthropist and Savages this statement is particularly noticeable.

¹⁵Colby, "Introduction," p. 17.

For the most part in The Philanthropist comments about the government are ignored. For example, Don relates a story about the activities at the House of Commons.

Don. She parked her bicycle, dropped the front wheel into one of those slots they have, and puffed up to the gallery, where she sat for a bit beaming amiably and sucking Glacier mints. Then, all of a sudden, she leapt to her feet, produced a sub-machine-gun out of nowhere, and mowed down the front bench.¹⁶

Philip and Don discuss this briefly and then carry on a conversation with Celia about lemons; they do not even broach the subject with her. Politics in the university community, at least this one, is virtually ignored.

Savages is more political than The Philanthropist, because it concerns atrocities that actually happened. Brazilian guerillas capture a member of the British embassy in order to gain attention for their political demands. Though somewhat concerned about the mistreatment of the Brazilian Indians, the guerillas are more intent upon being recognized politically. Alan West, the diplomat they capture, knows that Britain will ignore their demands and that he will die a useless death. He knows that the small band of terrorists are only capable of reeking havoc--nothing else. West is correct because he is killed at the end of the play. This play uses the theme of politics to show how people or nations are undermined for the politics of

¹⁶Hampton, The Philanthropist, p. 17

capitalism. The British government will not come to West's aid; it is guilty of tampering with life in Brazil and knows it.

Misfit in Society

The misfit in society is one who does not mesh with his environment; he is like a man without a country because he does not belong where he is. The misfit must come to terms with himself, seeing just what it is that makes him so uncomfortable; upon identifying his problem, he must then rectify it and decide whether he should escape the society he is in or play along with its games. The misfit in society is contained in both historical sources The Misanthrope and It Is So! (If You Think So).

The misfit in society in The Misanthrope is named Alceste; he becomes a misfit in his society, the French drawing room, because of his standards. Alceste believes in ultimate honesty above everything else and spares no one from his brutal honesty. He explains his philosophy concerning honesty in this quote to his friend Philinte.

Alceste. Adopt behaviour both sincere and true,
act like a decent man, and let words fall
only from the hears, or not at all.¹⁷

Though Alceste's idea is sound in theory, few deign to hear complete honesty without cringing; honesty makes Alceste a tormented misfit in French drawing room society. The only way he can escape the falsity

¹⁷ Moliere, The Misanthrope, p. 2.

of his environment is to leave it; and he does so at the end of the play. Moliere's theme concerning the misfit is that since he cannot be tolerated by society nor can he tolerate society himself, he must remove himself from this world.

Pirandello's It Is So! (If You Think So) also uses the theme of the misfit in society; in this case the misfits are Signora Freola and her son-in-law Ponza. Although Signora Frola says that her daughter Lena is married to Ponza, Ponza claims that Lena is dead and that he has remarried. This disagreement is further complicated by the fact that Signora Frola says that Ponza is mad; while, just as emphatically, Ponza declares that Signora Frola is mad. The Agazzis, a family in the Italian province, become obsessed with finding out the truth, which tangles itself more and more. The Agazzis question the two sides of the argument, but only become more confused. Because they hound both Signora Frola and Ponza, the two find their lives very difficult; Signora Frola and Ponza are misfits in the Italian province. Driven to distraction, Signora Frola elects to leave the town. Ponza's hand is called; that is, he must produce his wife, but the mysterious woman Ponza produces reveals nothing. Although Ponza does not leave, he is forced to reveal the truth for the Agazzi's inspector. Thus, the misfits in society, in this case Signora Frola and Ponza, must justify themselves in the eyes of the Agazzi family or leave the province in which they live.

The same theme is used in The Philanthropist where Philip, a professed lover of man, is also a misfit in his society, which is the

university community. He is a misfit because he will not voice an opinion to anyone; he is too indecisive to be of any use in the parlor games of the university community. Celia, his fiancée, points this out to him.

Celia. You know something, you apologize far too often. You really oughtn't to, it's not very attractive.

Philip. Yes, I know, I'm sorry.¹⁸

The theme concerning the misfit shows that being too agreeable and too unwilling to make a stand results in Philip's being outside the social and intellectual community, just as Alceste is ostracized from his community for his extreme candidness.

The Importance of Appearances

The appearance of a character in his society determines his outward success. No matter what his private life is like, he must take on affectations of accepted and permissible behavior, much like a mask is worn to hide a face. That is, he adapts himself in order to mesh with and be accepted by his peers. When the appearances are proven false, a reaction is caused; society rebels and chaos ensues. Appearances are important because they keep up the balance of individuals accepted in a given environment, thus providing needed stability.

The theme of appearances is evident in The Misanthrope in that all the characters, except Alceste, rely on how they appear rather than

¹⁸Hampton, The Philanthropist, p. 64.

what they really are. For instance, Celimene, who appears to love her suitors individually, merely wants to keep them flocking around her all at once. She is disconcerted at the end of the play, and her place in drawing room society is paralyzed. Also, within the drawing room, characters speak civilly to each other, calling him "friend." Outside earshot of this "friend," backstabbing results; "friends" are kept only for the sake of appearances, just as suitors are kept for the same reason.

It Is So!(If You Think So) employs the importance of appearances as one of its major themes; it concerns the threat of falsity in the capitol of an Italian province. In an effort to expose family relationships, the Agazzi family and their friends go to great lengths to pull the masks away from Signora Frola and Ponza and their mysterious secret. Both Signora Frola and Ponza eventually become so threatened that they must reveal something to the townspeople, and finally the mystery is unraveled.

Signora Ponza. No! I am she whom you believe
me to be. (She looks at them all
through her veil for a moment,
and then leaves. Silence.)¹⁹

The Agazzi family has been distraught because they cannot understand the relationship of Signora Frola and Signor Ponza, and the mysterious woman provides the answer the townspeople so richly deserve. The theme here is that keeping the mask up for the sake of appearances preserves order in society.

¹⁹Luigi Pirandello, It Is So! (If You Think So), in Naked Masks (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1952), p. 138.

In the same way the mask is held up in The Philanthropist, because all the characters in the play pretend to be something they are not. Within the microcosm of the university community, they want to appear better and more exciting than they really are. Philip, who professes his love for humanity, actually dislikes humanity. Philip's fiancée Celia, who says she is approached by virtually all the professors on campus, admits these are lies to make her appear more appealing. Don, who appears to be a vital and interested researcher, actually has all the work he needs written several years previously on notecards. Also, Don suggests a girl named Liz as a possible romantic interest for Philip, but at the end of the play Don goes to bed with her. For the sake of survival in the university community, each of these characters has a mask to keep up. If the masks were totally removed, then the character would be open to criticism and ultimate removal from the group--chaos would ensue. That is, the theme of appearances results in the survival of the character in his society.

The Importance of Fidelity

The theme of fidelity concerns being faithful to a prospective mate. In the engagement period faithfulness is expected; marriage will not follow if both parties do not remain constant. In both The Misanthrope and The Philanthropist fidelity becomes an issue when engagements are broken off because of the lack of it.

In The Misanthrope Celimene is unfaithful to Alceste; she writes love letters to several of her suitors, claiming each of them is her

true love. Eventually Celimene is exposed and Alceste is wounded. Celimene admits she is wrong, though her other suitors are as hypocritical as she has been, and she has truly wronged Alceste.

Celimene. I'm wrong and I admit it. Enough, enough,
no more pretending, no more lies and bluff.
I could despise the anger of the rest,
but you I know I've wronged, my poor Alceste.²⁰

In the face of one who is virtually blameless the truth is revealed, which is the theme concerning fidelity in the play.

The Philanthropist has the same theme, but the plot is modernized. Philip has gone to bed with the lecherous Anaminta, but nothing happens between the two. Nevertheless, Celia finds them out and heatedly accuses Philip of infidelity. She breaks off the engagement, citing Philip's actions as her reasons. Because Philip, taken in by Anaminta, is virtually blameless in the situation, Celia breaks down and confesses the truth. She has been to bed with another man on the same night; Philip's infidelity only provides an excuse for her to leave him. Celia explains that she is not in love with Philip; the break up is caused by her feelings, not Philip's. Once again, the truth of fidelity is revealed in the face of one who is not to blame, and another engagement is broken.

Conclusion

The First Wave playwrights have influenced Christopher Hampton in his thematic development since recurring themes are discussed in

²⁰Moliere, The Misanthrope, p. 60.

both First Wave and Hampton plays. Themes of apathy, honesty, protection, and politics are found not only in their plays, but also those of Hampton's.

Historical sources have also influenced the thematic development in Christopher Hampton's plays. Playwrights Moliere and Pirandello have influenced The Philanthropist by use of the themes of the misfit in society, the importance of appearances, and the importance of fidelity. Because the same themes appear in both the historical and modern plays, their influence is shown; both First Wave and historical plays have influenced thematic development in Christopher Hampton's plays.

CHAPTER IV

THE INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE AND STYLE

There are fewer language and style influences on Christopher Hampton than influences of character and theme; however, they are the most obvious. Three influences of language are discussed in the following chapter. Caustic language, used by characters to vent frustration, is especially obvious in John Osborne's play Look Back in Anger. The use of the song, another influence, carries over into Hampton's work, but it takes on a different form. The play on words, a comic effect employed in The Misanthrope, is compared to Hampton's Philanthropist. Influence of style, evidenced by the play-within-the-play, is discussed in Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author and Hampton's Philanthropist.

Caustic Language

Caustic language is the most obvious in Look Back in Anger. It is spoken by Jimmy Porter, and his language is his reaction to a world which he feels has turned cold with indifference. Jimmy uses his language to arouse his wife Alison, who he feels is falling into apathetic indifference to herself and her world. His language is cynical and snide; comments are made with an undertone of sarcasm. Jimmy talks about Alison's father; his sarcastic language is very noticeable here.

Jimmy. If you've no world of your own,
it's rather pleasant to regret the
passing of someone else's. I must

be getting sentimental. But I must say it's pretty dreary living in the American age--unless you're an American of course. Perhaps all our children will be Americans. That's a thought isn't it?¹

Though Jimmy's language is rapid-fire, it is not full of nonsequiturs, because he proceeds with stealthy logic and cunning in his endeavors to arouse the apathetic through language. Another characteristic of Jimmy's language is its blatant honesty; when he is not being snide, Jimmy blurts out truths in an almost painful way. In fact, Jimmy's honesty of tongue resembles that quality of Alceste's language in The Misanthrope. In the following example Jimmy describes truthfully Alison's brother's lack of perception, providing himself with another means to disturb her.

Jimmy. The only thing he can do--seek sanctuary in his own stupidity. The only way to keep things as much like they always have been as possible, is to make any alternative too much for your poor, tiny brain to grasp. It takes some doing nowadays. It really does.²

Though Jimmy's language is bitter, it is basically honest; it is meant to strike out and activate those apathetic people close to him.

Caustic language which exhibits honesty is also in Delaney's Taste of Honey and Lion in Love. In A Taste of Honey the two speakers of this language are Helen and Jo, her daughter; both are angry at each other as well as themselves. Notice Helen's language, which is half to herself and half to her daughter.

¹Osborne, Look Back, p. 17.

²Ibid., p. 20.

Helen. Well, I've always said we should be used for manure when we're gone. Go and see to that coffee. I'm dying for a hot drink. This bloody cold! It's all over me. I'm sure it's flu-- I suppose I'd better clear some of this stuff away. She wouldn't think.³

Jo's language is as caustic as that of her mother's. Making no explanations for what she does, Jo does not hesitate to fire the truth at her mother. Jo's harsh invective is a way of venting pent-up anger and putting the truth clearly under the spotlight.

The Lion in Love is another play that employs the use of caustic language; it involves a family situation where all the members have little in common and have drifted apart. Frank and Kit, parents of the family, are involved in a drunk and fighting relationship; their sharp comments are mainly directed toward each other in a verbal parry. Frank and Kit berate each other for their treatment of other family members as well as themselves. Other family members use blatantly honest and caustic language; each tries to get some sort of reaction from the other, though none of them really cares. For example, in this comment to her husband Frank, Kit explains why she drinks so much.

Kit. You're bad, you are. Pity for none and especially for me--if you knew how I feel sometimes-- (She starts to play-act.)--you couldn't know though--it's beyond your mental powers. Everybody thinks I enjoy getting drunk but do you know why I drink--?

Frank. No I don't. Why?

Kit. --to forget--half a dozen glasses of whiskey take the edge off life--⁴

³Delaney, A Taste of Honey, p. 37.

⁴Shelagh Delaney, The Lion in Love (London: Methuen, 1961), p.

The rest of the family, just like Kit, uses the same type of language in an effort to lift the blanket of apathy that has settled over them.

One play by Brendan Behan makes use of caustic language; it is The Quare Fellow. The prisoners use language that is snide, cynical, and brutally honest to arouse responses in their fellow inmates. Their language, used for reasons transcending Jimmy Porter's reasons, is a form of survival in the omnipresent jungle of the controlled prison environment. Deprived of knives, guns, and brute force, the prisoners lash out with the only defense allowed them--their language.

When Did You Last See My Mother?, Total Eclipse, and Treats are three plays in which Christopher Hampton makes use of sharp invective. When Did You Last See My Mother? uses language which is very similar to Look Back in Anger. Both young men, Ian and Jimmy, use language as brutally honest as that of Jimmy Porter's. The purpose of their caustic verbiage is to force honesty upon each other; the following conversation between the two reveals this.

Ian. (stung) Jealous? Jealous? Listen, I wouldn't look at that twice if she stripped down in front of me, because I don't like her, see? (Short silence.)

Jimmy. (mockingly) Because you're queer.
(Silence. Now it is Ian who is angry.)

Ian. Don't give me that. You know bloody well if you had a choice between Linda and Dennis, you'd choose Dennis.⁵

The language, which is purposefully harsh, forces the characters to come to grips with the truths about themselves.

⁵Hampton, When Did, p. 26.

Total Eclipse also makes use of harsh language, which is chiefly used by the poet Arthur Rimbaud. He forces Paul Verlaine to conform to his desires; but Verlaine has trouble making a clear-cut choice. Rimbaud endeavors to overshadow Verlaine, even though Verlaine is ten years his senior. His use of language, which is also a means to an end, differs in intention from the other plays. Rimbaud uses his invective to bully others to his side. Because of his crass manner, coupled with his uncanny abilities with the English language, he usually succeeds. Verlaine, who falls in love with Rimbaud, is left the loser at the end of the play; he loses not only his wife, but also Rimbaud.

In his most recent play, Treats, Christopher Hampton uses caustic language in which a menage-a-trois relationship is involved. Away on a business trip, Dave returns to the apartment which he shares with Ann, only to find that he has been replaced by Patrick. Immediately Dave and Patrick are pitted against each other in a contest for Ann; neither man realizes that Ann controls him, and she is not particularly concerned with the outcome of the battle. Harsh language, used mostly by Dave and Patrick, proves that one man triumphs over the other; for example, Dave employs sarcasm to belittle Patrick.

Dave. You think you're underpaid?

Patrick. Sometimes.

Dave. Perhaps you should become a miner.

Patrick. What?

Dave. I'm sorry, it's just something I say to test people's reactions. If they laugh, I know they're shits.⁶

⁶Hampton, Treats, p. 25.

Neither man really wins in this kind of intellectual battle; verbal victory for either man is short-lived through the entire play.

Use of the Song

Another technique of language usage in the First Wave playwrights is the song, employed by a surprising number of writers in their plays. In many plays songs are framing devices, while in other plays they provide a musical repeat of the point the playwright makes at the end of a scene or act. Other First Wave plays use the song to add folk flavor to their plays, thus giving the setting and characters greater authenticity within the world of the play.

Osborne's Entertainer uses the song as a framing device, accentuating the tone in the play by giving it an ironic twist. Between each confrontation with family members, Archie sings a song in his nightclub act. This song is really Archie's attitude on the world; he is not concerned about anything. Use of the song muddies the separation between Archie on stage and Archie off stage; even Archie cannot separate the two worlds.

Both A Taste of Honey and The Lion in Love make use of the song; Delaney's technique is that she uses the song near the beginning of the second act, and then repeats the song at the end of the play. Usually there is the presence of another song close to the beginning of an act for folk flavor. In A Taste of Honey the song symbolizes a return to innocence; for example, Jo, who is pregnant, returns to a state of innocence through her yet unborn child. Her song at the closing of the

play reveals her return to the innocent world, by virtue of the comforting, childlike song.

Jo. As I was going up Pippin Hill,
 Pippin Hill was dirty.
 And there I met a pretty miss,
 And she dropped me a curtsy.
 Little miss, pretty miss,
 Blessings light upon you.
 If I had half a crown a day,
 I'd gladly spend it on you.⁷

Jo's song represents her inward turn toward the caring of her child; she is ready to accept responsibility for the child she is going to have.

In The Lion in Love the use of the song is again a framing device, which points a direction for the characters at the end of the play. Kit and her husband Frank have anything but a happy marriage, but the song sung by Jesse, Kit's father, indirectly talks of a new direction for them. Here the song represents a hopefulness for the future, a musical blessing for a happy marriage. At the end of the play the song is sung again. Frank decides not to leave his wife, but realizes that he loves her and needs to stay with her. Jesse's song implies a hopefulness for the future, that the couple will resolve its differences and continue united in marriage.

Jesse. (still singing)
 Winter's coming in my lass,
 The north wind's blowing cold
 I think we've counted long enough
 It's time our tale was told.⁸

⁷Delaney, A Taste of Honey, p. 108.

⁸Delaney, The Lion in Love, p. 104.

All plays in the Wesker trilogy, Chicken Soup with Barley, Roots, and I'm Talking About Jerusalem, make use of the song. Wesker uses a very interesting technique because his songs represent a life to death cycle, when viewed cumulatively. For example, in the first play, Wesker uses the song "England Arise." The lyrics to this song are uplifting; they represent a rebirth and resurgence of energy not only for the socialist movement, which the song directly refers to, but also for the characters in the play. Through this song and through the socialist movement, the characters may assume new beginnings. In the second play, Roots, the song "I'll Wait for You in the Heavens Blue" hints at a middle-years period, representing a satisfaction and resignation to the ways of life. The last play in the trilogy uses a song which is a funeral song, and its lyrics speak of a young man who is going to death by hanging. Hence, in the songs sung in the three plays, the musical life to death cycle is cleverly interwoven in the play text, giving further unity to the play trilogy.

Both of John Arden's plays, Serjeant Musgrave's Dance and Live Like Pigs, make use of the song. Serjeant Musgrave's Dance makes use of the song at the beginning and the end of most scenes; the first song of the play predicts the outcome of the play. For example, this song is sung by a soldier who is later killed by one of his fellow soldiers.

Sparky. When first I deserted I thought myself free

Till my cruel sweetheart informed upon me--

Aftercliff. (sharply) I don't think you ought to sing that one.

Sparky. Why not? It's true, isn't it? (He sings):

Court martial, court martial, they held upon me
And the sentence they passed was the high gallows tree.⁹

Ironically, Sparky, who attempts desertion, is killed by Aftercliff. Sentenced to death by hanging, Aftercliff's song in prison closes the play. Arden provides the song with a foreshadowing quality; it ironically predicts the outcome of the play.

Live Like Pigs employs the use of the song in exactly the same way as Serjeant Musgrave's Dance. The opening song describes the condition of the house the Sawneys are put in; but it also foreshadows what will eventually happen to the Sawneys. The government allows people like the Sawneys to be free, but it also restricts their movements and forces them, even though the family is satisfied with what they have, to live in a house the government deems fit. When the Sawneys do not conform to the government's wishes, it removes them from the house the family has been put in at the beginning. The closing song reveals that there is nothing left but to put the Sawneys some place where they do not offend anyone; it suggests that the government put the Sawneys in a hole and leave them there, never to come out again.

Both Brendan Behan's Quare Fellow and Hostage use the song within the play. The Quare Fellow employs the use of the song as a running comment on prison life. The songs, usually appearing at the beginning and ending of scenes, speak of the loneliness and hardship of prison

⁹Arden, Serjeant Musgrave's Dance, p. 277.

life. The Hostage makes use of the song in the same way; because it makes a running commentary on life in the boarding house. The boarding house in The Hostage, similar to the prison in The Quare Fellow, assumes the function of a prison during the course of the play; the occupants of the boarding house become its guards. Songs in The Hostage appear at approximately the same place in this play as they do in The Quare Fellow--at the beginning and end of scenes. Also evident in both these plays is the presence of a repetitious song, which is the last song in the play; both ending songs, acting as a postlude, make use of the image of the bell. In the first play it is the jingle-jangle of keys, which signify a freedom from the confines of the prison. In the second play it is the bells of hell; the "ting-a-ling-a-ling" sound again signifies freedom, this time from the earthly constraint of the boarding house. Obviously, both songs end the play on an ironic note.

Christopher Hampton makes use of the song in When Did You Last See My Mother?, The Philanthropist, and Savages. In his first play, When Did You Last See My Mother?, Hampton actually uses singing, but here as well as in the other plays, Hampton substitutes the song for a story used as a confession. Hampton gives the song a foreshadowing quality; Ian is singing part of a song which predicts the action in the play.

Ian. They is a house in Noo Orleans
 They call the Risin' Sun,
 An it's been the ruin of many a po' boy,
 An' God, Ah know, Ah'm one.¹⁰

¹⁰ Hampton, When Did, p. 6.

Later, another song performs the same function; it foretells the action in another section of the play. Beginning with this play, Hampton also makes use of the story. The story appears near the end of the play and concerns a woman showing a film that none of her students are interested in. Ian tells the story to Jimmy after finding out that Jimmy's mother is dead. At the end of his story, which Ian apparently has told before, he confesses that he changes the end of the story. This story has no real meaning; that is, the story signifies Ian's futility at this point. He does not make any sense because the situation is out of control, and by telling a story and changing its ending, Ian creates a situation in which he does have complete control. This enables him, acting as though he knows nothing, to regroup and continue the conversation with Jimmy.

The Philanthropist does not include any songs, but relies once again on its evolved form, the story. Philip tells a story to Celia as a way of confession and also as a way of getting himself back into perspective. The first story, which makes no sense, concerns a man trying to drive through a roundabout. The second story, one that he has never told anyone before, becomes Philip's confession. He admits that he hit a beggar accidentally when he did not have any change for him; Philip says that he was trying to escape the beggar when he hit him. Again, the story is really pointless; but it serves as Philip's confession. He discovers that he has spent his life in fear of people.

Savages makes use of the story in the most dramatic manner of the three plays; Hampton uses Indian myths to parallel the present-time

action of the play. The myths, like the songs in the First Wave plays, provide a running commentary on the outside world of the play. When there is danger in the world of the Indian myth, the next scene in the play reveals danger in the present Indian world or the world of the captive Alan West. In fact, the Indian myths run a life to death cycle during the course of the play.

The Play on Words

Language, for comic effect, uses a play on words. That is, a word, which may not be comic by itself, becomes comic when applied in the context of another situation. This playing around with language is an effective technique and is employed by virtually all successful writers of comedy.

Moliere capitalizes on this technique throughout his dialogue and produces a comic effect. This example of the play on words is an instance of his particular use of language in The Misanthrope.

Alceste. You hoist your glass and hail, not hail, halloo
 some person from a distance, and then zoom
 into warm embraces from across the room,
 drench the man with kisses, smile and swear
 your lasting friendship, shout mon cher, mon cher
 so many times you sounded quite inspired,
 then when you sidled back and I inquired:
 Who's that, the long-lost friend you reached to hug?
 All you do's look sheepish, and then shrug.¹¹

In the above passage, as well as many in the play, the language is humorous because of the play on words.

¹¹Moliere, The Misanthrope, p. 1.

Hampton uses the play on words technique to establish the humor in his play. The wit in *The Philanthropist* is also appropriately placed on the words themselves because Philip is a philologist; his field of interest concerns itself with the study of individual words. Even though suicide is unpleasant to say the least, and even though they witnessed a death caused by a gun, Philip and Don can still laugh at the subtle witticisms their own words take on as a result of the suicide. For instance, Philip and Don find themselves laughing over their word choices concerning John's suicide.

Don. I know you did, but it was no good. The ideas
were there, but the technique, it
was far too cerebral.

Philip. Under the circumstances, I think that's
a uniquely unfortunate adjective.¹²

Both playwrights make use of the technique of the play on words; it creates a fast-paced humor.

The Play-Within-the-Play

The influence of style is evident by the technique used in the plays, in this case, that of the play-within-the play. "Modern playwrights use the play-within-the-play . . . to show that life is like theatre and vice versa."¹³ It muddies the separation between appearance and reality; the audience is unable to discern what action is really going on in the world of the play.

¹²Hampton, The Philanthropist, p. 15.

¹³M. S. Barranger, Theatre: A Way of Seeing (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1980), p. 149.

Though the play-within-the-play was used even during Shakespearian drama such as Hamlet, Luigi Pirandello gave it its real impetus in the late 1800's and early 1900's. The play in which he most successfully used this style is Six Characters in Search of an Author (1922). The play concerns six characters, created in the head of an author, who come to a rehearsal and demand to be put on the stage. The stage manager of the rehearsal is at first annoyed and then finally listens as their strange story unfolds. The drama of the life of the characters becomes as real as the story they are trying to create, their rehearsal of the play, the actual rehearsal of the play, and the life of the actors rehearsing the play.

The Philanthropist is influenced by Pirandello's style because it uses the play-within-the-play technique. Pirandello is even mentioned in the play; the character Don refers to him.

Don. I can't say I like that Pirandello-style beginning.
It's been done so often you know.¹⁴

The beginning and ending of Hampton's play is obviously influenced by his style. At the opening scene of the play a young man (John) says that he is going to kill himself; later dialogue reveals that John is actually a young writer reading his work to two professors who are supposed to give him a critique of his work. Then, at the end of the scene, the young writer demonstrates the effect he desires for his suicide scene and actually blows his own brains out. The play-within-the-play technique has several layers to it here. The play, The

¹⁴Hampton, The Philanthropist, p. 11.

Philanthropist, is being presented, a young playwright reads scenes to two professors for comment, and the scene that is read mirrors the action on stage. Also at the conclusion of the play, Hampton again employs the play-within-the-play style of writing. Philip calls Don to come to see him, saying that he is about to do something terrible. He has taken a revolver out of his desk drawer. Philip mentions to Don that he has made up an anagram for "I hate thee sterile anagram"; it is "imagine the theatre as real." He picks up the pistol, turning it towards him. Pulling the trigger, Philip lights a cigarette from a small flame coming from the hammer of the gun and walks offstage; the play concludes.

Conclusion

The First Wave playwrights have influenced Hampton in essentially three ways. Both have made use of the caustic language of one who is striking out at the world. First Wave playwrights and Hampton make use of the song; the earlier playwrights use the song as a framing device for the action of the play or as an emotional thermometer for the characters. In Hampton's plays he takes this a step further by turning the song into a story, but a story with essentially no meaning. The story functions in his plays not only to reveal emotional level, but to provide a cleansing effect through a confession; the story provides the vehicle for an emotional catharsis for the character in the play. Witty language represented by a play on words is Moliere's

influence on Hampton's language. The humorous effect of the word joke, used often in both plays, strengthens them as comedies.

Christopher Hampton is also influenced by Pirandello because his style of writing employs the play-within-the-play. His opening and closing scenes use the same style employed in Six Characters in Search of an Author. The audience cannot discern the difference between what is really happening on stage and what appears to be happening on stage; hence the fine line between appearance and reality blurs.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This thesis explores the answer to the question: How did First Wave and historically important playwrights influence Christopher Hampton? The influences of five First Wave writers, John Osborne, Shelagh Delaney, Arnold Wesker, John Alden, and Brendan Behan, are discussed as well as influences of Moliere and Pirandello. They are examined with regard to three major categories: the influence of character treatment, the influence of thematic development, and the influence of language and style.

The influence of character treatment, examined in the second chapter, involves five character types common to the First Wave playwrights: the angry young man, the mother/incest character, the misplaced homosexual, the passive acceptors, and the misguided activist. These characters appear often in First Wave plays; all these character types appear in at least one of Christopher Hampton's plays. After the character types are examined, the three main characters, Oronte, Alceste, and Celimene, in The Misanthrope are compared to three characters, Don, Philip, and Celia, in The Philanthropist. Though the characters are virtually the same and the time periods obviously different, the same character types appear in both the preceding plays and Hampton's plays. He has been influenced by the First Wave writers and produces a similar angry young man, mother/incest, misplaced homosexual, passive acceptor, and misguided activist character in the story line of his plays. Moliere's Misanthrope essentially provides Hampton with

the set of main characters in The Philanthropist. Therefore, both groups of playwrights, First Wave and historical, effect influences on characterization in Hampton's plays.

The third chapter examines the influence of thematic development. First Wave themes also found in Christopher Hampton's plays are the danger of apathy, the importance of honesty, the responsibility for protection, and the importance of politics. Moliere's Misanthrope and Pirandello's It Is So! (If You Think So) are compared with Hampton's themes of the misfit in society, the importance of appearances, and the importance of fidelity. First Wave themes bear great similarities to Hampton's, as do those of Moliere and Pirandello. Since these themes are so similar, Hampton has drawn from this background to develop themes in his own plays.

The influence of language and style, the last chapter covered, examines use of caustic language and use of the song in First Wave plays. These elements are then compared to caustic language and the use of the song in Christopher Hampton's plays. Finally, the play on words or witty language is compared in The Misanthrope and The Philanthropist. The influence of style, discussed with regard to Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author, relates to The Philanthropist by use of the play-within-the-play. This influence is further verified by the actual mention of Pirandello in Hampton's play. Similarities of caustic language, use of the song, and the play on words all are instances of Hampton's influence by the First Wave writers, as well as

Moliere. Because this writing style in The Philanthropist incorporates usage of the play-within-the-play, Hampton is influenced by Pirandello's style.

In conclusion, Christopher Hampton is influenced by the character treatment, thematic development, and language and style of both First Wave and historically important playwrights that are discussed in this thesis. Because the same traits appear in Hampton's plays as well as his predecessors, it follows that he has written his plays under the guiding influence of these writers; he is a product not only of the Second Wave, the group of playwrights to whose time frame he rightly belongs, but also of the First Wave and historically important playwrights.

Because Christopher Hampton is influenced by the First Wave playwrights, this thesis question, How did First Wave and historically important playwrights influence Christopher Hampton, points the direction for further study. The traits of the First Wave playwrights should be explored, and their influences on the Second Wave playwrights should be explored. This thesis begins to answer this question by examination of one particular Second Wave playwright, but other playwrights, such as Joe Orton, Tom Stoppard, David Storey, and David Hare, have undoubtedly been influenced by the First Wave also. Future study along this course is important; progression and new directions of the modern British theatre can be better evaluated and understood.

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VITA

Pamela N. Booth, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John P. Booth, was born in Bristol, Tennessee, on November 24, 1958. She attended schools in Sullivan County and was graduated from Bristol Tennessee High School in June 1976. The following September she entered The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and in June of 1980 she received a Bachelor of Science degree in English Education. In the fall of 1980 she accepted a position teaching English at Bristol Tennessee High School, where she remained until June 1981.

In the fall of 1981, she entered the Graduate School of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She accepted an assistantship in the box office of the Clarence Brown Theatre and worked there until July 1982; for the 1982 fall quarter, she was awarded a teaching assistantship. She completed a Master of Arts degree with a major in Speech and Theatre in December 1982.