

## **REALISM**

### Notes

In the theatre, Realism is a technical development instead of that of reality. The Realist tended to create an illusion of reality on stage by using realistic settings, costumes, colloquial language and realistic dialogue.

**REALISM** recognized during the 1850s, aimed at objective, scientific explanation of human behavior.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF REALIST DRAMA**

The décor, the costumes, language, subject matter (social problems –poverty, social ills), relationships etc., have to be true reflections of contemporary life. Thus, realist playwrights such as Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Shaw represent their own contemporary society.

Realism meant true to life in the contemporary sense. Shaw narrates events that are true to life, but his characters (Vivie, Crofts) are exaggerated characters that can only exist on the stage. This Shavian characteristic distinguishes him from the other realists and Irish Realists like Synge and O'Casey.

Environment/Hereditary: Characters was largely determined by ENVIRONMENT and influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution (HEREDITARY).

The major playwrights who composed Realist plays in one period of their literary life are Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881), *An Enemy of the People* (1882); Strindberg's *The Father* (1887), *Miss Julia* (1888); Chekhov's *Uncle Vania* (1900), *The Three Sisters* (1888), *The Cherry Orchard* (1902).

Unlike Ibsen, Strindberg or Chekhov, SHAW uses theatre as an instrument for his didactic purposes. He believes that art should both entertain and teach at the same time.

## **BERNARD SHAW**

- Started realistic theatre in England.
- Shaw uses theatre as an instrument for his didactic purposes. He believes that art should both entertain and teach.
- In the reign of Queen Victoria, England reached the peak of imperialism and capitalism. Capitalism forced rural people, formerly peasants, to move to the big cities as workers. However, they didn't have proper working conditions-sanitary conditions, were not protected by law, and earn low wages. So, Shaw wanted to show Victorian affectations, social hypocrisy, hidden immorality, the condition of the workers

In *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, Shaw explored the area of prostitution, problem of social injustice, exploitation of capitalism.