

## *THE UNPREDICTABLE*

*(02,08,16,17,25,23,30,68)*

*How this drama is different from well made play?*



### *How this drama is different from well made play?*

The "Encyclopedia Britannica" defines the well made play as a drama adhering to certain technical principles that dominated the stage in Europe and the United States for most of the nineteenth century. The technical formulas called for a very complicated and highly artificial plot based on a secret known to audience but withheld with certain characters, a climatic scene in which all the difficulties are solved, and a happy incul-de-sac. Hermon Ould defines "a well made play" as, "the play which conforms to certain reasonable, well tied rules and does not seek to break away from accepted practice". A likely believable dramatic situation is indispensable to such plays. No amount of inventiveness can save a play if it is implausible as the audience fails to believe in a situation which is innately impossible or absurd. Under such conditions it became imperative to have a script, proper stage setting, actors, producers, and lights. A series of events in a logical connectivity were scrutinized before being produced before the audience. Non realistic dialogues with lofty expressions and elevated language became an essential prerequisite to the well made play

Pirandello, in the play, takes a modernist approach, which differs significantly from the realist one common in classical drama. Moreover, the characters in the play are portrayed differently from the conventional ones. Their dialogue, language, emotions and self deceit are notably different from those of other plays. Pirandello's use of theater as the setting is not only innovative, but also helps in structuring the plot. Three things make this play different from the well made play, "the use of language, time, and context. Unlike in traditional classics, time and language in well played play have no meaning and represent the absurd.

Moreover, the well played play text does not involve conventional languages, for instance, no clear meaning is attached to dialogue nor is it easy to determine whether "a character is honest or dishonest". Additionally, the dialogues in well made play were rather short compared to classical ones. Pirandello favoured the illusionism movement of the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that disapproved the use of realism in well made play. The movement introduced the dramatic tools of soliloquy and audience actor interaction because they believed that these

elements were more expressive and depicted the inner lives of the human beings, more accurately than classical drama.

*Six characters in search of an author* is an impromptu play by 'six characters' that interrupt a rehearsal to ask the director to cast their story. The writer Luigi Pirandello, uses the play as a medium through which the characters express their feelings and opinions. The play uses theater as a stage setting for showing the interpersonal relations among its different players, including the actors, the playwright, and the characters. It depicts the characters as socially disaffected people faced with uncertainty and lack of self awareness.

Pirandello achieves this by mixing reality and illusion. Pirandello uses the play to tell his views about the separation of person from the self and society. The play does not involve fiction rather it recounts the real lives of six characters as told by them on stage. Its unconventional form, language and evident plausibility motivate the audience, the actors and the characters to participate in a psychotic experience. The play brings to the fore the distinctions between reality and illusion, and art and life among

The six Characters looking for an author wear masks during the play. They also act out fixed character types. Pirandello draws on the symbolism of an old Italian theatrical form called *Commedia dell'arte*. The art form thrived in Europe between the 16th and 18th centuries.

*Commedia dell'arte* relied on groups of actors portraying archetypes, or stock characters, in improvised comic situations. Actors wore masks that identified their archetype. Theatrical companies drew their plots from the more serious works of Italy's *commedia erudita*, or "literary drama," turning the plots into broad physical comedies.

Part of the *Commedia dell'arte*'s appeal was audience familiarity with its stock characters. Characters conformed to four basic types: servants, old men, young lovers, and powerful captains. Actors developed unique characters based on the types, turning them into recurring audience favorites like Harlequin, Pierrot, or

Punch—half of the violent comic duo known as Punch and Judy. Audiences knew the characters before they knew what would happen in the drama.

Part of the Commedia dell'arte's appeal was audience familiarity with its stock characters. Characters conformed to four basic types: servants, old men, young lovers, and powerful captains. Actors developed unique characters based on the types, turning them into recurring audience favorites like Harlequin, Pierrot, or Punch—half of the violent comic duo known as Punch and Judy. Audiences knew the characters before they knew what would happen in the drama.

Like the Commedia dell'arte characters, Pirandello's six Characters resemble archetypes— typical examples of a certain personality. Their identity is unchanging and immediately obvious to the audience. Pirandello pairs each Character with a dominant emotion or desire. For instance, the Father is remorseful, the Stepdaughter is vengeful, and the Mother is grief-stricken. Although *Six Characters in Search of an Author* could be seen as a comedy of absurd effects, its Characters incorporate tragedy because they're stuck in their fates. The Father will always be ashamed, and the Mother will always grieve. The Characters' masks are in part designed to represent their frozen identities, so the masks do not hide but identify.

Pirandello uses the technique of play within a play. For Pirandello, the theater is itself theatrical. That it is itself implicated in the forms and dynamics of the stage. This self referential structure, that of a play about the play, is paralleled by another in the opening. Both these plays belong to the Pirandello. The inclusion of mixing it up and later, a double of Pirandello himself, is self indulgent.

George Neveux a young contemporary playwright told not only his viewpoint but when the entire generation of French dramatists imbibed from Pirandello;

“Pirandello is first of all, the greatest prestidigitator of the twentieth century....”

Talking about his most important play *Six Characters* he comments;

He took the very centre of the real world and turned it inside outright in front of us , as the fisherman turns inside out the skin of an octopus to lay bare it viscera.

But when Pirandello laid bare before us is not only the work of the actor, not that of the author, not only the other side of the scenery, but something much more universal; the other side of ourselves.

