

Chapter - I

INTRODUCTION

From times immemorial drama has been a medium of entertainment as well as instruction. We live in an age where drama has grown multidimensional, it is more self-questioning. The remarkable shift in the style and treatment given to the form is witnessed by the drama lovers, all over the world. American drama, too, has different dimensions, especially, the 1930s has been considered a great period of revolution. The Great Depression had largely affected economic scenario, and due to industrial explosion the Southern agrarian was disturbed drastically. The conflicts between the owners and the workers resulted in great unrest, which gave way to the formation of unions. The social upheaval was caused due to the rise of national movements. Naturally, the creative writers responded to these changes in their own ways. Among these literary writers, Lillian Hellman had made her mark.

In this chapter we will attempt an analysis of Hellman's position in American drama by tracing the intellectual ambience of that age. Attempts have been made to trace Hellman's growth and development as a writer in the first section of the chapter. In the second section, her contemporaries, who were committed to the social, political and economic issues of the age, have been mentioned so as to understand their realistic, moral and social concern. The contribution of Lillian Hellman and her contemporaries in the growth of the drama in the 1930s and after is highly remarkable and it has been discussed briefly in the section. Lillian Hellman is basically known as a 'moralist.' Her moral commitments to the literary world occupy much of the space within which she operates. She is greatly concerned with evil in society and she interprets her characters and their actions from the point of view of good and evil. Hence, from different perspectives the terms, 'good' and 'evil', have been discussed briefly in the third section.

I

About Lillian Hellman :

Lillian Hellman came into prominence at the age of twenty-nine with the brilliant success of her first play, *The Children's Hour*. After that in the following thirty years of her career as a dramatist, she never looked back. She enjoyed immense popularity in her lifetime. Lillian Hellman's life is full of dramatic events which reflect her extra-ordinary power as a human being. A writer and his life as a layman cannot be separated from each other because the writer's life plays a vital role in his creative work. Therefore, it is important to know about Hellman's life as a woman and a playwright.

Lillian Hellman was born on 20 June 1905. She spent half of her childhood in Manhattan and half of it in New Orleans but she always had fondness for New Orleans. Hellman's father was trying to establish himself as a businessman. Hence, along with his family he had to shift from New York to New Orleans. Consequently, Hellman's school semesters or vacancies in the boarding house were based on her father's convenience and the times. As a child, she was considered to be a wild, rebellious and freedom-loving girl. This instinct in her, later, helped her to develop as a rebellious writer. At the age of sixteen, Hellman started keeping a "writer's book." In those days, she wrote several love poems. She used to write a column in the school newspaper.

She came into contact with Julian Messner, a top editor at Boni and Liveright Publishing House in the year 1924. After that she went to New York University. Her intelligence impressed Messner and he offered her a job. Hellman's reputation was quite different. She was known as bright, sharp tongued yet full of fun, a woman who was quite serious about books. At that time, she began writing short stories and started sending them to various publishers. All but one came back and she got disappointed. She began to doubt her ability to write. She was making the most of the opportunities and thus she started reviewing books for Herald Tribune.

At this time, she met Arthur Kober who was a young writer, newspaperman and press agent. He was working with the Schuberts at that time. Arthur Kober was attracted towards Lillian for her boldness and her subtle feminine ways. For Hellman his connection with the theatre made him interesting. She was developing as a writer at that time. At the age of twenty Hellman was in good standing. When she was at the centre of literary excitement she left it and got married to Arthur. It was an odd decision. Kober wanted to be a writer but his writing was of lower order compared to that of Hellman's. Though Hellman had left 'Liveright' for her marriage, she always aspired to resume but due to the fear of refusal from Messner, she never expressed her desire. Hellman's first experience in the theatre was of a Broadway review where she had got a job of doing publicity for Broadway. Her first professional writing appeared in 1926. She wrote reviews of two books 'Our Doctors' by Maurice Duplay and 'The Unearthly' by Robert Hickens. She was writing reviews and short stories but she had to give up her job as Arthur was offered a job in Paris. During her stay in Paris, Hellman published her short stories in 'The Comet', which later on, were dismissed as 'lady writer's stories'. Hellman started getting frustrated because it was not the life she had planned. Arthur found a job of play reader for Lillian. Hellman also took brief jobs of reading for other producers. Thus, once again she was in the literary world.

Dashiell Hammett, the then upcoming detective story writer and a novelist, influenced Hellman and her writings enormously. Lillian and Arthur met him at the time of their stay at Hollywood. In his company, she realized herself as a creative artist. Hammett was a perfect man for Lillian. He was a superb writer and organizer and at the same time, he had the experience of movie making and publishing. When Hellman had not proved her ability as a writer, Hammett was a celebrity. Hammett's company, his acquaintance with publishers and writers encouraged her a lot. Thus, Hellman got her own way and she started writing short stories. Due to Hammett, she came into contact with the prominent public figures like Herman Shumlin,

William Faulkner, and Dorothy Parker. They, too, influenced Hellman in their own ways.

Hellman never had an idea that she would be a playwright. It came very abruptly when Hammett came across a collection of noteworthy British Court cases and was struck by a chapter entitled “Closed Door, or The Great Drumsheugh Case.” It was based on lesbian theme, which was too bold to present, especially for Hellman who was going to try playwriting for the first time. In summer of 1934, Hellman put the script in front of Herman Shumlin, a very good friend of hers and an important producer, who accepted it willingly to produce. The play opened on 20 November 1934 with the title *The Children’s Hour*. The play was accepted by the audience and the critics enthusiastically. It was expected by some that Pulitzer Prize for drama of the year would be earned by this play. But the prize went instead to *The Old Maid* by Zoe Akins.

The theme of the play was hard to accept for the Americans and for the people in other countries. Shumlin was so overwhelmed with enthusiasm that he decided to present the play in London but came to face the problem of censorship and ban in various cities like Boston and Chicago. Within a few months of the opening of the play, Samuel Goldwyn gave Lillian an offer of writing screenplay and the offer was readily accepted by her. It was the Depression Era. Many actors and playwrights were unemployed and starving. They had nothing substantial to do. Jobs in the theater were very scarce, at that time Hellman was offered a job of \$2500 a week. The contract with the Samuel Goldwyn production was renewed for film adaptation and the play was retitled as *These Three* for the film. The story of the play revolved around a neurotic child, Mary, who accuses the headmistresses of their lesbian relationship and causes death of one.

After finishing two screenplays, Hellman set to work on her next play *Days to Come* and it was opened on 15 December 1936. The play was not as successful as the former one. Hellman herself admitted that she thrust everything into it. It was the play about the people involved in a labor strike resulting in strike-breaking and victory of the workers. The reaction to the

play made her re-think about her talent as a writer. She had two choices before her, either to give up writing, or to write much harder and she chose the latter one. After deliberate efforts, she wrote her next play *The Little Foxes* which was a powerful and brilliantly constructed play. It opened in Baltimore on 2 February 1939 and was received by the viewers and critics quite enthusiastically. According to her, “*The Little Foxes* was the most difficult play I ever wrote. I was clumsy in the first drafts patting in and taking out characters, ornamenting, decorating, growing more and more weary as the versions of scenes and then acts and then three whole plays had to be thrown away.”¹ Through the play Hellman focused on the changing value pattern of the American society.

After this hit, Hellman started doubting her ability. She was worried whether she could give another such hit and she also had a fear of getting blocked due to rewards that she received. At the same time she was thinking of her new play, *Watch on the Rhine*. Hellman was thinking on the serious theme based on World War II. It was a play exhibiting horror of Nazi ideology and it was contrasted with comfortable life in American society. The play revolves around the fight of a couple against brutality of Nazism. The play opened on 1 April 1941 at Martin Beck Theatre. The critics appreciated the global application of the play, as with the German invasion of Russia and Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor the conflict had become global.

In November 1941, Hellman was profiled in ‘the New Yorker’ for her noteworthy career. Hellman sold the play to Warner brothers. Hellman recorded a pleasant memory regarding the play. President Roosevelt was invited to Washington for a night, as was a yearly custom in those days for a play to be chosen to give a command performance before the President. Hellman says, “He was more interested in when I had written *Watch on the Rhine*. When I told him I started it a year and a half before the war, he shook his head.”² In the summer of 1942, Hellman began a new play *The Searching Wind*, a play about interaction between spreading fascism and decent people. The play was a tedious job for her because there are a number of characters and time shifts. Hellman wanted to show evil of Fascism through the play.

It opened at the Fulton Theatre in April, 1944. Later she wrote screenplay of the play for Paramount.

Thereafter, Hellman started work on a new play, *Another Part of the Forest*. The play was about the Hubbards but this time twenty years before *The Little Foxes*. It is about the nastiness of the Hubbards who are penny-pinching and they can go to any extent to fulfill their selfish purpose. In 1948, Hellman accepted an assignment to go to Yugoslavia for The New York Star to interview Tito, the first communist leader. But the interview later on created a controversy. While in Europe she met the Spanish playwright, Emanuel Robles and she decided to do an English adaptation of his play "Montserrat." It opened on Broadway on 29 October 1948. It was an interesting version. 1949 was the year of professional glory for Hellman. The operatic version of *The Little Foxes* entitled *Regina*, succeeded remarkably. A production of *Another Part of the Forest* opened in Moscow under the title *Ladies and Gentlemen*. In terms of critical and financial success, Hellman enjoyed better moments.

By the time, Hellman wrote her next play, *The Autumn Garden*, she was known as an established reputed writer. Until now she had discussed various evil forms in her plays, i. e. blackmail, threat, murder, extortion, etc. In her play *The Autumn Garden*, she uses her inevitable device but in a soberer way. The play has Chekhovian touch. It appeared on the stage at the Coronet Theatre on 7 March 1951. By this time Hellman got disturbed for being black-listed by House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). She herself and Hammett were forced to name the communists who fled away. Hellman sternly refused to disclose the names. It was a period of stress for Hellman.

Hellman adapted Christopher Fry's adaptation of Jean Anouilh's play about Joan of Arc, Li Aloutte and was opened by the title *The Lark* at the Lonyacre Theatre on 17 November 1955. It was followed by another adaptation, that is of Voltaire's satirical novel *Candide*. It was decided that the play should be presented in the form of operetta. Though it was out of style, it was full of rich melody ever written for Broadway. *Candide* was not a pleasant experience for Hellman. After these three adaptations Hellman did

not write any play and her friends were worried of her drying up as a playwright. Hammett inspired her to write *Toys in the Attic*. Hammett knew about Hellman's family members, especially her aunts and her mother, therefore, he suggested to write the play without mentioning the autobiographical resemblances with the boarding house of her aunt and her aunt's love for their brother, Max and her mother. It is a play about excessive love of the sisters for their only brother whom they want to see a successful man. It is a play about tenuous entanglement of emotions. The play opened on 25 February 1960. The play was highly successful and won the 1960 Drama Critics' Award.

Long-borne friendship between herself and Dashiell Hammett came to an end after his death in 1961. Hammett's role in shaping her career as a playwright is undeniable. He was everything for her, a friend, philosopher, guide, lover and a good companion to her over thirty years. At this time she read a novel *How Much?* By Burt Blechman and realized that it greatly resembled her own life. So she adapted it for the stage as *My Mother, My Father and Me*. It was the last play by Hellman.

Hellman received many awards and honors for her precious contribution to the American Drama. She was awarded Theatre Arts Medal for outstanding Lifetime Achievement by Brandeis; an Achievement Award was given by Yeshiva University. Wheaton College named her to receive an honorary doctorate. In December 1962, she was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters to replace poet Robinson Jeffers. During the period 1960 to 1969, she was awarded more honors and attention than she had received when she was writing major Broadway plays. She was respected by critics throughout her writing career. Hellman had record of revivals when her contemporaries had disappeared from American theatre. She always remained involved in various activities.

At the age of sixty-two she decided to write about herself. Then came her first memoir *An Unfinished Woman* in 1968. She was very much honest while writing the book and was praised unanimously for the sincerity with which she gave an account of her life. It remained the bestseller and won the

National Book Award for Arts and Letters. It is in the form of a series of literary sketches. Up to now Hellman had become a celebrity and was a theatre name. She had led a life of rare glamour and excitement. In 1970, she attended a conference on the Far East in San Francisco, sponsored by the association for Asian Studies. In the next few years she regularly accepted lectures and teaching engagements, chaired writing seminars at the University of California in Berkeley in 1970 and 1971 and conducted seminars at New York Hunter's College in 1972.

In 1972, her second memoir *Pentimento* appeared. It is a collection of portraits of people who played important role in Hellman's life. Awards and honors came to her even in her seventies. She received a Ph. D. from Yale, and her Alma Mater, New York University, honored her with a 'Woman of the Year Award'. She was appointed to the editorial board of *American Scholar*. A half million-dollar offer was made by Mike Nichols for her two memoirs. He wanted film rights of the memoirs to be compressed into one film but Hellman refused it on the grounds that her story might have been distorted.

In March, 1976, her third memoir *Scoundrel Time* was published, it is a record of her political experience. It was accepted with great enthusiasm and was on the list of bestsellers. During this time interest in her works increased. *The Autumn Garden* had its revival. In the same year an honorary Ph. D. from Columbia University was conferred on her and very prestigious Mac Dowell Medal for contribution to literature was awarded. She delivered commencement address at Mount Holyoke College and was invited in her native city, New York, to speak at a series of lectures at the New Orleans Public Library. The greatest honor of her life came with the film "Julia", which was based on one of the chapters of *Pentimento*. The people who were unaware of her life realized how adventurous and romantic life she had lived.

The revival of *The Little Foxes* came in May 1981 with Elizabeth playing Regina. Hellman wrote another small book named *Maybe* and it was her last professional writing. Thus, Hellman's career as a writer was full of glamour and excitement. Her courage to fight against oddities of life is par excellence. Her instinct always checked her from doing wrong. She had been

at the centre of literary groups. She received outpouring love and respect from the people for her indomitable spirit. She was at the same time tough and diplomatic and always cherished her principles. An ‘angry’ woman, who had strong hatred for cruel mistakes, unjust order and evil in all forms. Confrontation of good and evil was her favorite theme, which she used repeatedly in all her plays. Being a moralist she always wrote with a sense of righteous indignation. And her view of looking at the problem of ‘good and evil’ was always social rather than religious or ethical. The most controversial yet energetic and still enigmatic, Lillian Hellman, died on 30 June 1984.

II

The Contemporaries :

1930 was the period of great turmoil in the history of America. The decade witnessed the unforgettable scars of economic depression, unduly industrial growth which led to exploitation of workers and gave birth to unionism. The period was also remarkable for the nationalist movements. Thus evil growing in all the spheres of life greatly alerted the writers and the stage became a platform to present the dormant evil confronted by good. The writers were committed to their society though they were worried about the changing scenario; they were also hopeful about the bright future. According to Allan Lewis, “Important plays are cultural milestones holding within them the hopes, dreams, struggles, victories and ceaseless inquietude of man’s conflict with himself and the external world .”³

Many theatre enthusiasts formulated ‘Theatre Guild Studies’ ‘Theatre Union’, ‘New Theatre League’, ‘Theatre of Action’ and ‘The Labor Stage.’ The dramatic results were various and of varying quality. They created socially relevant drama. They had witnessed distress in the society due to depression, so they were searching some sign of hope. They had a collective dream of a better society. The young writers like Lillian Hellman, Clifford Odets, Sidney Kingsley, John Wesley, William Saroyan, Irwin Shaw were prompted by the social turmoil to write about it. Even the older writers like

Elmer Rice, John Howard Lawson, Behrman, Anderson, Sherwood and Kaufman presented the then existing problems in their own ways.

In the three important phases of development of the stage various trends can be witnessed. The first phase, 1929-33, witnessed Marxist drama. Philip Berry, Paul Sifton and Elmer Rice were the writers of the phase. In the second phase, 1933-36, there were dramas about social criticism. Clifford Odets and Sidney Kingsley were some of the writers who combined information with entertainment. The third phase, 1937-39, was the phase of mellowing of hard-core Marxist ideas. It was the phase of 'well-made' plays. Clifford Odets, Philip Berry and other writers presented their ideas through various plays.

The playwrights of the 'depression period' can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of Clifford Odets, Lillian Hellman, William Saroyan, Irwin Shaw, Sidney Kingsley and Victor Wolfson. Like other playwrights these playwrights, too, showed their concern for the society. The other group is of Elmer Rice, Maxwell Anderson, Robert Sherwood, Philip Berry, John Howard Lawson, S. N. Behrman and Paul Green. These writers were concerned with the grim aspects of life. Hence, their concern about the common man is clearly reflected in their works. They were critical about amoral behaviour of the people in the society.

All these writers used the theme of evil and presented it in various forms. For example S. N. Behrman was critical about evils like social injustice, Fascism and growing parasitism. He was confronted with the dilemma of how he could function in the times in which nearly everyone sought to destroy all principles but his own. He was Humanistic in his approach even though he did not solve immediate problems. His play *From Heaven* is a provocation comedy shadowed with Fascist threat or his comedy *No Time for Comedy* deals with conflicting ideologies of his days.

Though Robert Sherwood was interested in historical plays, he shows his antipathy for the evil in brutality and slaughter. He pointed out that single minded forces of destruction which we find in materialism, economic

collapses and Fascism have let loose upon the world. “The men of Good will be helpless, whereas, the men of action are gangsters...”⁴, the theme recurrently found in Hellman’s plays. In his play *Idiot’s Delight*, Sherwood presents evil caused by war, which shows death of a civilization. Maxwell Anderson is known as the most gratifying and the most disturbing playwright. Like other playwrights of the age he was aware of the social evil in the form of injustice and malignancies. He becomes highly ironical when he handles the subjects like dirtiness of war, as reflected in his *What Price Glory?* or lust and callousness of power in *Elizabeth, the Queen* and *Mary of Scotland*. He comments on cynicism of politicians in *Both Your Houses* and evils of corruption is seen in *Winterset*. He strongly criticizes evils like hypocritical Puritanism, materialism and injustice.

Elmer Rice’s deep concern for society and about woman and her conflict between her career and domestic life are some of the important themes of his plays. He strongly opposes evil caused by war and condemns brutality and senselessness of war in his three plays *The Iron Cross*, *The Home of the Three* and *Fight to the West*. His history making *The Adding Machine* is about the ills caused by changing values in the society, growing materialism and its dehumanizing effects. He showed concern for depression affected people. He presented flaws and drawbacks of the American society and emphasized the need to restore values like individual freedom and dignity.

Paul Green was concerned with insane world and corruption in it. An honest man confronting with corruption is the theme of his *Johnny Johnson*. Clifford Odets presented the problems of depression decade. He was anguished with the decade that he presented the frustration and inability of the generation, which could not change the crux of socio-economic problems as is seen in his *Waiting For Lefty*. His *Awake and Sing* depicts the devastating effects of the Depression on a typical American working class family. Irwin Shaw’s concern was, also, social justice. His *The Gentle People* is about the confrontation of good and evil. He also dealt with the problem of war. Sidney Kingsley was considered among the serious writers. Corruption, crime

in the slums, evil in the form of lust, intrigue and family quarrels are the main themes of his plays. His *Dead End* is a typical play of the depression decade.

Thus, Lillian Hellman and her contemporaries witnessed many changes in the contemporary American society and were alerted by them. All these writers, to various degrees, tackled the problem of evil confronted by good. But primarily they were concerned with the basic structure of the society, which was getting tattered to the pieces, and all the value patterns were changing drastically. Moreover, the decade ended with the Second World War. The evil forces, which emerged in the life of American people, gave birth to various other problems, most of which were related to moralism. Ultimately these sensitive and sensible writers were disturbed thoroughly. They started rethinking about human values, morality and individualism.

Therefore, almost every writer considered these problems in his own works. The theatre became an active participant in the struggle to arouse disheartened people to renewed conviction. For them a number of issues became very urgent to be noticed and the theatre served the purpose of pulpit through which the dramatists presented solutions to the problems. According to Allan Lewis : “all were committed writers, deeply concerned with the fight for social justice, and critical of long held myths that induced complacency in times of success and panic in the face of disaster .”⁵

The theatres of the thirties are remembered not only for their contribution as they produced masterpieces for the ages but for their response to the challenges of their times. They were very much vigorous and excited while confronting the challenges. They became highly conscious of the confrontation of good and evil. The drama of the decade was less individual and more social. They were worried about national distresses. They adapted themselves to this changing world around them very speedily. Most of them reviewed the social decay and left it without suggesting solutions to it, while others were optimistic. But one thing is sure that all of them went through the state of inquietude. All these plays are, therefore, cultural milestones.

III

Good and Evil :

Lillian Hellman was the most dynamic yet uncompromising writer, a moralist concerned with 'good and evil'. These two basic themes are recurrent in her plays. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss these terms from different perspectives.

The phrase 'good and evil' is often used in Old Testament, generally in connection with a verb, rarely alone. We find phrases such as 'to know good and evil'⁶ 'to distinguish between good and evil'⁷, 'to refuse the evil and choose the good'⁸, 'seek good and no evil'⁹, 'to hate evil and love good'¹⁰, 'do good and not harm'¹¹, etc. The most important use of the combination of 'good and evil' occurs in the theological etiology of sin and fallenness where it plays a fundamental and decisive role. The whole account is centred on 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.'¹²

The knowledge of good and evil is rather a protean phrase. According to Holy Scriptures, Evil began with an angelic rebellion led by Satan. His persuasion to Eve makes her break the commands of God. Satan defeats Eve by getting her to doubt God's word 'Yea hath God'¹³, disbelieves God's word "ye shall surely not die",¹⁴ and disobeying God's word by inducing her to act against the word : "For God's eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good from evil"¹⁵. According to Old Testament, usage of the combination has more than one interpretation. It is considered the knowledge of 'good and evil' is nothing else but the awakening of the intellect or of moral consciousness.

Man strives for this divine knowledge, as the serpent promised the woman : "you will be like God"¹⁶ and as God himself states : "Behold the man has become like one of us,"¹⁷ he was no longer happy to live under the moral guidance of God but he wanted to decide autonomously what was for him morally good or morally evil. What he aimed at, therefore, was moral autonomy. Certainly, the man had to decide between good and evil but this decision was to be made under divine guidance.

The idea of human goodness is relatively little developed in the Old Testament. Man is good only in a very limited sense as it is clearly expressed in Psalm 14:3 'They are all alike Corrupt: there is none that does good, no, not one'. The same thought is expressed in the Psalms of Solomon : 'The goodness of man is grudging and is shown only for the sake of reward and it is an admirable thing when man shows his goodness again and again without murmuring.'¹⁸ Human goodness is overwhelmed by the all-embracing favour and compassion of God, which is too sublime for man to imitate. Goodness is an essential part of the Christian way of life. The book of Genesis affirms that creation was 'good' and God saw that 'it was good'. The aspect of good is found in the teachings of Jesus, that is, good is a way of life, worship and a way of belief. The wish to be good consists solely in longing for what is real in God. According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer : "Good is not the correspondence between a criterion which is placed at our disposal by nature or grace and whatever entity one designed as reality, good is reality itself, reality seen and recognized in God."¹⁹

The knowledge of good and evil seems to be the aim of human beings. As it is found in Genesis, 'The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.'²⁰ After consuming the forbidden fruit man knows about good and evil but this knowledge of good and evil is against God. They are good and evil of man's own choosing. Thereafter every moment of his life is engrossed by the conflict between choosing good and evil. Theists believe that God is almighty and whatever takes place is due to his will. Therefore, if evil exists, then it must be due to God's will. If God is an embodiment of good and whatever he creates is also good then can His creatures be the origin of evil? God has created perfect creatures but has granted free will and the same free will is the cause of all evil. The Theists believe that evil arises due to imperfection from the perfect and evil can be defeated by the omnipotent.

The problem of evil has been mentioned in the New Encyclopedia Britannica in the following words:

...evil, problem of, a theological problem that arises for any philosophical or religious view that affirms the following three propositions: 1) God is almighty; 2) God is perfectly good, and 3) evil exists. If evil exists, it seems either that God wants to obliterate evil and is not able to - and thus his almightiness is denied - or that God is able to obliterate evil but does not want to - and thus his goodness is denied.²¹

Thus, various philosophers attempted to define and solve the problem of evil. As Pendergast Richards points out, evil can be defined as the absence of some good which...

...ought to be present in the being or situation which is evil. Evil as such, therefore, is not a being but a privation, a defect of a being which is fundamentally good. Evil is a defect of some symbolizing activity as well as the defect which it causes in the symbol produced and the lack of fulfillment which results in the being doing the symbolizing.²²

Hence, evil is a defect of a being who is fundamentally good. It is believed that the world as it came from the hands of God had to be wholly good and it must have become evil in the course of development because of the intelligent creatures, as only such creatures can originate evil and commit sin. At some point in history an intelligent being which was good and without defect chose evil and so failed to develop in the way it should have.

It is considered that there are two types of evil : moral and physical. The problem of sin is attached to moral evil. Theodicy believes that natural evil is a precondition of knowing how to defeat evil. Even if a man had never sinned and behaved in a good manner still physical evil is inevitable because it is the basic system of the world. It is essential because it is the basis of responsible human action. It is further believed that God has allowed evil to exist because he has good reason. Evil exists right from the birth of man. So it is one of the pre-requisites of a human being. The messianic prophets believed that man is not basically corrupt, whereas according to the Old Testament, man has the potentials for both good and evil and it is his choice that he should choose between the two. As Erich Fromm states:

God does not interfere in his choice, he plays by sending his messengers, the prophets, to teach the norms which lead to the realization of goodness to identify the evil, and to warn and to protest. But this being done, man is left alone with his “two strivings” that for good and that for evil, and the decision is his alone .²³

It is also true that evil is universal As Dob Leonard points out :

Evil is universal as a result of the nature of man and his society and also of an inevitable system of theology to which he subscribes. Although human beings differ with respect to their appearance and individuality, their talents and capabilities, they also have many reactions and a common destiny .²⁴

Many thinkers have different views regarding the problem of evil. According to Hegel, all apparent evil is really good, it looks and feels bad because its character as good is yet incomplete. Martin Luther believed that sin is the part and parcel of human nature, therefore, law can not guide one in the righteous way but can only serve to confirm one’s way. Kierkegaard

believes that opposite of sin is faith. These opinions largely relate to the religious world but what Richard Taylor says about good and evil is commonly acclaimed :

Those things are good that one being finds satisfying to his needs and desires, and those bad to which he reacts in the opposite way... the things that nourish and give warmth and enhance life are deemed good, and those that frustrate and threaten are deemed bad.... In most general terms, those things are good that satisfy a being's actual wants, those that frustrate are bad .²⁵

The thinkers of the Renaissance believed that all evil in man is nothing but the result of circumstances. Since the beginning of the First World War, there has been the explosive outburst of evil. It emphasized the intensity of human destructiveness. It seems that conditions for killing man had become ultimate and the distinction between good and evil or Right or Wrong is difficult to make. The post war experience of man prompted him to probe into the fundamental question whether life is intrinsically good or evil. Moral right and wrong arise when there is adherence to rules or violation of them. These rules may change according to different social patterns. By reason man understands what is right and what is wrong. The perception may be fallible yet he directs his will to remain adhered to whatever is good and shuns away whatever is bad. Man's will determines what any man shall declare to be good and what he shall pronounce evil. Principles also play a great role in shaping man's good or evil behaviour. Without them social life would be impossible. When principles cease to have that values, their applications produce more evil than good. There are aims, desires and purposes of man which give birth to good and evil.

The aim of the present study is to point out confrontation of good and evil in various situations. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze why confrontation takes place. When people confront each other with different motives there is a clash between the good motif and the bad motif. In such a situation one may feel his motif to be good and others' evil. There arises conflict of will which leads to mutual aggression and it enhances the emergency of right and wrong. In such a situation man either conflicts, submits or co-operates himself with the opposite view. In the conflict there is a threat of evil whereas in co-operation there is a promise of good. Sometimes evil becomes so overpowering that it crushes down good mercilessly, not permitting it even to submit. But this conflict can be resolved by observing certain regular modes of behaviour or rules.

Good and evil are two dynamic powers which struggle for mastery within the cosmos and within man. These two forces are always present within the same human spirit and every being must sooner or later choose whether he will advance towards God or turn away from him. The angelic will aims at absolute good which is always confronted with evil. In spite of it man is constantly striving for good. Since the birth of philosophical ethics, the moralists have been trying to identify the good for man. They always emphasized righteous path for mankind.

It is believed by the theologians that God takes notice of every behaviour that man may escape from the laws and punishment but the eye of God never sleeps. Happiness can be proper conduct and those who forget pain awaits for them in the form of hell after death. It makes man aware of his good and bad conduct. It is, again, applicable to those who are ardent believers in the doctrine but those who overrule it are free to behave licentiously. Those who do not abide by the rules are categorized under the label of 'Hedonists', seeking pleasure in self-satisfaction. In moral context, such a behaviour is condemnable as it is considered to be evil.

Hindu philosophy strongly emphasizes man's moral behaviour. It is believed that man's actions, good or bad, have their repercussions. Any kind of evil done in a particular life does not end in that life alone but the nemesis can be prolonged even up to the next life if the evil doing is not rectified in a life. Man has to compensate for his evil doing. Hence, what one experiences in the present life may be the consequence of the evil or good done in the former life. Hindu philosophers recurrently discuss those concepts which are largely based on the doctrines of the Bhagvad Gita. Evil as discussed in the Holy Scripture of the Hindus is an outcome of attachment. So the idea of detachment has been fostered through those scriptures. By doing so, man is ultimately led towards righteous path.

In the twentieth century, the terms 'good' and 'evil' have different meanings, rather these terms have become ambiguous. So it becomes difficult to define what is purely good or bad. Modern man's abysmal decay caused due to self-indulgence leading towards materialism, changes applicability of these terms. The century has witnessed the ugliest side of the coldest behaviour of man. The World Wars have stirred the very basis of human belief in goodness. A sense of rootlessness engulfs human existence. Hence, it becomes quite difficult to determine the significance of the terms. According to Carl Jung, "Every good quality has its bad side, and nothing that is good can come into the world without directly producing a corresponding evil. This is a painful fact."²⁶

Lillian Hellman has long been known as a moral force, almost an institution of conscience. She hates corrupt nature of man caused largely by greed for everything : money, power, recognition, etc. Therefore, the themes like blackmail, murder, extortion, greed for money, evils caused by fundamentalism, neurotic behaviour of human beings, etc. are recurrently appear in her plays. She protests against the moral and social delinquency. She discusses socially and morally debilitating effect of wealth. Therefore, Hellman's point of view regarding good and evil is not essentially religious, rather it is social. As the concepts of good and evil arise from religious

interpretations, may it be ethical, moral or social, the origin of these concepts has been discussed, here, in short.

In view of all this foregoing discussion one can say with Hamlet that “There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.” and with the witches in *Macbeth* that “Fair is foul and foul is fair/Hover through fog and filthy air.” Yet as morally sound human beings we must attempt to establish the sovereignty of Good in the world to make easy life of all creatures. In the chapters that follow we will discuss the confrontation of good and evil as reflected in Lillian Hellman’s plays selected for the study.

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Chapter - II

PLAYS FROM 1935 TO 1939

This chapter attempts to analyse confrontation of good and evil from a perspective that is essentially social. Hellman chose to portray the study of the said confrontation in all her plays. To understand her point of view, a detailed analysis is required because the core of Hellman's work is formulated in these concepts. This particular chapter analyses three major plays by Hellman published during the period 1935 to 1939.

I

The Children's Hour

About the Play

The Children's Hour is a play based on a narrative account of an 1819 Scottish trial : "Closed Doors; or The Great Drumsheugh Case," one of a collection of criminal cases entitled *Bad Companions* by William Roughead. It is a powerful and gripping story. Critics often mistake the theme of the play as the terms used are suggestive of lesbianism or homosexuality. But the true theme deals with, as Doris Falk puts it : "...the destructive scandal-mongering, the smear and the big lie. It deals with the power of the old and rich to rob – to despoil others of livelihood and life."¹

The theme of the play caused a stir among moralists. Although plays based on the theme of lesbianism were not new, but the moralists raised their brows. The good confronts, here, the evil which is mainly in the form of a big destructive lie that takes away the life of a teacher. Hellman challenges conventions of the contemporary society. Hellman herself has pointed out that the theme of the play is "...good and evil."²

Yet some critics believe that it is about evil only. Barret H. Clark comments : “...rather I believe evil alone, the evil here as in the character of Iago, is a kind of unattached and almost meaningless power. It is like a phenomenon of nature which cannot be eradicated, hardly perhaps even dealt with.”³

Hellman always had fascination with malice, the human capacity to cause hurt to others for little or no reason. She has seen this capacity in her schoolmates and sometimes in herself, too. The play reveals destructive effects of malice and unprovoked evil. In most of Hellman plays she deals with a fascination with lies and the devastation they can cause. No doubt, Hellman has combined two aspects beautifully; injustice caused due to malice, and the theme of so-called lesbianism.

A Brief Summary of the Play :

The play focuses on the destructive effects of evil in the form of a lie and good is destroyed due to its weaknesses to fight against evil. It is a serious study of the abnormal psychology and to understand the tenuous threads of it, it is necessary to understand the story part at length. Let us see how the confrontation of good and evil is focused in different scenes.

The play revolves around two friends, Karen Wright and Martha Dobbie, who have been successful in fulfilling their cherished youthful dream of a private school for young girls. Amelia Tilford is the financial benefactor and grand mother of a neurotic child, Mary. Mary is a spoilt child with the flair ‘to twist any situation’ to her will. When the play opens in an afternoon study room where Lily Mortar, the aunt of Martha, is in her sewing class, Mary enters with a faded bunch of flowers. She is shrewd enough to divert Mrs. Mortar’s attention from accusing her for coming late in the class. Mary offers the bunch to her and in turn Mrs. Mortar gets flattered. It is just a glimpse of chain of pretexts that is about to come. Habitual liar Mary practices such harmless lies now and then to maintain her pseudo dignity.

Mary hates school, all authority and the teachers. She is a real craftsman, who has learnt how to win sympathy from the elders. She spoils everyone who comes in her contact, especially her schoolmates. They are bullied by her. Karen is well aware of Mary's nature. So, she accuses Mary for lying and spoiling other girls. It is the beginning of the confrontation of good and evil. The cause of confrontation is evil in the form of lie which is not accepted by Karen who represents good in the form of righteousness.

Mary cannot tolerate the exposure of her true nature and evil in her is challenged by the righteous woman. Karen tries hard to control Mary and she tries to convince her how this form of lying distorts everything and how harmful it can be. But Mary remains unstirred in spite of Karen's persuasions. To teach Mary a lesson, Karen resorts to punishment as a cure. Consequently, Mary has been stopped from taking her recreation periods for the next two weeks. Mary vehemently crosses her limits and threatens Karen with a complaint to her grandmother. From this moment begins a chain of lies and pretexts. Mary pretends to have chest pain and breathlessness. She schemes so cunningly that no one has an idea of what goes on in her mind.

But the teachers' problems have only begun. Martha's aunt, Lily Mortar, with her fabricated stories of a glorious theatrical career has become a nuisance. Plus the threat given by Mary makes them fear for the financial support to their school. Martha is so fed up with her aunt that she decides to send her back to London. That brings forth an angry accusation which is suggestive of the fact that Martha is jealous of Karen and her boyfriend Joe and that Martha cannot stand her friend's relationship with the beau. Lily Mortar's accusation leaves Martha stunned :

You are fonder of Karen, and I know that. And it's unnatural, just as unnatural as it can be, you don't like their being together. You were always like that even as a child. If you had a little girl friend, you always got mad when she liked anybody

else. Well you'd better get a beau of your own now – a woman of your age. (18)

Misfortune of the teachers has begun with the speech as the eavesdropping girls, Evelyn and Peggy, have been caught by Martha. In consultation with Karen, she decides to separate the girls from Mary. Three of the girls are summoned by them and are given instructions regarding change in their accommodation which greatly disturbs the nasty child.

Evil in Mary does not allow her to take the insult easily and she exhibits different forms of evil. First of all she tries to escape the situation by telling to let her go to her grandmother. As nobody pays attention to her, she, then, bullies Rosalie to move her things from her room. Meanwhile Peggy reports Mary the over-heard conversation. It is the greatest discovery on Mary's part. Her maliciousness is boosted up by the news. She bosses Peggy and even harms her physically. The atrocity of Mary is so overpowering that Peggy has to give up.

Mary manipulates the information and twists it according to her convenience. She repeats the overheard discussion suggesting there is something unnatural about Martha. She enhances the effect of the story by adding her own details that both the teachers do not want them near their room because they are afraid of the girls. Quite fearlessly she adds that something awful is going on between the teachers. Mary deliberately constructs the story as she knows only relating a simple story will not suffice to get the effect she wants. Until and unless the story has been made sensational, hard to believe and morally accusable, no one will pay any heed.

Thus evil in Mary gets its firm foot and Mrs. Tilford fails to understand Mary's cunning. Overcome with disgust she telephones the shocking news to all the parents asking them to take their daughters away from school. She also rings up Joe Cardin, who is engaged to Karen. Rosalie, who is staying the night with the Tilfords, too, is involved by Mary in her vicious acts of lying. Rosalie is blackmailed into becoming a 'partner' against her will. Mrs. Tilford pressurizes Joe not to marry Karen, completely baffled Joe does not believe

the story, so do Karen and Martha. The disastrous effect of Mary's lie has turned the school suddenly into an insane asylum as the parents take away their children without any explanation. The very dream of the teachers shatters within no time.

Joe presses Mary to tell the truth, instead, she adds that she had seen through a keyhole that both the teachers were kissing each other. Karen retaliates it promptly saying that there is no keyhole on her door. Mary changes the story within a fraction of second and tells that she had seen them in some other room. Martha strongly attacks, reminding her that she shares a room with her aunt. Only for a while Mary gets confused but her quick, cunning mind operates sharply and further she adds that it is not she but Rosalie who had seen the whole thing. Poor Rosalie has been terrorized by Mary's threats, previously, and she has been made to support Mary. Thus, the first confrontation between good and evil leads to the success of evil. Viciousness in Mary has come a full circle. Mary lies for her selfish purpose but she is unaware of the destructive repercussions. Both the teachers are, thus, forced to leave the school and undergo a libel suit.

Karen and Martha are totally under the spell of evil. They are as if excommunicated since they have confined themselves in a vacant school. They are publicly branded and have fears that they will be "pariahs." The case against them has been lost by them. Perhaps, at this trying time Mrs. Mortar's help would have saved these teachers from blasphemy but instead she moves around at the time and all the 'appeal telegrams' are left unanswered. She returns when the situation is beyond control. Mrs. Mortar's pseudo sympathy towards Martha is futile and nauseating on the part of Martha. Out of disgust Martha asks her to go away and here Mrs. Mortar plays the role of a bystander who watches the destruction without interfering in it.

Apparently, sympathy towards them is shown by Joe. He has planned to take both Karen and Martha away to Vienna. But Martha refuses to accompany them. Joe's apparent sympathy has a shade of suspicion. Although Joe is showering all his love and favours, somewhere in the corner of his mind a suspicion lurks. Karen is well aware of it therefore she feels it useless to

continue the relationship. She knows that their relationship will be painful, not natural and joyous, she prefers to break up as she is convinced, by now, that their relationship has no future. In turn Martha gets hurt by the news of their separation. Poor Martha has been entrapped in her own emotional chaos. She gets panic and finally confesses that she loved Karen 'the way they said'.

For Karen the reality is very hard to accept. She does not understand how to tackle the matter so she requests Martha to go inside and lie down. Indirectly it becomes the predicament of Martha, she goes inside and after a few minutes she shoots herself and suicides. The real 'mover and shaker' Mary passes by easily without looking back what havoc she has created so far.

Confrontation of Good and Evil in the Play :

The Children's Hour reflects evil in various forms such as blackmail, lie, passivity, extortion, hatred, atrocity, domination, lie, self-righteous judgments, hegemony, etc. Good in various forms confront evil at various levels. We will now see the confrontation of good and evil in the play by examining closely the lives of characters.

Evil in Mary :

Mary is at the centre of the play in such a manner that she appears like a puppeteer. The strings of two teachers' lives are in her hands. She plays with them at her feel and at last lets them loose when things are beyond control. She dominates the first two acts with her cunning and guiles. Like a sorceress she entraps the teachers in an inescapable web. Her apparently petty lie destroys everything that comes in its way. She proves to be a perverse child and a vicious maid. Evil in Mary has been proved by her tremendous capacity of lying. Mary's satanic, invocative sting is neglected by the society members as they take it to be a moralistic one. W. E. Bigsby thinks that Mary represents 'simple malignity' which "...functions rather too unambiguously in the play, a malevolence which exists not so much as a psychological truth; as an image of implacable hostility which is then compounded by those incapable of conceiving the existence of pure evil."⁵

In the words of Atkinson Mary is “a miniature genius of wickedness.”⁶ Whereas R. C. Reynolds believes that Mary has potential of evil she can “spread suspicion and destroy anyone or anything she wants to in the name of morality .”⁷

At the revival of the play Hellman commented on Mary’s character in the following words :

On the stage a person is twice as villainous, as, say in a novel. When I read that story I thought of the child as neurotic, sly, but not utterly malignant creature which playgoers see in her.... In her case I saw her as a bad character but never outside life. It’s the result of her lie that makes her so dreadful. This really is not a play about lesbianism, but about a lie. The bigger the lie the better, as always.⁸

It is obvious that Hellman strongly believes that evil cannot be put out of life. It exists along with good, hence, the confrontation is inevitable. Martha’s half-felt realization regarding her feelings towards Karen has been cleared because of the lie. Martha has been prompted to analyse her feelings and by the end of the play she admits that there has been something wrong and she loved Karen therefore she resented her marriage. The realization proves to be devastatingly destructive that takes away the life of Martha and, though Karen survives the shock, her life becomes meaningless.

The confrontation of good and evil, here, arises due to Mary’s superego which is diseased and corrupt. It overpowers righteous way of life. All her expressions of aggression and all her forms of tyranny and dominance are the outcome of her too much self-importance which is reared by other ‘not so evil looking’ characters like Mrs. Tilford and Mrs. Mortar. She treats various characters in different ways. She manipulates Rosalie’s weakness of stealing bracelet as a weapon against Rosalie, to bend her according to her

will. According to R. C. Reynolds, Mary's character has an allegorical significance. At one level she imitates her elders,

...but on another level, Mary symbolizes something more than simply a particularly evil child who uses violence and threats to get her way. She also stands for something pernicious in society, an element which is innocently disguised as "right" but in reality is utterly destructive. It can spread suspicion and destroy anyone or anything it wants to in the name of morality.⁹

Hellman accuses society as a guilty factor, responsible for the total doom of innocence and the pseudo ethical values fostered in the minds of the society members. Reynolds further adds about the wrong ethical values that "make them unable to justify right and wrong, good and evil judiciously. Evil, in the society always, forces its way into positions of trust among the conservative stratum of the social order and perverts whatever Good it finds there."¹⁰

Confrontation between the Good and the Evil Forces :

Both, Karen and Martha, try to confront the evil force of the society as if they swim against the forceful stream and consequently get drowned to the abysmal depth. Their efforts to fight back the accusations turn futile. Judith Olauson comments in the following words: "...the two women seem to personify Hellman's view of the hopeless struggles of human beings who contend against evils, as well as the unresolved incapacities of human nature, particularly women's nature with society."¹¹

In fact it is a struggle between self-established value system of the society, and truly moral system observed by the teachers. Eli Sagan says :

The norms of society may insist ...a perfect resolution of conflicting needs. If the value system within society always includes many elements of morality the crucial question

becomes one of degree. To what degree does the system give satisfaction to moral impulses and to what degree to their opposite? Moral progress can be defined as an increase in the degree to which moral needs are expressed within the system of values.¹²

Evil in the form of maliciousness of the child is just a beginning. Only lie would have been futile if the elders in the play had been judicious and sympathetic. If they had tried to dig out the truth, the force of evil in Mary would have been nullified. On the contrary, evil in Mary is instigated because the pseudo sense of justice in Mrs. Tilford and the parents has been replaced by hasty unreasonable judgements. Mrs. Tilford's decision to remove the teachers is not only merciless but also insane; her suggestions to parents to take away their daughters from school, her attempt to convince Joe not to marry Karen for her having unnatural relationship with Martha, which consequently results in Joe and Karen's break-up, Martha's shocking revelation about her true nature are the factors responsible for the final destruction. Faith, love, sanctity are the basic factors which lie at the bottom of every good relationship, but all these values become hollow in the contact of evil. Mary's evil goes beyond logical human understanding, in addition to it the irresponsible attitude of the elders widens the gap that leads to destruction of the teachers' lives.

Mrs. Tilford and Mrs. Mortar's Inertia as a Form of Evil :

The confrontation is obviously seen in the case of Mary and other good characters but evil in Mrs. Tilford and Mrs. Mortar is realized by them when things are beyond control. Lily Mortar is the decisive factor in the tragedy of Martha. When blame of destruction goes to Mary, Lily Mortar's instinct to lie has been neglected so far. Her lie is at the basis of the destruction which prompts Mary to carry it forward. Lily's timely arrival at the time of libel suit would have saved Martha's life, but she returns far later. Likewise, Mrs. Tilford, who supports evil in Mary, comes to her senses when the

Bracelet of Helen is found in Rosalie's room. The realization, 'how evil Mary is!', dawns, she hurries back to Karen to her help by making a public apology, but, again, time can not be reversed. Though Mary remains unharmed in this tumult, both these women get punished for their negligence. Karen suggests Mrs. Tilford to send the child away, who has something wrong in her, quite helplessly Mrs. Tilford says, "No I could never do that. Whatever she does, it must be to me and no one else" and Karen very curtly points out "Yes your very own, to live with the rest of your life... It's over for me now, but it will never end for you. She's harmed us both, but she's harmed you more, I guess... I'm sorry" (68).

Various Forms of Evil :

Evil in Mary reflects in various forms, i. e., lies, pretexts, blackmail, scandal mongering, atrocity and threatening. She can harm the good characters mentally and physically. She is a thorough vicious character. She knows how to manipulate weakness of morally feeble characters to accomplish her selfish purpose. She bullies Rosalie and tries to bend her according to her whim as she knows Rosalie is not strong enough to fight back because Rosalie has stolen the bracelet. When she comes to know about the weakness in Martha, she takes advantage of the overheard conversation and destroys her life. She is a coarser, a flatterer, a blackmailer and, in a way, a destroyer. She has the element which

...often forces its way into position of trust among the conservative stratum of the social order and perverts whatever it finds there, Mary points out a particularly sinister aspect of :the enemy within" – it's childlike quality – which evokes trust and even pity from those who are duped by it.¹³

Lily Mortar's symbolic comment, "one master passion in the breast, swallows all the rest" (9) is perfectly applicable to Mary's passion to lie that has shattered everything that is innocent and beautiful.

Confrontation at Different Levels :

The play describes confrontation of good and evil at different levels. As we see it in the pairs; Karen Wright – Mary Tilford, Martha Dobbie – Lily Mortar and Amelia Tilford – Wright and Dobbie. In the cases of Mary, Mrs. Tilford and Mrs. Mortar there is one common vice and that is mercilessness. Hellman believes that mercy is the ultimate good, whereas merciless cruelty is the ultimate evil. These characters tend to be narcissists, and indulge in themselves extensively. This generates in them carelessness towards others which accelerates panic. To juxtapose mercilessness in them, at the very outset of the play Hellman has quoted Portia's famous speech on mercy. Peggy is reading out the passage :

...it is twice blest; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes;
it's mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes the throned monarch
better than his crown; his sceptre shows the force of temporal
power, the attribute to awe and majesty, wherein... doth sit the
dread and fear of kings; but mercy is above this sceptred sway,
it is enthroned in the hearts of kings, it is an attribute to God
himself. (14)

This plea for mercy ironically juxtaposes cruelty of these self-indulgent characters.

Karen-Mary Confrontation :

Karen tries to confront Mary in a righteous way. Mary's lies are realized by Karen, so she accuses her for bringing flower from garbage and presenting them to Mrs. Mortar as fresh flowers. It becomes the initial cause of Mary's anger. To put Mary on a righteous way Karen uses the device of punishment. She does not allow her to take recreation periods for two weeks and removes her roommate, Evelyn, from her room and compels to live with Rosalie whom Mary cannot tolerate. She has been ordered 'not to move' the grounds for any reason, she has been forbidden to participate in hockey, horse

back riding, etc. To Mary's dismay she has been punished to follow these orders not only on weekdays but on all days and this thing makes Mary feel persecuted.

Instead of confronting directly with Karen, Mary seeks refuge under the shelter of Mrs. Tilford. Very cunningly she twists the situation and complains against Karen. She tells her grandmother how everybody treats her in the school and punishes for every little thing she does and how they do not pay attention to her 'heart problems'. At last she sets out to take her revenge and accuses Karen and Martha to be lesbians. This cruelty in Mary arises when she feels insulted and frustrated. Erich Fromm feels that this kind of violence is "produced by frustration. We find aggressive behaviour in animals, children, and adults when a wish or a need is frustrated. Such aggressive behaviour constitutes an attempt to attain the frustrated aim through the use of violence. It is clearly an aggression in the service of life, and not one for the sake of destruction."¹⁵ Though Mary's violence is not physical, here, in every case it is undoubtedly a shattering one. Karen somehow survives her aggressiveness but her survival becomes meaningless. Cruelty in Mary is provoked due to Mary's self-indulgent nature. Karen is performing the role of a responsible teacher but Mary fails to understand the good aspect of her character due to her extraneous self-importance.

Martha-Mrs. Mortar Confrontation :

In the case of Martha and Mrs. Mortar's confrontation, Mrs. Mortar passes by causing destruction. A true despoiler, Mrs. Mortar, is not as reckless as Mary, but she shares a common thing with Mary, i. e. lying. She goes on fabricating stories about her acting career. Therefore, according to Karen and Martha, she is unfit as a teacher in their dream school. Very plainly Martha asks Mrs. Mortar to leave the school. This is an unexpected thing for her, so she makes a plea for mercy but Martha and Karen are very keen to inculcate good values in the students. So Martha sternly asks her to leave the school, not allowing her to stay any longer. She requests Martha not to remove her until she makes some other arrangement. But Martha gives importance to her values. Her stern behaviour towards Mrs. Mortar hurts her, out of frustration

Mrs. Mortar accuses Martha for the treatment she gives to her. Her patience is broken and her blasphemous accusation further becomes predicament of Martha.

Victim-Victimizer Syndrome :

In the initial stage, Mary and Mrs. Mortar feel that they are victimized and Karen and Martha are victimizers. In the course of time the former victimizers become victims. Mrs. Amelia Tilford, too, becomes victimizer, she does every evil thing that she can against the teachers. At Amelia Tilford's house both of them make plea for mercy but all in vein. Both try to confront evil by retaliating the accuses, they think they are unjustly persecuted. They are so baffled by the enigmatic situation that they try very hard to analyse the things. They ask "what is she trying to do to us? What is everyone doing to us?...You're not playing with paper dolls, we're human beings, see? It's our lives you're fooling with. Our lives" (53).

But the efforts to overcome the accusations are so futile that the victimizers around them remain unmoved. In the confrontation against evil, good can not make any harm physically or morally, because it is essentially good. What such good characters can do at the most is to confront evil with the weapon of words, by threatening them about the repercussions as it is reflected in the following sentence : "What can we do to you? There must be something – Something that makes you feel the way we do tonight. You don't want any part of this, you said. But you'll get a part. More than you bargained it for" (55).

Through such confrontations two things regarding establishing evil come forth. As Dob Leonard points out :

there are two criteria for establishing evil. One is psychological, the other social or moral : psychological, a condition in which one or more persons experience pain, unhappiness, frustration, or other negative, aversive feelings : social-moral, a condition in which aversive feelings or the

cushions of one or more persons are considered undesirable by one or more judges within or outside the victims' own society and sometimes also by the victim or victims themselves. Included in this criterion is a condition in which the feelings or actions for one or more persons are judged to threaten either the security or existence or one or more of its basic values.¹⁶

It is applicable to both, Karen and Martha.

Passivity as a Form of Evil :

Lillian Hellman has strong abomination for such social groups which do nothing except spreading rumours and spoiling individuals. She is concerned with the universal problem of human evil, gossip and scandal mongering. Shocking power of gossip and the diseased nature of evil make Lillian restless. What she hates most is the members of the society who indulge so much in self righteousness that they are not ready to analyse what the truth is. According to Judith Olauson,

The ascendance of the wickedness which springs from the lie of child is weighed against the descending capacity for the truth to survive, with relentless momentum, deception outbalances truth and the irreparable damage is done to the two main characters.¹⁷

Thus passivity of the society members plays a pivotal role in the predicament of the two teachers, though, it is not evil in its purest form, it accelerates evil in others. Aunt Lily Mortar is the social stereotype of passivity and Mary is her "periodic distortion".¹⁸ When the play opens Lily and school girls are involved in a 'great show of doing nothing.' Peggy reads a speech on mercy and very deliberately three lines regarding salvation are omitted. It is a foreshadow of Lily Mortar's absence when the case is opened

and Karen and Martha have been accused. Martha, in the end of the play, has been forced to accept that she was fonder of Karen in an unnatural way as the words of Mrs. Mortar create adverse effect on her. They appear as canny truths, before suicide Martha admits “I love you that way – may be the way they said” (62).

In the same way, Mary and Mrs. Tilford play their cunning and keep themselves aloof from the final scene and let the teachers meet their doom. Mary is not mentioned in the last act which is a typical example of social passivity. Joseph Krutch Wood points out :

...the whole of the dramatic interest is centred upon the perverse child, and the only real concern of the audience is with her. At this point, however, she completely disappears from the play... Moreover, all the real tension has developed around her.¹⁹

Though Mrs. Tilford appears in the last act, her appearance does not mend the matters. Likewise, the role of Joe Cardin is nonetheless passive. Never does he take strong stand against the accusations. Indirectly, he also remains a bystander, who lets things happen without any remedy. Moreover, Joe is ready to accept Karen but only half-heartedly. Though he tries to show sympathy towards the teachers, suspicion lurks in his mind about their relationship. And perhaps this is the last jurk that Martha receives. After this realization, within a few minutes, Martha commits suicide. Mary, Amelia Tilford and Lily Mortar are the representatives of social passivity. They are bystanders, who watch the destruction in a moral disguise.

Passivity of Mrs. Mortar as a form of Evil :

Confrontation of good and evil has been pointed out by deliberate use of various devices, i. e., dialogues, characterization, descriptions and actions, which are typically applicable to the types. The way Lily Mortar speaks and fabricates the stories regarding her theatrical career, vividly represents her deceptive nature. As Mary Ann Broe puts it :

She makes her career out of absence, omission and inadvertence. Living in the days of steamer trunks and road shows, Lily has made theatrics her domain, chatter her trademark. For Lily the natural thing is the socially customary, courtesy a mere matter of breeding, passivity an unconscious and uncritical way of life.²⁰

The description of students and their speech also has symbolic significance, all the arts of womanhood become useless. At the curtain rise Lily Mortar is sitting in a large chair with her eyes closed and her dress is too fanciful for a classroom to indicate her inappropriateness in this scenario. She is a misfit as a teacher in the dream school of Karen and Martha. The girls are in the sewing class, some of them are sewing but with no great industry. A girl, Evelyn Munn, is using her scissors to trim hair of Rosalie, whose head is bent back at an awkward angle. This hair cutting is as irregular as Latin verbs are conjugated and Peggy Rogers is reading in a singsong tired voice. All these actions suggest 'nothing to do' attitude, which, indirectly, has been encouraged by Lily Mortar.

Mary – Mrs. Mortar : An Analogy

Hellmann uses dialogues very deliberately to establish evil in Mary. Mary is a bully and a liar. Her dialogues regarding missing bracelet, allowance money, broken vase and flowers, fake heart problem are the forceful scenes with concrete dialogues. Her vicious actions, further, help in establishing her as an evil character, e. g., arm twisting scene establishes her as a perfect bully.

In the same way, dialogues of Mrs. Mortar have been engineered very effectively. The way Mrs. Mortar gives references of her glorious past and of Sir Henry Irving, it is obvious that Hellman is successful in establishing impression of rottenness. Though Mary and Lily Mortar are off stage, they are always the subject of discussion. Hellman has given great importance to character building, especially in the case of evil characters. Whereas both the teachers, who are the embodiment of good, are characterized slowly.

Readers sympathize with the good characters who unnecessarily get entangled in the web woven by the vicious characters. But Hellman herself doesn't want that readers should sympathize with those who are weak to confront evil forcefully. As Doris Falk observes :

The war between forces of good and evil, with evil the victor, in *The Children's Hour*, had made for a tightly constructed series of conflicts, crises, and resolutions... in Hellman's scheme, ignorance is not excuse – sad, regrettable but weak, and ultimately destructive. The forces of good have no direction except muddle and neglect, and the only reward of such failure is a dim self-insight, when it is too late to reform²¹

The comment indicates muddled Martha, who has no direction but has only 'a dim self insight.' Same is the case with Mrs. Tilford. Mary's viciousness comes to be known quite late. She also is muddled in the initial stage. Only at the end of the play she acquires new insight.

Repercussions of the Confrontation :

Hellman's good characters are either defeated or drummed as they are weak to fight back the evil force. Martha commits suicide and Karen loses everything. The problem, instead of getting resolved, enhances after Martha's death. Because hereafter the nauseatic feeling of the relationship will always ache Karen's mind. Even if play ends on an optimistic note one is not sure that

her relationship with Joe will be the same as before. Joe has almost lost Karen's love as is revealed in the following dialogues:

MRS. TILFORD. You and Joe

KAREN. No we're not together anymore.

MRS. TILFORD. Did I do that too?

KAREN. I don't think anyone did anything, anymore.

MRS. TILFORD. But he must know what I know, Karen. You must go back to him.

KAREN. No, not anymore.

MRS. TILFORD. You must, you must... perhaps later, Karen?

KAREN. Perhaps.(68)

Mrs. Tilford also is shattered to know what harm she has created. She can not send away Mary anywhere. She has to live with the guilt and with Mary, too. Though things have ended for Karen, at least to some extent, they have not for Mrs. Tilford. Mary has harmed everyone, but she has harmed Mrs. Tilford to a greater extent. Mrs. Tilford loses self-respect so does Lily Mortar. All the school girls lose the happy joyful atmosphere at the school, moreover they lose the school itself. Mrs. Tilford's maid, Agatha, who loves Mary like her own child, loses faith in Mary.

Thus, it is a tragedy from the point of view of all the good characters. As Katherine Lederer points out, the subject "is character assassination; the theme is the damage done in our world by so-called "good" people, through self-righteous judgement, selfishness, blindness to their own weakness."²²

Mary's evil motivation and psychological drives of Martha are two major factors causing tragedy of good characters. Though Hellman never claimed that she was writing a classic tragedy, the tragic effect in this play has a greater impact than any other play by Hellman has. In the tussle between good and evil, evil prospers unjustly. In the words of Doris Falk : "Her plays

are always about good and evil, and evil may seem to prosper unjustly but the actions and the strivings of the characters have meaning and consequence. Violence is there for a purpose, not for sensational effect.”²³

Hellman's rage against society is prominently reflected in the play. The women in authority like Mrs. Tilford are easily prejudiced against the common women. Ultimately such women, who are victims of the blinded evil forces, have been ruined due to wrong opinions. Thus, Hellman aims at hopeless struggle of human beings against the forces of evil. In the world full of despoilers and cruel, merciless people, the good characters like Karen and Martha have no place.

Such social injustice makes Hellman restless and creates great stir leaving permanent scars in the lives of the characters and in the minds of the readers as well. Barrett H. Clark points out the role of evil in the play in the following words :

The evil, here, as in the character of Iago, is a kind of unattached and almost meaningless power. It is like a phenomenon of nature, which can not be eradicated, hardly perhaps even dealt with. It differs from all the evils Miss Hellman has skillfully and meaningfully set forth in her later plays... since in each case the evil is shown not only to be rooted in what is understood but to be something about which it is humanly possible to take a definite stand.²⁴

Though evil is inevitable, Hellman does not want the people to submit to it. Instead of lying prostrate in front of it, she wants the good to confront it. Beneath this confrontation there lies one message : Though wrong in society is prevalent, it can be wiped out with justifiable reasoning and thus society can proceed towards betterment.

II

*Days to Come***About the Play :**

In her next play *Days to Come* Hellman repeats the same pattern which was used in the earlier play, and continued it in the following plays. The play mainly focuses on evil caused due to circumstances and how people are victimized, who are neither villains nor heroes. In the words of Barrett H. Clark :

...the old idea of individualism and the new idea of individualism for the purpose of achieving justice and human dignity... being an observer and a philosopher as well as a special pleader, knows well that in the ranks of each of the opposing forces there are those who are neither villains nor heroes, and she has been at pains to show (particularly among her reactionaries) some man or woman who has been victimized by circumstances...²⁵

Days to Come discusses confrontation of good and evil at different levels. Hellman wants to show many ideological forces that sprang from the economic turmoil of the 1930s, largely affecting human lives. Many contemporary writers tried, in their own way, to point out wreckage caused by the Depression. At the same time they appealed to socialism and communism. Hellman's *Days to Come* appears to be a political play also. It poses Marxist problems but Hellman, here, is sympathetic towards factory owners, unlike Marxists. While commenting on the central figure, Julie, and on the theme of the play Lillian Hellman says, "It is crowded and overwrought, but it is a good report of rich of a modern lost lady, and has in it a correct prediction of how conservative the American labor movement was to come."²⁶

Doris Falk also feels it to be “a brief foray into the maelstrom of class struggle.”²⁷ Timothy Wiles thinks that it “rings far truer as social history... it is her most overtly political play... virtually all her plays take on more resonance as direct depiction... set in 1930 the play ‘vividly captures the poignant local version of that breakdown.’”²⁸

A Brief Summary of the Play :

To understand confrontation of Good and Evil, the story part should be revealed at length. So, we will go through summary of the play from the point of view of confrontation between Good and Evil.

Confrontation of good and evil mainly arises due to the strike in the mill of Andrew Rodman. Julie, Andrew’s wife, a member of the ruling class, gives a point to the play. It is also a story of a brother and a sister, Andrew and Cora Rodman, who own a brush-factory in a small Ohio town. The play opens with a talk about strike. Two housemaids are talking about the problems of workers that have arisen due to the strike in the factory, their master, who has not paid the boys and how they are badly in need of money and they are not sure when the strike will be called off. Andrew Rodman has been forced to cut down wages below the poverty level.

It is a hard time for all of them. Instead of compromising with the workers Andrew Rodman has hired new strike breakers as he has been persuaded by Henry Ellicott, the lawyer, and her sister, Cora. She doesn’t like the ways of her brother. She thinks, “He’s worn himself out for no reason. Papa would have settled this strike a week ago...”(81) She does not want that her securities would be touched for the loan to meet the ends. She warns Ellicott to protect her money. The tussle between herself and her brother is caused by the lack of understanding in her. She strongly feels that Andrew has committed mistake and she is not ready to pay for his mistakes. Ellicott wants to make Cora understand that as she shares the profits, she must share the losses. But Cora plainly denies what Ellicott suggests as she wants to talk about ‘losses business’ over with Andrew. Self-centredness in Cora is the

cause of the confrontation of good and evil, as is seen in Andrew and Cora case.

Julie also proves to be another major factor responsible for the confrontation. Many a time she is seen near the strike office by Ellicott and he doesn't like her roaming so. Earlier Julie and Ellicott were engaged with each other, emotionally. But Julie's changed behaviour makes Ellicott worry about their relationship, he wants to confirm where exactly they stand. Julie very bluntly further explains that Ellicott likes civilized conversation about love 'too much' but she likes it 'too little'. She has established this relationship in the hope that there won't be any talk about it at the end. Evil in the form of adultery is seen, here, in Julie – Ellicott relationship.

As the confrontation of good and evil is seen at the subtle level in Andrew and Cora, it is also seen between evil and evil that is, in Julie and Ellicott. But very strangely, there is a confrontation between good and good also. Andrew and Firth, a mill worker and well wisher of Andrew, confront each other for certain reasons. Both of them represent good, but the odd situation has made them confront each other. Firth stands by Andrew in a lot of ways, their relationship is beyond a typical 'owner-worker' relationship. Firth represents good in every respect. Firth is a good friend of Andrew. He is loyal and has great concern for Andrew. Obviously Firth is disturbed to know that a trainload of strike breakers has come through Callon junction. For Firth it is hard to believe that Andrew has called these strikebreakers because he firmly believes that Andrew does not know such things. So, along with Whalen, a labour organizer, he appears at Andrew's place to know the fact. Andrew tries hard to explain why he has taken such a difficult decision. Though Leo Whalen shows a telegram from his friend from Cleveland ascertaining arrival of the strikebreaker, it is still difficult for Firth to believe in the news he believes that Andrew is innocent.

When it is confirmed that Andrew has really called the strikebreakers, Firth's faith in Andrew gets shattered. Andrew's explanation regarding the decision is overheard by Firth. Andrew tries to show the figures of losses but Firth does not want to see it. Goodness in Andrew does not allow him to

compromise with the quality of the product, so he cannot sell it out at cheaper rate. Even Firth does not like it that way and Andrew has got to sell the products, therefore, he wants to break the strike. Very broad mindedly Andrew explains the fact to Firth and asks him to suggest a way out which he will accept readily. He knows that he “can’t stay in business losing it this way or they would be out in another year” (86). So he has to cut down the wages of workers and that becomes the cause of turmoil. Though Firth understands the problem, he does not realize why there is such a big cut. According to him they can not live on ‘forty-cent piecework’. Besides, the fear of taking away their jobs by the strikebreakers lies beneath the confrontation. Andrew’s helplessness makes him call the strikebreakers but it grossly affects the relationship of the owner and the workers. The ringing note of the great havoc created due to the depression is found, here.

Whalen appears as a mediator, who wants to settle down the matters. He is a well wisher of the workers and from the bottom of his heart he wishes that the conflict should be settled down without causing harm to anybody. So he asks Andrew to give the workers their sixty-cent hour and the workers will be back to their work in no time. In fact, Andrew is unable to pay them that much salary. Whalen’s confrontation with Andrew suggests confrontation of good with another good. Whereas Whalen’s confrontation with the four strikebreakers stands for the confrontation of good and evil. Though depression had created an unbridgeable gap between the workers and the owners, in some cases, the owners performed the role of a patron, they used to cater for the needs of the workers, though they were on strike. In the play, Hannah, the housemaid supplies the canned food from Rodman’s kitchen to the workers on the strike and Andrew neglects it even though Cora complains. There are bystanders like Julie who has no concern for anyone. Julie does not care for her husband’s problems or even those of the workers. The strikebreakers are villainous characters who create mess in the house but Julie has nothing to do with that. In spite of heavy rain and cold she goes out without indulging in the strike matter.

Most of the characters do not realize the basic urge that is required in relations. Julie and Cora are such characters, who have nothing to do with the problems, feelings or emotions of the persons who are very close to them or who are dependent upon them, emotionally. Andrew feels lonely and needs company of Julie but she fails to realize his emotional need. Julie's drabness towards Andrew creates emotional stir. Julie's suggestion to settle the strike as it is not good for Andrew and as she feels that who wins is not important is an example of Julie's detachment towards everything. Andrew, also, is not interested in winning the game but he himself does not know where his place in the whole thing is. He loves only two things – Julie and the town. Though Andrew is badly in need of a warm talk and he expresses it so to Julie, she can't stay and listen because she wants to talk to herself.

The workers like Firth represent genuine good. Even though they do not have enough to eat they worry about Whalen's 'stomach'. The strikebreakers want that workers should indulge in physical tussle so they invoke the workers to fight but Whalen instructs them not to do so. The workers maintain their patience but the strikebreakers try to dominate them which, consequently, enrages the workers. The strikebreakers want to hurt them and their family members physically. Firth understands their intention to hurt his child so that the strikers may break their patience and confront them. A time comes when Firth really loses his temper and he says, "I'll kill'em if they ever go near my girl again. I'll kill'em –" (104) Whalen being an outsider and a peacemaker, knows the evil strategies of the strikebreakers. He tries to explain how the strikebreakers are playing viciously against them and requests the workers to remain quiet because he feels the longer they remain quiet the sooner they will win and Wilkie, the chief of the strikebreakers, wants them to fight amongst them.

Confrontation of good and evil thickens when Julie goes to see Whalen. First of all, Whalen supposes that she has been there to give him bribe but she explains that she has been there not for any purpose but for herself as she wants to stay with him for a while, Whalen gets baffled. Later he mellows down when he understands Julie's reason of coming to see

him. After a friendly talk when Julie is about to leave, Whalen asks her not to mention anywhere about their meeting. At the very moment they listen the noise of a car and sharp grinding of its gears. As Whalen goes out to find out what the noise is about, he returns in a dejected mood and tells Julie that a dead body of a strikebreaker has been planted in the alley to get somebody in troubles, maybe Whalen, Firth or some other worker. He immediately phones Firth and asks him to stay where he is and not to worry about him and not to fight with Wilkie. Whalen's courage to confront evil is noteworthy. He now and then warns Firth to get ready 'to do nothing' as he will be in jail for some time. Thus, he gets ready to accept the consequences.

Wilkie's accusation regarding Mossie Dowels' murder is an indication of his evil intention to entrap Whalen in the case. Because he does not want interference of Whalen in the strike affair. Even Ellicott does not like it because if Whalen gets successful in settling down the problem between the workers and Andrew, Ellicott's efforts would have turned futile. Wilkie doesn't like it as he wants to give job to the strikebreakers. Thus everyone has his own interest in removing Whalen from the scene. When Julie returns and tells about the dead body laid outside the place of Whalen, Wilkie threatens Julie not to tell it to Andrew and police. He further tries to twist the story because he has fears that Julie will reveal the truth and his plan to entrap Whalen will be shattered. Very cunningly he threatens Julie that policemen will make a story that Mosie caught Julie and Whalen together, so Whalen killed him, and when the strikers will find out that Whalen has been 'carrying on with' the boss's wife they may not tolerate it. Thus, Wilkie is successful in threatening Julie and she is shattered, completely.

When these vicious people are plotting against Andrew, he himself holds responsible for the death of Dowel. Guilty conscience in Andrew makes him think that he has pushed them into it. So he requests Wilkie to leave the place at once but Wilkie refuses to do so as his man has been murdered and he thinks that it is his responsibility to take care of the matters. Confrontation of good and evil can be clearly witnessed in this matter. When Andrew is least

responsible for the murder he supposes that he is behind all these things whereas Wilkie tries to manipulate the situation for his selfish purpose.

Andrew's deep concern towards workers makes him visit the workers' lane but he gets thoroughly disturbed to see the changed atmosphere and changed behaviour of the workers. The conflict has been stopped and there is a kind of ominous peaceness. Andrew's concern towards the workers makes him restless and the feeling of helplessness engrosses him. But Julie has nothing to do with that as she is worried about Whalen. When she comes to know that he is in jail she starts nagging Andrew. She accuses him for starting up all this. Helpless Andrew explains that there are many reasons but money is the biggest cause of all, the money which has been borrowed from Henry Ellicott. For the first time Julie comes to know about the borrowed money and she says, "I didn't know any of that.... There are a lot of things we don't know about each other" and Andrew's reply "I suppose so darling. That's the way with most marriages. I guess" (117). This particular dialogue aims at their frustrated marital relationship.

Andrew's selflessness and Julie's selfishness are reflected when Julie breaks her silence and tells Andrew that the previous night she was with Whalen. Julie's exposition regarding the visit is not out of guilt, it is because she knows that only Andrew will rescue Whalen from the jail. And good hearted Andrew, in turn, says that she should have tried earlier to get him out and asks her to ring up the judge, Alcott. He himself requests the judge to let Whalen out of jail. In spite of Julie's adultery, Andrew maintains his calm. Instead of getting angry with her, he promptly helps Whalen.

The confrontation of good and evil at different levels does not create much harm except emotional stir. But the confrontation of strikebreakers and the workers turns into violence and it becomes lethal, taking away life of an innocent child. The breathtaking depiction of what went between the two groups reveals how out of blind rage Firth's daughter has been killed. The strikebreakers hit his daughter at the back of her head pretending that the child threw a brick at them. Firth's heartrending mourning and Andrew's helplessness to repair the thing is an indication of the havoc created by the

toxic turmoil. Both of them are aware that this is not their way of life. The amount of disorder the fight has caused is beyond repair. At the end Firth implores Andrew to get the strike breakers out and they will go back to work. More than scarcity, repercussions of turmoil break Firth's determination. He compromises, not with Andrew, but with the situation.

After the release from jail, Whalen's attitude towards Firth and Julie is an unexpected one. Firth's account of killing has been taken as a matter-of-fact by Whalen, which, in turn, enrages Firth. The evil motif of Willie to make workers and strikebreakers fight has been understood by both Whalen and Andrew, and Firth also realizes what mistakes they have committed so far. Firth resumes to his genuine personality, i. e., loyalty and concern towards his master and requests him to remain away from 'down town' for a while.

Ellicott, the decisive factor behind all the warfare, has been rebuked by Julie for creating all the fuss. Wilkie's motif also gets frustrated due to the failure of the mission. Wilkie leaves the place and Ellicott, pretending to be innocent, declares that he is leaving the place the same night. True nature of various characters has been revealed in the last scene. Julie's confession regarding her liking for Whalen and her eagerness to know him shocks Andrew and Ellicott. Cora tells her brother that Julie has been doing all these things for years. Cora tries to point out the relationship of Julie and Ellicott but the answer given by Julie to Andrew regarding her behaviour is stunning.

The revelation reminds Regina's exposition in *The Little Foxes* of her feelings towards her husband, Horace. But in Horace's case, it proves to be breathtaking. On the contrary, Andrew takes it broadmindedly. He says that she has done nothing to him. Cora viciously tries to impose on Andrew that Julie has 'broken' Andrew and that is why he owes money. He has spent money on the needs of her family, her trips, and her clothes. But Julie is unaware of the fact. She always has the impression that they had plenty.

Julie asks Andrew whether he wants divorce from her but again exhibiting his genuine goodness he says he doesn't want divorce and gives her freedom to choose her own way. Very frankly he says that she has choice to

go anywhere she likes or she can stay with him as his wife and whatever he owns, half of it is hers. Julie is speechless and leaves the room and the matter ends on a reconciliatory note.

Confrontation of Good and Evil in the Play :

Days to Come mainly depicts evil caused due to the Great Depression. Hence, confrontation of good and evil arises as the characters face scarcity of money. So, money is the main evil aspect here. Along with money, blackmail, opportunism, adultery, deception, killing, hatred, self-centredness and manipulation are the other forms of evil. And to understand these a thorough analysis of various characters and incidents is necessary.

In *The Children's Hour*, the evil doers are well-intentioned. In spite of knowing what harm they are doing, they continue doing their malicious deeds but in the words of Hellman : “evil this time is in the hands of people who don't understand it.”²⁹ The play is not based on any particular incident but she has taken classic struggle of 1930 as a background to it. There is ‘cause-effect’ relationship between the characters’ lives and the public events of their time. Hellman herself comments on the play in the following manner :

There's never been any hard feeling between the owners and the workers....Until hard times came along, and there is a strike. It's the family I'm interested in primarily; the strike and social manifestations are just backgrounds. It's a story of innocent people on both sides who are drawn into conflict and events far beyond they can not stop, a parallel among adults to what I did with children in *The Children's Hour*.³⁰

Andrew's Confrontation with the Evil Forces :

Though all the characters are victims of social upheaval they can be categorized into two groups, viz. good and evil. Andrew, Firth and Hannah are genuinely good characters, whereas Ellicott, Cora, Wilkie and the

strikebreakers belong to the other category. The good in Andrew has been crushed between evil in his friend Ellicott and whimsicality of Julie. Ellicott forces Andrew to borrow money from himself and later on watches the things getting worse without much interference : ‘He is the foxiest of little foxes’³¹ On the contrary Andrew is virtuous. He has love for his men and his wife, he loves his town and even his business as it is revealed in the following speech :

I’ve only loved two things in my whole life : you and this town, Papa never loved it. He just wanted to be bozo and get to Carsland for the season. But my grandfather loved it. I think the way I do. Remember how I never wanted to go to Europe or to anyplace else – even when you want? This was my home, these were my people. I didn’t want much else.... (100)

This ardent love of Andrew for these things is the outcome of his point of view of looking at the things, he never finds any negative aspect in anything. He is unaware of the darker side of life until ‘scoundrel time’ comes in his life. The strike and the things after are eye-openers for him. He encounters many facts but unfortunately they are then beyond his control or repair. He becomes a victim of brutalities of the system which he has always taken as a liberal and an idealistic one. He realizes that he has been “the delicate prince in his ivory tower, carefully protected from the dust and din of battle.”³² Earlier he has looked at life quite positively without finding any fault in it. He thinks the world to be full of righteous people but when he comes to know the harsh reality of life, he is shattered. Though he tries his best to humanize the brutal ways of life he fails to do so.

He lives in the world of idealistic moralism and thinks everything can go according to his pious way. He has a wrong notion that he can control the sense of alienation in Julie by his sense of moral purpose. As Bigshy puts it :

...the inadequacy of such a stance, the incubus of anarchy concealed beneath apparent order, is symbolized here, as in Fitzgerald's book, by the wife's adultery. And he is left at the end of the play discarded by history, and displaced from the comfortable world he had imagined himself to inhabit...³³

Thus, Andrew has been forced to confront blackmail, adultery and even riot against his ideology. The very better half, Julie, fails to understand him and even fails to establish fair relationship with the fair soul.

Self-centredness of Julie as a form of Evil :

Julie is a self-indulgent and totally indifferent about Andrew's problems and feelings. At the time of crisis when Andrew is badly in need of her emotional support, she straightway refuses. She simply says – "I need help myself.... I want to talk to myself. I want help, too" (100). In other words the self-centredness of Julie is nothing else but the victimization of Andrew. And idle neurotic woman takes revenge upon Andrew by establishing extra-marital relationship with Ellicott and later on tries to go close to Whalen which, in turn, becomes a vein effort. Through her psycho-analytical speech the reason of her neurotic behaviour has been revealed. Perhaps that is the central cause of all evil that takes place in the life of Andrew. Andrew's bankruptcy has been caused due to Julie, as Cora accuses her for that. Most of Andrew's money has been spent either on her luxuries or on her family which leads Andrew towards economic crunch. The confrontation, here, takes place at emotional level.

The assault by Julie is non-lethal but it has power to shatter fine, pious relations. Julie is aimless and her indulgence in extra-marital relationship is established without much deliberation. She fails to develop mutual relation of understanding. Her love for Whalen and the hesitant confession of the man's attraction towards her, her love scene with Whalen, etc. seem obscure and blurs the outline of the story. It leads readers away from the serious problem that is evil caused due to scarcity. According to Barrett H. Clark it is uncalled

for : “While such things are always happening in life and are always spoiling the pattern which tidy minded artist must weave to make themselves articulate, they are too likely to lead us into bypaths, away from the main issue.”³⁴

Cora-Andrew Confrontation :

As for Cora, she is a lay figure “the symbol of all that was blind and cruel among the economic royalties who produced her.”³⁵ What Andrew is, Cora is not. If Andrew is an embodiment of good qualities, Cora is of evil. She is idle, self-centred, cynic, neurotic and vicious by nature. The evil in her is represented by her too much self-indulgence. Critics compare her with Regina in *The Little Foxes* and Lily Mortar in *The Children’s Hour*. Cora is a “thin, nervous looking woman” (76). Her nervousness has turned into cynicisms at all levels in the play. She takes keen interest in what her servants do and goes on nagging them for no reason. The level of self-respect in her is so high that it blinds her to look at her fellow beings with the same respect. She hates not only Julie but also her own brother, Andrew. Being a spinster, her unfulfilled desires are reflected through her hatred towards these two.

She has no concern for the problems faced by Andrew. Instead of sharing the agony created by the problem of strike, she remains quite aloof, criticizing Andrew for everything. When Andrew is restless due to the strike and cannot sleep, he walks up and down in the library all night. Being his sister Cora should have understood his problem but on the contrary she complains : “I shall have to move my room if he doesn’t stop walking up and down in the library all night. I sleep badly enough anyway and if a pin drops it wakes me. I have always been like that...”(79).

She neither believes in what Andrew does, nor does she want to help him financially. When Julie says to Andrew “you look so tired” (80) Cora’s remark on that is : “Certainly he looks tired. He’s worn himself out for no reason. Papa would have settled this strike weeks ago” (81). Or when Ellicott tries to explain it to her that she owns factory as much as Andrew does and as she shares the profit, she must share the losses, too. She plainly asks, “Why should I pay for Andrew’s mistakes? If we’d been able to make him do this

three weeks ago.... And I shall eat just as much as I please. Just as much as I please” (81). The evil in Cora is again non-lethal but it definitely has potential to shatter a sensitive mind. She is a frustrated spinster and a caricature of the snobbish, greedy, idle rich. Hellman, in the introduction to *Four Plays* says that she had known “prototypes of these characters and had hated the sister, Cora.”³⁶

She is a woman with little knowledge who possesses certain wrong notions. She firmly believes that caesarian operation takes place when woman is under age. She has craving for sensational things. She says to one of the strikebreakers, “I like to see a nice little card game. Do you know that nightclub singer who got killed in the paper. This morning?”(97). It hints at the rotten mentality of the so-called sophisticated but good for nothing who has neither aim to live nor any engagement to fulfill the aim. Andrew and Julie confront her at different levels. Julie does not tolerate sarcastic remarks of Cora but Andrew does not retaliate. Without creating much fuss he accepts every situation and even Cora’s sarcasm. In this confrontation Andrew has to subdue as he knows that the efforts to confront are futile.

Henry-Andrew Confrontation :

Henry Ellicott, who is behind all the turmoil, confronts Andrew but it is not realized by Andrew. Very secretly Ellicott gnaws down the long bred relationship between himself and Andrew. He deceives Andrew and establishes relationship with Julie. Ellicott is the most vicious character of all the characters, possessing evil intention all the time. He always sees the things from his point of view. Plotting and scheming are the major parts of his life. Corrupt by nature, he convinces Andrew to take loan from him and prompts him to call upon strikebreakers to break the strike.

After giving ignition to destruction, despoilers like himself and Cora watch the destruction calmly without interfering it. They are aware of the distortion caused because of them, perhaps, they like the things that way. For his selfish purpose he manipulates Andrew and takes undue advantage of his simplicity. In the end of the play he realizes what he has done so far and just

says sorry and passes by as if nothing has happened. Initially his role is that of a despoiler and then he plays the role of a bystander. When the things are beyond repair he skips aside and watches the destruction very coldly.

Firth-Andrew Confrontation :

Firth, the faithful worker, reminds one of the feudal loyalty of Chekhov's Firs. The play gives us a realistic picture of benevolent paternalism of the owners and the unquestioning loyalty of the workers. Though the workers were on strike, as owners could not pay them well, they were attached to each other in a strange way. Whalen remarks : "...there is no hate here. The boss loves the workers and the workers – love the boss' (84). Firth's devotion to Andrew is unshakeable. Very straightforwardly he tells Whalen 'you and nobody is going to hate a man who's been my friend'(84). He is on strike with the rest of the workers as he can not break up from them but at the same time he stands with Andrew in many ways. Such a good relationship between an owner and a worker has been disturbed, at least, for a while.

Confrontation of workers is not actually between themselves and the owners but it is with the circumstances and themselves. The unavoidable, grim social circumstances have led them towards hatred. In reality, during the Depression Era when banks collapsed and there was no money with which to pay the men, the owners paid them in strip goods at the store. Many a time eatables go from Andrew's house into the workers' colony and though Cora cunningly complains against it, Andrew neglects her complaints. Such a fair relationship is broken due to the odd circumstances and partially because of selfish motifs of people like Ellicott.

Firth's confrontation with Andrew is temporary and it ends on conciliatory note, it indicates confrontation of good and good whereas his confrontation with the strikebreakers turns violent and its result is agonizing. His daughter has been killed in wrath but he does not blame Andrew directly for the irreparable loss caused to him. In turn, Andrew is also hurt to learn the bad news and expresses his wish to do something for Firth but instead of taking any kind of help from him Firth asks Andrew to 'stay away from down

town' (122). Thus confrontation in the end turns into mutual understanding and concern.

The set of strikebreakers accomplish the villainous purpose. They have been imported only to create violence and they have been trained to make massacre. They can not think beyond violence and massacre and when they are unable to do so, they become restless. They themselves are strained to the extreme to kill one of them. The blind wrath in them leads them to commit another murder, that is, of an innocent child. Their villainy is at its extreme as Firth describes when he is broken down due to evil force in them : "I can't fight anymore, I wouldn't know how we isn't used to things like last night. Lundee got his hand shot off... they burnt Carlen's house all to pieces... we had to drag Berthed out, she was half crazy she got burnt a little..."(199-200). It is the most pathetic, brutal outcome of the confrontation between ruthless cruel people and meek and amiable workers like Firth.

Whalen's Confrontation with the Strikebreakers :

Only Whalen is a man who works for other men. His confrontation is at two levels. At one level he confronts Andrew and tries to persuade him to take back workers who are on strike and at other level he confronts the strikebreakers. He does not want that the workers should suffer for the decisions taken by the owners for their selfish motives. When Ellicott accuses him for coming at Ohio to create trouble, he very plainly reveals the truth "... What you and I want won't make much difference. When the guns start popping and the skulls start cracking, they won't be thinking about us" (87). Thus, his noble intention to make peace without any selfish motif is revealed here. When there is actual killing, it is he who senses the repercussions of all these matters. He warns workers not to indulge in the warfare because that is what the strikebreakers want. They want to create violence which Whalen does not want. But all his efforts turn ineffectual. The unionization fails, the massacre takes place and thus all the efforts of Whalen have been nullified. Though he bears ideal intention, in the confrontation with evil at various levels, all his ideals become useless.

The repercussions of the confrontation are definitely not positive. All the efforts made by Whalen to stop violence have dwindled away. The strikers, after paying a lot, return to their work and compromise with the low payment. Andrew's marital life has been disturbed. Though he forgives Julie, one is not sure about their establishing fair relationship in the coming years. Julie's affair with Ellicott has gone sour and her mawkish attraction to Whalen comes to nothing, Firth meets his doom as his innocent child is killed and Andrew comes to know about his wife's adultery and his friend's deceptions.

In the play Hellman points at the ineffectual people in the world. She always had strong hatred towards bystanders. In the earlier play, *The Children's Hour*, she criticizes passivity prevailing in society. Likewise she comments on the Rodmans who let evil grow and decay, attack and destroy the lives of others. Hellman beautifully fuses socio-economic theme and psycho analysis of the characters. The readers can sense the rotten society and the evil repercussions of the depression decade. There is unresolved discords, the sultry hates and murderous impulses that lie below the surface. The volcanic idea has been disguised under quiet and decorous atmosphere. But the evil caused by different factors has potential to burn out everything that comes in its way. Hellman strongly exhibits her anger towards evil present in society. In the confrontation Andrew receives some compassion from the author but this is not exactly a reward for him.

III

The Little Foxes

About the Play :

The Little Foxes is the finest play by Lillian Hellman. "...a major success, a landmark in the Broadway Theatre."³⁷ The idea of writing the play came to her mind when she was on visit to the Spanish Civil War. Moreover, she was prompted to write the play because of the great depression of the 1930s. This social upheaval changed the age old moral norms. 'Survival of the fittest' had been the bottom line in the fiscal scenario. The writers like

Hellman noted the change which crept surreptitiously in 'moolah-making' mentality (the term originated in America and came to prominence since 1930) and were greatly disturbed. Hellman strongly criticizes such a class of people who manipulated society for their selfish motives. The play sharply attacks evil in the form of greed and covetousness. She keenly observes the inspired ruthlessness and the chaos created out of it. The denunciation of greed is the most popular theme of the leftists. The communists were very critical of private ownership and profit motif. Through *The Little Foxes* Hellman, too, condemns selfish motifs prevailing in the contemporary society.

The play also focuses on the changing ideology of the American South. Once the 'Garden of Bliss', the South, was changing slowly into money making business, then. Mercantile success, free enterprise, and industrialization were unfamiliar words for the southerners, earlier, but slowly they were the most happening words, there. Through unaristocratic Hubbards Hellman points out growing greed of the common southern people who wanted to earn great wealth through industrialization. She crafted the play to demonstrate the vicious consequences of evil caused due to the money making mania. It was her disgust towards these self centred money minded characters that she knew that prompted her to think about Hubbards.

The title chosen for the play is suggestive of the menace caused to the vineyards of the world. At the very outset of the play, Hellman quotes two lines from Song of Solomon, II,¹⁵ "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes." These lines obviously reveal avariciousness of the human beings spoiling vineyards for their selfish purposes. These are the little foxes but their deeds are very destructive. They are the foxiest and the most wolfish in nature, who eat up their own kind. The confrontation of meek, mild characters with these fox-like monsters is penetrating. To understand this confrontation it is necessary to analyse the play at length. Hence, we will see a brief summary of the play to understand the evil characters and their evil intentions executed in various incidents.

A Brief Summary of the Play :

The play takes place in the Giddens Home, in a small town of the deep south, in the spring of 1900. The two Hubbards Ben and Oscar and their sister, Regina Giddens, are the little foxes, here. The two brothers inherit property of their father. Their sister Regina married Horace Giddens, a banker, to recoup her financial losses. They have a daughter, Alexandra. All the Hubbards revolve around one thing, i. e., money. When the play opens Hubbard brothers, along with Regina, are entertaining a Chicago businessman, Mr. Marshall, who is going to be a partner in a cotton factory and will open the door to their future. If the factory establishes, they will be millionaires. All of them try in their own way to impress Mr. Marshall. Regina becomes flirtatious whereas her brothers try to show profit in investment as they can hire cheap labour. They are successful in the deal. Mr. Marshall promises to put up forty-nine percent of money and Ben, Oscar and Regina are supposed to put up the remaining fifty one percent. Both the brothers are ready with their money but Regina's share is to come from Horace. Horace, who is being treated for a heart-ailment in the hospital at John Hopkins, is not willing to give his share. Hence, Regina has been threatened by the two brothers that they would take another partner if the money is not forthcoming.

Regina and Ben want that the larger share should come from Oscar but when he denies to do so, he has been convinced that Alexandra, Regina's daughter will marry his son, Leo, and thus money will remain in the family itself. In spite of the agreement, money from Horace is essential but Horace has not come with his money. Ben and Oscar put pressure on Regina for Horace's share. Regina has the only choice and, that is, to send her daughter, Alexandra, to bring Horace home. Alexandra does not find propriety in bringing her father home in his critical condition but Regina convinces her very shrewdly that to bring him home is the best cure for him. Thus, Alexandra, a simpleton and an embodiment of goodness, is easily exploited by Regina for her selfish purpose. Birdie, whom Oscar married for the cotton and land, is confused to listen all the talk because she is present throughout the conversation of Regina with Marshall and her brothers.

She comes to know about their evil plans so she warns Alexandra about it. When Oscar listens it he doesn't tolerate it and he slaps Birdie hard. Thus, Hellman successfully draws the picture of greed and corruption which lies in the very nature of these little foxes.

Horace possesses eighty-eight thousand worth of Union Pacific Bonds in his safe deposit box. Oscar's son Leo knows the fact that Horace opens his box once in every six months. Oscar is delighted to know it from Ben and he makes a plan to steal the bonds. It is decided that Ben will take away the bonds for three months. Oscar does not find anything inappropriate in stealing the bonds. When Horace arrives home he has been welcomed warmly by all the members. Addie the maid, Birdie and Alexandra are genuinely happy but to see Horace back, whereas, Oscar, Ben and Regina are happy for a different reason. They do not find Horace's condition to be serious. According to Oscar he looks 'Tip-top'. Ben shows, apparently, how earnestly he was waiting for Horace's arrival. In reality, Regina and her brothers are happy because Horace is a way for them to make their dream successful. They know if Horace consents they will be rich. Addie gives Horace a hint about the things happening around. The real nature of Regina has been exposed when Horace condemns the idea of Alexandra's getting married with Leo. Regina's benevolent stance starts evaporating gradually as Horace talks about their relationship which has gone sour before ten years and perhaps, that is the real cause of his ailment. Horace says :

I didn't tell them about my bad conscience. Or about my fancy women. Nor did I tell them that my wife has not wanted me in bed with her for... How long is it, Regina? Ten years? Did you bring me home for this, to make me feel guilty again? That means you want something. But you'll not make me feel guilty anymore. My "thinking" has made a difference. (168)

Neglecting what he says, Regina insists that Horace should listen to what Ben wants to say about their business. She shows unconcern for Horace. Horace is very much tired, he urges Regina to discuss the matter later. Even Ben realizes his condition but Regina is totally out of her wits. She does not realize how much her husband is suffering and asks him to talk about their investment in the proposed business. She treats Horace very cruelly. Her self-indulgent nature is exposed in every situation.

As these brothers get confirmation that Horace is not willing to invest his money, they decide to steal the bonds and disown Regina from partnership. Regina is unaware of the plans, she goes on insisting that Horace should put his share. The pestering of Regina is intolerable on the part of Alexandra. She reminds her mother of her father's illness but Regina has been so blinded by selfish motifs that she does not realize it. Regina is unaware of the plans made by her brothers. When she comes to know about Oscar's departure for Chicago to see Mr. Marshall, she gets disappointed. The second blow comes from Horace as he expresses his disgust for their business :

I'm sick of you, sick of this house, sick of my life here. I'm sick of your brothers and their dirty tricks to make a dime. Why should I give you the money? (Very angrily) To pound the bones of this town to make dividends for you to spend? You wreck the town, you and your brothers, you wreck the town and live on it. Not me, may be its easy for the dying to be honest. But it's not my fault I'm dying. (177)

He knows well how these siblings are after money-making business. Regina shows her real nature in the preceding dialogue. Very cruelly she expresses "I hope you die. I hope you die soon (smiles) I'll be waiting for you to die" (177). These are the civilized barbarians, who have not been touched to see the pathetic condition of the person who is dying in front of them. Their primary aim is monetary gain beyond which they see nothing.

Meanwhile Horace suspects that bonds have been stolen and he sends his servant, Cal, for attorney-at-law, Mr. Sol Fowler, and Mr. Manders, the bank person. Only Alexandra and Birdie live in their own world of innocence, unaware of the cunning of these people. Birdie gets an opportunity to expose many hidden truths of her life. The readers come to know about her miserable condition as she goes on talking about her past nostalgically. Oscar married her for estate and abused her in the later years of their married life, now and then insulting her for no reason.

Regina continues behaving rudely towards Horace. She makes an arrangement that they would live in different parts of the house. The second blow comes from Horace revealing the theft of the bonds by her brothers and letting her know that he will keep the bonds with them as a loan. Regina assumes that Horace is punishing her in this manner. His exposition of making a new will hurts Regina greatly. He further tells her that he is not going to accuse her brothers for the theft and he will leave bonds worth eighty-eight thousand dollars to Regina and the rest will go to Alexandra. Regina is shattered to know how she has been avenged by Horace and more cruelly she expresses her contempt towards Horace.

In the fit of anger, Regina reveals her utter hatred towards Horace. She says that her marriage with Horace was the worst mistake of her life. Therefore, very deliberately she had kept him away from her pretending that there was 'something the matter.' This sudden blow proves to be a lethal one. Horace gasps, reaches for the medicine, but the bottle slips, he asks to call the maid but Regina remains unstirred. He tries to call Addie but in vein. As he tries to go upstairs all by himself, he makes a sudden furious spring from the chair but falls on the landing not to rise again. Throughout his pathetic efforts, Regina behaves very rudely. Cold bloodedly she watches him getting unconscious and then calls the servant. Horace's intention to despoil the plotting of these foxes remains unfulfilled as he dies prematurely.

Regina tries to exploit her brothers by threatening to expose their theft. She demands seventy five percent in exchange of the stolen bonds or she will send them to jail. Ben tries to settle down the matter but at that moment

Alexandra appears slowly, realizing the ominous death of Horace. Alexandra gets rebellious; she goes on asking questions to these money-makers whether they really loved her father. At last comes the stunning question ‘What was Papa doing on the staircase?’ (196). At first, Regina pays no attention but then she realizes grimness of the situation and tries to convince Alexandra but it is of no use. She tells Alexandra that they will leave the place but instead Alexandra herself denies to go with her because she wants to go away from her mother as her father always wanted her to leave the place. Regina demands the hand of friendship but that also is denied by Alexandra declaring that she will fight back the injustice made to her father. The final punch given by Alexandra proves to be a shattering one, asking her ‘are you afraid Mama?’ (207).

Confrontation of Good and Evil in the Play :

The play reveals various forms of evil confronting good in many ways. We find greed, selfishness, emotional vacuity, malice, blackmail, theft, scheming and plotting for selfish purposes, exploitation, cheating, inhuman behaviour, etc. throughout the play. Let us examine the confrontation of good and evil through discussion of the characters and various situations.

The Foxes

The evil force in the play revolves around Regina and her brothers. These people are the perfect embodiment of hyper rigidity, whose hearts do not melt to see sufferings of their fellow beings. Hard hearted, ruthless Hubbards are not touched by natural human feelings of compassion and sympathy. Highly self-centred Foxes think only about monetary gains at all times. As Freedman Morris observes : “They are greedy; selfish, even with one another; cruel to the point of sadism, dishonest, anti-negro etc., etc.”³⁸ Hellman herself admits that it was the most difficult play she ever wrote and the idea for the play came to her at the end of her visit to the Spanish Civil War and that she was also inspired by her mother’s rich relatives. The characters portrayed in the play throw light on the culture from which they have sprung. As William Wright puts it :

We come away not necessarily with a deeper understanding of the human condition but with a deeper understanding of American society as a molder of individuals. And this society after nearly a decade of the Depression, was subjecting itself to an excoriating reexamination of its values.³⁹

Hellman meant the audience to recognize some part of themselves in the money dominated Hubbards. As her mother's relatives were wealthy southerners, who had left Alabama to go to North where money was. In her late teens Hellman "began to think about that greed and cheating that is its usual companions were comic as well as evil."⁴⁰ Whereas Henry Hewes observes it to be "the crass menagerie... the play itself is demonstration, as it concentrates on showing us the graceless behaviour of a society in which the more ambitious become scoundrels and the more decent stand by and let them get away with exploiting the poor."⁴¹

Thus, the set of evil Hubbards confront with that of the set of good characters like Horace, Alexandra, Birdie and Addie. Their goodness is nullified by the volcanic force of evil which erupts everything that comes in its way. More strikingly, instead of only confrontation of good and evil, there comes forth the confrontation between evil and evil, too. One little fox tries to eat up another little fox and this crooked game continues throughout. Therefore, the conflict revolves more around who among the foxes will get the upper hand than how the foxes will defeat the decent people. In reality, they do not bother about good characters as they are harmless according to the evil ones.

Regina, the 'Vicious Vixen' :

Through Regina and other characters, Hellman has tried to probe under the skin of ruthlessly acquisitive society. Regina, the central figure and a 'vicious vixen' among the little foxes, remains an unforgettable character. Hellman describes Regina as a handsome, self-assumed lady and the forceful evil that dominates good easily and overcomes evil with cunning and

shrewdness. Ambitious Regina becomes so overpowering that she overrules all the basic moral norms. She does not find it inappropriate to appear in a flirtatious manner in front of Marshall. Because she knows that he is the person who has ‘opened the door to their future.’ She is well-aware of his inclination towards her and she is knavish enough to understand how to display the cards in her hands and how to dig out benefit. She disguises herself in a highly decent way to hide her real intentions. The person in front of her is easily misled by her flirtatious manner.

While persuading Alexandra to bring Horace home, she uses the same strategy. She pretends how eagerly she wants Horace back home. “You’re to tell Papa how much you missed him, and that he must come home now – for your sake. Tell him that you need him home” (153). Alexandra is baffled to see this utter simplicity in Regina, she can not understand why her mother is so keen in bringing her father home when he is too sick to travel. At first Alexandra refuses what her mother says assuming her father would think how reluctant Alexandra is about his health but Regina persuades her in a very sweet manner, as it is reflected in the following speech :

But you are doing this for Papa’s own good... you must let me be the judge of his condition. It is the best possible cure for him to come home and be taken care of here. He mustn’t stay there any longer and listen to those alarmist doctors. You are doing this entirely for his sake. Tell your Papa that I want him to come home, that I miss him very much. (153)

Alexandra easily believes Regina and is thoroughly impressed to see how her mother has deep concern towards her Papa. Alexandra is too good to understand Regina’s true nature, and gets manipulated in the hands of Regina. Her opposition to her mother, in the initial stage, is easily tackled by Regina. Alexandra very unknowingly becomes prey of the beautiful guiles played by her. Regina moves her like an object on a chessboard. Another important decision is taken by Regina, i. e., Alexandra should marry Leo. Thus, Regina

proves to be a typical materialistic and decidedly unsouthern lady. Alexandra does not oppose her strongly at the initial stage and takes every action of her quite positively.

After Horace's arrival, Regina's behaviour changes drastically. Alexandra does not find that care or concern taken towards her Papa which was mentioned earlier. She can not tolerate to see her mother talking so harshly with her father when he is badly in need of mental peace and when he is physically tired, too. She tries hard to prevent her from the discussion as she gets irritated to see Regina's getting outrageous towards Horace regarding the business matter. For the first time she confronts Regina openly. She asks "How can you treat Papa like this? He's sick. He's very sick. Don't you know that? I won't let you" (175).

But the protest of Alexandra is retaliated by Regina, saying "mind your business, Alexandra" (175). The warning given by Regina is so overpowering that Alexandra has to retreat. Regina's mind works at different levels, when she rebukes Alexandra for interfering her business, the next moment she starts talking about money.

Regina-Horace Confrontation :

At another level confrontation of good and evil is seen in Regina-Horace relationship. Here, evil in her confronts good in Horace and brings catastrophic results. Regina's self-centredness goes to its peak. She does not care about Horace's condition or the sufferings he might undergo while travelling. She has been haunted by the only idea that is 'to possess the power'. When all the members are worried about Horace's being late, she remains cool. Very bluntly she exclaims, "What is so strange about people arriving late?" (161). Not only that, her cruelty towards Horace is quite apparently seen in the consequent scenes.

Physically weak Horace is unable to conflict Regina, he tries to protest against her in his own way but the force of evil in Regina is so strong that hapless Horace's force has been nullified. Regina's favourite weapon to use against the weak persons is sweet words, which she uses at the initial stage.

She uses them too to entrap Horace. Very purposely she has not gone to the hospital. But she puts it in a very flattering manner, showing how earnestly she wanted to be with him to look after him. Horace is prudent enough to understand Regina's cunning and he answers back saying that there was no need to come. Regina continues showing her concern, "Oh, but there was. Five months lying there all by yourself, no kinfolks, no friends. Don't try to tell me you don't have a bad time of it" (163). The same sweetness of Regina disappears once Horace talks against the marriage proposal of Leo with Alexandra and shows his non-indulgence in the business. Then she starts exposing her real nature.

Moment by moment Horace has been proved to be a weakling. However he tries to explain how tired he is and the business matters can be tackled later, Regina pays no attention to his pleas and continues pestering him. Horace does not want that Regina should be after the evil money making business. He tries to convince Regina, "We've got enough money. Regina we'll just sit by and watch the boys grow" (171). But Regina is totally out of her wits and the talk between them gets grimmer. A horrible truth comes forth when Regina confesses that she has undergone hateful marriage and stifled in a small town that offers her nothing. She always had a strong craving to go to the city and have a romantic life. Very deliberately, she had kept Horace away from her. Very coldly she tells that she married Horace out of loneliness, and not for his companionship, but for the things she never had as a child and felt she was never going to get them as a woman alone. The revelation of the truth proves to be destructive which takes away the life of Horace. In all this tumult Regina remains unmoved. She is nonetheless a cold blooded murderess, a vixen, who eats up her own kind. The confrontation of evil in Regina and good in Horace once again proves Hellman's point of view aiming at vulgarity that arises out of greed and its extent. The weak has no place in the vicious world of cruelty, it is trodden underfoot, mercilessly.

A Fox-like Southerner :

Regina's confrontation with her brothers outwitting them, points out confrontation between evil and evil. She extorts far more than her legitimate share of the profits. In the initial stage Ben is an omnipotent, who dominates his siblings and bends them according to his will, but consequently Regina takes the place of Ben. By the end of the play she becomes an overpowering devilish character.

Ben represents a typical changing southern ideology. Through this character Hellman attacks rapaciousness of capitalism. According to Elizabeth Hardwick, Hellman aims at : "...a besieged Agrarianism, a lost Southern life, in which virtue and sweetness had a place and more strikingly, where social responsibility and justice could, on a personal level at least, be practised."⁴²

Ben has been portrayed as a very cunning and shrewd, fox-like southerner, who has excessive pride in being so. He has all the essential ingredients to be an evil character. Hellman in her background notes describes Ben as "rather jolly and far less solemn than the others and far more dangerous."⁴³ At the very outset the confrontation between Ben, who is the most powerful of the three in the beginning, and his siblings comes forth revealing his deceitful nature. He is a perfect businessman. Horace does not want to invest his money in their business but Regina puts it in the other way telling him Horace does not want to invest because he wants bigger cut of profits. Though Ben agrees to her terms he takes extra money from Oscar's share. Unwilling Oscar tries to protest against Ben but when he explains how beneficial it is to get his son married to Alexandra, Oscar has to agree to go along with reduction. Ben is prudent enough to keep all the profits in the family. For thirty-five years Ben has his hold over the Hubbards. Ben has made money for Oscar, at least, that is what he tells Oscar, and assures him that he will do the same for his future. He says, "You'll be a very rich man. What's the difference to any of us if a little more goes here, a little goes there it's all in the family" (150). Thus Ben very successfully and easily dominates Oscar. The confrontation has cropped up at the root level itself but it is tough in the case of Regina.

Ben's Cunning :

Evil in Ben is disguised under the beautiful words. His deceptive use of language often misleads the good characters. Sometimes his sentences bear vicious meanings. When Mr. Marshall appreciates the company of the three women there, Ben responds "Our Southern women are well favoured," (137) or when Marshall says "That you Southerners occupy a unique position in America. You live better than the rest of us, you eat better, you drink better. I wonder you find time, or want to find time, to do business"(138). Ben sharply remarks "A great many Southerners don't" (138) or answer to Marshall's "It's very remarkable how you Southern aristocrats have kept together and kept what belonged to you" (138), Ben's answer is "you misunderstand sir, Southern aristocrats have not kept together and have not kept what belonged to them" (138). It is a sharp criticism of aristocrats that is reflected in the sentences like "when the war comes these fine gentlemen ride off and leave the cotton, and the women, to rot" (140). At the same time his pride of being a southerner is reflected in the sentence when he asks Leo to fill the glasses to prove that. "The Southerner is always still on his feet for the last drink" (142). Thus all the time Ben is ready to attack the person in front of him with words. He does not allow anyone to let him down. But he does all this in a decent manner.

Ben plays the role of a stimulant for other evil characters. He is the decisive factor in fostering the idea of getting rich industrialists by using cheap labour that is abundantly available. Thus, seeds of greed lying in the Hubbards clan are nurtured by him. Very subtly evil in Ben works out without giving the slightest hint of his evil intentions. His practicalities can be seen throughout the play. Many a time he is full of false joviality. But in certain cases he has to be sharp tongued. Regina has given 'word' about the money to be invested in the business. But Ben is fed up with it. Very bluntly he says to Regina :

Oh, it was enough. I took your word But I've got to have more than your word now. The contracts will be signed this week, and Marshall will want to see our money soon after. Regina,

Horace has been in Baltimore for four months. I know that you've written him to come home, and that he can't come.(148)

No wonder if such a bitter argument with Regina prompts her to take decision to get Horace home. But when Horace arrives Ben does not confront him. Very cunningly he shows his concern towards Horace, in the following words. "Well, sir, you had us all mighty worried.... Waiting to welcome you home" (164-165). Through such sentences one can not have the slightest idea of evil in him. When Ben says "Never leave a meal unfinished. There are too many poor people who need the food" (166). makes readers wonder to see his double standard. We do not stop wondering when Ben has started showing his concern for the poor people. In reality he is the exploiter, trying to manipulate cheap labour that is abundantly available. Oscar and Leo's plan of stealing bonds of Horace has been further fuelled by Ben. But he does not allow Leo to be a partner in their business. He bursts out "You would? You can go to Hell, you little" (178).

He, no doubt, remains a perfect businessman. He knows how to make others work for him but he does not want to part with the benefit he is going to get from the business. The moment they decide to steal the bonds and Regina's persuasions towards Horace have been frustrated, he plainly tells Regina that everything is settled and he does not want her monetary support. Regina tries to command him to wait for money but Ben's answer is "You are getting out of hand. Since when do I take orders from you?" (176). Though Ben outwits Regina by the end of the second Act, in the course of time things change a lot. Regina comes to know about the theft of the bonds and she takes place of Ben, ruling the roost, she nullifies the powers of Ben. Regina declares Ben to be a 'loser' but in spite of bowing down in front of Regina, Ben successfully maintains his stature. His answer to Regina is remarkable :

Well, I say to myself, what's good? You and I aren't like Oscar. We're not sour people. I think that comes from a good digestion. Then, too, one loses today and wins tomorrow. I say to myself, years of planning and I get what I want. Then I don't get it. But I'm not discouraged. The century's turning, the world is open. Open for people like you and me. Ready for us. Waiting for us. After all this is just the beginning. There are hundreds of Hubbards sitting in rooms like this throughout the country. All their names aren't Hubbards but they are all Hubbards and they'll own this country someday. We'll get along. (191)

Though defeated, Ben does not forget to give his last punch and makes his final attack on Regina, asking her "What Horace was doing on staircase?" (196), the same question asked by Alexandra. At the moment he does not get an answer but he gives a hidden hint that someday he may find the answer and on that day he will let Regina know what Ben is. It is a hidden threat that someday or the other he would have his upper hand over Regina. Hellman wanted to write a trilogy of Hubbard plays; unfortunately, she could not write the third play but if she had written it, it would have been about Ben manipulating the truth of Horace's death.

Evil in Oscar contrasted with good in Birdie :

Ben's villainy is subtle whereas evil in Oscar is superfluous. The pair of Oscar and Birdie is another example of good vs. evil as well as a horrifying revelation of human aggressiveness and greed. Oscar's domination of Birdie crushes her down completely. As her name suggests, she is "ineffective, a fluttering bird like creature wholly cowed by her husband."⁴⁴ Birdie has been preyed upon by the foxy Hubbards. As she is a passive and vulnerable member of the dying aristocracy, she first goes to Ben for financial assistance and for

some legal matters. Ben is shrewd enough to understand that they can acquire her family's property through marriage and thus birdlike, helpless Birdie herself enters the dangerous den of the Hubbards and loses everything, consequently, i. e., her self-respect, position and power. What she possesses is sweet memories of her past, of her mother and father and the old plantation. She is like a captivated bird because she cannot behave feely according her choice or will.

Birdie's character is based on Hellman's mother, Julia Hellman. She is a genteel and utterly defeated wife. Birdie has been described by Hellman as a nervous and timid, she has a longing for beauty and affection. She wants only two things in life, i. e., Lionnet, the plantation, back to her in the manner her Papa and Mama used to look after and feels earnestly that Oscar should stop shooting. According to her, Oscar's shooting birds is just for shooting. He does not allow anybody to shoot when poor niggers need it so much to keep from starving. But these two genuine wishes are overheard by him, for Oscar what she says is merely 'chattering' and her behaviour childish. He condemns her chattering to Mr. Marshall as it is 'maggie' to him. Oscar reminds us of Marcus treating Lavinia in the same humiliating manner.

Now and then Oscar insults her mercilessly, nowhere is her sensitivity taken into consideration. Sometimes Oscar crosses limits by hitting her sharply. When these merciless Hubbards plan to bring Horace home they don't realize how sick he is but Birdie senses his agony. Though Leo is her son, she does not want that marriage between him and Alexandra should take place. She loves Alexandra more than Leo. She tries to protest against the idea by stressing that Alexandra is just seventeen but her protests are not taken into consideration. But one thing is obvious that she is one of the instigators who provoke Alexandra to leave the Hubbards. Her counselling Alexandra is a suggestion of her deep concern towards Alexandra and her disgust towards evil in the Hubbards. Birdie is an embodiment of good. Her character reflects virtues like compassion, concern for the downtrodden, fellow-feeling, etc. Birdie has great concern for Horace, so she 'bursts out' in Kimono when she comes to know about Horace's arrival and receives rebukes by Oscar. It is

only Birdie who realizes how weak Horace has been, unlike Oscar and other Hubbards. Birdie wants to show her concern towards Alexandra but she gets petrified by Oscar's anger at her. Domination of Oscar is so influential that Birdie literally trembles in front of him.

But in the pleasant company of Horace and Alexandra, she frees herself and talks openly. She behaves so, as she knows "they have some of the same longing."⁴⁵ Birdie becomes nostalgic in the company and gives outlet to her suppressed feelings. She remembers her mother's dislike for the Hubbards:

I saw Mama angry for the first time in my life.... She said she was old-fashioned enough not to like people who killed animals they couldn't use, and who made their money charging awful interest to ignorant niggers and cheating them on what they bought. (182)

This remembrance echoes Birdie's disgust towards evil in the Hubbards. She has been dominated by these foxes to the extent of lying that Birdie has headache but never in her life she had a headache. In reality Birdie seeks solace in drinking. She conceals herself in her room and drinks all by herself, and then as they want to hide it, they say, 'Birdie's got a headache again.' As Richie Watson Jr. observes :

It is evident that Hellman is setting up, with considerable dramatic economy, what at first glance may seem a too – obvious contrast between her grasping Hubbards and the genteel Birdie. The Hubbards – Regina, Ben and Oscar - are the foxes of the play's title. Rapacious and unscrupulous, they easily crush the fragile Birdie, the delicately nurtured flower of antebellum plantation society... they give their allegiance to no

creed and serve no interest but their own... they not only have not served but have actively collaborated against their native region's sacred cause during the civil war, Birdie, in contrast, reflects the breeding and a cultivation that the wealthy and sophisticated Marshall recognizes and admires.⁴⁶

Meekly Good represented by Birdie :

All the good characters understand each other in a better manner and that is the only solace for them to survive in the poisonous world of the Hubbards. Alexandra realizes the entrapment of Birdie and very earnestly she feels to leave the place. She wants that together they should go away from the vicious Hubbards. Birdie doesn't want Alexandra loving her so much. She says, "Because in twenty years you'll just be like me. They'll do all the same things to you... And that's the way you'll be. And you'll trail after them, just like me, hoping they won't be so mean that day or say something to make you feel so bad -only you'll be worse off because you haven't got my Mama to remember – "(183).

No doubt, Birdie's pathetic condition is revealed in the speech but at the same time she gives a hint of Alexandra's deprivation of motherly love. Birdie has been encaged, she knows her boundaries. She can not fly away from the clutches of Oscar but she wants Alexandra to rescue herself from the vicious entanglement. Birdie's protest against evil of the Hubbards is as if a bird confronting a hurricane. Her existence has been crushed under the heavy weight of greed and self-centredness of Oscar and the other Hubbards alike. Though we pity Birdie, Hellman states "I had meant people to smile at and to sympathize with the sad, weak Birdie, certainly I had not meant them to cry."⁴⁷

Birdie has been used as a medium to more wealth and more power. Oscar has control of the wealth left by her father. But once her usefulness is done, she has been abused. Hence, Birdie has been frustrated by the treatment given by the so-called sane persons. Her gentility is not at all taken into

consideration. Birdie represents everything that Regina loathes, she is a symbol of an effete, dying southern aristocracy which is inadaptably to progress and change.

Horace's Confrontation with the Vicious Characters :

Horace tries to confront the vicious band of the Hubbards in his own way. He confronts Regina openly, whereas the confrontation with her brothers is indirect. At many levels Horace has been victimized by Regina. Regina's rudeness towards Horace causes his illness. Very deliberately Regina brings Horace to his doom. Horace's safe deposit box contains a broken fiddle along with the bonds and other things. No need to explain here that Regina has broken the fiddle and it is a symbol of Horace's broken mind. Regina has kept Horace away from herself very cunningly. She hates him so desperately that she does not want any physical relationship with him. Horace is not hard enough to bear this hatred. He struggles hard for life, for a bottle of medicine kept upstairs, but Regina does not move from her place to give it to him. Regina's cruelty is nonetheless foxiest.

Though, Horace is physically unable to confront evil, he is morally strong enough, at least at the initial stage, to protest. Instead of bursting out against them he maintains silence regarding the business deal. His conscience does not allow him to shake hands with the Hubbards in exploiting the town's cheap labour force. He says :

I'm sick of you, sick of this house, sick of my life here. I'm sick of your brothers and their dirty tricks to make a dime. Why should I give you the money? To pound the bones of this town to make dividends for you to spend? You wreck the town, you and your brothers. (176)

In the course of time these protests prove to be void. When he comes to know about the stolen bonds, he decides to give Regina another blow by disowning her from the property. He declares that Alexandra, in turn, will

inherit everything. But unfortunately his second blow turns meaningless. When Regina comes to know that all her tactics have failed, she attacks him finally, ensuing an argument that brings Horace a heart attack.

Horace's craving for a better life is frustrated due to Regina's hard heartedness. He has made plans for Alexandra's better future. With the help of Addie, the maid, he plans that somehow Alexandra should escape from the clutches of these vicious people. He has kept thirty seven dollar bills for Addie, the money left from his trip. As his plans to defeat Regina and her brothers are shattered his confrontation becomes meaningless. As R. C. Reynolds observes : "Horace's conversion to good comes too late to save either his town or his daughter, Regina has triumphed as a force of evil, and whatever intentions Horace had to thwart her and her brothers' plans die along with him."⁴⁸

Horace is another example of good taken over by the evils. Though Horace tries to defeat Regina, he is not at all successful in his plans. In the struggle he is robbed of his life. The money which he does not intend to give to the Hubbards ultimately goes to them, as if he has made money for them. Thus, in the confrontation of good and evil, once again weak, good-doer, Horace gets defeated and breaths his last.

Addie, the Helpless Good Character :

Addie represents helpless nigger servants, who can feel the agony of their masters but can not do anything on their own will. Addie shows her courage to analyse the true nature of the Hubbards, pointing out their peculiarities : "Yeah, they got mighty well-off cheating niggers. Well, there are people who eat the earth and eat all the people on it like in the Bible with the locusts. And other people who stand and watch them eat it, sometimes I think it aren't right to stand and watch them do it" (182). The comment by Addie bears the seeds of revolution. It is a hint given to Alexandra to escape from the den of the Hubbards. She knows that like Birdie and Horace these despoilers will erupt Alexandra's existence. Addie is successful in inculcating her message in Alexandra. Utterly modest Addie shows her self-respect and

refuses to accept money from Horace. At the same time she boldly focuses on the colour discrimination prevailing in the contemporary society. She pleads Horace, “Don’t you do that Mr. Horace, A nigger woman in a white man’s will! I will never get it somehow” (184).

Alexandra : The Representative of Hellman :

Through Alexandra’s character, Hellman wants to bring the poetic justice. Throughout the play we witness the game of power and money being played by the Hubbards. But only a few characters give less importance to this dirty game. They want a peaceful life without any malice in it. Alexandra is under the spell of Regina, as she is an obedient daughter, she never crosses her limits. Whatever has been said by Regina is executed by Alexandra without questioning her. Regina uses her as a tool in her business matters. Alexandra has been sent to bring Horace home, and to compensate the share it is decided that she should marry Leo. Totally unaware of the interests of the cunning Hubbards, she has been moved like an object on a chessboard. Birdie makes her aware of the reality and hints are given by both, Birdie and Addie, to break the high walls of the Hubbards. Very gradually Alexandra realizes the true nature of these people and she asks Horace, “Papa, I mean when you feel better couldn’t we go away? I mean, by ourselves, couldn’t we find a way to go? (183).

The very question makes the readers restless. Though Horace answers it in a promising way, he himself is not sure about their escape from the Hubbards. His answer “We’ll try to find a way”(183). creates suspicion whether these powerless goodies will really enjoy freedom? Alexandra is struck to see her mother’s real nature as Regina pitilessly bursts out at Horace. Alexandra’s condition is very wretched, she tries to stop Regina from giving trouble to sick Horace, but all her efforts are futile. After Birdie and Horace, Alexandra is the third person who has been neglected and whose existence is not taken into consideration until they have monetary gain. Once they are used up, they are thrown away mercilessly. Unlike Birdie, Alexandra is a girl of her own will, she has the potentiality of rebelliousness. The legacy of Horace is fulfilled in the character of Alexandra.

Hellman's good characters reflect virtuosity. As it is seen in Alexandra's character; she takes care of Horace, shows concern towards Birdie, and is fond of Addie. In turn she, also, is appreciated and supported by good characters. According to O'Hara : "The thorough bred strain is dominant in Alexandra, but through most of the play, her mother and her uncle confuse docility with weakness, eventually they can no more manage Alexandra than they can change them."⁴⁹ Alexandra is a true representative of Hellman ideology.

Alexandra's Confrontation with the Evil Characters :

Alexandra starts assimilating the devastating horrible condition. After the death of Horace a point comes when she dares to question the Hubbards :

ALEXANDRA. Did you love him Uncle Oscar?

OSCAR. Certainly, I – what a strange thing to ask! I –

ALEXANDRA. Did you love him, uncle Ben?

BEN (Simply). Alexandra, I –

ALEXANDRA.(starts to laugh very loudly) And you, Mama, did you love him, too?

REGINA. I know what you feel, Alexandra, but please try to control yourself.

ALEXANDRA. I'm trying, Mama. I'm trying very hard.

BEN. Grief makes some people laugh and some people cry. It's better to cry, Alexandra.

ALEXANDRA. (the laugh has stopped. She moves toward Regina) What was Papa doing on the staircase? (196)

Rebellions Alexandra :

It is the first and foremost jerk given to the throne of Regina. The seeds of rebellion are now shooting up vigorously. The triumph of evil, maintained so far, starts getting defeated and shattered. Regina's empire starts collapsing gradually. The indomitable Regina is mellowed down. She tries to

convince Alexandra that everything is all right but Alexandra remains firm and decides to find out the cause of her father's death. The change in Alexandra is a welcome change though it is not a sudden one. Alexandra is ready to break the bonds that hold her. She does not care for the money which she was to receive earlier but this bold, little anti-Hubbard girl resolves to flee from evil. She reveals her understanding of the malevolence of such people when she calls them "the little foxes that spoil the vines." The only thing is that instead of eating grapes these foxes "eat the earth". She tells Regina :

Mama, because I want to leave here. As I've never wanted anything in my life before. Because now I understand what Papa was trying to tell me. All in one day : Addie said there were people who ate the earth and other people who stood around and watched them do it. And just now Uncle Ben said the same thing... Well, tell him for me, Mama, I'm not going to stand around and watch you do it. It'll be fighting as hard as he'll be fighting... someplace else. (199)

This is a herald of Alexandra's forthcoming rebellion against evil in the Hubbards. Alexandra, representing good, at last turns to her mother, and tells her that she is leaving home. R. C. Reynolds believes: "Alexandra's escape from her mother and the reasons she gives for wanting to escape represent the hope for a better world, the hope for the future."⁵⁰

It is a boomerang irony. Regina slowly realizes the situation in which she has been trapped and finally, totally defeated she asks Alexandra, "Would you like to sleep in my room?" (199-200). Regina's helplessness is very obvious, it is a sufficient evidence of her collapse. Alexandra gets upper hand over Regina, making her powerless and dumb.

Transformation in Alexandra is a stunning one for both Regina and the readers. An innocent girl, who is unaware of the tactics of the money maniacs, later on turns into a rebellious one, completely undominated by the heavy

weight of evil. Hellman for the first time shows a change in her favourite topic, i. e., confrontation of good and evil and evil getting defeated by good. Here good defeats evil in its own simple way.

Evil in Mr. Marshall :

Besides these pairs of good and evil characters there is one more character which remains neglected so far, considering evil force in him. We either fail to understand evil in Mr. Marshall or we do not pay much attention to him. Perhaps, it is not counted as evil in him is non-lethal, unlike in Regina, or it is not as dominant as in Ben. But the fact can not be denied that confrontation this time is between evil and evil, in a very sober manner. Mr. Marshall has been portrayed as a man with poise, decency, gentleness, urbanity and sophistication but under his gentle skin, in reality, Mr. Marshall stands for the decisive evil factor in the play. He sets into motion the whole enterprise of the Hubbards. If he flirts with Regina, sexually, he flirts with the Hubbard brothers, commercially. If to say so, he is the foxiest of all these foxes, because very consciously he makes them work to fulfill his filthy intentions. He wants to exploit these southerners. He does not make any harm, personally, but like Satan he enters into the garden of bliss and the seeds of poisonous rebellion are sown by him. Through this character Hellman wants to draw our attention to the industrial rise in the South. The South that represented everything good and innocent, is spoiled ruthlessly by these industrialists. As Allen Lewis observes : “The problem of good and evil is basic to all of Hellman’s work but in her own plays the well-intentioned are destroyed by “the little foxes” who are always around to ‘eat the earth.’”⁵¹

Various Confrontations :

Confrontation of good and evil is at two different levels. Upto the end of the play it seems that the play is about the strong dominating the weak and it is also about a horrifying revelation of the nature of aggressiveness and greed. But the last stroke proves it to be a play about victory of good over greed and malice. Birdie, Horace, Addie and Alexandra, the set of good people confronts the vicious ones – Ben, Oscar, Leo and Regina. The confrontation is

not again strictly between good and evil. But most of the times it is between evil and evil. As it is seen in Oscar vs. Leo, Oscar-Leo vs. Ben, Ben vs. Regina, Ben – Regina vs. Oscar, and Ben Oscar vs. Regina. Likewise, the good vs. evil is seen in the pairs like Birdie vs. Oscar, Horace vs. Regina and Alexandra vs. Regina. In the first set of villains Regina outwits all the foxes whereas in the second set Alexandra gets her upper hand over evil characters and over Regina in particular. Though Hellman gives a hopeful end, the nemesis comes far late. By the time good becomes victorious, evil has proved its disastrous nature.

All human values have been destroyed by lust for power and money. Regina has served right but the harm has, already, been done to Horace. Alexandra triumphs, she rejects Regina but one is not sure that it is the right treatment given to her. Remaining good characters are the instruments of human sufferings. The malicious characters go by their own rules. As Ben has been defeated by Regina, he does not believe it to be so. As he does not accept his defeat, Regina's victory is nullified. Hellman's dark world of those who triumph through cunning and shrewdness, overwhelming moral values, is seriously grim and painful.

The power of evil caused by the social condition in the south is felt while finding greed in the Hubbards. The play echoes the decline of moral values in the social context. Hellman's pursuit of social freedom while illuminating the paths for righteousness, liberation from the clutches of evil and evolution for the sake of victory of good can be clearly sensed through the play. Hellman expects the character like Alexandra amongst the members of the society.

But R. C. Reynolds while analyzing the play comments :

The point of view of the play is that the battle between those who are evil is possibly more significant than the possibility of the triumph of good over them. Neither Horace nor Alexandra is victorious as a force of good, for his struggle has killed him,

and she lacks a full understanding of how ruthless the forces of evil can be... The Little Foxes reflects almost all of her anger and frustration the social playwrights of the thirties felt toward the corrupt forces of the power conscious and exploitative middle class, and it does so as an explosive and dynamic work of dramatic art.⁵²

Though Reynolds feels that the battle between good and evil is more significant, it is obvious that the reasons given for escape represent the hope for a better world, the hope for the future. Though villainy in the play proves to be more victorious than good, Hellman gives a lesson that the future of evil is uncertain as good is destroyed by the forces of economic determinism and blind struggle with social oppression. They either fail to understand what they themselves are good for, or they are defeated by their fate and their own human weakness. They meet their doom at three different levels; firstly they are defeated by the evils in the confrontation, and they are homeless or get frustrated. To put it in the words of Eatsman : “By a synthesis of rational formulation and moral commitment, The Little Foxes gains particular authority in casting an image of American destiny – the continuing dialectic of the privileges versus the responsibilities of liberal democracy.”⁵³

Once again Hellman proves to be a moralist preoccupied with the evil in man, usually that within the individual but sometimes that in society.

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Chapter III

PLAYS FROM 1941 TO 1946

This chapter attempts to analyse confrontation of good and evil from a perspective that is essentially political and social. Hellman senses the prevailing contemporary political problems and presents those in her two plays *Watch on the Rhine*, the best anti-Nazi play, and its extension, *The Searching Wind*. It is an attempt of Hellman to make the Americans realize their follies and condemnable ignorance to the affairs taking place out of America whereas *Another Part of the Forest* is a powerful play that attempts to trace the origins of villainy of the Hubbards.

I

Watch on the Rhine

About the Play :

After the stunning success of *The Little Foxes*, Lillian Hellman was considered to be a major American playwright. Hellman, then, had a fear of being seduced by the rewards of theatre and of getting blocked. She was doubtful whether she could give another such hit. She was busy in partying with her friends on her newly bought farmhouse. Nobody would have believed that Hellman was seriously thinking about her next play related to World War II at that time. Her *Watch on the Rhine* came out at the right time.

It is an anti-Nazi play. When the loom of Nazism and Fascism was hovering over Europe, America was basking merrily in the comforts, partially aware of the problems faced by the Europeans. Hellman had a sense of guilt concerning Americans' attitude towards the threat. The play aims at awakening of the bystanders, the Americans. It was an "attack on the very picture of insular comfort while "the earth was being eaten" by the fascists."¹

Suddenly Americans got haunted by the question of their imminent involvement in the problem faced by the most of the European countries, who had fallen to Hitler. The play is concerned with the deadly earnest theme challenging American Isolationism. Through the play, Hellman poses an ethical question. Unlike her earlier play, *Watch on the Rhine* does not deal with the confrontation of good and evil in connection to the major problem of 1930s and after, that is, capitalism. But this time the confrontation encompasses the problem faced by the world. It is related to the moral responsibility. It is about confrontation of American 'goodies' with that of universal threat of Fascism, and of a German refugee, who wants to overcome the wrong notions of Nazis. As Doris Falk puts it : "American and European characters are thrown together in order to say something about their differing values and customs – not only about good and evil."²

In the play there is confrontation of Good and Evil at different levels and to realize it we must go through the summary in brief.

A Brief Summary of the Play :

The play opens in the drawing room of Fanny Farrelly, the widow of a liberal judge and diplomat. The time is late in the spring of 1940. The wealthy dowager, Fanny Farrelly, lives with her son, David, in her spacious home about twenty miles from Washington, D. C. They are awaiting for Sara, Fanny's daughter who returns after many years in Europe, where she and her husband have been active in the anti-Nazi underground activities. Sara has three children; Joshua, Bodo and Barbette. The guests of the house are Romanian Count Teck De Brancovis and his wife, Marthe. He is a Nazi sympathizer, whereas Marthe dislikes Nazis. Both of them have spent much time of their life in Europe. Fanny and Marthe's mothers were friends hence both of them are on a visit to Farrellys.

When Sara and Kurt arrive along with their children, they are hungry and ill clothed. They carry scars and broken bones. As Hellman describes :

...Sara... is very badly dressed : her dress is too long, her shoes were bought a long time ago and have no relation to the dress, and the belt of her dress has become untied and is hanging down... the children come in... they are dressed for a much colder climate. (213-214)

The description sufficiently provides evidence of their confrontation with the Nazi threat. They have perhaps, hurriedly left the place to save their lives. Scarcity aroused due to Nazi fundamentalism is seen clearly in their manner. As they enter the house of Farrellys they find open doors and the children are puzzled to see it, as they are not accustomed to such an ease of life.

JOSHUA. But we did not sound the bell –

SARA. The door isn't locked. It never was. Never since I can remember.

BODO. (Softly, puzzled) The entrance of the home is never locked. So .

KURT. You find it curious to believe there are people who live and do not need to watch, eh, Bodo?

BODO. Yes, Papa.

KURT. You and I.

JOSHUA. (Smiles) It is strange. But it must be good, I think.
(214)

Hellman tries to give a hint of the difference in the lifestyle of the Fascism affected Europe and lavishly living Americans. At the same time readers are made aware of the tortures made by Nazis dismantling peaceful lives. They are constantly under watch of Nazis, starved and struggling for common needs of life. Therefore, when Sara asks her children 'What would you like for breakfast?' they are surprised. Because their likes or dislikes are

meaningless. Surprisingly her daughter asks, 'What would we like? Why, Mama! If an egg is not too rare or too expensive –' (217).

Though Kurt tells his children that they are on holiday, he himself is not sure how long the holiday will be. Kurt is on a mission. He is carrying money to be used to help rescue political prisoners from the Nazis. The Count discovers that the shabby briefcase contains a considerable amount. He figures out Kurt's identity. Teck is a good for nothing count, who is constantly in need of money for gambling. He has already lost the money he has and now he has to live on credit because he is in debt. When he discovers that money collected by Kurt will be of his use. He becomes inquisitive about Kurt. He says "...I am curious about a daughter of the Farrellys who marries a German who has bullet scars on his face and broken bones in his hand" (226). Marthe hates Teck's invading Kurt's privacy in such a manner. She tries to persuade him from not behaving in such a silly manner but all in vein. It is just a beginning of confrontation. The act has been concluded by giving the hint of Teck's getting upper hand over good people.

Teck does not give up his efforts to collect information regarding Kurt's past. He tries to get information from the children but Kurt accuses him to do so. Teck and Marthe's marriage has been frustrated. Marthe loves David and when Teck asks her to pack her things to leave; she plainly denies to go with him. She is fed up with his way of life, which is full of tricks and deceptions. Finally, she leaves the place declaring, "Then let us make sure we go in different directions, and do not meet again. Good-bye, Teck" (244). For a while Teck gets disturbed but viciousness in him does not allow him to be righteous. Teck finds out that Kurt's companions have been arrested, they have been imprisoned and tortured by the Nazis. The fourth companion who is missing is no one else but Kurt himself. Teck threatens to expose the fact to the Germans if Kurt does not give ten thousand dollars to him. Thus, he blackmails Kurt but David and Fanny do not understand it.

Kurt explains to Fanny and David that Teck has discovered him helping the anti-Nazis, so he is blackmailing him for ten thousand dollars. Fanny accuses Kurt to be careless to carry such a big amount but Kurt

retaliates by telling her how she is careless to have in her house a man who opens baggage and blackmails. Though both of them do not realize the menace, in the form of Teck, completely, they try to share the problem of Kurt and take initiative to pay Teck. David realizes that Kurt has to leave the place to save his companions. Meanwhile Teck is successful in collecting information about Kurt that he is one of the wanted men by a German embassy for the underground activities. Fanny showers her anger on Teck as she knows his malice.

FANNY. I have not often in my life felt what I feel now.
Whatever you are, and however you became it, the
picture of a man selling the lives of other men –

TECK. Is very ugly, Madame Fanny. I do not do it without
some shame, and therefore I must sink my shame in
money... The money is here. For ten thousand, you go
back to save your friends, nobody will know that you
go, and I will give you my good wishes... (255)

With such a shameless cruelty, Teck tries to overpower good characters. Kurt realizes that the Americans do not understand their world, which is full of difficulties in it. Though it is decided that the demanded money will be given by David, Kurt does not tolerate Teck's getting overpowering on the good, innocent characters. At last he decides to confront with him in a forceful way to eradicate unnecessary evil around in Teck. It is not according to his ethics to co-operate with a man like Teck who has no values in his life. He straightway attacks on Teck and in the confrontation Teck is killed by Kurt.

Sara realizes what she should do at the moment, so she rings up the airline and reserves a seat for Kurt under a fake name. Kurt needs two days to get out of the clutches of the German officials. When Kurt comes back from the garden where he has shot Teck dead, he explains everything to Fanny and David :

I have a great hate for the violent. They are sick of the world...
Maybe I am sick now, too... I am going to take your car – I will
take him with me. After that, it is up to you. Two ways : You
can let me go and keep silent. I believe I can hide him and the
car. At the end of two days, if they have not been found, you
will tell as much of the truth as is safe for you to say... There is
another way. You can call your police. You can tell them the
truth. I will not get home. (261)

Thus Kurt very plainly confesses what he has done so far. Fanny and David now understand his efforts to protect the cause to maintain peace. The Americans, for the first time realize their role in all this turmoil. They take initiative to support the noble cause. While departing from his children, Kurt makes them aware of the world outside and of how they should take all the things happening around them. He tells them that the world outside is out of shape as it has people who kill, steal and lie.

Kurt takes leave of his children, Sara, Fanny and David. No one is sure whether they can see each other once again in the future. Kurt is sure about one thing that his children have received a good company, a good place where they can live peacefully. At the end of the play David and Fanny are left alone realizing the forthcoming trouble but they have made up their mind to accept and face it.

Hellman not only gave anti-Nazi message through the play, but she herself was involved in many activities and a number of projects in aid of the European struggle. She raised funds for the cause, and wrote speeches. Thus involving herself in the great cause helped her, in many ways, to construct such a powerful play. Hellman's focus in the play is on the conflict between a firsthand awareness of the Nazi horror and the comfortable life style of the Americans who were unaware of the discomforts faced by Nazi affected European countries. At the same time it is also about her

favourite theme, i. e., good and evil. As in *Days to Come* and *The Little Foxes*, basically the good people confront the evil caused due social turmoil, and, in consequence their potential evil also prompts them to suppress good.

Confrontation of Good and Evil in the Play

Watch on the Rhine reflects evil in different forms such as Nazism, blackmail, lie, self-centredness, greed, stealing etc. To realize those let us examine some of the characters and events in brief.

Nazi Fundamentalism as a Form Evil

The very first and foremost confrontation in the play arises due to Nazi fundamentalism. The world was experiencing the terror caused by Nazi evil, which is reflected in the play. Kurt and his family represent victims of Nazi tyranny. When they arrive at Farrellys, they are starving, ill clothed and Kurt is bruised and broken-boned. It is the sufficient description to understand the threat prevailing in the lives of innocents. They have to leave their hometown not only to save their own lives but also the lives of other such evil affected innocents. They have lost their home, liberty and peaceness of mind. Therefore, when they arrive at Farrellys' house and find unlocked doors, children are puzzled to see it, that means people are not watched over here. Kurt says, "You find it curious to believe there are people who live and do not need to watch, eh, Bodo?" (214). The children have been premature grown ups. Their manners are no more childish. They are cautious of every little thing they do. When they enter Farrelly house Babette asks rather hesitatingly, pointing at a couch, 'Is it allowed?' (214) and when asked about breakfast she says "...If an egg is not too rare or expensive –" (217). That means children are deprived of such common eatables like eggs. The evil caused by war and reflected, here, clearly makes us realize how the innocent people confront it in their own meek way. A nine year boy, Bodo, when appreciated by Kurt for speaking in English says : "There is never a need for boasting. If we are to fight for the good of all men, it is to be accepted that we must be among the most advanced" (218).

His grandmother is stunned to see the level of understanding of the little boy and she exclaims, “Are these children? “These children have seen their father confronting with the evil of Nazism. Therefore, for them, undoubtedly, he is a ‘great hero’; brave, calm, expert and resourceful, who is fighting for the noble cause. They do not complain that their father can not buy a good big breakfast for them. Fanny is unaware of the problems faced by the people. She just can not understand why they do not have a good breakfast, and Kurt has to explain :

Let me help you, Madame. You wish to know whether not being an engineer buys breakfast for my children. It does not. I have no wish to make a mystery of what I have been doing, it is only that it is awkward to place neatly... It sounds so big : it is so small. I am an Anti-Fascist. And that does not pay well.(222)

Children are amused to see the splendourous arrangement that everyone has his bed and each has his bathroom. That gives readers an idea as to how many compromises these children have made at such an early age. These innocent people have confronted the evil in their on way, they have accepted every oddity of life without any complaint against anything. On the contrary they thank their Papa for the most enjoyable life. When Kurt takes leave from them the children react in the following manner :

JOSHUA. ...You are talking to us as if we were children.

KURT. Am I, Joshua? I wish you were children. I wish I could say love your mother, do not eat too many sweets, clean your teeth...I cannot say these things. You are not children. I took it all away from you.

BABETTE. We, have had a most enjoyable life, Papa.(262-263)

Kurt's Confrontation with the Evil in the Form of Nazism

Kurt's confrontation is at two levels. At one level he confronts the evil in the form of Nazism and at another level he confronts Teck, a crooked minded, self-centered Nazi sympathizer. An engineer by profession, Kurt, has to give up his vocation for the noble cause of saving mankind from evils of war. He becomes an earnest anti-Nazi. According to Rosamind Gilder : "Kurt becomes the prototype of all those, who, like Hamlet, revolt against the cursed spite that calls upon them to set right by violence a world gone but of joint."³ Hellman portrays a picture of the life of Germans before they were struck by the Nazis. Kurt was born in a town called Furth where people were living merrily, unknown to the hatred and malice caused due to the fundamentalistic ideas of the Nazis. Kurt describes it in the following manner :

...There is a holiday in my town. We call it Kirchweih. It was a gay holiday with games and music and a hot white sausage to eat with wine. I grow up, I move away – to school, to work – but always I come back for Kirchweih. It is for me, the great day of the year...But after the war, that day begins to change. The sausage is made from bad stuff, the peasants come in without shoes, the children are sick – It is bad for my people, those years, but always I have hope. In the festival of August, 1931, more than a year before the storm. I give up that hope. On that day, I see twenty seven men murdered in a Nazi street fight. I cannot stay by now and watch. My time has come to move. I remember Luther, 'Here I stand I can do nothing else. God help me. Amen.' (224)

Thus innocent people are unnecessarily dragged along into the warfare and some of them are mercilessly killed.

Greed as a Form of Evil :

Greed is also the cause of confrontation between good and evil represented by Kurt and Teck respectively. Kurt confronts the evil of Nazism wholeheartedly. He does not bother about his own or his family's comforts. He is on the mission of rescuing anti-Nazi leaders. He has to give up everything for the noble cause, his homeland, his job and in the end even his family. In the final scene when he is taking leave of his family, no one is sure whether he is going to return to them in the future. Such a gallant sacrifice he does is par excellence. At another level his confrontation with Teck arises quite unexpectedly. The evil in Teck has no roots to be malicious. Though he is a Nazi-sympathizer, he does not confront with Kurt for this cause only, it remains at the background. Teck's greed for money is the main cause of the evil that Kurt has to confront with.

Teck – Kurt Confrontation

Teck is an opportunist, he collects information about Kurt and goes on asking questions to the children about their father's profession, their varying accounts and about their place of living. When Marthe asks him about his being inquisitive, he says "...I am curious about a daughter of the Farrellys' who marries a German who has bullet scars on his face and broken bones in his hands" (226). He asks Kurt whether he knew about Von Seitz and about the military song, which he had heard in Berlin? He asks the children whether their father was an electrician and so many other questions. Kurt loses his temper and asks him to question him and not to his children. When Kurt has a phone call and Sara asks after that phone call, Kurt tries to avoid by saying that call was of no importance but Teck seeks the opportunity to reveal Kurt's identity that at the Embassy he was told that they had taken a man "...who called himself Ebber, and a man who called himself Triste. They could not find a man called Goffer...I shall be a lonely man without Marthe. I am also a poor one. I should like to have ten thousand dollars before I go" (245). Thus, evil in the form of blackmail arises here due to greed for money.

Kurt initially maintains a great patience, but gradually loses his temper to see how Teck is trying to manipulate him. Teck threatens Kurt to give him ten thousand dollars otherwise he will reveal his name to Von Seitz. Kurt no longer tolerates and angrily bursts out and confronts:

This money is going home with me. It was not given to me to save my life, and I shall not use it. It is to save the lives and further the work of more than I. It is important to me to carry on that work, to save the lives of three valuable men, and to do that with all speed. But...Count De Brancovis, the first morning we arrived in this house, my children wanted their breakfast. That is because the day before we had been able only to buy milk for them. If I would not touch this money for them, I would not touch it for you. It goes back with me. The way it is. And if it does not get back, it is because I will not get back. (255)

Kurt's genuine feelings to rescue the noble man at any cost does not influence Teck. Vehemently he sticks up to his demand and quite shamelessly he says if Kurt does not want to pay him, then Kurt will not go back. Self-centered Teck fails to understand what dedication Kurt has towards his mission. His only concern is money. His attitude of dehumanizing disturbs good people like Sara, David and Fanny greatly. David and Fanny try to convince him that they would fulfill his demands. David is ready to pay him and it seems that everything has been settled.

Kurt's Anguish

Kurt can not tolerate Teck getting his upper hand over him and harming his noble cause. He knows that to overcome the vicious tendency he has to confront him in a more forceful manner, perhaps by means of violence which he hates most. So he tries to abolish evil prevailing in the form of Teck

by killing him. After killing Teck, he says, “I have a great hate for the violent. They are the sick of the world. Maybe I am sick now, too”(261). Thus a gentleman, a man of peace, is driven to violence to protect the cause and to confront the violent. He does not allow Teck to rob him away. Kurt has experienced great sufferings caused by war. Every scar on his mind is reflected due to Nazi fundamentalism, which does not allow him to accept undue selfishness. He remembers how innocent people like his cousin were mercilessly killed. He regrets that he can not give a proper home to his wife and children. He is disgusted with the evil ways of life and his inability to overcome it. With self hatred he exclaims : “Shame on us. Thousands of years and we can not yet make a world” (260). Though his confrontation, here, is with Teck, it, actually, symbolizes confrontation of good with the universal evil that tramples down the righteous way of life. Thus, the eternal confrontation of good and evil has been reflected in a miniature form in the case of Kurt and Teck.

Kurt’s unshakeable faith in his mission creates an aura of great patriotism around him. He appears a superhuman with the immense capacity to confront the evil. He is undeterred by the treachery and the oddities he goes through. He has strong belief that if they had won the war they would have been successful in establishing a new world. While remembering those Germans, who were ready to sacrifice their lives for the noble cause, he reflects :

...At a quarter before six on the morning of November 7th, 1936, eighteen years later, five hundred Germans walked through the Madrid Streets on their way to defend the Manzanares River. We felt good that morning. You know how it is good when it is needed to be good?...We did fight but we did not win. It would have been a different world if we did.
(238- 239)

Kurt's Triumph over Evil

Compared to Hellman's earlier protagonists, Kurt appears to be a real hero. As *The Children's Hour* and *The Little Foxes* were plays with no heroes, Leo Whalen in *Days to Come* has some vigour and forcefulness but in spite of it, he remains a catalyst. In the words of William Wright, in the earlier plays –

...Hellman provides no effective counterforce to the evil that abounds and to a large degree, triumphs. In *Watch on the Rhine*, Kurt not only opposes the evil, he destroys it. He is also a character of understated yet clearly towering nobility. For the first time Hellman has produced a character she admires without reservation, and she has allowed the goodness he embodies to win out at the drama's end...⁴

While commenting on the play, Jean Gould points out :

The feeling of loyalty and love between Kurt Muller and his family evoked sympathy in American audiences and made the Count's death a triumph over evil, a feeling that was increased by Muller's return to Europe to fight the Nazis. In this respect, *Watch on the Rhine*, differed from Miss Hellman's previous plays, in which the force of evil was unrelenting.⁵

Kurt's confrontation with evil, as portrayed in the play, is not purely fictitious but it is largely based on Julia, Hellman's girlhood friend killed by the Nazis. The play is her tribute to Julia and other such unsung heroes 'willing to die for what they believed in', whom she had seen in the Spanish Civil War. Kurt's efforts to oppose evil reminds us of Julia's sacrifice and sufferings.

Sara's Confrontation with the Evil of Nazism

Sara is another important character, which faces evil in her own ways. She also, like her husband, confronts the evil of war and the cruelty reflected by Nazism. As Judith Olauson describes her rightly :

...Sara, his (Kurt's) long suffering expatriate wife, shares her husband's values, in spite of her longing for the amenities and security she knew as a child with her affluent family. Her life with Kurt is filled with love, but she is not without the bitterness of one who recognizes the inequalities suffered by his people.⁶

Nobility in Sara is equal to that of Kurt's. Kurt has decided to dedicate his life for the noble cause and is an active anti-fascist but Sara is the great supporter to the cause. Though she is not directly involved in the war force, her dedication to her husband, her support to him and her understanding of him is noteworthy. Her confrontation with the evil of war indicates her forbearance. Kurt has to move from place to place, he is jobless, sometimes he cannot even manage for a good breakfast for his family but Sara has no complaints against anything. On the contrary, she helps him in her own way, i. e., by sewing for a living. Therefore, she gets hurt when she finds indifference of her mother towards their sufferings.

Sara – Teck Confrontation

At the same time, she does not like Teck getting upper hand over her husband. Teck tries to investigate whether they stayed close to the borders of Germany and whether Kurt has hopes that 'National Socialism would be overthrown on every tomorrow?' (230). Very sharply Sara retaliates : 'We have not given up that hope. Have you Count de Brancovis?' (230). Sara hates the very attitude of Teck. She gets disgusted with the void polite talk regarding politics. In a way, she becomes a mouthpiece of Hellman and accuses Teck : "...By this time all of us know where we are and what we have

to do. It's an indulgence to sit in a room and discuss your beliefs as if they were the afternoon's golf game" (230-231). Sara's confrontation with Teck suggests the confrontation between Nazi favouritism and that of hatred towards Nazis. But when she confronts her mother, she represents anti-Nazi humanitarian values and her mother represents confined aloofness towards the universal evil of Nazism. Sara very straightforwardly accuses her mother for having old convictions, and emphasizes the need to change them. She says "...Do you remember, Mama? For every man who lives without freedom, the rest of us must face the guilt" (231-239).

Sara's sacrifice is nonetheless praiseworthy. At another level, she confronts her life itself. Her childhood was full of fun, security, love, care and affluence, unlike her children's. She remembers 'Savitt's' and 'the Milan hat', 'the black suit with the braid' and the 'evening suit', which were the part of her extravagant life. She has longing for those beautiful things which, perhaps, may not be enjoyed by her in future. But she has no complaints or regrets because her life is filled with love. Her decision to sustain Kurt has been based on her own values. Sara shows immense courage in accepting her husband's decisions to go back to Germany, alone. She knows very well that there are very few chances of seeing him again. But she has seen the bitterness in the lives of the innocents, she has seen the national struggle, and compared to those sufferings, her sacrifice is nothing for her. She is proud of Kurt's underground activities. She knows it is hard enough to get back and at the same time, she knows very well that Kurt has to leave for those who are anxiously waiting for Kurt's arrival to save them from the clutches of Nazis. Sara's bold endeavour to accept the fact is seen in the following lines :

...Don't be scared darling. You'll get back. You'll see. You've done it before – you'll do it again. Don't be scared. You'll get Max out all right. And then you'll do a good job, the way you've always done... (She is crying very hard. To Fanny) Kurt doesn't feel well. He was wounded and he gets tired – (To

Kurt) You don't feel well, do you? Don't be scared, darling.
Don't worry, you'll get home. Yes, you will. (248)

Sara's sacrifice enhances the meaning of Kurt's fighting for the dignity of mankind. Kurt's confrontation with the evil is direct, while Sara's confrontation is subtle and indirect.

Martha – Teck Confrontation

Kurt and Sara are confronting the evil, which is in the form of brutality of fascism, whereas Marthe confronts the evil in the form of selfishness and greediness of Teck. Marthe knows Teck's evil nature and his sympathy towards Nazis. She does not like his way of life, i. e., his hanging on at the German embassy, his not being able to pay up when losing in play cards game, his not paying bills, living as a refugee and his total carelessness. At first, her confrontation with him turns null and void. She is tired of his negligence towards the fact that they have a little money. She accuses him for playing poker game and warns about chances of his losing in the game. She is scared of disame that would arise due to his carelessness. She says :

...if you do loose and can't pay, it will be all over Washington in an hour... They'll find out about it, and we'll be out of here when they do... And I understand that I am getting tired. Just plain tired. The whole thing's too much for me. I've always meant to ask you, since you played on so many sides, why we didn't come out any better. I've always wanted to ask you what happened... I'm tired, see! And I just want to sit down. Just to sit down in a chair and stay. (213)

But agony of Marthe is not taken into consideration by Teck. In spite of Teck's ridicule, Marthe accuses him of being indulgent in Kurt's matter. She does not like his inquisitiveness regarding Kurt and his bags. Goodness in Marthe does not allow her to tolerate Teck's giving instructions

to Joseph, the servant, to take the baggage upstairs so that he can look at baggage comfortably behind closed doors. Very sharply she confronts Teck. She says, "...What kind of silliness is this now? Leave, these people alone – I won't let you –" (227). But even this is not entertained by Teck and Marthe's confrontation turns to be a futile effort to bring Teck to a right path.

Teck is not ready to change himself but he has all great expectations from Marthe. He expects loyalty from her and when he finds that Marthe and David like each other, he cannot tolerate it. He asks Marthe to pack up the things and very boldly Marthe declares that she is not going with him. This time she confronts Teck quite boldly. When Teck asks whether she is in love with David, she admits and when asked whether David is in love with her, she says, "...I don't think so. You won't believe it, because you can't believe anything that hasn't got tricks to it, but David hasn't much to do with this. I told you I would leave someday, and I remember where I said it – and why I said it." (242)

Unlike Birdie in *The Little Foxes*, she has courage enough to confront evil. She reminds us of Alexandra, who does not want to compromise with her mother's evil nature. Marthe, too, does not bow down in front of Teck's whimsicality and his evil intentions and thus, consequently, Teck is defeated by her. Though, it is a minor victory of good over evil, it establishes an outlet for the suppressed feelings of Marthe and frees her from the unwanted wedlock. The step taken by Marthe is a way of revelation, which has taken place in the earlier plays in the case of Julie in *Days to Come* and Regina in *The Little Foxes*. A time comes when these three speak out the truth regarding their frustrated marriages. In the case of Marthe, the step taken by her is laudable as it arises sympathy, whereas in the case of Julie and Regina nothing but disgust arises. Marthe's following speech is an eye-opener not only for the characters including Teck but also for the readers. She says :

I don't like Teck. I never have...There is nothing to discuss.

Strange. I've talked to myself about this scene for almost fifteen years. I knew a lot of things to say to you and I used to

lie awake at night or walk along the street and say them. Now I don't want to. When you're sure, then what's the sense of saying it?...A seventeen year old daughter, marrying a pretty good looking title, about to secure herself in a world that Mama liked – she didn't ask me what I liked. And the one time I tried to tell her, she frightened me...May be I've always been frightened. All my life. (242-243)

Finally, Marthe leaves Teck with the determination : “let's make sure we go in different directions, and do not meet again. Good bye, Teck.” (244) She moves out maintaining her self-respect and making Teck feel sorry for losing her. In a righteous way, Marthe confronts evil and becomes successful in getting rid of it.

Fanny and David's Initial Indifference to the Evils of Hitlerism

Initially, Fanny and David are quite aloof from the confrontation. They represent the Americans who were basking in a peaceful, luxurious life, indifferent to the evils of Hitlerism. Hellman wanted the Americans to realize the threatening loom of Nazism which was on their threshold awaiting, about to enter their life. N. S. Pradhan very aptly describes it in the following words :

...the American Fanny Farrelly and her son David live in a strange insularity. They not only do not understand, but don't care that the world is up in flames. In their nineteenth century attitudes in high society. More, they do not understand the Mullers' poverty. One of the Muller boys has sensed this : “Grandma has not seen much of the world.”⁷

Fanny does not understand that Sara and Kurt along with their children have come to her as they want to have a long vacation. She insists that they should stay there and Kurt will get work as he is an engineer. She does not know that Kurt has not been working as an engineer since many years. She is unaware of the miserable condition in which they have lived. The only thing she knows is that Sara was having 'a bad time.' Sara gets irritated at the innocence of her mother towards the European misery. There are two contrasting ways of life; Fanny's with its awakened innocence, whereas Sara's with its tragic necessities. For Fanny, the world is quite confined and in her world are David, her son, whom she bosses all the time and her servants with whose help she keeps her family in order. Clinging to the convictions of her dead husband, she measures everything from his perspective. Her world is filled up with the local gossip. David, too, knows her well and does not conflict with her as she wants him to be like his father. Very gradually, they come out of their secured world and confront the evil that was right in their home, in the form of Teck.

Fanny's confrontation with Teck

When Teck demands money, Fanny, for the first time, uses harsh words : "God made you not only a scoundrel but a fool. That is a dangerous combination" (245). She accuses him for being greedy but she is unaware of his Nazi favouritism, as yet. When Kurt explains that he is an 'outlaw' working with many other illegal organization and carrying money to save the people fighting for the noble cause, both David and Fanny get baffled. They go on asking questions innocently and suggest solutions to come out of the unfavourable situation. But in spite of it, David and Fanny want to help Kurt. Though, verbally they confront Teck, they get ready to pay him the amount he has demanded. This is their way to confront evil.

When David asks her to get money, Fanny says to Teck, "Years ago, I heard somebody say that being Roumanian was not a nationality but a profession. The years have brought no change" (256).

Upon that Teck comments :

The new world has left the room. I feel less comfortable with you. We are Europeans, born to trouble and understanding it... They are young. The world has gone well for most of them. For us – we are like peasants watching the big frost. Work, trouble, ruin – But no need to call curses at the frost. There it is, it will be again, always for us. (256-257)

What Teck says is the truth regarding the gulf of experience. But very slowly, Hellman makes Fanny and David get through the confrontation. They are involved in it as if they are part and parcel of it. Fanny promises to help Kurt. She goes with the first option suggested by Kurt, i. e., to render him two days to escape from the place and not the second one that is to inform the police. Not only that she also offers her money as a contribution to Kurt's work. Symbolically, her generosity is a step taken by the Americans to understand what the world outside is facing. She has no grudges against Kurt or even the murder, which has taken place right in her house.

The confrontation of Kurt with Teck for the cause of German liberation is an eye opener for the Americans. By the end of the play, Fanny remarks to David : “Well, here we are. We are shaken out of the magnolias, eh?”(264). She is well aware of the troubles they are going to be in. But she assures David, “I understand it very well. We will manage. I am not put together with flour paste. And neither are you – I am happy to learn” (265). While confronting evil in the form of Teck, they learn :

...that the fundamental clash in civilization is between those bent on self aggrandizement and those who are not and that it doesn't pay money to fight for that in which we believe.⁸

Teck as the Central Cause of Confrontation

The villain and the central cause of confrontation, in the play, is Teck, an opportunist. When he finds Kurt carrying money with him, he finds it an opportunity to grab money from him and starts collecting information regarding Kurt and his mission. Though, as foxy as Hubbards and cunning as Mary, he lacks brilliance of Ben, he is a self-centred and careless, good for nothing aristocrat. He lacks understanding of Kurt or even forbearance of him. He knows, only, how to make his life as comfortable as possible. He has nothing to do with the poor or their somehow collected money and their emotions. Without understanding the need of the money, he blackmails Kurt. He confronts good for no great reason. A myopic self-centred blackmailer becomes the victim of his own guiles. Though he pretends to be a Nazi-sympathizer, in reality he does not represent it. Kurt evaluates evil in the following manner. According to him some fascists:

...came late, some because they did not jump in time, some because they were stupid, some because they were shocked at the crudity of the German evil, and preferred their own evil and some because they were fastidious men. For those last, we may well some day have pity. They are lost men, their spoils are small, their day is past...(265)

Evil in Teck is not touched by anything. Very shamelessly he accepts the accusation made by Fanny for selling the lives of other men. He does not care for the feelings of Kurt and says to Fanny :

...Is very ugly, Madame Fanny, I do not do it without some shame, and therefore I must sink my shame in money... (255).

All the evil aspects of Teck's character are revealed by Hellman, but at the same time, she does not waste her hatred upon him. As Sara points out, he is not 'difficult to understand'. Therefore, he is easy to confront with. As Barret H. Clark points out :

...I call attention to the "villain" Teck,...who blackmails his hosts into buying him off when he discovers who Kurt is and what he is trying to do. Teck is no lay figure; he does not even represent fascism : he is no more than a pitiful little rat, himself a victim. She even goes out of her way to make him understandable, and she likewise endows him with some remnants of human decency....⁹

Teck's murder is the final act of confrontation, which is necessary from the point of view of the plot. Blackmail and murder are the two major devices used by Hellman to enhance dramatic effect. That also focuses Hellman's philosophy that even a simpleton can cross his limits when there is oppression and war which is uncalled for.

Hellman, quite successfully, leaves her message for the Americans that they are not safe from war or its violence. It is a wake up call for all those wealthy and cultured peace-loving people to realize the threat and the agonies of the miserables. Through the powerful drama, *Watch on the Rhine*, Hellman has conveyed her own feelings. As Jean Gould puts it :

...The feeling of loyalty and love between Kurt Muller and his family evoked sympathy in American audience and made the Count's death a triumph over evil, a feeling that was increased by Muller's return to Europe to fight the Nazis. In this respect, *Watch on the Rhine* differed from Miss Hellman's previous plays, in which the force of evil was unrelenting.¹⁰

The play demanded greater attention because Hellman wants to focus on the realistic theme and how money makes man crazy that moral ethics and principles get worn out in the hands of some selfish people. It is an exhortation to the Americans either to confront evil or to help those who are confronting it. It deals the fundamental issue of America. *Watch on the Rhine* was quite a contemporary play with the contemporary theme. No doubt, it presents the moral dilemma of the Americans. There were other dramatists dealing with Anti-Nazi theme but it was Hellman who won the Drama Critics Circle Award, an impressive victory.

II

The Searching Wind

About the Play :

Hellman's next play *The Searching Wind* is an extension of *Watch on the Rhine* with the same theme of criticism of American inertia to the global evil, fascism, that was crushing down the good aspect of life. According to her, not only evil intentioned people were responsible for the disaster but also those good people who did nothing except watching the earth eaten. Judith Olauson rightly points out : "In this exposure of the evils of appeasement prior to the Second World War, Hellman hinted that diplomats did as much to bring about the war in their surreptitious efforts to placate the fascist uprising as the fascists did in outright attack."¹¹

The Searching Wind deals with the serious theme presenting strong thoughts of Hellman. Hellman was a staunch moralist, she could not tolerate passive by standing when everything was going to pieces. She used drama as a social tool and implied her provocative ideas through it. This time we don't have Mary, Ben or Tek-like characters as villains. It is the passivity of the people that largely becomes evil and the young generation, forbearing certain good values, has to confront that evil. William Wright observes it in the following manner : "The Searching Wind is a rambling, talky three acts that set out to show the culpability of well meaning people of privilege who do not

use that privilege to stop an evil like fascism before it becomes too strong to stop...”¹²

In *Watch on the Rhine* Hellman at least makes liberal upper class Americans realize the horror, but in *The Searching Wind*, liberals do not notice until too late. Instead of confronting with the evil, the liberal, Alexander Hazen, compromises with it and the lives of the next generation are on stake. But he is unaware of it until his son reveals the truth. To understand confrontation of Good and Evil at different levels let us see a brief summary of the play.

A Brief Summary of the Play :

The Searching Wind is a play about Alexander Hazen’s family and Cassie Bowman. When the play opens, Alexander Hazen and Emily Hazen are ready to receive their friend, Catherine (Cassie) Bowman, whom Emily has not met for years. Alexander and Cassie see each other at intervals. Emily’s father, Moses Taney, retired newspaper publisher, and her son, Samuel are also present on the occasion. Nobody has any idea why Cassie has been invited for dinner. The place is Washington D. C., the time, the spring of 1944 – the year in which action begins and ends. Consequently, the first scene is followed by flashbacks of 1922, 1923 and 1938. The three years are important from the point of view of the three characters, Alex, Emily and Cassie. At the same time the three years are also important from the point of view of political upheavals.

The play opens with a casual talk between Moses Taney and his grandson Sam. Moses is asking Sam to read the article by Alex, Moses’ son-in-law. The servants are making preparations for the dinner. Emily, the wife of Alexander Moses, is giving instructions to them. Sam is a wounded soldier and son of Emily and Alex. The doctor has advised him not to get up for more than a few hours. That is what his mother reminds him of. Emily has arranged the dinner purposefully. She has invited her friend, Cassie Bowman and Moses wants to stay with them for dinner. Emily, his daughter, suggests to him that he should take an apartment at the Shoreham and have tea with them

on Sundays. The idea is not liked by Sam, as he does not want to miss his grandpa. Moses tells Sam that his mother, Emily, forgets that the place they live in belongs to him and after his death it will belong to Sam. Emily accuses her father and Moses remarks :

You have got too much money as it is. You and Alex don't need a house. You'll always be busy ambassadoring in Europe, talking in eight languages, in that diplomatic basic baby talk... Do stop moving about, you're not a fidgety woman and it doesn't become you. (To Sam) If you turn out to be a diplomat, I will cut you out of my will. (276)

Thus, the play opens on a casual note and a comment of Moses on Alex and Emily's being diplomats and their wandering all over Europe. We come to know about the reason for the dinner but nobody knows why Cassie has been invited by Emily after so many years. When Cassie arrives no one is at ease. Cassie is hesitant and cautious, as if she is unsure of herself. Even Emily is not very free in her manners. Emily, unnecessarily, goes on giving account of her life that Alex does not like. He gives her a hint that they, himself and Cassie, have met earlier and Cassie knows everything. Emily answers "...Well, I wanted to bring her up to date" (279). Emily reminds Cassie of the olden days when they were in Rome. Yet Cassie is confused, she does not understand why Emily is talking too much about the past and Emily explains : "It's natural to talk about it, we haven't seen each other for so long. It's natural. We remember what used to be... Let it come, as it will. Cas, Better for all of us if we're not frightened of it..." (281). Scene one ends sustaining confusion in Cassie's mind and nervousness in both, Cassie and Emily.

Scene 2 takes place in Rome where Moses Taney, Emily, Cassie and their maid Sophronia are on their visit to Rome. Alex is a young diplomat in the American Embassy. Tension has been aroused as Mussolini is marching to Rome. Alex conveys a message of the Ambassador that Moses and girls should go and stay in Embassy but Moses refuses to do so. The gunshots are

heard outside, there are muffled sounds of distant shouting which are quite frightening. Everyone is worried about the repercussions. Emily's scary question, "Is it going to be bad, father?" alarms everyone and Moses' answer to it, "It has been bad, it is bad, and it is going to be bad" (285). confirms its consequences. At the time of tumult, some people are enjoying their vacations. They are not bothered about Mussolini's marching on. Against the noises of guns they enjoy their party music. They believe that 'Fascist' means a recovery of Italy. Some of these are Americans who have helped Mussolini, financially.

Cassie and Emily are also enjoying their visit to Rome but Cassie decides to join a job of teacher and not to go with Emily to Washington. In spite of Emily's insistence to live with her and have fun, Cassie determines to join the job, as Cassie's financial position is not so strong. Through their talk, to Emily's surprise, the relationship between Cassie and Alex has been revealed. Thoroughly disturbed Emily cannot understand why Cassie and Alex meet separately when the three of them have known each other all their lives.

Now it is the turn of Cassie to get baffled. Cassie is not sure about her real feelings towards Alex. She does not like Alex's failure to take a strong political stand. He supposes that open opposition to the fascists would be an intervention in Italian internal affairs. So, Cassie decides to go away from Alex for a while and ponder over their relationship. Emily takes advantage of Cassie's decision of going away. Instead of going to Washington, she decides to remain in Rome and have her music lessons. In reality, she wants to stay in Rome because Alex is there.

The 1923 scene takes place at a restaurant in Berlin where Alex, coincidentally meets Cassie when he is waiting for Emily to arrive. Alex and Emily have married each other. Cassie is happy with her job of a school teacher. Organized anti-Semitic riots are going on, the noises of riots and threats against Jews are heard outside. The people in the restaurant are worried and Alex tries to calm them down. He assures them that everything is under control, nothing is happening near the restaurant and there is no danger. Emily arrives and she is scared as she has just witnessed German ex-soldiers beating

up old Jews. Emily finds Cassie and behaves casually. Cassie can not tolerate Emily's ease and accuses her of stealing Alex from her. Cassie's accusation has been retaliated by Emily. She explains :

I didn't make you and Alex fight. I didn't know you'd had a fight for months after he came back to Rome. Then all he ever told me was that you disagreed with what he thought and what he was, and that you'd both decided to quit. What good is this Cassie? It's all over now (304).

Cassie cannot understand it and sternly declares not to see each other again. Emily tries to reconcile and says perhaps they will forget after a while and come together. The scene ends on the reconciliatory note.

The 1938 scene takes place in Hotel Maurice at Paris when the Munich Agreement is about to take place. Alex, and his secretary, Sears, are in the hotel room and Sears receives a phone call of Count-Von Stammer, a German diplomat. The conversation regarding report compiled by the Poles, with the figures on the Soviet Union war potential is going on. Alex also is supposed to send his recommendations to the U. S. government. Sears talks of the rumors about the Munich meeting and Alex gets disgusted with it. Alex can not believe in villainy. So he can not accept whatever is going around them. He asks Sears : What's the matter with me, Jim? Am I just tired? I can't put the pieces together, or may be I don't want to. I don't know. I can't believe in villainy. I can't. I always want to laugh when somebody else believes in it (307).

Von Stammer comes from German Embassy to pressurize Alex to report his government not to encourage the English and the French to make war. And if there will be no meddling from Alex's side all will be settled. Alex has hope that Hitler may keep his promise not to annex more territory after Sudetenland. He does not believe in what Van Stammer says, i. e., Hitler will talk of making war at some time in the future on the Soviet Union. So, Alex, in his report, makes earnest recommendations that the United States should

protest against any further German aggression or against any further concession from them. He also believes that Chamberlain is working in the interest of peace.

Emily invites Cassie for tea. She has already known that Alex and Cassie have been meeting each other, these years. When Cassie comes, Emily is away for a while. Cassie and Alex talk about their relationship. Alex tells Cassie, "...I love Emily. Very much, I think. But I – oh, Cassie, it's taken me fifteen years to say these words even to myself; I was only in love once" (313). Emily has no courage to face Cassie and she waits in the lobby until Cassie leaves. When Emily comes, Alex tries to tell her that Cassie has come but Emily neglects and tells him about her investments. Alex gets irritated to know about it as Emily has never mentioned it earlier and accuses her of having connections with the pro-Nazi Europeans. When they are talking about her investments, there is an announcement on the radio declaring that Prime Minister, Chamberlain and Premier Daladier will fly to Munich. On that Alex remarks, "Well, there's your peace" (316). Emily sharply answers that she does not want anybody to suffer and wants peace. She does not want to send Sam on war. The last scene is full of drama where most of the characters face reality. The first confrontation takes place between Emily and Cassie. Straightaway Emily asks Cassie why she goes back to the hotel where Alexander Cassie had met earlier? Emily wants to finish the matter as they three can not go on like this. Cassie agrees but breaks down and confesses that when Emily married Alex, she was angry with her and at that time she felt it had been done against her. She wanted to take Alexander away from Emily and punish her. Cassie realizes that she had got mixed up then and couldn't help herself. She comes to know that all these years she has seen them wrong. Cassie leaves Alex and Emily forever and Emily asks Alex not to talk about the matter, as she didn't want it even earlier.

Up to the end of the play, Sam does not play any significant role. But when he speaks : Alex – Emily – Cassie episode appears foolish and he condemns every elder for whatever they did. He accuses Alex for recommending appeasement and also accuses his grandfather for keeping

himself aloof from all the turmoil. He criticizes his mother for having friendship with rich pro-Nazi socialites. He has been wounded in a battle and now he exposes the truth that the doctors have decided to amputate his leg. Everyone gets stunned to know the repercussions of their deeds. Everyone realizes follies committed but nobody can alter them. The play ends with the sharp criticism of the elder generation for either doing nothing or helping evil prosper and bringing about the war.

Hellman's Deviation from the Earlier Themes

In the earlier plays, Hellman has dealt with the theme concerning good and evil. She has presented confrontation between these two forces. In her plays blackmail and greed for money are the recurrent causes generating evil. This time Hellman deviates from these causes. The play is about politics and individual lives woven around each other in an intellectual manner. In spite of many time shifts and a number of characters, Hellman maintains a poise in presenting her ideas. Good or evil does not come out easily. There are neither heroes nor villains. The characters are muffled in such a manner that it becomes difficult to label a character as a good or evil Katherine Lederer observes :

There is no true villain in *The Searching Wind*. All of the major characters have let things happen, have stood around and watched the earth and the people on it be eaten. Nor is there a single protagonist. A searching wind blows away the rationalizations of all the characters by the end of the play, as they learn the truth about themselves.¹³

Minor Characters Confronting the Evil of Nazism

Ponette's Confrontation

Truly speaking, only Sam and some minor characters confront the evil of Nazism in their own peculiar way. Ponette is a servant of Hazens and his wife is a cook. Both of them are refugees at Hazen house. Once Ponette used

to have a dry good store in Toulouse and his wife used to have a servant of her own. Sophronia comments about their present condition, "...if it hadn't been for those people who used to go on strikes, the Germans would never have come into France and if it hadn't been for their crazy son-in-law who was a Socialist they would never have had to leave" (275). In the same scene Ponette is making preparations for the dinner, Sophronia asks him to try Vermouth to serve the guests. He gets delighted and says, "Ah, vermouthe. Merci...he vermouthe de France." Moses comments, "You sound as if vermouthe is a relative." Sophronia sharply comments, "Is all the fault of the United Front." All the conversation disturbs Ponette a great, he gets hurt and says, "Ah, you gentlemen laugh. But it is not a joke. If it had not been for the radicals of France If it comes in your country, should God forbid, you will see the danger. Leon Blum – Like me, you will loose your store, your beautiful house, your –" (274). The speech by Ponette is the sum total of the grim reality confronted by the people in Germany and the result of their confrontation with the evil caused due to German hegemony.

Common Man's Confrontation with the Evil Represented by the Waiter :

In Scene 2 of Act I a young waiter comes in the room of Moses and he coughs hard, though he tries hard he stifles and he cannot check himself from coughing and gets frightened. He requests Sophronia not to report it to the owner that he has coughed near the table. What he tells is quite disturbing, his lungs are bad from the war and it is only his second day in the hotel. He is afraid that he may loose his job if Sophronia reports against him. When Moses arrives Sophronia tells him about the young waiter and how he has got hurt in the war. The young waiter, here, represents the common man in Italy who undergoes great suffering. They know well that the government has nothing to do with the common man and his sufferings. As he tells, the Garrison Government could have stopped Mussolini but they won't because the king and the Government are with the Fascisti and they want them to march in. The common man has lost faith in the Government and for them it has been finished for a long time. Earlier they believed that President Wilson will have

tackled the problem but the Government does not allow him to do so. What the young waiter says is the reality of the common Italians. he says :

For me, for many Italians, it was there three years ago. Your President Wilson was in the Piazza Venezia. The great man would speak to us, tell us what to do, tell us how to make a free country. Fifty thousand people came. Many of them walked all night. They carried their children...But our king and our Government did not wish President Wilson to speak. They were afraid of us. All day they keep him inside the palace, meeting the great names who came to call. All day the people waited with the last. I did not know it then, but that night it was finished for me. (284-285)

It is obvious that the common man cannot confront the evil when it is at larger scale. He gets helpless, he neither can save his nation from doom, nor can he save himself from the overpowering evil. It is the predicament of common man.

Americans' Indifference to the Grim Reality :

The miserable common people are getting crushed down under the heavy weight of evil in the form of Nazism. Employment, scarcity, homelessness, disbelief, uncertainty are some of the repercussions of evils of war, which are reflected in the play. The Americans, in the play, are far away from this reality. They are reluctant to realize these problems. When one part of the world is getting destroyed, totally, they enjoy their affluence. In the very midst of the turmoil they enjoy their trips to Europe. They have fun and frolic. Merry making and parties are going on and they cannot sense the evil, which is prevailing in the lives of the innocents. In the play, Hellman tries to present two different lifestyles. When Eppler, a German Restaurant owner, points it out he tells Alex :

...Notice the price mounts. This morning I buy bread for one hundred and forty billion marks the loaf. You are lucky to have American money...In all my years I have not seen so many American dollars and English pounds. Here they buy a drink for more than a German can earn in a week. It is fault of no one, but it causes bad feeling. You understand Mr. Hazen. It is not wise to have tourists here now. You work in Berlin, you understand that. (299)

For Americans this misery is hard to believe. They cannot understand how people are helpless and desperately poverty-stricken. Evil caused due to political fundamentalism affect common man's life largely and they get defeated, wounded while confronting with it. In the same scene when Alex is waiting for Emily, a disgraceful riot of hoodlums against the Jewish section takes place. Every common man is worried regarding his safety. The noises and shouts of troubled people and threats against Jews are heard. The atmosphere is filled with tension and horror of riots. Emily rushes in hurriedly. She is thoroughly shocked, as she has undergone a terrible experience. She has witnessed German ex-soldiers beating up old Jews.

This is only trivial attempt of Emily to confront the evil but the very effort of confrontation turns futile. Being an American, she has been discarded from the scene. Thus, Hellman successfully points out confrontation of common man with the evil of fascism.

Sam's Confrontation with the Evil of Nazism and with Other Characters :

Like common man confronting the evil directly, Sam is the only American in the play who confronts it in his own way. At the beginning of the play, Sam remains quite aloof from the happenings. Only in the last scene, he bursts out with all the disgust he has towards the older generation.

He firmly believes that because of their inability to confront the evil, his generation is in trouble. As Judith Olason observes :

Hellman pointed out that the generation of people who had reached middle age by 1940, were ignorant, frivolous individuals who has created an overwhelming situation and then had handed it over to the younger generation to resolve on the battlefield. She particularized this in the young, crippled soldier, Sam, who loses his closest friends while fighting. He is ashamed of his parents' attitude that Europe will be liberated when it is restored as the charming, carefree place they once know.¹⁴

Sam's Confrontation with His Parents :

Sam has courage enough to confront his wronged parents and the evil of Nazism as well. Though Alex and Emily had thought it wise to admit their children in school at France or Switzerland, for Sam it was a great mistake of them. Because that has created the feeling of homelessness in their lives. Sam hates those schools and thus condemns the idea of his parents that Europe is an ideal place for their schooling. Only words are meaningless for him. Though his grandfather had tried hard to turn him into an intellectual, he prefers to be a warrior, a man who trusts action and sincere human relations. He shows courage enough to speak out against his grandfather. He says:

You mixed me up quite a lot, Grandpa...But one fine thing you taught me : that I belong here...I never come across my kind of people until I met Leck and Davis. I guess I never could have

belonged to your world...I still don't know where I do belong. I guess that's what's been worrying me... (322)

This sense of rootlessness has been imposed on him due to self-indulgence of his parents. The revelation of the stark truth makes his parents feel guilty. Sam has his own ideal world, chosen by himself. He feels comfortable in the company of his solidier friends, who possess certain ideals, and he is at home in the army. He loves his country and cannot tolerate how his older generation has wronged the nation, too. He confronts his elders very sharply for damaging their country. He is not ready to do fancy fooling anymore. Sam comments :

I don't want any more of father's mistakes, for any reason, good or bad, or yours, Mother, because I think they do it harm. I was ashamed of that clipping. But I didn't really know why. I found out tonight. I am ashamed of both of you, and that's the truth. I don't want to be ashamed that way again. I don't like losing my leg. I don't like losing it at all. I'm scared but everybody's welcome to it as long as it means a little something and helps to bring us out someplace. (324)

Futility of Sam's Confrontation :

Sam's criticism is an eye-opener for his elders. But it comes far late, because what has happened cannot be changed. Elders' half-felt realizations become crystal clear now. Sam cannot repair the loss caused to his nation or to him. He has to face his predicament, he has to undergo amputation of his leg. He remains a spokesman of the younger generation and represents an outlet for their feelings. According to Doris Falk, the last speech by Sam has 'implied impotence.'¹⁵ At the end of the speech Sam says, "let's have a drink" (324) which connotes reconciliation. The vigour that has been represented in the speech is nullified by it. Barrett H. Clark thinks that Hellman is not

pleading any kind of reform “...she is evidently not ridden by the notion that all you have to do to win the Good life is to eradicate the evil men and substitute good. “I love this place,” says Sam, and Sam speaks for the author, “and I don’t want any more fancy fooling around it.” This place is, of course, our country, or perhaps all those countries in which our way of life is held to be the best.”¹⁶

Sam-Alexandra : An Analogy :

Sam bears the temperament that of Alexandra in *The Little Foxes*. Both of them cannot tolerate the mistakes committed by their elders. In the course of time, both overpower their elders by pointing out elders’ follies and their irreparable mistakes. The only difference is that Alexandra forlorns her mother, Regina, and lets her repent on her own deeds alone, whereas Sam doesn’t want to punish anybody. He just makes them aware of their mistakes and does not go away from them.

Sam’s Action Vs. Inaction of Other Characters :

The whole set of other characters are juxtaposed against Sam’s character. While Sam represents action, these characters represent inaction and indifference to the grim situation. It is the nick of time when all the characters are supposed to confront evil of fascism. But instead, they are thoroughly indulged in the emotional entanglements created by themselves. Through these characters, Hellman harshly criticizes the tendency of indifference of Americans towards the global evil. Moreover, they shake their hands with it and let the evil grow unruly. Alexander Hazen diplomatically follows the isolationist policy. Under the disguise of noble act he, indirectly, helps the evil prosper. He himself is a muddled character; that does not understand many things that he is doing. His conviction is that one day or the other evil will turn into good. His report to the U. S. Government supporting appeasement is the arch example of his wrong notion. He writes :

It is my Earnest belief that we should protest against any further German aggressions or against any further concession to

them. But I am convinced that Mr. Chamberlain is working in the interests of peace and his actions must not be judged too sharply. If he can save his sons and our sons from war – It is difficult to give you a picture of muddled situation. On the side of peace there are many selfish and unpatriotic men willing to sacrifice the honor of their country for their own private and dishonorable reasons... (317-318)

Alex's Inability to Sense Evil :

Alex, who basically is good natured, senses evil but does not hate it as he has faith in goodness. He says, "I can't believe in villainy...I always want to laugh when somebody else believes in it, which shows his nobleness and genteel nature" (307). For a long time he is under the notion that whatever he does is right. He supposes that as an individual he cannot fight back the evil and change the things. That history cannot be changed by an individual, is his conviction. He justifies his act as if to soothe his tortured feelings. As Sam goes on accusing him, he does not confront Sam, as he wants to come out of the pressure of guilt. He listens what Sam says without interfering him and at last confesses, "Sometimes I was wrong because I didn't know any better. And sometimes I was wrong because I had reasons I didn't know about..."(324). Thus Alex proves to be an indirect despoiler. As Judith Olauson comments :

Alex recommends appeasement regarding Hitler's aggression in an attempt to prevent involvement. But inevitably world war ensues, and in his own family, his son suffers great loses. Although he has considered it a blameless diplomatic maneuver, Alex has made a fatal mistake which he recognizes only years later.¹⁷

Cassie's Confrontation with Alex and Emily :

At the very outset Cassie seems to be a character having potential to confront evil. At least through her forceful and assertive dialogues, we assume her to be the spokesman of Hellman. Cassie's accusation to Alex for not taking strong political stand is really laudable. She out rightly asks Alex about the ambassador's stand regarding letting Mussolini in and accuses him for giving sorry excuses for the political stand he has taken. She, bluntly, confronts Alex saying,

We're an ignorant generation. We see so much and know so little. Maybe because we think about ourselves so much... A revolution is going on out there. But by this time next year it will be nothing more than dinner table conversation. Things mean so little to us, to you – (289)

Cassie can sense the things happening around and is duly enraged against it. She cannot tolerate Emily's piano playing when outside the hotel, noises of gunshots are heard. Cassie cannot stop herself from accusing Emily, "Do stop playing the piano. It does not go well with guns." (293)

It shows Cassie's moral concern but unfortunately Cassie's confrontation takes another dimension. On a very personal level she goes on confronting Alex and Emily in her own peculiar way. After Emily-Alex marriage, she starts following them every year. Only to revenge Emily, she continues her relationship with Alex and she remains highly self-indulgent. Though Cassie has potential to confront evil, she gives it up and narrows her confrontation on a personal level. Foolishly she gets entangled in the web created by her own until Emily confronts her. She realizes her follies and admits how muddled she was. Cassie's long speech reveals the follies of their generation, too. Cassie says :

...You know, when you don't think you're bad; then you have a hard time seeing you did things for a bad reason, and you fool

yourself that way. It gets all mixed up and may be the hardest thing in the world is to see yourself straight...Well, I guess you pay for small purposes, and for bitterness. I can't say I'm sorry. I can say I got mixed up and couldn't help myself...It's too bad that all these years I saw us wrong. Oh, I don't want to see another generation of people like us who didn't know what they were doing or why they did it. You know something? We were frivolous people. All three of us, and all those like us – (320).

Before this confessional speech only once she confronts Emily in the Berlin scene. She openly asks Emily, “What did Alex tell you when he came back from seeing me? When he came back to Rome. Where you were waiting for him?” (304) Emily tries to convince her that she did not make them fight and only through Alex's conversation that she came to know that Cassie disagreed with what he thought. Emily tries to tell Cassie how useless it is to discuss the matter when everything is over but Cassie retaliates in the following manner :

Is it, Em? Your best friend marries your beau and a year after it's as if it never happened. You've always done that, Em. You've always made things as simple as you wanted them to be...I seemed to have been the only one who was disturbed...Let's not see each other again. (304-305)

Thus the confrontation here comes to an end on a bitter note. Emily realizes that things are wrong between them. They decide not to see each other again and depart.

Emily – Cassie Confrontation :

Emily's confrontation with Cassie is also an outcome of their entangled relationship. When Cassie loses Alex, Emily wins him. She is prudent enough to get married with Alex. When Cassie tells Emily that she

and Alex have met, Emily cunningly says, “I never thought you and Alex got along very well. You are so unlike...And then, of course, I suppose I’d always thought I might marry him someday –” (287). The comment creates suspicion in Cassie’s mind regarding her relation with Alex. Emily manipulates the situation and decides to remain at Rome. Cassie goes away from Alex to join her job and also to confirm her true feelings towards Alex. Emily gets married with Alex and Emily’s self becomes the cause of confrontation between them. For more than twenty years, the obscurity regarding their relation continues, which comes to an end in the last scene when Emily, at last, poses the question to Cassie asking about her strange behaviour. She demands to tell the truth for the sake of their lives. The instigation of the search for truth in their lives finally makes Cassie break down. Cassie confesses the truth and leaves Alex forever. Thus Emily wins her husband back and gets rid off Cassie’s intention in their life.

Breaking down of Cassie brings solace in the lives of the three. But it is quite difficult to determine who is good and who is not, especially in the case of Emily and Cassie. They confront each other in their own way but then labelling one of them as a heroine and the other villainess or vice versa becomes quite difficult. Judith Olason remarks:

Hellman posed a legitimate problem deserving analysis in the competitive relationship between Emily and Cassie...Hellman studies the behaviour of two women over a twenty year period, examining what effects society had on them and finding that their personal values, set against social unrest and turmoil, were dominated by the confusion of the identities as to which woman was really the heroine or the villainess...¹⁸

Confrontation at Two Different Levels :

Confrontation, in the play, has two different dimensions. At one level, it is the confrontation between the characters and at the other level it is social as well as political which has broader canvas as it is related to the global problem. Three important confrontations take place in the lives of the

characters. In the 1922 scene, Cassie confronts Alex regarding his political convictions and Emily confronts Cassie regarding Alex-Cassie relationship. In the 1923 scene, Cassie accuses Emily for stealing her friend, and in the 1938 scene, Alex confronts a dilemma regarding the report to be sent. At another level, in 1922, Mussolini is marching to Rome and Alex agrees with his boss not to appose the fascists openly. In 1923, the first organized anti-Semitic riots take place. Alex tries to calm down the people and blames the riot on the negligence of the police. He refuses to face the complicity of the police in the anti-Semitism. In 1938, Munich agreement takes place and Britain and France are about to appease the stand taken by Hitler. Alex supports Chamberlain's stand of maintaining peace. The last scene, which takes place in 1944, is the combination of all the confrontations. There is confrontation between the two generations between two women and between a common man and the political evil, which disturbs the lives of all the characters, directly or indirectly.

Hellman's Attack on the Tendency of the Bystanders :

Hellman's intention is not only to show these confrontations but also to attack the tendency of the bystanders. She focuses on the failure of well-meaning people to stop the evil grow. Moses is the oldest of all the characters. He is well informed and prudent enough to guess what the repercussions will be. But instead of confronting it, he remains aloof. He goes on commenting on Alex's diplomatic compromises. The other characters may not sense the grimness of the situations but he does. Even then he does nothing to reform it except accusing others sarcastically. He accuses Alex for being tolerant. He says :

I feel sorry for people who are as tolerant as you. Difficult world, eh, Alex? So many men doing so many strange things. All we can do is compromise. Compromise and compromise. There's nothing like a good compromise to cost a few million men their lives. Well, I'm glad I retired. I don't like having

anything to do with the death of other people. Sad world, eh,
Alex? (318-319)

He has knowledge of the political affairs but he prefers to remain away from all those. He calls the political affairs as “a very dangerous game.” According to him Mr. Wilson played it, “It goes on the assumption that bad men are stupid and good men are smart, and all diplomats are both good and smart. Well, the last time, Mr. Clemenceau was both bad and smart... I remember that day in Rome...That was the day I decided to retire and let the world go to hell without my help” (280).

Moses’ attitude makes Hellman restless because he represents most of the Americans, who sensed evil but didn’t confront it. Hellman hates passivity. As Howard Taubman puts it :

The Searching Wind condemned the good, well intentioned people for their failure to speak out against Mussolini’s coming to power in 1922, against the depredations of the new movement of Nazi bully boys in 1923 and against the “peace-in-our-time” Munich mentality of 1938.¹⁹

Moses’ good intention reflects when he condemns Europeans having fun and frolic at the time of the turmoil caused by political changes. He hates those people who put up their money for Mussolini. The stance of Moses is charming but his cynicism mars his potential to confront evil. He withdraws himself from political decision-making. Unknowingly, he also, is responsible for the doom of the next generation. Sam cannot tolerate his passivity and criticizes his grandfather for doing nothing. Even though, Moses criticizes other Americans, he himself does not stop going on Europe tours even in those years of crisis. Hellman’s intention to point out the Americans’ attitude clearly comes forth when Moses finds himself in the midst of the most important event, i. e., Mussolini’s capture of Rome. He says : “I knew most of this years

ago. But I should have known before that, and I did. But I didn't know I did. All night long I've been trying to find out when I should have known" (284).

Barret H. Clark feels it to be the heart of the problem :

Miss Hellman has sought to elucidate, if not to solve. Why have the men of good will and courage and intelligence, allowed the destroyer of freedom and the dignity of men to get the upper hand, and how has it come about that little or nothing was attempted besides appeasement? How many of us knew what was happening, and what prevented our killing the evil before it took to root and spread?²⁰

Denunciation of the So-called Innocence :

Though outwardly innocence of the Americans has been praised and their charm and carefree attitude has been admired, it promotes to make their existence flawed. Commenting on the good guy mentality of the Americans, the German diplomat Von Stammer says : "I have always admired Americans. If they eat dinner with a man, he must be honorable"(311). They lack understanding for many things. According to N. S. Pradhan :

...their ignorance of evil and poverty, their lack of concern for the disturbing events between the wars and their efforts to be nice guys, constitute a flawed existence. Innocence is not enough. In the context of the 20th century political developments, it is actually a liability. Written under the shadow of war, these plays contain the denunciation of a so-called innocence which makes the Americans look like a fool in the eyes of the world.²¹

Hellman herself admits that while writing the play, she meant only” to write about nice, well-born people who, with good intentions, helped to sell out a world...I felt very sharply that people had gotten us into a bad situation – gotten us into a war that could have been avoided if fascism had been recognized early enough.”²²

Passivity as the Form of Evil :

Unlike other plays, *The Searching Wind* lacks direct confrontation of good and evil. Hellman’s recurrent theme of blackmail or money, which causes evil in the most of her plays, is also missing here. This time she concentrates on entanglement of emotions that has been foregrounded against political upheavals in a subtle manner. Nobody hurts or threatens anybody directly yet something is missing grossly. Hellman puts forth another form of evil, i. e., passivity, which can be more cruel and dangerous than killing somebody. Casper H. Nannee feels : “*The Searching Wind* has two centres around which the plot revolves. One is the willingness of American businessmen to do business with Hitler and Mussolini and the other is the pent-up feelings of retinal soldiers towards those who brought on the war by closing their eyes to what was going on.”²³

Being a moralist, Hellman is concerned with the behaviour of her characters. Alex’s decision to recommend appeasement is quite confusing even for himself. He cannot make a decision whether it was right or wrong. But at the end of the play, Hellman makes him confess his dubiety and, also, makes him accept that he has done wrong. Cassie, too, continues her relation with Alex as she wants to take revenge on Emily but she realizes what mistake she has committed and confesses her real reason for that. Thus, true moral values have been sustained, it is the confrontation within. Amoral behaviour of the characters has been turned into righteousness by the end of the play.

The play has contemporary relevance. Hellman staunchly points out the universal evil through it. Important political events, which affected common man’s life largely, have been portrayed vividly by her. Richard Moody observes : “With Eisenhower’s invasion of France two months away,

with the Nazis still threatening, we struggled to know where we went wrong in bringing the civilized world to the edge of disaster.”²⁴ Hellman, an ever-seeking playwright, intellectually draws careless men of 1920s. In an interview Hellman explains her viewpoint:

...there were not only a lot of bastards who fixed things up in the last 10 or 12 years, but nice people, too, (as in their personal lives) can do bad things from the right motives. I know I don't start by telling myself to write a play about War. What War, whose War? What occurs to me first are the people.²⁵

At the same time, Hellman tries to analyze the attitude and psychology of the contemporary young generation. According to her in the time of the crux only the young generation bears the moral responsibility. They are ready to shoulder the risks and sustain those human values, which have been forgotten so far by their elders. They show courage to confront the older generation and bear the attitude of ‘spit in the eye’ in a soberly muffled way.

III

Another Part of the Forest

About the Play :

“I had always planned *The Little Foxes* as a trilogy, knowing that I had jumped into the middle of the life of the Hubbards and would want to go forward in time. But in 1946, it seemed right to go back to their youth, their father and mother, to the period of the Civil War. I believed that I could now make clear that I had meant the first play as a kind of satire. I tried to do that in *Another Part of the Forest...*”²⁶, says Hellman while explaining her intention of writing the powerful plays about well-cultivated evil nature of the Hubbards. The title *Another Part of the Forest* is borrowed from Shakespeare's Arcadian comedy *As You Like It* (Act III Scene 5). Hellman's ironic usage of the title has aimed at telling the story of the origins of villainy

in the Hubbards and they have remained her most successful theatrical creations. The period chosen for the play is the 1880's to show the germs of the Hubbards' nastiness. The entire play reveals how these Hubbards try to overpower each other with the money they have.

Several years after *The Little Foxes* when Hellman found that the people hated the Hubbards' avarice, she wondered the way people were reluctant to find that the Hubbards are representing the masses. She does not like the hypocritical nature of the people of establishing moral superiority by disliking the very nature of the Hubbards. So she felt it necessary to look into their family background and find out the reasons for their viciousness. Hellman wants to analyze their inner goings rather than their superficially good-looking existence. They have been portrayed in bold strokes surpassing the Hubbards of *The Little Foxes*. Throughout the play, they treat each other viciously creating horrifying situations. Their unlimited power to pull down each other and to establish themselves to be superior in the struggle for family power is quite disturbing. Money is the only weapon with which they attack each other mercilessly. It is, no doubt, an unruly jungle where 'survival of the fittest' is the saga of their life. Once again we come across a set of vicious people. Their cruelty and barbaric craze to dominate each other is quite nauseating to understand the confrontation of good and evil let us see a brief summary of the play.

A Brief Summary of the Play :

The action of the play takes place in the Alabama town of Bowden in the year 1880. Marcus Hubbard, the father of Ben, Oscar and Regina of *The Little Foxes*, has made his fortune through illegal means. During the war through smuggling salt, he has earned a lot. In the same period he had Union troop to an encampment of local boys, who were killed. Marcus is the omnipotent head of the Hubbard clan, who dominates everyone, including his eccentric 'crazy' wife. His two sons, Ben and Oscar have low paying jobs in the Hubbard business. Marcus has strange liking for his daughter, Regina, and spends money on her luxuries. Lavinia, the wife of Marcus, is a religious woman. Ben is a perfectly business minded man, a replica of Marcus in his

profit oriented ways. Oscar, devoid of depth of character, falls in love with Laurette Sincee, a prostitute. Regina is in love with John Bagtry, an ex-Confederate Officer, who wants to go on war in Brazil. Regina wants to go to Chicago and get married with John.

Contrast to the Hubbards are highly mannerful Bagtrys, John Bagtry, his cousin, Birdie and her mother. Once rich aristocrats own plantation, Lionnet, but presently are penniless. The drama becomes a contest between the father and the oldest son, Ben. The play opens in the side portion of the Hubbard house with a conversation between Regina and John Bagtry. Regina accuses John for not meeting her the previous night and John while explaining the reason focuses on their wretched condition that his Aunt Clara and Cousin Birdie were lonely and they wanted to talk to him. He tells her, “Things are different with us. Everything is bad. This summer is the worst, I guess, in all the years. They are lonely –”(330). John has lived with them for fifteen years. They are good to him sharing with him the little they have and he is ashamed of not giving anything in return to them.

Regina is highly possessive to him and cannot understand what John thinks about his aunt or cousin. She supposes that it is because of these two ladies that John cannot meet her. Being highly boastful of the power of her father, she says, “...Your cousin Birdie’s never done more than say good morning in all these years – when she knows full well who I am, who Papa is. Knows full well he could buy and sell Lionnet on the same morning, its cotton and its women with it –” (331). A perfect Hubbard, Regina, takes pleasure in looking down upon others who are poverty-stricken. When the conversation between Regina and John is going on, Lavinia appears there. She is returning from the church and it is her birthday. John congratulates her for that but Regina doesn’t. Not only Regina but every one treats her in the same way, with scorn and neglect. Regina has won her mother’s place by attracting her father’s extraneous attention to her of which Ben is jealous.

For many years, Lavinia wants to talk to Marcus regarding her leaving home as she always wanted to go to Altoosa and run there a school for the colored children. But Marcus does not pay heed to her requests, pretending to

be busy but can spare time with Regina to go to picnic with her. Even on her birthday Marcus cannot fulfill Lavinia's single wish to talk with him. Unlike Marcus, Oscar does not understand how to make money or to get money from Marcus, smartly. He is not as shrewd as Ben or Regina. Ben has won his father's favour by profit-making business but Oscar is not that cunning. Ben always looks for profits, so he wants Oscar to marry Birdie Bagtry, who owns Lionette. But Oscar wants to go with Laurette as he is 'deeply and sincerely in love' (343) with her. He wants money to go to New Orleans with Laurette.

Birdie, a representative of dying aristocracy, needs a loan from the Hubbards as they have "a mighty bad time" (345). Her mother makes trips to Natchez to borrow money on cotton or on the land or even to sell pictures or silver. For Ben it is an opportunity to gain control over the Bagtry plantation by giving loan to them. Birdie, being a thorough aristocrat, does not want to reveal the loan taking business to her mother. Because she believes that even if they have lost everything they have one thing with them and that is pride. Her mother would rather die than to owe money to somebody. Ben promises not to reveal the secret regarding loan to Birdie's mother and encourages Marcus to lend a loan to Bagtrys. Ben has an intention to double cross her father by demanding ten thousand dollars as the loan amount when Birdie wants only five thousand. He wants to keep five thousand to himself.

Marcus believes that whatever Ben does is profitable. According to him Ben can always make 'a good business deal' (349) Ben wants to manipulate the very faith of Marcus. As Oscar wants money, he shares the secret of Ben because Ben has promised to help him. Ben invites John Bagtry and Birdie for a 'musicale' of his father. Oscar persuades Marcus and gets consent to invite Laurette on the occasion. As Act II opens we find some musicians appreciating Marcus' compositions, which, in fact, are good for nothing. Regina is excited as John is coming but Marcus does not like her appreciation of John. When John comes, Marcus insults him by disapproving his urge to fight for a cause in the Brazilian army. Regina rebukes Marcus for being rude towards John. When Regina talks about their marriage, John tells

about his plan to go to Brazil and Regina gets disappointed. Being jealous of Regina, Ben exposes her plan to Marcus. When Regina comes to know about Ben's double crossing to Marcus and how Ben has exposed her plans, she, in return, reveals his double-crossing to Marcus.

Ben does not like Oscar's liking for Laurette. So, when she comes to their house he makes her get drunk and watches calmly how she speaks out the truth of Marcus' money making. Consequently, Marcus gets enraged and asks Oscar to take away the girl. In the pit of anger Marcus declares his cancelling the loan, which disappoints Birdie a lot. In spite of her entreaties Marcus does not change his decision and Ben gets confused for the strange behaviour of his father. Marcus shows his contempt towards the musicians for their careless performance. When Oscar returns, he gets angry for Ben's tricks played against him and Laurette. Ben and Oscar are about to fight when Marcus interferes and scolds Oscar. Thus Oscar withdraws but Ben gets rebuked for his double-crossing. Marcus reminds him, "you're a clerk in my store and that you'll remain. You won't get the chance to try anything like this again. But in case you anger me once more, there won't be the job in the house, and you won't be here" (376).

Oscar convinces Marcus for the money he needs to go to New Orleans and invest in a little business. Marcus agrees and asks Oscar to get the money on the table the next morning. Disappointed, for getting frustrated his plans, Ben tells how Regina has planned to go to Chicago and asks Regina to convince Marcus that she has never loved anybody. Marcus gets insulted by Ben's remark and he slaps across Ben's face. Humiliated Ben retaliates : "I spent twenty years lying and cheating to help make you rich. I was trying to outwit you, but I guess I couldn't do it" (378). and he exits.

Lavinia cannot tolerate the conflict between her son and her husband, she tries to intervene but nobody pays any heed to her. She is about to lose her balance. Regina tells her that she will take her to Chicago but Lavinia wants to go to Altaloosa, to the colored people and run a school for them but even this time she is neglected. Marcus is reluctant to understand her feelings, on the contrary, he threatens her to behave or he will send her away to asylum.

Thoroughly frustrated Lavinia once again loses control over herself. She starts running hysterically and Act II ends on a note of having upper hand of Marcus over his family members.

When Ben is about to leave home, he goes to Lavinia to say good-bye to her. Lavinia pleads to take her away with him and while doing so she reveals the secret of Marcus to Ben. She tells Ben how she wanted to go away from Marcus long ago but could not do so because of her children. She tells Ben whatever money Marcus has earned so far is 'evil money' (383) by smuggling salt through the blockade and sold it for eight dollars a bag. How he had taken advantage of people's need and had never earned good reputation. There was suspicion that he had the Union troops to a camp Southern boys were training. The people in the town figured out that Union troop could not have found the camp unless they were led through to it, and they also figured that it was Marcus who did the leading. Union troops crossed the river and killed the twenty-seven boys who were training there including John Bagtry's twin.

The people were murder mad when they found the poor dead boys. They came with hot tar and guns to get Marcus but was successful in creating an alibi that he was not there at the time of massacre. He got successful in convincing the people that he was away but Lavinia and Coralee were witness to it. Lavinia had written the account in her Bible. That is the only proof they have got against Marcus. Ben decides to use this information against his father and in exchange of it, he promises Lavinia to send her to Altaloosa and help her financially to start her school. Ben gets money kept by Marcus in a locked door and gets what he wants. When Marcus comes to know about Ben's deeds, he gets startled. At first, he tries to pull down Ben calling him a fool for going against him. He demands the envelope but Ben startles him by exposing the information he has just received from his mother.

Ben tells that he knows how Marcus was successful in buying two passes proving he had ridden through Confederate line the day before massacre, and didn't leave till after it. Ben threatens Marcus to sell him the family business for just a dollar or he will report against him and Marcus will

be hanged out. Marcus still tries to protest Ben and blackmail Lavinia emotionally. But Lavinia does not listen to him. Marcus tells Ben how her efforts are futile as nobody will believe what Lavinia says for she is an 'insane'. But Ben tells Marcus, "...they think Mama is an eccentric and that you made her that way...They know Mama is a good woman and so they respect her. They will take her word because as she told me a little while ago people believe what they want to believe" (389). Though Marcus tries hard to persuade Lavinia to give Bible to him, Ben remains firm and makes her aware of the repercussions. Because, once Marcus gets it, he will send her to a mental institute. At last, Marcus has to bow down in front of Ben, as there is no choice left for him. He writes on a paper that he has sold the store for a dollar and all stocks and bonds, safe deposit box, liens and mortgages. Thus, all assets of Marcus are incorporated.

Ben sends five thousand dollars to Birdie as a loan against Lionnete. Oscar does not get money from Marcus, as a result of it he returns getting humiliated by Laurette for having no money. He gets surprised to see Ben in the chair of Marcus. Regina, too, notices the change. Ben tells her to forget about her trip to Chicago. He tells, as "Papa has no money at all now. No money for you to travel with, or to marry with, or to go on her with" (397). He further informs her that their Papa has given him his money because he is the eldest son. Regina is shrewd enough to understand what has gone between them. Once she gets confirmation of it after discussing with Marcus, she decides to follow Ben by accepting his dominance.

Even for Oscar it is difficult to accept this power shift but Ben warns him to follow his orders otherwise he will turn him away. Thus, he controls everyone with the help of money and power that follows it. Marcus has to accept his defeat and victory of Ben. Cunning Regina knows well that going with Ben is beneficial for her. Her last gesture of ignoring her father and taking seat near Ben suggests her 'follow the leader' tendency.

After having seen the summary in brief, let us discuss confrontation of good and evil at different levels. In the play we come across various forms of evil; greed, lust for power, blackmail, lie, atrocity, murder, money-making

mania, domination, manipulation, exploitation, inhuman behaviour, etc., confronted by the world of goodness.

Confrontation of the Barbarians :

The play is crafted intellectually by Hellman. It is full of confrontations of which most are between evil characters. It is the dynasty of evil-doers, who have unlimited power to commit sins, therefore, good characters are mismatches in this scenario. Judith Olauson feels : “from father to son, the evil is relinquished as if it were a birthright, particularizing Hellman’s theme that not only the sins of the father passed on to the sons but the capacity for sinning as well.”²⁷

They create horrifying situations one after another as if they are barbarians, without a touch of humanity, they are born villains. The confrontation arises mainly due to their superior complex. They are not ready to accept superiority of each other. They strongly believe that whatever they do or think is right and whatever others do is not only wrong but also not acceptable. All of them are totalitarians. While commenting on Hellman’s Hubbards Johan Crossby says, they are :

possessed of a single idea...and not to be deflected from it by any consideration at all... Her characters are to my mind totalitarian individuals...Miss Hellman professes to loathe the totalitarianism..., but she nevertheless understands the totalitarian individual better than she understands the human or malleable individual...She comprehends the undeviating man as opposed to the rational man, and since the world seems now to be divided into two camps...Miss Hellman, the first literate exponent of the future totalitarian man occupies a position of distinctive though unenviable important in contemporary letters.²⁸

Marcus – Ben Confrontation :

These totalitarians go on confronting each other only for two things money and power. The main confrontation in the play is between Marcus and Ben. Marcus has been an indomitable emperor of the empire he has created by his own. He has not the slightest idea that one day he will be overwhelmed by his own son. Ben is then foxiest of all the Hubbard progeny. Whatever seeds of ruthlessness are sown by Marcus, he gets its fruits in the form of Ben. There is great parallelism in the two characters. Like his father, Ben also is an opportunist having uncanny power to tackle money matters. Perfectly business minded Ben lacks human emotions like love, and to sacrifice for it. He only knows business even in relationship. He knows only terminology related to money matters. When he returns from his business trip, he tells to Marcus :

I wanted to invest two thousand dollars in Birmingham Coal, Incorporated. It will bring fifty thousand some day, there is coal there, and they're sending down men from the North with money for it – (335).

Thus, Ben is successful in remaining in the good books of Marcus and making him strongly believe that in money matters there is no parallel. He says to Ben... “the one thing I never doubted was your making a good business deal.” (349) Sometimes Marcus gets worried for Ben’s money-mindedness and tells him : “You’re a free man, Benjamin. A free man. You don’t like what I do, you don’t stay with me. I do wish you would read a little Aristotle, take your mind off money” (348). But Ben cannot think beyond money. He convinces Marcus how it is an honor to give loan to the aristocrats as these quality folks will come to them and beg favour of Marcus. Thus, Marcus is totally convinced that whatever Ben does is for their profit or the family’s pride. Ben is shrewd enough to pamper Marcus by making him happy with profits. That is why Marcus fails to understand the real nature of Ben. As long as Ben is treated respectfully, he maintains a poise, but once he gets insulted he confronts Marcus without bothering Marcus’ authority or his position.

If Marcus fails to understand Ben, Regina does not. She is well aware of his cunning and she rebukes Oscar for not having the slightest smartness of Ben in him. Only due to Regina, Ben's plan to outsmart Marcus gets frustrated, in the initial stage. In a way, Regina gives ignition to Ben's villainy. When Regina exposes his secret to Marcus, his strong faith in Ben shakes to its very basis. He declares that he will not make loan because his tricks are getting nasty, and they bore him. More than Ben's cunning, what aches Marcus is his rudeness towards himself and Regina. Physically attacking Ben, he orders him to quit home. The sudden jerk shatters Ben's thinking that he is a favourite of Marcus. He had never thought that his father would be so stern and that he would be asked to get away. Utterly frustrated Ben reminds his father how he has been an abettor in his sins since last twenty years and how he was trying to outwit him and failed to do so.

Though Ben accepts his defeat initially, and decides to leave home as he has no alternative, things get falling in his favour and Ben just pounces over the opportunity he gets. Lavinia's revealing secret of Marcus' evil deeds becomes a weapon for him to confront Marcus. Evil in Ben pops up and doubly charged Ben gets ready to rule over the nasty Hubbards. Now it is the turn of Marcus to get astonished to see his rival in his son, Ben. Stubborn Marcus does not give up easily. It is very tough for Ben to dominate him. First of all Marcus neglects Ben's threats supposing him immature in such deals. When he is convinced that Ben has really got a strong evidence to pull him down then he tries to threaten Lavinia to institutionalize. When that, too, does not work, he tries to blackmail her emotionally. When Lavinia is getting faltered, Ben intervenes and makes her aware of Marcus' cunning to send her to asylum once he gets what he wants.

When all the tricks get frustrated, Marcus blackmails Lavinia emotionally regarding their marriage. He says, "Lavinia...It would be wrong of me to say our had been a good marriage. But a marriage it was. And you took vows in church, sacred vows. If you send me to trouble, you would be breaking your sacred vows –" (391). Marcus' shamelessness is condemned by Ben sharply and at last Ben makes him transfer his property.

Marcus' imploring Ben to get proper share or an increase in it, if he behaves properly, remains futile. Quite authoritatively, Ben asks Marcus to write down that he would inherit all the property to Ben only.

Marcus has to give up in front of Ben's, now, omnipotent stature. Marcus' "You will give me enough for a clean Bed?" is an indication of his retreat and Ben's getting complete dominance.

Marcus' Retreat :

Thus, completely defeated Marcus quite unwillingly withdraws himself from the empire he has created by his own. He has to beg for Ben's favour for a large breakfast and thus Marcus remains a wretched character. No sympathy has been aroused for him as his downfall has been confirmed quite earlier, when he had started bullying his sons and dominating his wife. Ben's rebellion against Marcus is the outcome of Marcus' tyrannical treatment. Marcus' slave-like treatment to Ben, making him work as a clerk for a little salary is the important factor to make Ben enrage against his father and overthrow his authority. According to William Wright :

Marcus holds Ben in humiliating subjugation throughout most of the action but Ben is ultimately given the ammunition to overthrow and supplant his father by the weakling mother who harbors a secret about her husband – his betrayal of his Southern neighbour during the Civil War, which, if known, would bring about a prompt lynching.²⁹

Victimization of Marcus would have been impossible for Ben without Lavinia. Thus, in the confrontation between two evil-doers, good in the form of Lavinia plays a pivotal role in defeating the chief of the clan.

Ben-Regina's Sibling Rivalry :

If Marcus is Ben's financial rival, Regina is his sibling rival. He is jealous of Marcus' extraneous attention to her. Regina is the only

member of the family who has won Marcus' affection. Ben is well aware of Regina's using her feminine tricks against Marcus for her selfish purpose and to get money for her luxuries.

Regina and Ben are forever at each other's throat. Both of them, equally, do back stabbing. Like Ben Regina also is an opportunist. The reason for confrontation between Ben and Regina mainly causes because Ben has to struggle a lot to remain in the good books of Marcus when Regina does not need to take any efforts for that. Regina very cunningly plays her father and Ben against each other. To get confidence of both she coaxes them. Ben confronts Regina for another reason, i. e., her being spendthrift because he is a penny-pincher. Ben rebukes her now and then for her being so. As an elderly brother, Ben tries to keep control over Regina. He condemns her for not answering the letter of Horace Giddens to whom Ben wants her to marry. He wants Regina to get settled down as she is twenty, which has been worrying them. Ben comes to know how Regina has told Marcus about Ben's double-crossing him. In turn Ben loses his temper and exposes Regina's plan to go to Chicago and get married with John Bagtry. Marcus gets enraged as he feels that Regina is deceiving him and gets offended by the way Ben talks to Regina. Ben says, "You do not look bad. Go up to him, Regina, put your arms around him. Tell him you've never really loved anybody else, and never will. Lie to him, just for tonight. Tell him you'll never get in bed with anybody ever again –"(378).

As a result of it Marcus assaults him physically and thus Regina becomes the cause of their confrontation. The characters who have remained so far indomitable upto now get dominated by Him. Regina's licentious behaviour has been checked. In a very sweet manner he makes Regina aware of her limits.

By this time Regina learns well that Ben has left no choice for her but to accept what he tells. Though she gets defeated, she maintains her poise beautifully. She accepts Ben's domination and, at least, outwardly the confrontation between them ends there momentarily. Because later in *The Little Foxes*, Regina gets upper hand over Ben. Thus, the confrontation

continues even after twenty years. Both of them represent penny-pinching mentality, greed and self-centredness. In the tussle of these vicious people, Ben overpowers as he gets power and money. Regina gets defeated because her capacity to struggle for family power is immature. Regina's viciousness is just like Marcus'. She does not want to follow the footsteps of her mother adopting the ways of powerful male members and remaining 'always afraid' of them. Instead of confronting them directly she chooses to withdraw for a while when her charms do not work. Undoubtedly, the confrontation between these two characters becomes interesting because they always have battle of wits.

Oscar – Ben Confrontation :

We have now another type of confrontation here. Like all the Hubbard children, Oscar, too, inherits his father's viciousness. But he has been portrayed in milder strokes. Simple-minded Oscar is easy to dominate. Because he neither possesses smartness of Ben nor the charms of Regina. The confrontation between Ben and Oscar is not for power or money. Oscar does not have Ben's profit-making mentality. He makes his life miserable mostly because of his own follies. Ben is tough minded whereas Oscar is emotional. It is this emotionality that Ben despises most. Ben does not like his waywardness because he believes that Oscar is nonetheless a clown who does not realize where his profit is. Ben does not find any sanity in Oscar's being 'sincerely and deeply' in love with Laurette, the city-whore. According to him getting married with Birdie will add fortune in their property. But for Oscar she is "Damned little ninny." Even though Oscar does not like her, Ben tempts him to give five hundred dollars to be nice with her. Even after doing so when Oscar expresses his abomination towards Birdie, Ben accuses him : "I know. Virtue in woman offends you. Now go on. Be charming. Five-hundred possible dollars 'charming'" (348).

Oscar himself gives an opportunity to get pulled down in the hands of Ben as he invites Laurette. Ben does not need to play any great trick against Oscar. He simply helps Laurette get drunk. As a result of it she goes on talking against Marcus. Instead of confronting with him directly, he makes use of

Oscar's weaknesses. He uses his cunning and victimizes Oscar quite easily. But a physical confrontation takes place when Oscar realizes what Ben has done with him, i. e., separating him from Laurette by not providing money he wanted. He tries to convince Marcus about what Ben has done.

While explaining his stand Ben mentions Laurette in a derogatory manner, which Oscar cannot tolerate, and he grabs his shoulder. The conflict between the two brothers reminds us of Cain and Abel struggle as Lavinia mentions, "Oh, goodness! The blood of brothers" (375). At this moment Oscar tries to be powerful by challenging Ben to fight with him or asking him to apologize Laurette, but the stance taken by him turns futile. When he returns humiliated in the hands of Laurette, he finds Ben in the chair of Marcus. Like everyone else, Oscar, too, takes it lightly. He supposes that Ben has gone crazy. But in no time Oscar comes to know what has happened and thus thoroughly baffled Oscar somehow manages to mumble, "Sure must have been an earthquake here since last night. You go to bed and Papa's one kind of man, and you wake up –" (401). He can not complete his sentence. He cannot afford to delay in getting reconciled and soon he starts talking about money, getting rich, etc. Ben achieves victory over Oscar and proves the Darwinian doctrine. As Doris Falk puts it :

The sibling rivalry between Ben and Oscar turns into a kind of one sided Cain and Abel struggle, in which the older brother subdues the younger and weaker. (Oscar is not only amoral, he is also stupid) Ben soon breaks up that affair and sets the scene for Oscar to court Birdie Bagtry, and bring home those rich cotton fields into the family. Oscar's broken heart is soon on the mend at the proposal of being rich.³⁰

Ben's Cunning :

In the tug of war for money and power Ben overpowers Marcus, Regina and Oscar as well. Ben tries to mould them according to his style. He gets successful in abolishing love from their lives because he knows well that it is not true love. He says to Regina, "I don't think anybody in this family can love" (399). All the three commit some kind of mistake or the other. As an animal watches its prey, Ben watches them patiently, allowing them to commit mistakes and once they do it he pounces over them manipulating them to bend according to his choice.

Lavinia's Peculiar Confrontation with Evil :

She is the only Hubbard with whom Ben does not confront. Generally, Hellman's good characters do not get victory over evil characters. While confronting with the evil-doers, most of them get shattered. They are easily crushed down by the evil characters. But Lavinia is an exception to this. Lavinia is used to living according to the dictates of Marcus. Though she is a witness to Marcus' sins, her righteousness does not allow her to betray the oath she has taken not to reveal the secret. For eighteen long years she lives under stress that some day or the other she will be institutionalized.

Though powerless, Lavinia possesses certain values. It is utter goodness in her that makes her submissive. Hellman has modelled the character of Lavinia on her mother. Truly speaking Lavinia's simple nature is very complex to understand. Especially for the Hubbards, she is an enigmatic. Downtrodden by Marcus throughout her life, Lavinia remains tough due to her belief in goodness. Like other Hubbards she could have dominated Marcus and would have made him bow down in front of her with the help of information she has got. But Lavinia does not do so. Perhaps, Lavinia is also responsible for allowing evil to prosper in an unruly way. She has been constantly neglected by Marcus and her children. Knowing fully well about Marcus' infatuation to her, Regina, too, neglects her mother. No one is ready to take into consideration her existence. Marcus, actually, makes her beg a few minutes to talk to him.

Frustrated Lavinia gets wild but Marcus leaves her mercilessly and Coralee is supposed to take care of her. The wretched condition of Lavinia makes her choose eccentricity rather than confronting with the vicious people. For Marcus it is insanity and for her Hubbards' running after power and money is frenziness. Her conscience does not allow her to break the promise and she does not like even Marcus breaking it. For Lavinia living with Marcus is like living with sin. She tells Coralee about her dream :

I lived in sin these thirty-seven years...such sin I couldn't even tell you...Now I got to finish with the sin. Now I got to do my mission. And I'll be – I'll do it nice, you know I will. I'll gather the little black children round, and I'll teach them good things. I'll teach them how to read and write and sing the music notes and – (351)

Hellman's good characters always cherish a Utopian dream where all the ideal things exist. Most of these are straightforward people. Therefore, Lavinia does not understand why Marcus gets angry when Laurette reveals the truth of his sinful money-making. She tries to confront him, "Why, Marcus. The girl only told the truth. Salt is just a word, it's in the Bible quite a lot. And that other matter, why, death, is also just a word – And – "Marcus can not tolerate venturing Lavinia in this manner. Immediately he rebukes, 'you go daring, Lavinia...Now stop that prattling or go to your room –" (372) Whenever Lavinia tries to confront Marcus, he makes her keep quiet calling her talk nonsense.

Completely broken by Marcus' bullying, Lavinia seeks solace when Ben promises to help her. Lavinia, though a weak character wins at last by her righteous way. Always suspended and subdued, Lavinia gets importance in the end of the play. Now it is the turn of Marcus to beg her favour. Marcus has to give up his stance but before that he tries to persuade Lavinia by blackmailing her emotionally, or reminding her of being religious. He also gives woes of their marriage but Lavinia does not stir. She remains determined and her

determination is the outcome of Ben's moral and financial support given to her. Earlier Lavinia did not dare to confront Marcus but Ben builds in her a kind of confidence to confront the evil in Marcus and to expose it.

Lavinia's goodness is seen throughout the play and in spite of Marcus' evil-doings, Lavinia does not want to see him in a wretched condition. Even she cannot tolerate Ben abusing Marcus. When Ben uses harsh words to Marcus, "I'll come tomorrow morning and cut you down from the tree, and bury you with respect. How did the Greeks bury fathers who were murdered? Tell me, and I'll see to it...", Lavinia immediately scolds him, "Benjamin, don't talk that way – " (390). At the same time, Lavinia is very firm in her manner. The change which has overcome in her in the climax is noteworthy. Imploring Marcus has understood by this time that all his cunning are useless. He uses all the measures to dominate her initially and later on to persuade her. His emotionally blackmailing her by reminding of their marriage vows and telling her how her sending him to trouble means breaking her sacred vows, appear foolish attempts.

When Lavinia tells Marcus that she does not want to give trouble to anybody and that she just wants to go away, Marcus uses another measure to persuade her. He tries to give her a bribe and is ready to provide whatever she wants; ten thousand dollars for the poor ones at Altaloosa, a teacher for higher learning and two hundred dollars for Coralee's old mother and a crippled little cousin. All the tricks played by Marcus to get back the copy of Bible turn useless. Because of Ben's intervention to make Lavinia aware of the would be repercussions, Lavinia becomes strong enough not to falter from her decision. Marcus has to give up and he retreats. After much struggle to sustain his powerful position he gets defeated in the hands of Lavinia. It is self-victimization of Marcus, as Katherine Lederer points out : "Had Marcus granted Lavinia's request, she could not have been present to be the instrument of his downfall."³¹

Confrontation of Sentimental Organism with Commercial Order :

Like Lavinia, Birdie and other Bagtrys represent good in the form of innocent agrarianism. Their confrontation with the Hubbards represent sentimental organism confronting the hardhearted new commercial order that was getting rooted in the 1880's. Bagtrys fall a total contrast to the Hubbards. The Hubbards are ruthlessly crazy for money but Bagtrys cherish certain values. It is ironical that once rich Aristocrats have to go to penny-pinching, worthless Hubbards for the financial support. Because the traditional social stability represented by the aristocrats is encroached by the self-centred people like the Hubbards. While using the myth of 'garden' N. S. Pradhan rightly points out :

In Miss Hellman's vision a complete jungle existence now prevails where there might once have been real innocence and its surrounding arcadia...such exposure by implication establishes the playwright's faith in the traditional values of society. Therein lies the peculiar role of the myth; the 'garden' image implies the traditional gentility and placidity of an old fashioned southern society and the 'foxes' image denotes the new generations of competing, devouring creatures who prowl around the 'garden'.³²

Regina's hatred towards Birdie :

Amongst the Bagtrys, Birdie, the most pathetic character represents a helpless victim of fading aristocracy. As Birdie and Regina are contrasted in *The Little Foxes*, here, too, they are in contrast with each other. Birdie stands for all the good aspects of the South whereas Regina is materialistic and decidedly unsouthern. Though they do not confront each other directly, both represent paradox of the myth of the plantation that the South played. Regina's hatred towards Birdie does not arise due to money matters alone but she

believes that it is Birdie who keeps John Bagtry away from her. Birdie wants a loan to save their dying aristocracy but Regina thinks the loan will be used to send John away to Brazil.

Regina's view of Birdie is beyond John's understanding. He tries to convince Regina that Birdie does not even mention Regina. Crookedly Regina Comments : "That's good breeding : to know about something and not to talk about it?...Your Cousin Birdie's never done more than say good morning in all these years – when she knows full well who I am and who Papa is. Knows full well he could buy and sell Lionnet on the same morning, its cotton and its women with it –"(331).

Confrontation of Good Characters with Evil :

Both Birdie and Lavinia represent utter goodness, but basically, they differ in their way of confrontation with the Hubbards. Lavinia has to confront the evil in the Hubbards as she wants to escape from the vicious world of them, whereas Birdie confronts indirectly and falls a prey of their guiles. Moreover, her confrontation is with the wretched condition in which Bagtrys are struggling hard to sustain their dignity. Though they have lost everything, their wealth power and status, they possess their values. Their good breeding is very obviously seen, they prefer starvation to thinking like the Hubbards of making money by hook or by crook. Birdie tries to maintain the secret of her demanding loan from Hubbards, being an aristocrat, her mother would have preferred to die than to beg to the Hubbards. Helpless Birdie cannot confront Marcus when he refuses to loan her.

Financial Dependency of the Three Female Characters :

The three women; Regina, Lavinia and Birdie, are powerless characters as far as money-matters are concerned. Financially they have to rely on the male characters and the main cause of their confrontation is money itself. Among these three, Regina is shrewd enough to know how to go with power. Regina reconciles with Ben when the power and money come to him. Regina understands that she has no other choice left for her than to submit herself to Ben's will. Throughout the play, Lavinia cannot escape from the

clutches of Marcus. Even though she knows that she has been living with the sins of Marcus, she cannot go away for not having economic independence. Firstly, she has been governed by her husband and then by her son, she lives her life afraid of them. Birdie, too, has to seek financial assistance from Ben to survive the dying aristocracy. Thus, all of them represent the confrontation of the contemporary women with the dominant male power. Their pursuit of social freedom represents their search for equality and liberation. But unfortunately, their rebellion against male domination and struggle for independent existence remain an unfulfilled dream. Only Lavinia gets liberated, the fact which seems to be the first step of women's getting released from the clutches of men.

John's Confrontation with Marcus :

There are two more minor confrontations. John and Laurette, are dauntlessly confronting Marcus because directly they do not rely on Marcus, regarding money. But the persons with whom they are related need Marcus' favour for money. John is an ardent soldier who confronts the evil in the form of war. A man of action and honor he is a complete contrast to Marcus. Marcus' hatred towards John arises due to his extraneous attention to his daughter. The Oedipal-Electra complex of Marcus does not allow him to tolerate John's winning favour of Regina. He cannot imagine even John touching Regina. In an incident, he asks Regina : "How could you let him touch you? When did it happen? How could you – Answer me...A foolish man, an empty man from an idiot world. A man who wants nothing but war, any war, just a war. A man who believes in nothing, and never will. A man in space –" (379).

John is really fighting for a cause but Marcus accuses him for being a soldier. When John wants to fight for his ideals, Marcus sarcastically asks : "Why don't you choose the other side? Every man wants to win once in life." John says, "I don't like that way of saying it. I don't fight for slavery, I fight for a way of life (367). Thus, John confronts Marcus quite fearlessly. He is unaware of Birdie's plan to borrow money from him. Therefore, when Marcus decides not to make the loan as he comes to know about both Ben and

Regina's plans to deceive him, he shows his contempt towards John. He says, "You came to beg a favour, and you stayed to be amused. Good night." John cannot tolerate it and he confronts bluntly. He says, "Come to ask a favour? From you? Who in this country would be so dishonored? If you were not an old man, Mr. Hubbard, I –"(372). For Birdie's intervention he gives up but otherwise, he possesses that spirit and guts to confront evil in Marcus.

Laurette's Confrontation with Marcus :

John, the man of principles, cannot tolerate pseudo pride of worthless Marcus. Like John, Laurette, too, does not tolerate Marcus' domination. Both of them are aware of Marcus' real nature. Being outsiders and having know-how of Marcus' deeds, they confront ruthless Marcus dauntlessly. Both of them represent the towns people, who despise Marcus for his way of life. When Oscar asks Laurette to pretend to as good as other people, Laurette confronts Oscar, saying :

Pretend? Pretend I'm as anybody called Hubbard? Whey, my Pa died at Vicksburg. He didn't stay home bleeding the whole state of Alabama with money tricks and suspected of worse...You may be the rich of this country but everybody knows how... (361-362)

For Laurette, like the Hubbards, money matters a lot. Lovelessness of the Hubbards is also seen in her. She rebukes Oscar for his always saying his being 'deeply and sincerely' in love with her. She says, "We can't eat on deeply and sincerely" (361). Highly practical Laurette does not find anything inappropriate in condemning Marcus for his treatment to Oscar. Straight away she confronts Marcus rebuking him for his treatment of Oscar and even for his money-making. She says :

No animal would talk about their own son that way. I heard tales about you ever since I was born...You old

bastard...Everybody in this country knows how you got rich, bringing in salt and making poor, dying people give up everything of it. Right in the middle of the war, men dying for you, and you making their kinsfolk give you all their goods and money – and I hear how they suspected you of worse, and you only just got out of a hanging rope.... (372)

Thus, *Another Part of The Forest* presents the vicious world full of machinations, blackmail, cruelty, insanity, theft, torture, insult, drunkenness amongst which good has a little place. The Hubbards represent the Darwinian creed i, e., a ‘Survival of the Fittest.’ Their barbaric instinct makes them overwhelm each other to establish themselves superior. Their sadistic cruelty arises due to the importance given by them to money which takes them to the level of inhuman savages. Hellman believes that the Hubbards are not fictitious characters. It is the set of the brutal Hubbards from the real world whose greed for money disturbs the social scenario. Hellman is successful in exposing evils in general and evils caused due to materialistic approach generated from New Southern Mentality in particular.

The innocence of the agrarian society is losing its piety which has been restored by futile rat-race where relations appear meaningless. As Joseph Wood Krutch points out, there cannot be any admirable character here. He rightly observes that it is :

decline of the Southern feudal aristocracy and the rise of the capital exploiter. There are no admirable characters because, by antecedent premise, there cannot be any. Dying aristocrats must be dim-witted and rising capitalists must be villainous because otherwise the dialectic process could not have taken place as it did.³³

Like Hellman, Joseph Wood Krutch also holds responsible the bystanders for the dim-wit. Hellman wants us to look into ourselves and find out the hidden Hubbard mentality that governs us largely. In Hellman scenario, to be good is not sufficient; she wants her characters to confront the prevailing evil because, for her, bystanders are as sinful as the despoilers. She does not want us to sympathize with the good characters who are too weak to confront evil and she does not even appreciate vigourousness of vicious characters.

For very vicious character, she has planned nemesis. For sure, sooner or later it comes making them realize their follies. If Marcus dominates the poor and gets powerful in the course of time, he has been defeated by Ben. Ben gets dominant and he tries to take everyone, including Regina, under his control. But after twenty years, in *The Little Foxes*, he has been outwitted by Regina. And finally, Regina gets humiliated by Alexandra, who represents good. Thus, victory of the evil characters does not last for long. It is their intangible fate that they meet. The remaining ones prove to be losers. Oscar gets humiliated in the hands of Laurette and Regina is forlorned by John. Hellman shows the loveless world which can only beget lovelessness.

To conclude, it can be said that, here, Hellman extends her favourite theme, i. e., the confrontation of good and evil in a highly realistic manner. Hellman is successful in portraying the contemporary struggle. Superbly crafted play *Another Part of the Forest*, clearly brings forth Hellman's staunch moralism. She delves deep into human psyche, reaches to the very core of the hidden grim truth, and makes us speculate on our own follies and foibles.

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Chapter – IV

PLAYS FROM 1951 TO 1960

This chapter attempts to analyse confrontation of good and evil from a perspective that is essentially personal. Miss Hellman has exposed her disgust towards social injustice and evil prevailing in various forms in her earlier six plays. But her last two original plays, *The Autumn Garden* and *Toys in the Attic* are concerned with moral choices. Both the plays deal with nostalgia for a no-longer existent past and the individual's vain struggle to achieve it through no-more existent love. This particular chapter analyses Hellman's changed point of view reflected in these plays. The angry young woman, Hellman, instead of exhibiting her anger towards the evil doers only expresses general irritation.

I

The Autumn Garden

About the Play :

With *The Autumn Garden*, Hellman shifts her interest from money-minded people whose exclusive concerns are power and money to those people who are middle-aged bearing their own individual past. This particular version of the past largely affects their vision in the present. Everyone is the victim of self-deception of which they overcome only in the end of the play and become aware of the staunch reality of their life. It is Hellman's favourite play as she reflects in an interview : "*The Autumn Garden* is my favourite play of my own. I don't know why except I think I said more of what I felt in Autumn Garden than I ever said before or afterwards. I think it's the most mature play I ever wrote. It was not the most successful play I ever wrote. But I like it better than any other. It was me being all I knew at the minute rather than me only being a certain part of what I knew at the minute."¹

As Hellman herself admits, she has said more of what she felt in the play. Truly it is a play proving Hellman's ability to scan human psyche at its innermost depths. It is the most mature play probing into the reality of lives of the characters. In the play, Hellman exhibits her command of revealing the characters' inner goings in the most subtle way. Most of the critics feel the play to be Chekhovian in that Hellman has moved from the "well made" in the direction of Chekhov. But Hellman refutes the label explaining that *The Autumn Garden* is the fullest play. According to her, it is the most rounded play. She says, "No, oddly enough, I never read Chekhov at the time I first started to write. One has forgotten that Chekhov was very late in being translated. Earlier in England than here but very late here. I really think I only began to hear of Chekhov well. I began to read the short stories... I'm sure that when I was in college I have read a Chekhov play... I am his great admirer, of course, have become an even great admirer; but I don't think they influenced me to any large amount." ²

Amongst other critics, who did not take the play to be Chekhovian, was Howard Taubman. He strongly condemned those critics who created unnecessary fuss regarding Chekhovian impact. He strongly criticizes them in the following words: "...The word went out that *The Autumn Garden* was Chekhovian, as if this were some species of obloquy. The truth is that Miss Hellman was describing a southern and American – way of life with something of the autumn's aching chill and glow." ³

Formerly, Hellman had shown her cold fury against evil and injustice prevailing in society but in the present play her anger has been transformed into general irritability towards human inadequacy. She continues to show her intelligence as a master craftsman while introspecting over universal daydreaming of the people around us. This time Hellman exhibits her contempt towards moral evil. The major theme of the play is confronting process of ageing and frustration caused due to failure in search of meaning of life. Hellman points out how later life can be horrifying burden if it is not channelled properly in the initial stage. Through the meaningless lives of the characters Hellman wants to make us aware of the reality of our life, that is,

without growth everything gets rotten. These are the rotten lives of the characters who fail to understand their responsibilities. She strongly believes in making life meaningful and decent and strongly abominates moral inertia.

A Brief Summary of the Play :

Let us see summary of the play to understand minute threats of good and evil crisscrossing each other.

The time of the play is September 1949. The place is Tuckerman house in a summer resort on the Gulf of Mexico about a hundred miles from New Orleans. The owner of the house, Constance Tuckerman has converted this family summer home into the boarding house where all the old acquaintances of hers have boarded. The boarding house is modelled on one Hellman had visited and her aunts, Hannah and Jenny, also had a boarding house. Except two, all the boarders have crossed their forties and thus they are really experiencing the autumn of their lives. All the boarders lack any zeal for life. Among these boarders there is Edward Crossman who is a middle aged intellectual and was once in love with Constance; he is a regular summer boarder and drunkard who finds solace in being so. Sophie is a young niece of Constance, daughter of her brother and his French wife, whom Constance has brought from Europe, to rescue her from poverty after the death of Sophie's father. Sophie is helping her aunt with the work at the boarding house. Frederick, a pleasant looking young man, is engaged to Sophie. A mother's boy, Frederick, is dominated by his mother all the time. His grandmother Mrs. Ellis dominates his mother, Carrie.

Mrs. Ellis knows the power of money and that is the reason why she treats both Carrie and Frederick accordingly. Though Frederick and Sophie have been engaged to each other they do not have love between them. Instead of having a fair mutual relationship, it is a matter of convenience for both of them. It is decided that Frederick will give her financial security and she will give him home and respectability. But, later it is found that Frederick is less interested in Sophie and he has real emotional interest in Payson, a male writer, whom Frederick is helping in editing his work. Payson has a dubious

reputation regarding his having homosexual relationship with other male members. The Ellises have planned to go on a Europe tour and Frederick wants his friend, Payson to accompany them.

The Griggs, Ben and his wife, Rose, are also regular summer boarders. General Griggs, a good looking man of fifty-three is fed up with his marriage and wants to break up with his wife. Ben Griggs always wanted a wife just like his mother, a serious woman. Rose is aware of this fact but she is a foolish woman. An ex-pretty, Rose wants to establish herself to be a serious woman by telling tales of her affairs when General Griggs was away during the war time. She appears to be very comic and girlish in her manner. Dennerys, Nick and his wife Nina are much awaited by the other boarders and Constance remains loyal to him for twenty three years, neglecting Edward Crossman's true feelings towards her. Nick is like a serpent in the Garden who goes from group to group seducing everyone of them and making them unhappy. He uses his charms over every member whereas his wife, Nina has understanding nature.

Among these people Nick is the only person who has interest in the lives of others. He does not accept the things as they are, he wants to twist those according to his will. He finds a kind of sadistic pleasure in making people unhappy. When the play opens, all the characters, except Dennerys, are present in the living room having their casual conversation through which their nature and relationships have been revealed. Frederick is about to go for a party but he does not want to take Sophie with him because he has cancelled to go to party and wants to go to see Mr. Payson. Sophie shows great understanding in letting him go and calmly tells Cassie that she really doesn't mind Frederick's behaviour. Carrie accuses Frederick for being rude to Sophie and asks him to break the appointment with Payson. She also objects why Payson has followed Frederick this summer. Frederick is embarrassed and tries to justify his mother's behaviour saying, "She's a little bossy from time to time but no harm in it" (473). Frederick refutes every charge of his mother and admits that Sophie and himself are an awkward pair.

After the confrontation between Frederick and his mother, General Griggs and Rose talk about their marriage which is worn out by now. General Griggs wants to breakup with Rose but is unable to give a proper reason for that. Rose is completely baffled regarding ambiguity of the would be separation. She tries her level best to sustain their marriage but it seems impossible. Rose tries hard to make General Griggs aware of their parental responsibility but all in vain. General Griggs supposes that his sons are not loyal to him. Thus their confrontation with each other remains an unsolved problem, at least, at present. After that, Constance appears on the stage and is greatly nervous to receive Nick and his wife Nina. When Nick arrives, he exhibits his pseudo concern for everything. Very cunningly Nick requests Constance to allow him to make a portrait of her. Before twenty three years Nick had made a portrait of her and now he wants to show the difference in the two portraits of the same person. Nina realizes the cunning of Nick and she accuses him of being troublesome to people around them. Then he tries to show his pseudo concern for Ned Crossman but Ned is shrewd enough not to allow him to get his upper hand over himself. All the charms of Nick prove to be futile in front of Ned. Act I ends with a crucial conversation between Sophie and Ned Crossman.

In Act II Nick is in action, meddling in everyone's life. His first victim is Constance. Nick has been allowed to make a portrait of Constance and quite purposefully Nick portrays Constance ten years older making Constance furious. But he is successful in convincing her very sweetly how much he loved her even when he married Nina. To make her happy, he further adds that Ned still loves her and wants to marry her. He finds great pleasure in doing harm to other people. Constance has not thought about Ned earlier but because of this revelation, Constance starts thinking about Ned. Nick moves his attention to Carrie and disturbs her by telling her about Mr. Payson with whom he had seen Frederick. He tells her about Payson's dubious reputation. Carrie is surprised to know that Frederick was booking a passage to Europe for Payson. Consequently, Carrie confronts Frederick accusing him of his relationship with Payson but Fredrick insists on taking Payson to Europe but

for the intervention of his grandmother, Mrs. Ellis, the matter comes to a close. Mrs. Ellis simply asks Carrie to ask Frederick to make clear to Payson that his ten thousand a year ends that day and will not begin again. The threat works and Frederick, though heartbroken, has to change his mind.

The third victim of Nick is Rose who seeks solace in the guidance of Nick. Nick flirts with her and gains her confidence. She also promises to make a \$5000 commission for painting a portrait of her niece. Rose also seeks advice from Nick and, as suggested by him, she goes to a doctor not to get cured but to be certified as an ill person so that she can get sympathy of her husband. Nina accuses Nick for meddling in others' lives and condemns his evil nature. She also threatens him to leave if he doesn't stop all his mischief. But Nick remains untouched by the threats or the accusation. He continues his gaming the preys and taking pleasure in doing so.

Meanwhile Rose tries to convince General Griggs how mature and serious woman she has been. She tells the stories of her love affairs but General Griggs does not give importance to all her prattling. In the end of Act II, Section I, General Griggs, Crossman and Nina plan to go for a picnic. In Act II, Section II also Nick does not stop his meddling. Mrs. Ellis makes Sophie aware of the fact that Frederick is 'Mama's boy' which may affect their future life. At the same time Nick gets a call from Rose relating her illness. Now bored with his guiles, Nick seeks solace in drinking and it is his drunken state that brings catastrophe and all the characters come to their senses. In the drunken state he advances to Sophie, she tries hard to remove him from her bed but Nick collapses on the bed and Sophie has to spare the night on a chair across the room.

When Act III opens Mrs. Ellis finds Nick in Sophie's bed which is quite unexpected for her. Sophie has not sensed anything about a future disaster, that is, however she is innocent, people will think that Nick has seduced her. Sophie, very shrewdly, changes and decides to take this opportunity to overcome her problems. While doing so, she unknowingly makes everyone aware of the reality of their lives.

Everything changes drastically as Sophie demands \$5000 to Nina as she has decided to make her life somewhere else. Nina, consequently, agrees to give the money. Sophie rejects the proposal of Ellises to go to Europe. Frederick also gives up the idea of touring with Payson but Sophie knows that he will be always his 'mama's boy'. So, she decides to leave him and go to her mother to help her. There is reconciliation between General Griggs and Rose, as has been guessed earlier by Nick. When General Griggs comes to know about Rose's illness, he gives up the thought of getting divorced and promises Rose that he will take care of her.

Nick plays his role and disappears from the scene, leaving stark realities behind. Constance and Ned Crossman realise how they have wasted their lives. Ned confesses how he wasted his life in drinking and living in a room and going to work without much zeal. He thinks, instead of going from bar to bar he should have done other good things. Constance, too, feels that she has wasted her life waiting for Nick's arrival. Now she realizes that she wanted Ned all the time. Now it is too late for both of them. Constance asks Ned to marry her but he cannot do so because he can not love her anymore. He begs pardon for fooling Constance by giving her an impression that he loved her. Thus, the play ends on a confessional note by the both, Constance and Ned.

Confrontation between Good and Evil :

In the play we find evil in the form of blackmail, lie, self-deception, self-indulgence, lack of understanding, complexed, superiority, domination, manipulation, possessiveness, inertia, waywardness, money mindedness and flirtatiousness. It is confronted with good in many instances which will be discussed further at length.

The confrontation of good and evil is the favourite theme of Hellman which has been used recurrently in almost all the plays by her. But *The Autumn Garden* is exceptionally different from other plays in respect to the confrontation which was most of the times, external in the earlier plays. This time the confrontation is at its subtlest level. Hellman now does not

discuss external problems like war or politics, ethical decisions or social changes affecting the pre-established value system. Thus, in the play the confrontation is not at a cosmic level but at an individual level. Her agitation towards the aspects mentioned earlier has been pacified by now to a great extent. As Doris Falk puts it:

Hellman has always been a doer – impatient with thinkers or perceivers or flounders. Her old anger against evil and injustice in the early plays seems now to have become a general irritability and petulance toward human inadequacy. She deplores failure through lack of direction, self discipline, or energy – “waste time.”⁴

Mrs. Mary Ellis’ Confrontation with Various Characters :

Though all the characters in the play confront each other for one reason or the other, none of them is bad and malicious like Mary or vicious like the Hubbards. Those who are somewhat bad are victims of their own follies. All of them are idealists who falsely believed that their ideals are the perfect ones. Only Mrs. Mary Ellis is an exception to it, she is not a pseudo-idealist. She hates these people for their self-deception. She has clear notions with regard to life. Highly self-dependent Mrs. Ellis says :

I used to like being alone. When you get old, of course, then you don’t anymore. But somewhere in the middle years, it is fine to be alone. A room of one’s own isn’t nearly enough. A house, or, best, an island of one’s own... Happiest year of my life was when my husband died. Every month was spring time and every day I seemed to be tipsy, as if my blood had turned a lovely vin rose. (467)

Very clearly Mrs. Ellis defines herself, therefore, she knows sound reasons of her confrontation with various characters. She condemns Payson's book which is full of confused sex. When Frederick appreciates Payson's book, Mrs. Ellis crosses him and very sharply criticizes Carrie's depending on herself financially. When Frederick says, "Mother sometimes I think no people are quite so moral about money as those who clip coupons for living." Mrs. Ellis sarcastically remarks : "And why not? Particularly your mother who is given the coupons already clipped by me who has the hardship of clipping them. That leaves her more time to grow moral" (468).

Mrs. Ellis-Nick Confrontation :

Only Mrs. Ellis has guts enough to confront Nick without any inhibitions. She straightforwardly accuses him for his evil doing against Constance and scolds him for portraying Constance ten years older. She says : "Why have you done that, Nicholas?...Ten Years older. When you pay an artist to paint your portrait he makes you ten years younger. I had my portrait done when I was twenty one, holding my first baby. And the baby looked older than I did. Was rather a scandal or like those people in Tennessee"(499). She also staunchly refutes Nick's complain of being bored. She suggests him that he should do something intellectual and rebukes him for inflicting his bear hugs, friendly pats, and tiny bursts of passion : "And you're a toucher, you constantly touch people or lean on them. Little moments of sensuality. One should have sensuality whole or not at all. Don't you find pecking at it ungratifying? There are many of you. The touchers and the learners" (509). She has strong convictions, so she does not get bothered while revealing them. She is "a straight-shooter with a razor sharp tongue." ⁵

Mrs. Ellis' Confrontation with Carrie and Frederick :

Financially powerful Mrs. Ellis holds the purse strings of the family, that is why she confronts meekly Carrie and somewhat vehement Frederick, who are financially dependent on her. When she realizes that Frederick is under the spell of Mr. Payson whose dubious reputation, which in turn may cause disrepute to him and the family as well, she threatens Frederick by

giving a hint that if he does not stop all the nonsense, she is going to stop his ten thousands a year. Carrie, being an affectionate caring mother, confronts Mrs. Ellis and tells her that if Mrs. Ellis is going to stop his allowance then she will send him her money. Mrs. Ellis is shrewd enough to overpower Carrie, she simply says : “Then I won’t give you yours... Yes, old people are often harsh, Carrie, when they control purse.” Having a strong grasp of the real issues of life-power, sensuality, money she further adds : “I say to myself, one should have power, or give it over. But if one keeps it, it might as well be used, with as little mealy-mouthness as possible” (503). Thus, her holding back the purse strings prove helpful for Frederick because he discovers that his friend’s real attractions is money. He realizes the truth about their relationship. He is sad to know the reality but Mrs. Ellis just can not tolerate this pseudo concern and very sarcastically she asks him to take a week to be sad because, according to her, a week is long enough to be sad.

She can speak with such bluntness only because she understands the attitude of the people like Frederick who pay most of the times for the interest of people like Payson, who victimize people with their literary charms. She hates hypocrites and has enough courage to confront them straightforwardly. It is Mrs. Ellis who encourages Sophie to confront evil and, because of her, Sophie gets confidence. Mrs. Ellis uses her power and the overheard words regarding Sophie’s molestation and creates such a situation which, in turn, becomes helpful for Sophie. She also warns Sophie to take quick decisions in connection to her relationship with Frederick because according to her : “Miracles don’t happen” (512). When Mrs. Ellis finds Nick in Sophie’s bed, she forces him to get out of it. While doing so, she also gives hint to Sophie that Frederick will not be allowed to marry her by Carrie as they have strange mother-son relationship and Carrie is highly possessive of Frederick and thus saves Sophie from the would-be disaster enabling her to confront evil. Walter Kerr compares her to the goddess Athena in a snap-brim fedora, “delivering her haymakers with aplomb.”⁶

Sophie's Confrontation at Two Different Levels :

Like Mrs. Ellis, Sophie is far away from self-deception. Very slowly she is transformed from a passive observer to the deceptions of others to a shrewd opportunist who gathers courage to confront evil. Sophie's confrontation with evil is at two different levels; evil caused due to odd situations and evil in human beings. She confronts the evil in the form of poverty. After her father's death she has to undertake various occupations along with her mother. As Constance thinks that her help to Sophie to overcome her poverty is essential, Sophie has to leave her mother unwillingly and accompany Constance as an assistant to her. This feeling of helplessness has been expressed by her to Ned Grossman in the following words :

Oh, Mr. Ned, we owe money in our village, my mother and I. In my kind of Europe you can't live where you owe money...Did I ever want to come? I have no place here and I am lost and homesick. I like my mother, I - every night I plan to. But it is five years now and there is no plan and no chance to find one. Therefore, I will do the best I can... And I will not cry about it and I will not speak of it again. (491)

Sophie-Constance Confrontation :

Thus, while confronting poverty as an evil, Sophie becomes submissive, accepting the situation as if it is her fate. Earlier she has accepted Frederick's proposal of marriage because it would give her financial stability and him a home. There is no love in their relationship, it is a kind of adjustment. Constance comes to know about the fact and is shocked to know that the relationship is not based on mutual love. For Constance, who has spent her valuable years of life in waiting for true love, everything seems meaningless without love. But Sophie has clear notions. By this time she gets hold enough to confront her aunt as is revealed in the following dialogue :

CONSTANCE. You mean you and Frederick have never been in love?
Then why have you? -

SOPHIE. Aunt Constance, I do not wish to go on with my life as it has
been. I have not been happy and I can not continue here.
I can not be what you have wished me to be, and I do not want
the world you want for me. It is too late –

CONSTANCE. (Softly) Too late? You were thirteen years old when
you came here. I've tried to give you everything –

SOPHIE. I am from another world and in that world thirteen is not
young. I know what you have tried to give me, and I am
grateful. But it has been a waste for us both.”(513)

Sophie bears the potential to confront evil and oddities of life, right from the beginning. We find her speaking quite clearly without any misconceptions. When Frederick points out that they have not talked much since their engagement, Sophie says : “...I think we should not try so hard to talk. Sometimes it is wise to let things grow more roots before one blows them away with words – It will come better if we give it time” (474).

Sophie-Nina Confrontation :

Sophie's hatred for deceptive nature of Nick and Nina prompts her to make a bargain for the seduction by Nick. She demands five thousand dollars, the exact amount he was to receive as a commission of a portrait painting of Rose's niece. Sophie does not want to accept the money as largesse. Sophie gathers enough courage to confront Nick and projects a situation that would be disastrous for her. She tells Nina :

Yes ma'am. You will give me five thousands dollars because if
you do not I will say that Mr. Denery seduced me last night...
I have lost or will lose my most beloved finance; I can not
return to school and the comrades with whom my life has been
so happy; my aunt is uncomfortable and unhappy in the only

life she knows and is burdened with me for many years to come. I am utterly, utterly miserable Mrs. Denery I am ruined... please do not laugh at me... I will call it a loan come by through blackmail. (536-537)

In a sharp manner Sophie points out that Nick and Nina's relationship is based on pseudo- ideals. She accuses Nina : "How could you and Mr. Denery go on living without such incidents as me! I have been able to give you a second or a twentieth honeymoon" (538). Thus, Sophie represents an idealistic world where sham has no place.

Sophie-Mrs. Ellis an Analogy :

Both Sophie and Mrs. Ellis use their words quite intellectually to overpower meek characters to submit to their will. But while doing so, both of them are not vicious. They only try to rectify the characters committing some kind of folly or the other. Mrs. Ellis and Sophie are that way simpletons who hate pseudo, make believe world of these characters. Both of them know the power of money. But their dominance over other characters regarding money is for the characters' good. Mrs. Ellis' dominance over Frederick and Carrie is for their good. Likewise, Sophie's making opportunity to get money proves beneficial for Nick and Nina as they undergo the process of self-realization after it. They come to their senses and face the reality of their life. Thus, though Mrs. Ellis and Sophie's confrontation appear harsh it really helps the characters in the process of self-realization.

Confrontation of French People with the evil of War :

While confronting various characters, Sophie also makes us aware of the difficulties faced by the war stricken French people and their confrontation with the grim situation. The oddities through which these people have suffered make her tongue razor sharp. She hates the English way of pomposity and accuses Ned for it. She says, "... You are an educated man with ideas in English that I am not qualified to understand... You take many words to say

simple things” (490-491). She also confronts Nina because Nina feels that Sophie is creating fuss regarding seduction scene. Sophie out rightly says :

No, Mrs. Denery. You mean it is the same in Brussels or London or Paris, with those whom you would meet. In my class, in my town, it is not so. In a poor house if a man falls asleep drunk and it happens with us each Saturday night – he is not alone with an innocent young girl because the young girl, at my age, is not so innocent and because her family is in the same room, not having any other place to go. It arranges itself differently, you have more rooms and therefore more troubles.

(537)

Sophie, a Clear-eyed Realist :

After a series of confrontation, Sophie gets confident enough. She becomes so self-dependent that she does not need help of Ellises anymore to establish herself as an individual. She no more needs the financial support of the Ellises and so she rejects their proposal to go to Europe. By the end of the play she becomes the mover and shaker and twists the situation according to her flair. The earlier life of Sophie, full of adjustments, comes to an end and the result of her newly grown confidence proves to be favourable enough. A sea change can be witnessed in her character by the end of the play. A meek, mild Sophie turns into a triumphant and dominating Sophie. In this manner, both, Sophie and Mrs. Ellis, prove themselves to be clear-eyed realists in the otherwise meaningless lives, who confront evil fearlessly. Unlike other characters, Sophie and Mrs. Ellis loose nothing because they have no illusions.

Nina-Nick Confrontation :

Nick is the central cause of the changes which occur in the lives of the characters. In his diabolic manner he goes on poisoning everyone's life. Doris Falk rightly describes him as "...the deus (or diabolus) *ex machina* whose meddling in the lives of others "shakes them out of their magnolias." He goes from group to group making trouble. His only motive is to display his charms and use his power to manipulate others."⁷ Though everyone is affected by Nick's meddling in their lives very few dare to confront him. His wife Nina is sick of his tricky behaviour and a time comes when she tries hard to stop Nick's meddling in others' lives by accusing him harshly. She simply does not understand his intention of coming to the boarding house after so many years. When she finds him playing with the lives of the people there she can not stop herself, and accuses him for his vicious tendency. She says, "You're simply looking for a new place in which to exercise yourself. It has happened many, many times before..."(485). She does not like Nick's deceits and his lying to Constance that Ned is 'rotting away' for Constance. She does not like his flirting with Rose, so very sarcastically she remarks : "I suppose it's all right to flirt with, or to charm, women and men and children and animals but now-a-days it seems to me you include book-in-vellum and sirloin steaks, red squirrels and lampshades" (498). Though it seems funny, it bears the truth regarding Nick's flirtatiousness.

Nina does not like Nick's meddling in the lives of Carrie and her son, Frederick. Out of disgust she accuses him for not leaving things alone. A time comes when Nina declares to leave him. Her strong abomination for Nick's crookedness has been expressed in the following manner : "Have you ever tried leaving things alone? I can smell it : It's all around us. The flower like odor right before it becomes faded and heavy. It travels ahead of you, Nick, whenever you get most helpful, most loving and most lovable. Down through the years it runs ahead of us – I smell it and I want to leave... " (500). She threatens him to leave but has no determination to do so. She uses every possible way to make Nick aware of his viciousness but fails totally to change him. This futile confrontation later on turns into a passive acceptance.

At last she has to make an adjustment to save Nick from the would-be troubles. Nina agrees to give \$5000 to Sophie as a compensation money for the misbehaviour of Nick. Thus, Nina's confrontation represents futile struggle, nothing changes. One thing is to be sure, that is, once they leave this place and go else where Nick, according to his nature, will continue doing his mischief and though Nina threatens to abandon him, will never do so. Both of them will, perhaps, repeat the same mistakes. They would not come out of the state of self-deception. Nina needs to punish and be punished and she does so in the end of the play.

Nina's Defeat :

In the confrontation of good and evil, Nina becomes a victim, at the same time, she learns a lesson from Sophie. For the first time in her life Nina understands Nick's behaviour for what it is. Otherwise, she has always allowed Nick to behave licentiously. As Judith Olauson puts it Nina is...:

... the all suffering- all – understanding, and forgiving wife. But her true motivation is based in her own self-concept. As Nick points out to her, she seeks to demean herself and so chose to love him. Sophie also perceives this in her.⁸

Nina comes to her senses and realizes that she can never change and, however she may try to confront Nick's waywardness, she will not be successful.

Rose Griggs-Ben Griggs Confrontation :

Whether to sustain their marriage or not is totally in the hands of Nina and she sustains it by accepting what comes to her way. On the other hand for Rose Griggs it is a problem which she can solve by her own. Rose senses how her marriage has been endangered due to drabness and meaninglessness. Therefore, her confrontation with her husband, Ben Griggs, has an altogether different dimension. While confronting Ben, she tries very hard to establish herself as a lovable wife. However, she fails to do so. Ben Griggs always

wanted his wife to be a serious woman like his mother, which Rose is not. Rose tries hard to show how serious she is but it only proves her silliness.

Rose wants Ben to accept her as a serious woman but Ben Griggs is well aware of Rose's hypocrisy. Now and then Ben Griggs makes her aware of the fact that they are 'worn out and there is no more to say' (475). Rose does not want any alteration in their life. She simply can not analyse Griggs' aloofness towards her and towards their sons. She questions Griggs, "... Do people get divorces after twenty five years by just saying they want them and that's all and walking off ? (475).

Rose's confusion regarding Griggs' behaviour is inexplicable as he has not given her any reasonable explanation about it. In a very silly manner Rose tries hard to keep herself young which is 'childish' according to him. However hard Rose tries to persuade Griggs, he remains unstirred. Consequently, Rose seeks solace in Nick's company. Nick becomes her friend, philosopher and guide. He advises her to get a certificate from doctor to prove that she is not well. Of that Griggs may feel sympathy for her and it would prevent him from giving a divorce. Unfortunately, the pretext proves to be a reality of Rose's life. While confronting Griggs, Rose faces her own predicament. Both of them come to their senses only to realise how really futile their lives have become. Rose loses all her charm, and very pathetically she appeals to Griggs to stay with her for one more year and then get a divorce. She says :

... Pleas stay with me this year, just this year, I will swear a solemn oath – believe me I'm telling the truth now – I will give you a divorce at the end of the year without another word. I' go and do it without any fuss, any talk. But please help me now. I'm so scared. Help me, please.... (541)

Griggs is now ready to live with her for one more year but he knows well that even though he does not like her, and now he will not, he won't leave her in future. Rose gets what she wants but by the time she gets it, it has lost all its meaning. She never wanted to get divorced and so she will not be

divorced. Griggs will live with her but there will be no love. It is only a kind of adjustment for both of them. Thus, Rose herself gets defeated in the process of confrontation. Hereafter she has to confront with her life itself.

Constance-Nick Confrontation :

Like Rose, Constance, too, tries to confront the odd life which, perhaps, is created by herself. In twenty years she has not acted upon her romantic ideals. Constance truly loves Nick expecting the same from him but it remains an illusion for her. Nick never comes back after his marriage with Nina and when he returns he tries to make fun of Constance by portraying her ten years older, a poverty stricken ageing woman. She realizes vanity of her fantasies and then tries to confront Nick but it is too late now. His crookedness has gone beyond control, though Constance urges him not to portray her, Nick somehow convinces her and she becomes the victim of the guiles played by him. It is not that Constance totally does not know the deceitful nature of him. When Nick tries to convince her how he loved Constance only and how he had never been in love again, Constance plainly makes him aware, "...You fell in love with Nina and that's why you didn't come back – you're very much in love with Nina. Then and now..."(510). The very realization of the true nature of Nick is awesome for Constance and we find change in her.

Constance's Frustration and Her Confrontation with Sophie :

Constance's blind belief in Nick changes into scepticism and her tongue becomes sharper than ever. She comes to know that she has wasted her precious twenty years in waiting for true love and neglected Ned, who was in love with her. The revelation of it is nullified by the fact that Ned no more wants to love or marry her. Constance's confrontation with Nick is not very fruitful as she has to retreat. She gets hurt and defeated in this confrontation. Her confrontation with Sophie, also, is very frustrating. She has brought Sophie with some gallant purpose but when Sophie turns against her, she is totally shattered. It is an unexpected behaviour of Sophie that reassures Constance as to how vaguely she had cherished certain ideals which according to other people around her are mere illusions.

Constance has spent a considerable time of her life in waiting for her love, hence, she does not understand Sophie and Frederick's lovelessness. The practical attitude of Sophie is appalling for Constance. She does not understand how Sophie and Frederick are ready to marry when they never have been in love. Though Constance has not acted on her ideals, she is offended by Sophie's careless attitude towards love. Constance accuses Sophie for such an outlook. Constance believes that whatever she has done for Sophie is very ideal but Sophie's comments bring her to her senses. Sophie says :

Aunt Constance, I do not wish to go on with my life as it has been. I have not been happy, and I cannot continue here. I cannot be what you have wished me to be, and I do not want the world you want for me. It is too late – (513)

Constance gets deeply hurt by her remarks, she can not confront Sophie anymore and she gives up. Her helplessness is reflected in the following words : “I have been so wrong. And so careless in not seeing it. Do you want to go home now?” (513). She comes to know soon that whatever she has dreamt about Sophie's future is useless. Thus, Constance is disappointed by her two most close-to-her heart persons. The only hope she finds is in Ned, who has always wanted Constance's love.

Constance's Realization :

As Constance has been told by Nick about Ned, she realizes for the first time how she has neglected the love of Ned towards her and wasted her life waiting for true love. She exposes the reality to Ned, saying : “all these years of making a shabby man into the kind of hero who would come back someday all happy and shining –” (543). Constance, Rose and Nina suffer from the same futile illusion about their lives. They want a fuller life, so they rely on their past and meet frustration in the present. Ned Crossman is a very straightforward realist. He brings Constance to the realistic front of her life, making her face the fact that she has wasted her years for Nick who never had asked her to make him what he wasn't or he has not told her to wait for him.

Constance has been made fully aware of her half-felt emotion and it is Ned who makes her accept the fact that she has wasted all these years for not knowing what she felt about Ned. After Ned's confrontation with her, Constance openly admits that she has really wasted these years for not knowing what she felt about Ned and requests him to have her but it is too late for everything. Because by this time Ned also realizes that he no more loves her. Nick's plainness influences Constance and she accepts the fact that all these years she was disillusioned. She confesses it and Ned, too, accepts it broad mindedly. Play ends on a reconciliatory note but a tinge of defeat lingers over the lives of these characters. Both of them choose to live their lives by themselves as if it is a compensation for their negligence towards themselves. Thus, Constance gets defeated not only by other characters while confronting, but also by herself.

Some Minor Confrontations :

Ned-Nick Confrontation :

Some minor confrontations include Ned's with Nick. As Nick tries to show Ned how both of them are greatly acquainted with each other. When, in reality, Nick has not taken notice of him. Ned straightway points out that they never had great acquaintance with each other. Ned is very sarcastic about Nick's cunning. His viciousness is realized quite appropriately by Ned and he retaliates him very sharply. Nick always tries to seek sadistic pleasure. He wants to tease Ned by telling him that he met a friend in Paris who told him that Ned and Constance had never married and perhaps that is the reason why Ned drinks so heavily. Ned can not tolerate it and he sharply points out : "Louis Prescott go all the way to Paris to tell you that?" (483). Ned realizes that it is no use showing his over smartness to Ned. Nick accuses Ned for being edgy but this also he does not accept. Ned tells Nick that he has not changed a bit in these years. Though Ned outwits Nick and proves himself to be better than him, in reality he himself has been defeated while confronting his own weaknesses. He does not understand how he has wasted the considerable period of his life. Even though he supposes that he has remained

very honest to his life, in reality, he has unknowingly hidden futility of his life in doing nothing considerable.

The irony of Ned's life is that Constance takes into consideration Ned's love for her when she begins to realize the vanity of her fantasies. She wants to be loved and taken care of by a good man, so she turns to Crossman but by then he has turned into an aimless alcoholic. Ned always lacked courage to propose to Constance, so finally, he chooses to live with his unrequited love and finds solace in drinking. When Constance wants him to be her partner, he fails to fulfill her expectation as he has been powerless. His life has been wasted in an expectation that some day Constance may love him but comes to know at the end what he has done to himself. He says :

... And all these years I told myself that if you'd loved me everything would have been different. I'd have had a good life, been worth something to myself. I wanted to tell myself that I wanted to believe it. Griggs was right. I not only wasted myself, but I wanted it that way. All my life, I guess, I wanted it that way.

When Constance asks him : "And you're not in love with me, Ned?" Crossman answers : "No, Con. Not now" (544).

Thus, Ned also confronts with himself for twenty years and finally comes to know the futility of his living so. He makes a kind of compromise with himself and decides to keep himself busy looking into other peoples' hearts so that he wouldn't have to look into his own.

Benjamin Griggs – Rose Confrontation :

Benjamin Griggs' confrontation with his wife Rose is an example of a transformation from aggressive negation of their relationship into a passive submissiveness. Griggs is fed up with his married life and wants to overcome it by having a divorce. On the other hand, Rose is trying hard to save their marriage by pretending to be a serious woman and further by

pretending to have severe health problem. Ironically enough both the pretexts become the predicament of her life. Griggs, ultimately, gets entangled in emotions as he can not confront Rose anymore. It is difficult for him to avoid Rose and he comes to the conclusion that they can never break away to shape their lives in a constructive, fulfilling way. He has to face the grim reality of his life and what he says is applicable to everyone's life :

...So at any given moment you're only the sum of your life up to then. There are no big moments you can reach unless you've a pile of smaller moments to stand on....Most people like us haven't done anything to themselves; they've let it be done to them. I had no right to let it be done to me, but I let it be done. What consolation can I find in not having made myself any more useless than an Ellis, a Denery, a Tuckerman, a – (541-542)

Hellman gets irritated to see the wastage of precious moments of life. Hence, she wants to give a warning through the play to stop deceiving oneself at the earliest or the repercussion of it would be disastrous. In the words of Marry Lynn Broe :

Life is a valuable and precious trust whose capital must be invested early and wisely, set in a committed direction and tended energetically before mid-life, or its returns will never be reaped. If it is squandered the Sophie's of the world will deceive themselves into becoming Rose Griggses.⁹

Thus, Hellman strongly opposes moral inertia and irresponsible behaviour of the people. She wants us to do the human best. Hellman hates fooling ourselves that is why she makes all the characters, who unnecessarily indulge

in illusions, realize their follies. Katherine Lederer's following comment regarding Hellman's point of view is noteworthy :

...we must strive to grow; we must be "committed" in the existential sense of that term. In her plays and in her memoirs Hellman uses again and again the phrase 'in space.' A person who speaks or acts 'in space' has no commitment, no reasoned outlook, he is like a kite without a string.¹⁰

Hellman's outlook is not altogether pessimistic. Through her characters she wants to ascertain optimism. In a newspaper interview Hellman said that the characters in the play led empty lives, but that "the play isn't meant to say that people can't do anything about such emptiness. It is meant to say the opposite – they can do a great deal with their lives."¹¹ That means if they realize their follies earlier they can mend their lives. According to her, confrontation is at the internal level with one's own beliefs and attitudes rather than with the outer world and the people around us. It is an optimistic play guiding people for the betterment in their lives.

The Autumn Garden is the essence of human existence. Hellman gives us a message to do our best. Though it is a high challenge, Hellman wants us to upgrade ourselves to that point. The character fail to meet that challenge but Hellman wants us to behave opposite to it. The recognition of failure is the predicament of every character. Their inner anguished lives are exposed before them to make us face the realities of our life. They also show how Hellman's concept of confrontation has been shifted from outward to inward confrontations.

II

Toys in the Attic**About the Play :**

The last original play by Hellman, *Toys in the Attic*, is next to *The Children's Hour* in its popularity. The play is based on a man who is loved by his people who wanted him to be rich. So, he becomes rich and then it is discovered that they really don't like him to be rich. Critics believe that the play has the influence of Chekhov and of Tennessee Williams. The idea for the play had been suggested to Hellman by Dashiell Hammett. Though it is not mentioned whether Hammett had in mind Hellman's father, but there are number of particulars related to her father, her mother and her maiden aunts.

It is a fine play having psycho-sexual terrain in it with moral implications. The play expresses sympathy for the damaged characters. The problem, here, like in any other Hellman plays, is money. Coercion for money is the main thread of the play but, here, characters are not greedy for money as in *Days to Come*, *The Little Foxes* or *Another Part of the Forest*. These people are greedy for love. It is not so that there is no love. There is plenty of love but it is not understood properly by the characters. Consequently, this failure in mutual understanding causes damage in their lives. In the play, Hellman very effectively presents the destructive aspect of love..

Toys in the Attic can be called an extension of *The Autumn Garden*. In both the plays self-deception causes great problems and realization of the truth proves destructive. The characters do not face realities of their beings. The closing sentence by Constance in *The Autumn Garden* could have been an opening line of the *Toys in the Attic*. She says, "Never mind, Most of us lie to ourselves. Never mind" (545). It is applicable to the three siblings, here. In the attic of these siblings is their past, moreover, the characters are the toys of Hellman's attic.

The play is about the effect of money on the characters' lives and destructive aspect of love which is disguised as concern. This time money is in the hands of the weak characters. They do not have avarice but coercion of money to fulfill their needs and aspirations. Evil in the play is due to injuries caused to the characters in the name of security and love. These are sad dreams of characters who create web of self-deception around themselves, falsely believing it to be the apt one. The confrontation arises due to the failure in mutual understanding.

A Brief Summary of the Play :

To understand the confrontation at its subtlest level, first we will see summary of the play. The setting is the Berniers' house in New Orleans. A typical middle class house, which is shabby in its appearance and getting shabbier in the course of time. The story revolves around two spinster sisters, Anna and Carrie, and their younger brother Julian Berniers. Julian Berniers' financial success and marriage to an immature childish girl are the causes of the sisters' anguish. Julian has been brought up by his two dotting sisters. Both of them are working women and have sacrificed their longings only for Julian. Their hard earned money goes to Julian's business needs and their dream of a Europe trip remains unfulfilled. Yet without regrets, they are happy because they are living for their brother who is their life.

As the play opens, Anna and Carrie talk about Julian, who is about to return from Chicago after a year. Julian undertakes many business deals but every time meets failure. At the time of his marriage with Lily, Lily's mother has given 10,000 dollars as a wedding gift which has been invested in a shoe factory by Julian, but, consequently it also proves a futile effort. Both the sisters are expecting their brother penniless, in want of their favour for money. But to their dismay, Julian returns with great financial success, with money bulging out of his pockets. He showers expensive gifts over his sisters, the things they always wanted to have but couldn't buy. They are baffled to find a paid up mortgage to the house and two expensive tickets to Europe, fancy clothes, a new refrigerator and a new piano.

Julian wants to see his sisters happy and he thinks that his success can make them so. He has brought with him an envelope filled with the money, the profit earned in a real estate deal. Julian's unexpected success does not make his sisters happy, as if their happiness has ended in Julian's getting financially independent. Both of them have been seeking pleasure through catering to the needs of Julian. As Julian's dependency is over, they assume that Julian no more needs them and hence they feel as if they have lost the very purpose of their life. They wrongly project an idea that money has taken their place and they are thrown out of Julian's life.

Albertine Prine is a wealthy but recluse mother of Lily, whom Lily despises most for her having relationship with her coloured chauffeur, Henry Simpson. Albertine always wanted to get rid of her daughter. Lily's marriage with Julian is a kind of solace to her. She has concern for Julian, she always supports Lily and guides her, warns her not to behave foolishly, so that their marriage may sustain. Lily is a neurotic, ever scared of abandonment by Julian. She is suspicious about Julian's love for her. She thinks that her mother has sold her to Julian and he loves her for her money only, but strangely enough, when Julian becomes financially independent her insecurity is accelerated. Now she thinks that the money earned by him has some connection with his having relationship with a middle-aged woman. Thus, Lily is under a constant threat of abandonment.

Love among the three siblings is at stake as money causes great emotional stir. This time money earned by Julian is purely legal though not ethical. It is an outcome of his business deal with Mrs. Warkins, his ex-mistress and Henry's half-coloured cousin. Mr. Warkins treats her brutally and Charlotte Warkins wants to escape from him. Julian has been aided by her in buying swampland which is important from the point of view of Mr. Warkins. Julian resells the same land to him and earns a great profit of which half of the amount is to be given to Charlotte, which she will use for her escape.

Mr. Albertine is well aware of the deal between Julian and Charlotte. She also knows that Mr. Warkins does not know of her being half-coloured. While Albertine is discussing these things with Henry, Carrie overhears and loses her wits. She just can't tolerate Julian having physical relationship with any woman, not even with his wife, Lily. Carrie has a strange obsessive love for Julian. She has incestuous feeling towards him, as is revealed through a hot exchange of words between herself and Anna. The very utterance of the actual feelings shatters Carrie to pieces. She begins railing at Anna who can no more tolerate Carrie. Finally, she has been compelled to speak out the bitter truth that Carrie had incestuous love for Julian and she always wanted to sleep with him. Anna is always frightened that Carrie would try and she would watch and suffer for her. Carrie's half-felt realization, when spoken openly, makes her more stern, and her love towards Anna turns into hatred. Both of them realize that they can no more have the same concern and love for each other. Anna decides to go to the Europe trip on her own.

Carrie is frustrated for two reasons; Anna's accusation and revelation of Julian's relationship with a 'mystery woman.' Carrie talks with Lily instinctively and through her dialogue with Lily gives way to her irritation. Lily is constantly engrossed with the fear of abandonment as always and her insecurity and restlessness has increased since they have returned from Chicago. Especially because of the presence of the two sisters, as she notices, Julian has become impotent in their house. In reality, Julian loves Lily and wants to give her all the pleasures of life, so he has decided to leave the home and go elsewhere where they can spend some time together.

Carrie despises Julian's plan as she can not bear the very idea of Julian going away from her. Julian's plan is to sell out the house and to send his sister abroad. He simply wants to see them happy and wants to give the share of Charlotte out of the profit he has earned. But all the plans of Julian get frustrated due to Carrie's jealousy. Now Carrie is under the spell of evil power. She manipulates Lily's fears and becomes successful in convincing Lily that her mother has sold her to Julian and Julian always has wanted her money and that now he will leave her forever and go with Charlotte.

Lily's fears are heightened, she gets angry and out of frustration she calls Mrs. Warkins only to beg for Julian's love for one year more. But unfortunately, the call has been received by Mr. Warkins. Lily has lost her wits, she can not realize whatever she is talking and unknowingly brings catastrophe to the lives of all the characters. Her fears are uncalled for as Julian just wants to give Charlotte her profit and after that he has a plan to enjoy his life along with his wife and sisters. After receiving the message of Lily, Mr. Warkins sends his thugs and they beat up Julian and slash Charlotte. The money has been snatched away by them. In the end, Julian comes home broken, physically and mentally. He loses all his newly earned confidence. Julian does not understand how his simple plan has been frustrated and he has been 'assed up'.

The defeat of Julian makes Carrie happy and this is apparently seen on her face. She fails to hide her feelings and Julian gets hurt to see it. She reacts as if nothing has happened. Julian can not stop himself accusing her and asks whether she likes him that way. Albertine senses viciousness in Carrie. She is sure that one day or the other Carrie will tell Julian about the call made by Lily. She will put all the blame on her, and Lily will return to Mrs. Albertine. Lily is ready to solve the mystery of the phone call but her mother warns her not to do so. Henry, too, shows his willingness to leave Mrs. Albertine when Lily returns because he knows that Lily hates him. The play comes to an end when Anna carries valises back and Carrie bustles off happily to the store to get essential things 'to make a good soup' always liked by Julian. The closing expression 'Tomorrow's another day' bears many hidden implications about their future life.

Various Forms of Evil :

Toys in the Attic reflects evil in various forms such as blackmail, lack of value pattern, lie, obsession, self-deception, negligence, and surprisingly enough, hatred for money, too much of truthfulness and innocence. These are some of the shades of evil which are confronted by good at various levels. To understand it let us examine some of the characters and events related to them.

Money has been the cause of evil in most of the Hellman plays. Here, too, evil is caused by money but the treatment given to it is different. In the play there is no more greed for money but it is the catalyst that alters the chain of human relationship. It forces the sisters to face the truth of their lives and causes trouble to everyone in turn. As money has destructive power in it, so does obsessive love. Jealousy, possessiveness, are some of the reasons that create tussle. Morally weak characters fail to understand true meaning of love which causes confrontation. Carrie's madness to avenge Julian and Lily's inadequacy of mature mind are also causes of turmoil that takes place in the lives of the characters. Hellman emphasizes the truth that love can be destructive when the giver and the recipient fail to understand its nature.

Carrie's Obsessive Love for Julian :

In the play, Hellman puts the burden of evil on Carrie and Lily. Carrie's obsessive love for Julian is the main cause of confrontation. Carrie wants all the attention and love of Julian. She does not want her love to be shared by anybody, not even by his wife. Carrie cares for Julian a lot but she herself does not understand when she crosses the dividing line between love, care and obsession. At the opening of the play, we find Carrie worried about Julian as Carrie and Anna have not received any letter from him for last two weeks. Carrie tells Anna that she has gone to the post office inquiring after it. she has also telephoned the hotel manager at Chicago where Julian had been staying. To her surprise, she has been told that Julian had moved from there months ago. Carrie's irritation is not due to Julian's leaving the place but to his leaving it without giving any hint. This anguish in her is an outcome of her expectations from Julian. She gets restless to sense that she is no more at the centre of Julian's life.

Anna-Carrie Confrontation :

Right from the beginning Anna does not like the way Carrie shows obsession towards Julian. So, the confrontation between them goes on continuously at a subtle level. Anna, indirectly suggests to Carrie that they should no more interfere in the lives of Julian and Lily. But Carrie wants to go

to Chicago to see them. She sends them money assuming they are in need of it, when in reality, they need no more money. Anna tries to stop Carrie from her interference and she confronts her in the following manner :

ANNA . I don't think we should run after Julian and Lily and intrude in their lives.

CARRIE. Who's doing that? What an unpleasant idea... we haven't got twenty-eight hundred and forty-three dollars. I took out a thousand dollars yesterday and sent it to Chicago. I didn't know then that Julian had moved from the hotel. But I'm sure they'll forward the money – I signed the wire with love from Anna and Carrie, so he knows it comes from you, too.

ANNA. (Slowly) I don't think you should have done that.

CARRIE. But I knew you would want to send it -

ANNA. How do you know what I want?

CARRIE. (Slowly, hurt) Shouldn't I know what you want for Julian?... I'm sorry our trip will have to wait a little longer, but-

ANNA. I'm sorry, too. But it's not the trip. Nor the money. We are interfering, and we told ourselves we wouldn't. (691)

Carrie does not know where to stop while Anna realizes it, and compared to Carrie's Anna's anguish is lesser.

Anna and Carrie never liked the house they are living in. When Julian returns he has with him a paid-up mortgage. Both Carrie and Anna can not make anything out of Julian's gesture of benevolence. Carrie's irritation is caused mostly due to Julian's financial independence. Julian's first move after getting success is to give a house free of debts as he has been always told by Carrie how she liked the house. Anna confronts Carrie on her irritation to see the paid-up mortgage. She says, "You used to tell him how much we liked it,

and the garden and the street, and the memories of Mama and Papa.” Carrie’s answer to it is : “You know very well I said all that to keep him from being ashamed of the house and what we didn’t have –” (708) Carrie’s stand is acceptable at this point but she deliberately forgets that Julian’s efforts are the outcome of her wish. Now and then Anna tries to remind Carrie of the righteous way. The confrontation between the sisters is caused by the basic difference in attitudes. Anna’s mature and motherly behaviour towards Julian is not liked by Carrie, whereas Carrie’s possessiveness and shallowness is hated by Anna.

Even after these confrontations, Carrie does not stop meddling in the lives of Julian and Lily. It is obvious that she can not sleep at night out of jealousy towards Lily. She tells Anna about Lily’s rattling around half the night and expresses her doubt that Lily does not know about Julian’s moneymaking. Carrie does not pay any heed to Anna’s rebukes and continues commenting on Julian’s marriage. She can not check herself from talking in a derogatory manner regarding Lily. Anna has forbearance but Carrie lacks it. Their attitudes are basically different which are reflected in the following confrontation :

CARRIE. It’s not natural in a good marriage. I can tell you that.

ANNA. We don’t know anything about a good marriage or a bad one. I read somewhere that old maids are the true detectives of the human heart. But I don’t want to be a detective of other people’s hearts. I’m having enough trouble with my own.

CARRIE. I know you are. I know you’re just as worried as I am. I know that’s why you’re having headaches again.

ANNA. I said I didn’t have a headache.

CARRIE. I’ll get you something for it. Julian pampers Lily as if she were a child. He never treated us that way, always boasted of our good sense.

ANNA He didn't marry us.

CARRIE. Nobody wants a child for a wife.

ANNA. There is no sense telling your opinions about marriage to me. I don't know anything about it. (712)

Carrie's viciousness grows by degrees because of her lack of faith in herself and in Julian, too. Even after his bright success, she no more believes in his ability. She does not want to go on a Europe trip fearing that Julian may meet failure. She feels that she should be there to support Julian if there is any trouble. Anna confronts Carrie for her negative approach but Carrie is the victim of her own obsessive nature and behaves rudely with everyone. In spite of Anna's constant rebukes and warnings their confrontation continues. Anna's endurance has been tested by Carrie. A time comes when their confrontation reaches to its climax. Out of disgust Anna unveils the truth of Carrie's life, making Carrie hysterical. When Carrie loses her temper and asks Anna to investigate the truth behind Julian-Charlotte relationship, Carrie is stunned to know that Anna knows about them. Out of hysteric attack Carrie goes on babbling, using derogatory terms and as a result of it Anna bursts out the truth. The following dialogue between them merits consideration :

CARRIE. Let's go and ask him. Let's go and ask your darling child. Your favourite child. The child you made me work for, the child I lost my youth for – you used to tell us that when you love, truly love, you take your chances on being hated by speaking out the truth... Go and do it.

ANNA. All right. I'll take that chance now and tell you that you want to sleep with him and always have. Years ago I used to be frightened that you would try and I would watch you and suffer for you. (731-732)

For Carrie it is a bombshell. On an instant she declares that she no more loves Anna. The fair relationship between them is broken and there will be only hatred hereafter. Carrie remains helpless in the presence of the

pressure of evil. Carrie's belief that she is needed by all comes to an end. Further shocks shatter her away. She has never believed that Anna will ever leave her and go on a Europe tour without her. The sanctity of their relationship is endangered. But Carrie's misbehaviour causes more trouble to other characters than to herself. She remains unpunished but Anna, Julian and Lily definitely get punished due to Carrie's fastidiousness.

The final catastrophe takes place in the last act. Anna comes to know about the reason behind Carrie's hysteria. Julian's independency brings disturbances in their lives. Anna accepts it without making any fuss about it but Carrie fails to do so. Anna no more controls herself and expresses her fear that one day or the other Julian may come to know about Carrie's true nature. According to her, something worst is going to happen and it has begun with Carrie.

Though Anna tries her best to prevent Carrie from doing any wrong act, Carrie avenges Julian in her own way and Anna's confrontation with her proves meaningless. Carrie's failure is in lack of understanding. Deceptively she believes that whatever she does or thinks is right. If only Carrie had paid attention to Anna's promptings seriously then the calamity would have not occurred in Julian's life. Carrie goes on negating the truth and under wrong notions adopts wrong ways. Carrie's behaviour makes Anna repent, "Why I took my mother's two children to be my own" (746). Thus, Anna gets frustrated and on her part the confrontation proves meaningless. She decides to go away from Carrie, but she knows she has no place to go.

The confrontation between Carrie and Anna is aptly expressed by Judith Olauson in the following words :

The most abstract confrontation is between Carrie and Anna...
By forcing the two behind their mutual kind of empty trivialities. Hellman produces the strange effect of making them seem like one and the same person... Before Anna's departure the two become alter-egos of each other as they confront the

shared deceptions of their life together. Neither one has ever acted independently of the other; they have remained together with the hope of eventually finding another way to live. But this has been sheer hypocrisy and, when small details and duties of their lives can no longer hide their frustrations, there is no substantial connection between them.¹²

Carrie-Lily Confrontation :

While Carrie confronts Anna she confronts Lily, simultaneously. In Carrie-Anna confrontation Carrie expects that Anna should feel what she feels as they have lived for a common cause. As Anna deviates, Carrie bursts out and breaks up. But in the case of Lily there is mere jealousy of Carrie towards her. Without any strong reason Carrie despises Lily right from the beginning. The only reason, if any, is Lily's being Julian's wife. Carrie looks at her as a rival, who shares Julian's love. Initially, Carrie's irritation against Lily is not very strong but gradually it grows to the extent of strong abomination. As long as Julian and Lily are away from them, she registers her irritation with Anna in a mild way but while seeing affinity between Julian and Lily right in front of her, she gets hyper.

Carrie starts using abusive language for Lily and mentions her in a derogatory manner. She firmly tells Anna : 'Girls like Lily don't have babies right away' (695). According to her, Lily is 'a crazy little whore who can do anything to attract Julian's attention. Carrie's irritation against Lily goes on increasing and she bursts out in a diabolic manner. Carrie's viciousness goes to the extent of making Lily believe that she is sold to Julian by her mother. Basically feeble and frivolous, Lily falls an easy prey of Carrie's guiles. Carrie gives wind to Lily's half-felt realization and gets success in shattering Lily's faith in Julian and her mother. Neurotic Lily gets confounded to hear about Julian's plan to leave her for ever. Her suspicion regarding Julian's relationship changes into confirmation. Thus, Carrie's plan to manipulate Lily is successful.

The frustration of Lily and her calling Warkins is an opportunity for Carrie. Standing by the side of her, she goes on prompting her. Feeling of revenge in Carrie is so overpowering that she loses her wit, behaves dumbfoundedly and watches destruction cold-bloodedly. She finds sadistic pleasure in causing trouble to Julian and Lily. Her revenge is complete when Julian is defeated and Lily's future is endangered. Thus, another victim of Carrie is Lily. According to Judith Olauson Carrie's fears are the forces which motivate her self-centred actions. She expresses hidden fear...

She tells Lily that she is frightened of her hair” which isn't nice anymore”, of her job “which isn't there any more”, and “of praying for small things and knowing just how small they are.” The expression of her fears forces her to discover that she and Anna have locked themselves away for the world perhaps because they were frightened of saying or hearing more than they could stand. Hellman is in sympathy with Carrie's desperation; this is most evident when Carrie cries out : “There are lives that are shut and should stay shut, you hear me, and people who should not talk about themselves, and that was us.”¹³

Hellman does not give any solution to the difficulties faced by her characters. Carrie fails to deal with her fears, she remains unchangeable and she will remain so and will carry on her unrealized life. Her deceptions are not cleared. The characters of *The Autumn Garden* face the same problem but at last they overcome their problems and accept their follies but Carrie's problem is that she is not ready to accept her mistake. The last speech of Carrie, “Let's be glad nothing worse has happened... We're together, the three of us, that's all that matters.” (750) is a clear sign of her continuing the same pattern of life.

Carrie-Julian Confrontation :

Carrie's confrontation with Anna and Lily is more direct than that with Julian. Sometimes she tries to attract Julian's attention by showing authority over him. Julian does not take Carrie's domination seriously. He is unaware of Carrie's true being. On the contrary, he loves her sisters truly and wants to make them happy. He does not have any idea about Carrie's hand in his doom. But he gets irritated, in the end, to see Carrie's taking things casually. Out of disgust he confronts Carrie :

Why you start to purr at me? As if I'd done something good.

You're smiling. What the hell's there to smile at? You like me this way? Pretty, all this. And the mortgage, and the tickets to Europe, and all the fun to come. Pretty, wasn't it? (750)

But Carrie does not feel any guilt, on the other hand, she is happy somewhere in her mind that Julian's newly earned confidence has lost forever making him once again crippled and dependent on them. Carrie seeks evil pleasure in the failure of Julian and proves her vicious nature. Though she is not as villainous or vicious as Mary in *The Children's Hour*, we find certain similarities between them. Both of them are neurotics and can twist the thing according to their whims. Both of them are deprived of moral sense. They harm other characters cold-bloodedly and pretend as if nothing has happened. They don't repent of their deeds. They are like hurricane that sweeps away everything that comes in its way.

Bluntness in manner, hysteria in behaviour, getting desperate on not achieving what is desired, use of abusive language and utter self-centredness are some of the peculiarities of Carrie. She is troublesome to everyone directly or indirectly, yet her actions are not pre-determined. Her villainy is an outcome of her selfish love for her own people. While commenting on Carrie's evil nature Charles Walcott says:

Here evil looks out of the frivolous void – strong, conscious, capable evil that plans and acts with shocking efficiency. By her frightful action Carrie defines and declares herself; she becomes responsible because she knows what she wants and plans how to get it, willing to hurt other people as much as is necessary to gain her end... clearly the plot provides Carrie's opportunity, and until it came she could not have known what she would do, could not therefore have known what she was to become by doing it. no amount of description of play of intellect could, I think, have made such wickedness even potentially real; it had to find itself in the act. It came into real being in the act.¹⁴

Evil in Carrie makes her believe in 'give and take' relationship. Throughout the play she deceptively believes that as she has scarified her pleasures for Julian, he should always remain under the weight of courtesy towards her. She is not a grown up character. She wants to live in the world of their childhood and when things do not happen as she wants the force of evil in her upsurges. While describing evil force in Carrie, Allan Downer says :

...the force of evil Miss Hellman presents directly and uncompromisingly. It is embodied in the younger sister, no capitalist dragon, no Satan lusting for revenge, no more incestuous than Ferdinand of The Duchess of Malfi. She is what evil must always be, the other side of good, tragic because she can not know of her enslavement, because she can never have the opportunity to escape. She is the most memorable figure of a memorable work.¹⁵

Lily's Neurosis :

Lily's problem is similar to Carrie's. Her abnormal behaviour is an outcome of powerful feeling of insecurity. The demented child bride of Julian, unknowingly becomes responsible for Julian's misery. She babbles the truth of Julian's connection with Charlotte but the sisters are so much engrossed with their problems that they do not pay heed to her. She knows that her husband talks every evening with a lady whom she had seen with him on Audubon Park bench. She has suspicion about Julian's waywardness but she can not make out any relation with the lady and Julian's success.

The catastrophic knowledge of half-truth by Lily is not properly investigated by her. Her hasty judgements and a phone call to a wrong person return Julian to a state of defeat and dependency on his maiden sisters. Mary Ann Broe feels :

Like so many Hellman characters, the negligible Lily has the oblique lucidity of the mad, as well as the practical savvy, that is, literally to direct for the Berniers' attic world of mismanaged truth.¹⁶

Though Lily has been portrayed by Hellman as a negligible good-for-nothing sort of character, she has potential to blast something under the guise of innocence. Mrs. Albertine senses it and says : "...the pure and the innocent often bring harm to themselves and those they love and when they do, for some reason that I do not know, the injury is very great."(747).

She is a thorough undoer, who reminds us of Birdie and Lavinia. Three of them have knowledge of truth but they do not have audience. Lily has to seek pleasure in the 'sacred knife of the truth' which has been bought by her from a morphine den and has given her wedding ring in bargain. Her ways to overcome her problems are either foolish or unrealistic. As Julian does not understand that Carrie is the main person, a shatterer of her plans, he also does not suspect Lily's having hand in it. Right from the beginning, Lily

appears in a lost manner, creating suspicion that she may cause some trouble, some time.

Mrs. Albertine-Lily Confrontation :

Like Carrie's, Lily's confrontation is with her fears first and then with others. Mrs. Albertine – Lily confrontation arises due to lack of attachment and affinity between them. Lily hates her mother for having relationship with her chauffeur, Henry and Mrs. Albertine always wanted to get rid of Lily. In an interview, Hellman explains : “Albertine... always wanted to get rid of her daughter... so the marriage has delighted her and she is the only one who feels sort of sorry for this poor bastard (Julian) and she'd like to see him keep the money and keep the girl for that matter.”¹⁷ Lily returns from Chicago after a year but instead of going to her mother, she stays in a hotel with Julian. Mrs. Albertine is disturbed to know it. She says : “...daughters who walk in the night and mothers who do not speak to daughters who walk in the night. I really don't know why Lily didn't come to me, nor why I didn't ask her...”(694).

In spite of the fact that Albertine doesn't like her daughter, it is she who always tries to put before Lily righteous way of life. A compromising tone of Albertine makes her a philosopher and guide of Lily's life. Lily's neurotic behaviour and fears are understood only by Albertine. When Lily complains about Julian's changed behaviour, her mother tries to explain : “Marriages change from day to day and year to year. All relations between people. Women of course, have regrets for certain delicate early minutes, but – There is no answer to that” (717).

Lily confronts herself in an unrealistic manner. When Julian fails to have physical relation with her, she is engrossed with the fear that she has been discarded by him. Out of frustration she leaves home at midnight and walks on a road in trance and gets impressed by a woman's ambiguous speech : “Truth, truth is the way of life, and the one way, the only way open your hearts with this knife and throw them here” (717). Lily seeks a temporary

solution to her problems and buys the knife but the very effort of Lily to make herself happy causes uneasiness to Mrs. Albertine.

Their confrontation continues throughout the play. Lily wants to be truthful, always, “ask truth, and speak truth, and act truth” (718) but she is unaware of the loss it may cause to her and to the people around her. Her digging out the truth is always very painful not only to others but to herself also. Lily’s direct question to her mother : “Did you sell me to Julian?” ...did he marry me for money?” is a much rehearsed question, it is as sharp as her knife of truth. Mrs. Albertine retaliates, she explains her quite bluntly : “he married you because he loved you. Shame on you, Lily. You are looking for pain, and that makes me sad and always has” (718).

As Carrie is disappointed by Julian’s financial self-dependence, so is Lily. Both of them do not accept the truth playfully, lest Julian may decentralize them from his life. Their hidden fears are so ugly for them that they themselves shy away from them and even if they try to confront they fail in their endeavour. As Anna peels off Carrie’s deceptive nature, so does Mrs. Albertine with Lily. Mrs. Albertine becomes sharp tongued as Anna. When Lily asks her mother about help, she confronts her in the following manner :

LILY. ... Mama, ... Now I’m frightened. Help me.

ALBERTINE. (gently) How can I help you when I don’t understand what you’re talking about? Are you really saying that if Julian stayed dependent on you, all would be safe, but if he has money for himself, and need not crawl to you –

LILY. That’s an ugly way to speak, Mama.

ALBERTINE. On your struggle up the mountain path, you will find that truth is often ugly. It burns... (719)

Mrs. Albertine's Motherly Instinct :

However, the confrontation between mother and daughter is grim. The motherly instinct in Mrs. Albertine does not allow her to keep herself away from Lily's life and watch mercilessly the misery taking place in front of her eyes. She gives her daughter a piece of advice to be happy that Julian has finally had a little luck and she further warns her that Julian would have come to hate her money and that is the danger she fears for Lily. Lily hates money and she never wanted that they should have it. According to Mrs. Albertine, hatred for money is as dangerous as love for it. When a phone call of Mrs. Warkins makes Lily violent, it is Mrs. Albertine who intervenes and the catastrophe which is about to come due to Lily's foolish behaviour has been postponed, at least, for a while. The friction between these two is an outcome of the vast gap between sensibility and senselessness..

Mrs. Albertine makes many efforts to prevent Lily from committing any mistakes out of her foolishness. As Lily has sold her wedding ring for the knife of truth, she can't explain to Julian where the ring is. When Mrs. Albertine senses that foolish behaviour of Lily may cause friction in her marital life, she advises her at least to pretend that she wants the wedding ring. She says : "There are many ways of loving. I'm sure yours must be among them. Put white flowers in your hair, walk your mountain path of truth with... with banner in your hand, and as you drop it on his head, speak of love. You asked my advice and here it is. You do too much. Go and do nothing for a while. Nothing. I have seen you like this before... I tell you now, do nothing" (727). Really speaking, if these troublesome characters have not done anything, the things would have been better, their lives would have been smoother.

However fierce their confrontation is, Mrs. Albertine's sincere efforts to make Lily's life easier are clearly seen. With the help of Henry, she brings back her ring. Of course, her efforts to sustain Lily and Julian's marriage have certain selfish implications. But she is not as much self-centred as Lily or Carrie. Her efforts are realistic but Lily does not understand her. Lily thinks that buying back the ring from the morphine dealer is an insult to her friend.

A time comes when Mrs. Albertine gets totally fed up by Lily's accusations and she bursts out in finality :

I've had enough of whatever you're doing. However innocent is innocence, I've had enough. More important, it is leading you into dangerous alleys. Not even for you will I again spend time in what you call an upstairs room with a morphine addict who holds senses to cover up what she sells... I am tired. I am sad. It is not good to know that my child swore fidelity to such a woman, and gave her wedding ring as proof. (747)

Innocence as a form of Evil :

Lily fails to understand the reality of the other characters also. According to her, Julian had a selfish motif while marrying her. She feels that her mother has sold her to Julian. She thinks that Julian will abandon her for the sake of the mystery woman and she also thinks that the morphine dealer is a well-wisher and good friend of hers. The morphine dealer's commercial sweetness is mistaken by her as real and friendly. Only Mrs. Albertine can smell destructive aspect of Lily's apparently seen innocence. She knows that sooner or later it will bring disaster to her and in a short while we witness the same. Lily's craving to be truthful proves void. Innocence and truthfulness are categorized as good characteristics but ironically enough these prove evil in the play. Hellman puts forth the idea that utter innocence and utter truthfulness are not always welcomed.

By the end of the play, their confrontation takes another dimension. Mrs. Albertine controls her anger and instead of bursting out all the while, she prefers to accept the accusations made by Lily in a soberer way. Lily hates her mother for her relationship with Henry. She strongly doubts that while in bed they plan to pain her. Mrs. Albertine knows that there is no use being rational or sensible. She takes it in a pleasant way and tells Lily that while in bed with

Henry, she forgets the mistakes made with Lily. Lily does not realise the hidden sarcasm in it.

Mrs. Albertine as a Miserable Character :

Though sensible enough, Mrs. Albertine is a miserable character because her life is attached with Lily and with the follies of Lily, too. However hateful their relationship is, at the last resort, she has to shoulder Lily's responsibility. Her confrontation with Lily is, that way, meaningless because at the end of the play she has to declare :

If something is the matter with you, come home and I will care for you, as I should, as I should. But if nothing is the matter with you, have pity and leave me alone. I tried with you all your life, but I did not do well, and for that I ask your pardon. But don't punish me forever Lily. (741)

We sympathize with Mrs. Albertine because it is obvious that however sour their relationship has gone, she will be there to support her daughter if any calamity falls on her. She is sure that one day or the other Carrie will tell Julian about the phone call made by Lily. Therefore she requests Carrie to inform her before exposing the truth so that she will be there to take Lily back to their home. And she requests Lily not to speak truth and kill Julian by telling it.

The confrontation takes place due to Lily's lack of control over her inner world and consequently losing control over her outer world. Psychological disintegration of Lily also causes her confrontation with Mrs. Albertine and Carrie. Though Mrs. Albertine can not control Lily's freakish behaviour, she tries to mend her life as much as possible. Her deeply felt understanding of Lily prompts her to do so. The troubled personality of Lily influences Mrs. Albertine's life. When Lily has the fear of her abandonment by Julian, Mrs. Albertine has fear of Lily's returning to her.

Lily's Undue Confrontation :

Lily can confront two characters only, Mrs. Albertine and Henry. She hates Henry from the bottom of her heart. She just can not tolerate him nor does she like his interference in her life. She does not understand that it is only because of Henry that her marriage has been saved. She is disturbed that Henry comes and makes her sit in the car and brings back her home. According to her, this gesture of Henry is not forgivable. When she becomes violent to receive Mrs. Warkins' phone call, Henry stops her from moving and she insults him : "Leave me alone. I told you that last night. I told it to you years ago when I rolled down the hill. I meant to roll down the hill and kill myself, but you didn't know it." and Henry answers : "I knew it" (720). She also accuses him that he plans to pain her in spite of it, he maintains poise and assures her that he will leave Mrs. Albertine and her home so that Lily can live with her mother peacefully. That means he does not want to create any kind of friction in the lives of the mother and the daughter. On the contrary, he appears as a helpful character. Julian asks help of him when he knows that only Henry can help Mrs. Warkins. Though Henry appears like a bystander, actually, he is very helpful. Hellman hates those characters who do nothing but Henry has been respected by her.

Due to these confrontations Julian's toys are shattered but Julian gains little sympathy because he has dreamt a wrong dream based on the wrong values corrupted by materialistic society. Hellman gives us a fresh and realistic view regarding mutual relationship. Hellman never deviates from her main thread... i. e., social criticism. She is always concerned with human hypocrisy and evil. Hellman's world of the characters is full of myths where live desperate beings clinging to the false notions. They go through painful experiences due to their follies. To put it in the words Katherine Lederer :

To speak of Toys in the Attic in terms of incest, miscegenation, Southern decadence, is to miss the point. Toys in the Attic is a fable about what happens to adult children when their protective self-deception is stripped away. Carrie had warned

Lily. "There are lives that are shut and should stay shut, you hear me, and people who should not talk about themselves and that was us."¹⁸

By the end of the play, all confrontations seem useless because Carrie and Lily are satisfied as Julian has returned to them, once more financially crippled. Anna will play the role of her siblings' mother forgetting their follies. Mrs. Prine will shoulder the responsibility of her daughter and they will live unhappily ever after.

The force of evil has been presented by Hellman directly and, uncompromisingly. The problem is that the evil happens due to the characters' living according to inner rules of decent behaviour. They make trouble for other people and face the truth when others are deluded." They are an often helpless minority, but they tacitly affirm the existence of goodness in the face of evil."¹⁹

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Chapter - V

CONCLUSION

The period in which Hellman started her career as a dramatist was of extraordinary interest and great activity. Especially for American drama it was the period of establishment for its identity. American theatre witnessed a full-length drama after 1920 and it truly became an art and a medium of expression. Hellman attempted to page the contemporary problems through her writings and tried to exhibit the evils prevailing in different spheres, capitalistic social structure, political front and in the bourgeois social order. Hellman wants people to protest against injustice where basic human values were challenged. Hellman was the part and parcel of the period of phenomena of drama. She wrote plays to express her strong moral concern. She was an idealist-philosopher who wanted to plead for Utopia where evil could be retaliated or put on a righteous way by the force of good. She is well aware of the fact that evil is an unavoidable fact of life. So, there is no fancy fooling in her plays. She does not present only idealistic good world. She gets angry with evil doers and her rage is authentic. As Carl Rollyson puts it : “Miss Hellman’s rage was cosmic, it came from a deep reservoir of hate over everything that makes this an unjust world.”¹

All the Hellman plays are quite popular ones and compared to the production of the thirties they are more varied in nature. Hellman’s plays can be divided into four major categories depicting struggle between good and active evil - the strike play, the Hubbard plays, the anti-war plays and the psychological crisis plays. She analyses American society through her plays dissecting all the odds and ills of it and exhibits her moral concern throughout. She is known as “an institution of conscience”² and it is clearly seen in her plays. Her larger than life image indicates her ferocious sense of justice. Rebelliousness is the essence of her vitality putting forth the idea that life should be better than what it is. Her plays definitely bear this idea. Lillian Hellmanesque integrity is clearly evidenced in her plays. Hellman’s

speculation as a writer largely rests on her eight original plays in which she is never static. She goes on accepting challenges and exhibits her dynamic and enterprising skill of exposing confrontation between the cosmic forces, good and evil.

Influence of Other Personalities :

While presenting her views regarding confrontation between good and evil, she was influenced by different people. Amongst them, the most influential person is Dashiell Hammett. Her total writing career is under his enormous influence. Because of him, she realized herself as a creative artist and her political nature was unlocked. Beyond editorial help, Hammett pacified Hellman's instabilities in thoughts. As Hellman exposes it in her memoirs, his sternness about her writing and criticism helped Hellman a lot. The idea of writing *The Children's Hour* was given by him, as he knew well that the theme of monstrous injustice may appeal her. It was Hammett who realized that it "could harness the anger and the contempt for self righteousness that was so strong in Hellman's makeup."³ Besides it he knew that she has a fascination for malice, the human capacity to cause hurt to others. The outcome of Hammett's belief in her was marvellous. She proved his belief true presenting destructive effects of malice and unprovoked evil implemented by a lie in a powerful manner. Almost all of her plays are reviewed by him. Ibsen is Hellman's 'principal master'.⁴ Like Ibsen, as a dramatist, Hellman uses the device of blackmail in most of her plays. At least five of them are the evidence of it. Blackmail is as various and essential in Ibsen's plays as in Hellman's plays. She uses blackmail for different dramatic and moralistic purposes than does Ibsen. Hellman has remained an ardent disciple of Ibsen throughout her writing career. At the same time she owes her loyalty to Chekhov. Her *The Autumn Garden* and *Toys in the Attic* are purely Chekhovian plays where, like Chekhov, she forces readers to view the truth behind every common deed. It is an effort to make readers probe deeper into the partial insights and reveal the tedious truths of their lives. Brechtian influence also can be witnessed in her *The Children's Hour* and *Toys in the Attic*. Her Marxist treatment of wealth is reflected in almost all her plays.

These stalwarts influenced Hellman yet she remains unique without moulding herself in any particular style of these writers. She makes her mark in the history of American theatre by her own peculiar style.

Contemporary Hellman :

Hellman is purely contemporary to the social, political, economic changes that took place in America and evils caused by them. She entraps evil upsurged through them and exhibits her staunch moralism. *The Children's Hour* is a critique on pseudo-standard of the society that punishes the so-called lesbians mercilessly. The play is a cry against blind society integrated with its own time, whereas *Days to Come* exposes brutal realities of the 1930s illustrating socio-economic depression and economic turmoil that caused disharmony in the life of common man. Hellman addresses the Great Depression in the play and its reflected aftermath. *The Little Foxes* discusses relentless emergence of new industrialization. Greed for money actually suppressed virtuosity of sentimental past and gulped down the age-old ethics. Hellman is well aware of the contemporary money-making tendency which has been tapped in the play. *Watch on the Rhine* is an eye-opener for the contemporary Americans who were far away from the Nazi horrors. They were basking in comfort and luxury and were ignorant of the miseries of the world outside theirs. Hellman's argument against American isolationism has sharply come forth in the play.

The Searching Wind reflects her continued involvement with timely world politics. She talks about the folly of appeasement and disgusting contemporary isolationist indifferent attitude of the Americans towards it. *Another Part of the Forest* presents broken American agricultural society that was getting essentially mercantile, crushing underneath it purity and goodness. The mad struggle for power and money, which was the fact of the contemporary American society, has been portrayed by her in the play. Her last two plays, *The Autumn Garden* and *Toys in the Attic* reflect human inadequacy and changing moral values of the age. Thus, for Hellman the themes used in her plays are not imaginary but the ones that existed in reality. She presents the world around her as full of evil-doers in one sense or other.

Her analysis of American society is largely based on the theme of confrontation of good and evil. She tries to unearth the roots of evil through her plays.

Forms of Evil Used by Hellman :

Money as a Form of Evil :

In her plays, Hellman recurrently uses certain forms of evil. She is more concerned with the destructive power of money in almost all her plays. It is always present through her plays as if it is one of the essential characters. She shows changing loyalties and values due to greed for money. In the flux of materialism money is worshiped like anything else. Its evil forces are so overpowering and devilish that it causes all the troubles and vicious tendencies. Hellman shows that love for money is as dangerous as hate for it. In both the cases money corrupts human conscience as it is reflected in *The Toys in the Attic*, *The children's Hour* and *The Little Foxes*.

Blackmail as a form of Evil :

Like money, the theme of blackmail also appears recurrently in her plays. She relies heavily on the theme as an effective device to point out evil prevailing in society. In five of Hellman plays blackmail becomes the central theme where money, again, plays a vital role whereas in the other plays it is used in the form of emotional blackmail. Right from her first play the theme has remained a very powerful one. Mary Tilford's blackmailing is a typical example of evil that arises out of another evil, i.e., too much self-indulgence. Mary blackmails her schoolmate because she knows how her schoolmate has committed a petty thievery. She manipulates the truth and makes her support the lie about the teachers and it results into a disaster. The victimized schoolmate becomes an easy prey of Mary's guiles and unknowingly helps the catastrophe that takes place in the lives of the teachers. Regina's blackmailing her brother exposes foxiest tendency and cunning that is hidden under apparent decency. Ben blackmails his father in *Another Part of the Forest* and in a way proves hidden animal aspect and gets hold of the property while threatening him to expose his lynching.

Another type of blackmailing is seen in *The Autumn Garden* where Sophie blackmails Nina and demands money not to disclose Nick's minor scandalous act. Julian in *Toys in the Attic* acquires a larger amount by learning the truth about the value of swampland, it is also a kind of blackmail. In all these cases some vicious characters get triumphant whereas a few others are malignant and face their own destiny. Only exception to it is Rumanian Count, Teck, in *Watch on the Rhine*. When he tries to overpower good, in turn, Kurt dominates evil in Teck and becomes triumphant. This is the only case of good overpowering evil. In these instances, except *The Children's Hour*, money is the central cause of blackmail.

Destructive Power of Evil :

Destructive power of evil is a common theme of all the Hellman Plays. Maliciousness of Mary and her lies take away the life of a teacher. Shrewd and cunning characters like Lawyer Walcott shatter away fair relationship between the factory owner and the workers. Self-centredness and greed for money takes away the life of an innocent person in *The Little Foxes*. *Watch on the Rhine* exhibits true nature of characters like Count Teck who does not believe in values and does not realize the value of patriotism in Kurt. *The Searching Wind* exposes evils caused due to Nazism. It focuses on the destructive power because of which the structure of society gets shattered to its very basis. It also aims at the inertia as a destructive form of evil. We witness the same destructive power of evil in *Another Part of the Forest* in the form of greed for money and power that turns the characters into foxes running widely after self, overwhelming everything that comes their way. *The Autumn Garden*, once again aims at the inertia in a different way which causes rotting of lives. Altogether different *Toys in the Attic* exhibits the destructive power of love. Thus, Hellman focuses her attention entirely on destructive forms of evil and condemns those very sharply.

While discussing the destructive power of evil, Hellman uses suicide very less, only once, that is, in *The Children's Hour*. Respectively in her next three plays; *Days to Come*, *the Little Foxes* and *Watch on the Rhine*, there is a murder in each. *Another Part of the Forest* is based on treacherous violence

of Marcus. He is responsible for provoking great massacre. In the last play, *Toys in the Attic*, Mr. Warkins' thugs beat Julian mercilessly. Only *The Searching Wind* and *The Autumn Garden* do not display active violence but the characters narrate destructive power of fundamentalism and war caused due to it. Physical violence is the integral part of Hellman's plays. Simultaneously she exhibits emotional violence and emotional blackmail in various plays victimizing meekly good characters.

Hellman's World of Goodness :

Hellman's good characters invariably suffer at the hands of the wicked ones. Well-meaning, basically good people are forced to confront malevolent antagonists or shattering socio-political forces by which they are invariably trounced. The two teachers in *The Children's Hour* undergo great sufferings as they fail to confront the force of evil. Firth in *Days to Come* goes through traumatic experience after the murder of his innocent daughter. His agony is indescribable. He becomes helpless in front of the band of headstrong, vicious strikebreakers. Birdie has no choice of her own. She has been made neurotic by her bullying husband, Oscar. She has no voice though she knows certain facts she has no audience. She remains an ineffective, a fluttering bird like creature wholly cowed by her husband. She is a poor prey caught by the cruel hunter, Oscar. She watches the catastrophe helplessly. Lavina, too, is dominated by her husband for many years. Consequently, she overpowers evil with the help of her son, Ben. Thus, she is the only exception amongst the meekly good characters whose identities are trampled down under the heavy weight of evil. Though helpless, initially, she overtakes the scene with the help of another vicious character, Ben.

Horace Giddens, another good but helpless creature, is victimized by Regina. He dies unaided under the force of evil that is displayed by Regina. Addie is also a good but helpless character. She has no power to eradicate evil, as she is a powerless black maid. Kurt Muller also suffers unduly and has to encounter evil. Though not defeated, he has to retreat and change his plans. Kurt is the only hero of Hellman, a good character, who fights against the evil tendency but he also has to undergo hardships. Bagtrys of *Another Part of the*

Forest also suffer invariably in the hands of the Hubbards. The characters like Coralee and Hannah and other minor characters are the shadow figures, who have not significant place in the society, as they are mere servants. Their goodness is totally neglected. Constance in *The Autumn Garden*, another good character, is deceived by vicious Nick. A set of good characters, Constance, Ned, Mrs. Griggs, Nina Denery are mal-treated by other vicious characters. Anna of *Toys in the Attic* is a helpless observer and has no choice of her own. Lily, like Birdie has no voice and is ill-treated by Carrie. Thus, the world of do-gooders is full of suffering and misery. Hellman does not approve utter goodness, on the contrary she condemns it and wants to convey a message of rebellion. Therefore, Alexandra escapes from the world of evil-doers and becomes free.

Hellman points out that good is not always crushed down. Sometimes it becomes triumphant if confrontation is supported by courage. She shows optimistic side of life through some good characters. Even though the number of successful do-gooders is less, it remains inspirational. Hellman is optimistic about man's little goodness in the world.

Hellman's World of Rascals and Scoundrels :

Hellman does not deny the existence of vicious people. She is a moralist but she, too, accepts that man has both the tendencies. Doris Falk rightly points out :

...But even as a relentless moralist as Hellman had to admit that
 "man" consist of both victors and victims ... But Hellman, as
 always, had meant to be tough in weak and strong alike...⁵

So, many characters in her plays are dominant, who commit atrocious acts and heighten our moral outrage. The most active villains are Marcus, Ben, Regina and Mary Tilford. These evil characters delight in their capacity for evil and enrich Hellman's world of unforgettable vicious people. Through these rascals Hellman expects her audience to be enraged enough by the injustice she dramatizes. She wants us not to leave the message unheard but to carry with us

for further action. In the world of rascals there are evil-doers, knaves, cheats, scoundrels who undertake blackmail, insanity, theft, insult and murder and almost every aspect of evil. While posing the evil characters, Hellman attacks evil prevailing in society and her veiled anger against it can be sensed. Sometimes her evil characters, fail to recognize evil either in others or in themselves. Evil characters' conviction that meek, do-gooders have no right to inherit the earth is sharply wiped out by Hellman.

Hellman's Moral Vision :

Hellman has long been known as a moral force, almost an institution of conscience. Hellman plays essentially deal with moral issues. Hellman hates those who get triumphant showing disregard for pattern of moral values. Her moral characters invariably suffer painfully but for Hellman this is the righteous way of living life. She portrays her characters within the framework of moralist. Hence, it is the truth that she is a moralist pre-occupied with the evil in man as an individual and society over all. She remains tough, principled and courageous while presenting her moral concerns. She is worried about the abnormal behaviour of the people, their failure in proper communication and greed for money and power. She not only laments man's inability to stop encroachment of political forces but also condemns it strongly. She hates detachment and other vices getting prominent in the age. Her characters represent these vices. For her drama is a medium to exhibit her moral concern. As it is observed by her, the world is full of foxes who eat up their own earth. Hellman strongly condemns their act but at the same time she strongly abominates those who watch them do so. For her despoilers and bystanders are equally responsible for the decay. While presenting her moralistic views she becomes ironic which is an all-pervasive vision of all her plays.

Women in Hellman's Plays :

Hellman is always interested in women and sensitive in depicting them. She includes major female characters in her dramas. She uses their confrontations with both male characters and other female characters.

Her female characters are autonomous and complex and they fall in both the categories, good and evil. These characters are seen in many roles, they are social dependents, there are keepers of society's standard and protectors of its morality. There are social rebels, neurotics and also the victims of male dominated culture. Nevertheless, a change can be witnessed from the simple, passive, socially subjugated women characters of the earlier plays to more subtle, complex and active, aggressive female characters. These women characters are not always successful while confronting evil but they have instinct to be free and independent. Some of them are 'lost ladies' quite ineffectual yet very essential to exhibit Hellman's point of view. Hellman studies her women characters and their anxieties at deeper, psychological level. This emphasis reflects internal frustrations in their lives. She presents various feminine conditions ranging from neurosis, alcoholic release, incest, marital unrest to moral strength, stability, compassion and courage.

Hellman's Political Views :

Hellman even from her very first political crusade seemed to see the world as divided into two groups : those who cared about their fellow men and those who didn't. Hellman had seen complex political situations – “as simply good guys versus bad guys.”⁶ But she felt that communists were on the right track. She was a leftist, therefore, through her plays, she condemns undue accumulation of wealth. She is an anti-Nazi, that is clearly reflected through her plays. She strongly criticizes Hitler's Semitism and approves of Marxist theory. Her *Days to Come* poses Marxist problems. The play was more sympathetic towards the problems of the factory owners. Her *Watch on the Rhine* is strongly anti-Nazi play, whereas her *The Searching Wind* condemns American isolationism.

Autobiographical Element in Her Plays :

While portraying her characters Hellman refers back to her own life and brings those people around her and their tendencies in her characters. While describing destructive havoc created by simple loving characters, she reminds her mother who caused problems for those she loved. The non-Jewish

Hubbard family in Hellman's *The Little Foxes* was based on her mother's relatives. Lillian Hellman's maternal grandmother, Sophie Newhouse, inspired Hellman to create Regina and her brother, Jake Marx, was modelled as Ben Hubbard. The characters in *Toys in the Attic* are patterned after her father and his two maiden sisters. The boarding house in *The Autumn Garden* has been modelled on the boarding house run by one of her aunts. Her governess, Sophronia, is the inspiration to create characters of Addie and Coralee. Kurt Muller's struggle is modelled on her friend Julia's actual struggle. She also brings some of the events of her life in her plays. For Hellman it was a fair game to write about the people and their different styles that fascinated her immensely.

To conclude, Hellman has a prodigious impact on the world of drama and she has exhibited her dramatic mind through her classics. She has written more hit plays than any other female writers on the theme-confrontation of good and evil. Her plays are theatrical milestones. Her style and frankness always appeal her readers. She dealt with the unsatisfactory reality of life with greater success and skill than any other of her contemporary female writers. Hellman's anger revealed a hatred for the world. As William Wright puts it :

...a hatred of the cruel mistakes of an unjust order, both natural and political, inflicted on her and others. So much of the thrust of her life was fueled by a desire to correct those mistakes.⁷

She has given a superb experience to the theatre lovers through her plays exhibiting her anger towards the follies of her society. She has an ability to construct plays based on two cosmic forces; good and evil and human conflict as the more universal struggle between good and evil.

In her plays, situations are powerful and the characters are well drawn yet she was criticized by a few critics for writing melodramas. Nevertheless, these melodramas do not end traditionally punishing evil and virtue rewarded. But Hellman depicts goodness as so weak that it is trodden underfoot by evil in most of her plays. She wants to suggest that such an outcome is possible

because the moral characters fail to assert themselves. Hellman's world of moral characters is overrun by materialistic cheats who get little confrontation from those who could build a better world. No other playwright has so successfully combined the powers of dramatic entertainment and moral concern that captivates the audience completely. Rebelliousness is an essence of her vitality and the creative artist in her prompts that life should be better than what it is. Hellman's plays have a permanent place in American drama as her test of time and deserve ongoing revival, to be judged from different perspectives.

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