

**PECULAR CONFLICTS BETWEEN GENERATIONS IN THE  
PLAY “FAMILY BUSINESS” BY JULIAN MITCHELL**

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**Annotation:** This article deals with the problems of modern world. An English playwright and novelist, Julian Mitchell who wrote *Family business*, it is a powerful family drama that explores themes of identity, generational conflict, repression, and social expectations in a traditional British setting.

**Key words:** generational conflict, identity, repression, paternal authority, metaphor, satirical, irony

With one family, a novelist, Julian Mitchell shows social and family norms of the time in England. The period of the fatherhood in the play *Family business* has a great influence to the future generations. The family considers as a big identity of the country. Mitchell shows the conflicts between generations and complex relationships in the family.

The main character, a father, Charles Gray represents the failure of the modern British father. His inability to connect with his sons shows a deep emotional and a generational crisis between two worlds. Here, Mitchell divides society into two parts. The first one is old ones the father with a mother, the second one is a new generation itself. There is a huge contrast between generations on the social and family values. For example, Charles Gray prioritizes idealistic points such as traditional British values with duty, business, family honour, and emotional restraint behind the family members. A son, Frank's rejection of tradition symbolizes the end of paternal authority as unquestioned. In fact, young generations claim seeks self-expression, freedom, and emotional honesty, often at the cost of social expectations. In the terms of inheritance, Charles expects Frank





to be involved in the family business, but Frank wants to follow his own path. This becomes a metaphor for the broader generational expansion, children should inherit their parents' lives and professions, not left any choice to the young people.

The play's power lies in how it expresses the painful cost of misunderstanding between generations and the urgent need for empathy. In the work the father invites his four sons, his sons will come with totally different ideas. Neither of them will appear just to visit their father to know how he lives. But there is a sense that what they will do with the inheritance of their father if he gives some of them. There is no point that some of them will continue father's business.

Whereas Family Trade isn't a parody within the conventional dramatic sense (like Wilde or Stoppard), it employs unpretentious incongruity, character varieties, social evaluate to uncover the foolish and excruciating inconsistencies of a severe, image-obsessed family culture. Mitchell's tone is controlled but sharp, permitting the parody to develop through inconvenience, not chuckling.

At the end of play, we could understand that the new generations have different social and family values. We can not say that these values are not idealistic. Here, new generations are much more developed, educated, self-centered. But, from another angle, it is too selfishness. From this point, we could understand that not all development for the best. Development of technology, development of social lives of people, shows different negative results when it comes to family values.

The main character, Charles Gray's Four sons have different worlds in their understandings. For their lifestyle, father's reaction is silence. But this silence has meaning for them. For this situation, older generation used to do like this. Unspoken times as an empty place or feeling among them. There is another side of the coin, at the same situation, new generations have totally different reactions. They are more open to discussions, to their true beings also. Nothing is a shame



to them. Older generations are vice versa reactions. They would think about the opinions of neighborhoods and society.

Although Julianne Mitchell's *Family Business* is first and foremost a serious family drama, it does contain subtle satirical elements, though not in an overt or comical way. Instead of humorous satire, Mitchell uses irony, criticism, and understated tension to expose the absurdities and hypocrisies of the British middle-class family.

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