

HUMAN PREDICAMENT IN THE SELECTED PLAYS OF ASIF CURRIMBHOY

**A Thesis Submitted in
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English**

By

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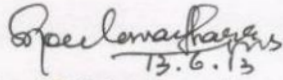
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SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that *Anthony Viphezol Richa*, bearing Rgd. No. 405/2010 dated 12-06-2010, has worked under my supervision as a research scholar on the topic *Human Predicament in the Selected Plays of Asif Currimbhoy*, in the Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus.

He has successfully completed his research work within the stipulated time and the thesis is the fruit of his original investigation conducted during the period of his research.


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DECLARATION

I, *Anthony Viphezol Richa*, do hereby declare that the thesis entitled *Human Predicament in the Selected Plays of Asif Currimbhoy* submitted for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree on the same title.

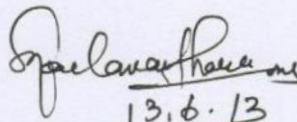
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Reference Abbreviations

<i>An Experiment with Truth</i>	-----	<i>AEWT</i>
<i>Angkor</i>	-----	<i>AK</i>
<i>“Darjeeling Tea?”</i>	-----	<i>DT</i>
<i>Goa</i>	-----	<i>GOA</i>
<i>Inquilab</i>	-----	<i>IQ</i>
<i>Monsoon</i>	-----	<i>MON</i>
<i>“OM”</i>	-----	<i>OM</i>
<i>“Om Mane Padme Hum!”</i>	-----	<i>OMPH</i>
<i>The Dissident MLA</i>	-----	<i>MLA</i>
<i>The Doldrums</i>	-----	<i>DD</i>
<i>The Dumb Dancers</i>	-----	<i>TDD</i>
<i>The Hungry Ones</i>	-----	<i>THO</i>
<i>The Miracle Seed</i>	-----	<i>TMS</i>
<i>The Refugee</i>	-----	<i>RF</i>
<i>The Tourist Mecca</i>	-----	<i>TTM</i>
<i>This Alien...Native Land</i>	-----	<i>TANL</i>
<i>Thorns on a Canvas</i>	-----	<i>TOC</i>

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Dramatic literature in India is an age-old genre in the literary world. Its history dates back to *Rig Veda*, which is the most ancient among Indian literary productions and the oldest of the Vedic collections. Drama in India is as old as the Indian customs and it has, at least, one of its main roots in proto-ballad poetry. The evolutionary evidence of Indian dramaturgy is seen in Vedic era down through the epic, *puranic*, Buddhist and Jaina literature and, we are obligated to map out the origin of old Indian epics in it. Like the way ballads afforded the essential basis for developing the epics, drama took its roots from the dramatic elements of the same ballads in which stories of gods and demi-gods in sacrifices and feasts were narrated.

Drama in India had begun its journey with the Sanskrit plays. A. L. Basham, a prominent historian, has opined that “the origin of Indian theatre is still obscure. It is certain, however, that even in the Vedic period dramatic performances of some kind were given, and passing references in early resources point to the enactment at festivals of religious legends” (Basham 434-435). Vedic collections have presented a lurid picture of dramatic theatre and in them are found the *Samhita* which has fifteen hymns written in a dialogue form, invested with the principle materials for drama. According to the legend, Mahendra and other gods went to Brahma, the Creator, with an entreaty that he creates a pastime that would be shared by all mankind. The Creator had extracted the words from the *Rigveda*, music and songs from the *Sama Veda*, the quality of acting from the *Yajur Veda* and aesthetic flavor from the *Atharva Veda* and composed the *Natya Veda* dealing with the poetics

of theatre. Indian *natya* is said to have a unique beginning, having a unique feature and well sealed in *Natya shastra*.

1. *Natya shastra*

Indian dramatic traditions are preserved in the *Natya shastra*, the oldest of the texts of the theory of drama, whose authorship has been believed to be Bharata Muni. *Natya shastra* claims for the drama divine origin and a close connection with the sacred Vedas themselves. We can clearly perceive from *Natya shastra* that Bharata is not only familiar with the Vedas and their status in the hierarchy of knowledge, but is also acquainted with the content, substance and form of each. He has also recognized the authority of the Vedas and this has virtually enabled him to carve out the theory of his own by basing on them. K. Vatsyayan has commented on Bharata's *Natya shastra* in the following words:

Important is the fact that he identifies *pathya*, the articulated spoken word, not just the word (*sabda*) from the *Rgveda*. The incanted word, the spoken word and its transmission, is a fundamental premise. So also is the case with identifying the *Yajurveda* as the source of ritual and body language and gestures. Vedic *yajna* as a per-formative act is considered as a base (Vatsyayan 12-14).

The *Natya shastra* of Bharata is the principle work of dramatic theory, encompassing dance and music, in classical India. It is believed to have been written during the period between 200 B.C.E. and 200 C.E. "The *Natyashastra* is the outcome of several centuries of theatrical practice by hereditary actors, who passed their tradition orally from generation to generation. It is in the form of a loose dialogue between Bharata and a number of *munis* who approach him, asking about *natyaveda*" ("Natya Shastra" <<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org>>).

The *Nṭya śāstra* discusses a wide range of topics, from issues of literary construction, to the structure of the stage (*mandapa*), to a detailed analysis of musical scales and movements (*murchhanas*), to an analysis of dance forms that considers several categories of body movements and their effect on the viewer. It posits that drama has originated because of the conflicts that arose in society when the world declined from the Golden Age (*Kṛta Yuga*) of harmony, and, therefore, drama has always represented a conflict and its resolution. Bharata's theory of drama refers to *bhavas*, the imitations of emotions that the actors perform, and the *rasas* (emotional responses) that they inspire in the audience. The eight basic *bhavas* (emotions) are: love, humor, energy, anger, fear, grief, disgust and astonishment. By observing and imagining these emotions, the audience experiences eight principle responses, or *rasas*: love, pity, anger, disgust, heroism, awe, terror and comedy. The text contains a set of precepts on the writing and performance of dance, music and theater and, its primary dealing on stagecraft has influenced Indian music, dance, sculpture, painting and literature as well. Therefore, the *Nṭya śāstra* is considered the foundation of the fine arts in India.

If drama is born of the divine, it has a causal origin of a happening in no time, a revelation, an intuitive experience. It has a form and structure and, the primary sense perception of sound and speech are its tools. "It deals with the visible and audible, employs body and language (gestures), speech, music, dress, costume and an understanding of psychic states, which involuntarily reflect themselves in the physical body, e.g., tears, horrification, etc., to express and convey meaning and emotive states" (Vatsyayan 48). Bharata has drawn the inspiration from his familiarity with structure and detailed methodology of the *yajna* in conceiving and visualizing his theatrical universe.

He has brought forth the metaphor of *bija* (seed) to explicate his theory of aesthetics. The tree grows from a seed and, flowers and fruits, in which is contained the seed; the parts distinct and different from each other but are inextricably related, having something from the same source. The interrelatedness and interdependence of the part and the whole is basic and fundamental. The process of growth, the proliferation of each part being different and distinct, and yet developing from the unitary source, is fundamental. Bharata has accepted and assimilated this concept not only as a central principle but also as an enunciation of the process of artistic expression and communication. The metaphor is not watertight and, therefore, is not to be extended literally and this is an invisible foundation of the text of *N tya stra*. Theatre is an organism just as life is an organism in which different parts make up the complete whole and they are inextricably linked, though each organ is distinctly different from the other.

K. Vatsyayan has also made an intensive scrutiny on the text of Bharata's *N tya stra*. He has explained that "the *N tya stra* does not refer to either *purusa* or to the elements explicitly. However, a close reading of the text makes it clear that the structure of 'drama' is in itself a *purusa*, a structure of different parts and limbs where each part is related to the whole. The physical, psychical, individual, social, horizontal and vertical dimensions are interconnected" (Vatsyayan 52). The concept of *N tya stra*, therefore, is of the same kind with the concept of *purusa*. Different parts of the body make up the whole man and absence of a part makes an incomplete man. In short, body and mind are interdependent. They are mutually effective and affective. Intellection is vital in man but senses, feeling and sensibility are elemental.

Bharata's worldview has evolved from his acquaintance and understanding of the world-view of the Upanishads. The *Kathopanishad* speaks of the hierarchical considerations of man and life. It is given that:

Higher than the senses (and their objects) is the *manas* (mind), more excellent than the *manas*, the *sattvam* (intellect); above the intellect soars the *mahatman* (great soul) and higher than the *mahatman* is the *avyakta* (unmanifest); and higher than the *avyakta* is the Supreme Soul (*purusa* here, could also be Brahman) (*Kathopanishad*, Valli III, Verses 10-11).

The Upanishad, which is considered the most refined avowal of a worldview and thought on the nature of the universe and man, makes it clear that placing the Supreme Soul on the pinnacle of the hierarchy is not a life denying worldview. In fact, it is conscious of the process of a gradual refinement from one plane to the other and the need for restraint and refinement. Bharata has adhered to this worldview when he spoke of sight (eye) and hearing (ear). Through these two elements, human endeavour towards greater refinement is made possible.

Bharata's theatrical universe has built its basis from here. The audible and visible worlds are the lifeline of a drama and theatre, as it was opined by Vatsyayan that "the senses and the sense-organisms and perceptions play a crucial role in the evolution of the theory, as also the techniques of each of the four instrumentalities of expression – sound, word (*vacika*) and body language (*angika*), décor and dress (*aharya*), internal states (*sattvika*)" (Vatsyayan 55).

Bharata has created an analogue to the physical layout of *yajna* at the level of structure. In *yajna*, as it is in *sala*, *vedis* (altars) of different sizes and shapes are built comprising both concurrent and sequential action, accompanied by multiple media for the purpose of replicating the cosmos.

N tya stra and its different chapters with divisions and components are the ritual altars of this grand and complex design. Like the *yajna*, the dramatic spectacle has an ethical and moral purpose. It has the path of stirring up *dharma* (moral duty), *artha* (economic wellbeing), *kama* (refine sensibility) and *moksa* (liberation). Therefore, arts are an alternate, if not a parallel, path for an avowed goals of a culture which move concurrently on the three levels of the *adhibhautika* (material), *adhyatmika* (individual soul) and *adhidaivika* (metaphysical).

Moving further into the text and context of the *N tya stra*, the book which has been divided into thirty six chapters, can be regrouped into three sections for the purpose of explicating the art and its form. The first is artistic experience, then the artistic content or states of being, the modes of expression through word, sound, gesture, dress, decorations and methods of establishing correspondences between physical movement, speech and psychical states, as also the communication and reception by the audience or readers and, lastly the structure of the dramatic form, popularly translated as plot.

The artistic experience is viewed from the direction of the creator who may be the writer, poet, artist, singer, painter, architect and interpreter. But in this case, it is the character or the actor, singer, the executor of the architectural design. Bharata has said, “Thus, the events (*v rta*) relating to the people in all their different conditions, should be included in a play, by those well versed in the canons of drama (*natyaveda*)” (Chapter XXXVI, verse 123). In verse 128 of the same chapter, it is said that “The men who know in this order the art of histrionic representation and apply it on the stage, receive in this world the highest honour for putting into practice the theory or essence of drama (*natyattva*) as well as acting (*abhinaya*).” It also includes the

spectator and the receiver. Therefore, Bharata has consciously felt that dramatists should take them into account while producing and enacting a stage play. He has said, “The people have different dispositions, and on their dispositions the drama rests. Hence, playwrights and producers (*prayoktr*) should take the people as their authority” (Chapter XXVI, verse 126). This is so, because rules regarding the feelings and activities of the world cannot all be exhaustively formulated by the *stra*. As a matter of fact, people are the critics and authority as regards the rules of the art.

The artistic content is the mid-wife of artistic experience; it facilitates an abstraction of life into its primary emotions and sentiments. The specificity of the individual, like the emotive particularity, is secondary because each is but a carrier of the primary abstracted state of love, hatred and the like. These, then are the content of art, known by their familiar terms, the eight or nine *rasas* or sentiments and their expressions as dominant states (*sth yi bh vas*). Herein is recognized the two connected levels; the non-duality of the undifferentiated and the differentiated states of diversity and multiplicity. Finally, “the plot is the potential of the artistic work to evoke a similar, if not identical, undifferentiated state of release and emancipation (*svatantrya*) in the spectator and reader from the immediate so-muchness of life” (Vatsyayan 60).

Theatre is a flexible space with the potential of being transformed into space of any order. The structure of the theatre is a micro-model of the cosmos and its source is the Upanishad. A micro-cosmic model is replicated through the construction of the site, the laying of the foundation, off the theatre, the construction of the stage and the division into central and peripheral areas. Chapter three of the *N tyā stra* is about the methodology of consecrating the physical space so created. This hallowed cosmic space requires a *puja* which is universal, whether it is a *yajna* or temple, *stupa*,

church or mosque. This shows that Bharata is not only creating a religious drama of a particular class, caste or denomination. His intent in consecrating the space is to prepare the actors or performers and spectators to be transported into the world of the imagination and simultaneously to the divine and the heavenly. It is in this way the terrestrial and the celestial are being interconnected.

Bharata has made a deeper study into the representation of universal by particulars through abstraction. The abstraction of life into *vyabhicare bhavas*, *rasas* and *staaya bhava* is basic and universal to the human. It is not culture specific, individual or particular. They are, in fact, embodiments of the universal human psychological states. He has also presented the creative ability of dramatists through his exploration of life with its sheer joy or pleasure, pain or pathos, wonder or amazement and their mutual interplay. The phenomenon of psychic states and their manifestation through distinctive modes of speech, body language, gesticulation, dress, costume and the like are the universal elements of life which constitute the core theme of a creative art.

Bharata has considered *vacika* or articulated word as the body (*tanu*) of a drama and believed in the efficacy of words and its effect on the listener or audience. In M.M. Ghosh's edition of *Nṭya śāstra*, it is said that in the literary world "the *śāstras* are made up of words, rests on words, hence there is nothing beyond words, and words are at the source of everything" (Chapter XV, verse 3). Bharata has minutely analyzed the principle units of structures, nouns, verbs, particles, propositions, nominal suffixes, compound words, euphonic combinations and case endings. He has critically placed the importance of verse and prose, metre and rhyme as well as syllables, rhythm and feet in couplets in the artistic composition of poetry or drama. The purpose of such meticulous choice and care in drama is to convey the moods

and sentiments, and present the emotive states appropriately. “Agreeable and appropriate words in a play are like the adornment (*alamkara*) of swans on a lotus lake; inappropriate ones have the incongruity of a pair of courtesan and ascetic br hmana” (Vatsyayan 71).

Bharata has moved from the explication of words and language effects (in poetry and drama) to the mode of address and intonation. The description of the modes of address provides an insight into human interaction and social status. He has related the use of specific notes (in intonation) to specific moods or sentiments. He has even identified three voice registers (*sth na*) called the breast (*uras*), throat (*kantha*) and head (*iras*), from which emerges the three pitches and the relative ascending and descending orders are indicated. He has also referred to the accents (*ud tta*): grave (*anud tta*), circumflex (*svarita*) and quivering (*kampita*). These are related to the specific sentiments and moods. Bharata’s purpose of bringing about the basic components of notes, registers, pitches and tempos is to relate them to specific sentiments and moods and, also to prepare the audience for a detailed enumeration on music (*sangita*).

The theatrical structure of Bharata does not move in an ascending line of beginning, conflict climax and denouement. The structure is based on the concept of *bija* which moves in a circular manner with a series of concentric circles, all over-layered and connected to each other. Bharata has assimilated the concept of *purusa* and used the terms *bija* and *bindu* (point) systematically throughout his text in dealing with *natya*. These are the unifying forces of his overall structure.

In terms of shape and form of a drama, three categories are recognized: *avastha* or state, *arthaprakrti* or progression or movement of the theme and *sandhi* or junctures. Abstracting them into a geometrical form and considering

their movement in a circular pattern, movement from the centre to the periphery or vis versa and centres of the two types of movements, converging and coinciding, are inevitable happenings. Varied forms of dramatic structure are evidently possible in a drama. This is possible if each category is considered as a volume or a solid mass (*ghana*). Besides, if they are multi-layered, and can be joined together in a number of configurations, permutations and combinations, infinite variety of dramas are possible.

In *Avastha*, the movement is from the point of view of the hero or the chief protagonist. This has been vividly seen from *rambha* or beginning, *prayatna* or effort, *praptisambhava* or the possibility of attainment, *niyataphaloprapti* or the possibility of resolution but not of certainty of overcoming of obstacles or conflict and, finally, *plalayoga* or *plalagama* which is fruition. From the point of view of the hero's progressive movement toward a goal, there is a linearity but is subsumed in the overall circular structure. The *arthaprakrti* is the nature of the movement of the essential theme. Bharata has employed the metaphor of *bija* and *bndu*, whose nature of development is akin to an organism which sprouts, grows and reaches a point of fruition. This progression, like the hero's movement, is also linear and vertical which is pervasive and permeating without losing the connection at any point of different tempos. Then there is the third and the most important concept called the *sundhis* (joint or juncture). This is responsible for weaving together the elements of progression, permeation and proliferation of a hero or theme without breaking the connectedness.

Having narrated the characteristics and components of the dramatic form called *nataka*, Bharata has emphasized the fact that drama presents and re-narrates ideas through expression (*abhinaya*). In chapter XXI, he has put it clearly that the success of this remains in the possibility of self abnegation, or

more appropriately only when the actor has overcome, suppressed, his personal self or *Svabh vas tajyate* (Verse 121-124). This is the gateway to the possibility of impersonating the character that the actor portrays. Bharata's ingenuity lies here because authenticity and originality of the character representation depend on shedding of the personal self and putting on the mimicked personality.

From the theory of impersonation, he goes on to delineate the indispensability of the need of external appearance and the inner most of a person called *s ttvika*. On the outermost, he has accentuated on *h rya*, the dress, costume, décor, props, masks, and the like. In chapter XXXIII, he has laid emphasis on costumes and make-ups where colour, correspondences and understanding of types of make-up for particular characters, people from different parts of India, techniques of constructing mobile and stationary props, and a vast variety of masks. Bharata has recognized the variety and multifarious cultures of India and the world. Therefore, he has left open the choice of colour, texture and costume to bring about a true representation and authenticity of character, personality and culture representation in a drama when he said, "According to one's pleasures, colours can be changed" (Chapter XXIII, verses 97-98).

Bharata has taken the inner states of the total personality to be fundamental in a drama. He has stated clearly in Chapter XXIII titled *S m nya Abhinaya* that feeling and its voluntary expression are crucial and it relates to all parts of the body. This refers to feeling and temperament (*sativa*) which are unexpressed, but can be discerned through physical signs. Intricately linked and inextricably corresponding with the physical body, *rasas* are the fundamental modes of expressing the internal and external states. In Chapter II, verse 6, he has stated that *rasas* arise from the forty-nine

types of *bhavas*: eight *sth yi bh va* (emotive states), thirty three *vyabhicare bhava* (transient states) and eight *satvika* (temperament states). In the next verse of the same chapter, he has gone further in the investigation and has presented that the state, proceeding from the thing which is congenial to the heart, is the source of *rasa* and it pervades the body just as fire spreads over the dry wood (Chapter II, verse 7).

He has elaborated on the correspondence between the internal and external states of a person with emphasis on the senses. He has also delineated the psychosomatic linkage to bring about the true and authentic character in the play. In delineating the fundamental issue of the relationship between the senses and mind, psychic states and involuntary reflexes, Bharata has intended to present the classification and categories of personality types as well as the different types of human temperament. Temperaments of calm, cool, hot, excitable, energetic or dull are indicators of body-mind relationship. There is also another type of relationship laid down by Bharata - *K ma* (desire and love) which is the centre of man-woman relationship. Sense, perception, feeling and consciousness play the foundational basis in this intra-gender communication. *K ma* is the pulling force that makes the communication going, whether it is introvert and extrovert, inner or outer. In this context, Bharata has pertinently described the different types of graces (*alamk ra*) or women, namely, feeling (*bahva*), emotion (*h va*) and passion (*hel*) which do not function autonomously. They are the psychic states with their emotional and involuntary reflex physical responses.

Bharata has not only laid down the concepts and design of an art work but also presented the need for a successful work production. In chapter XXII, he has made it clear that the efficacy of an artist's creation lies in its ability to communicate and this communication takes place at two levels: *daivika*

(divine) and *mānusa* (human). An artistic creation, a theatre production, can uplift and elevate the audience to a sense of awe, wonder and complete silence (XXII, 17). This evocation is a sure sign of *siddhi* (success).

To bring about success, the creator artist, dramatist and actor require inner control and description. “There is an indispensable need of impersonalization, depersonalization and detachment in the entire act of creation and presentation” (Chapter XXVI, verse 86). Bharata has also set a guideline for the audience and spectators because success also relies on them. They need to be trained, initiated and attuned. Preparedness, both, of attitude and initiation into some technicalities is an essential pre-requisite.

Bharata’s *Nāṭya śāstra*, therefore, is a keystone work in Sanskrit literature on the subject of stagecraft. It addresses a wide variety of topics, including the proper occasions for staging a drama, the proper designs for theatres, the authentic and success in presentation of an art work and characters and, most especially, specific instructions as well as advice for actors, playwrights and producers. The theory of *rasa*, described in the text, has been a major influence on “the modern theatre of India as well as Indian cinema, particularly Bollywood” (“Sanskrit Drama” <<http://www.enotes.com/>>).

Bharata’s *Nāṭya śāstra* has laid down the foundation for classical Sanskrit drama and is one of the most important sources for establishing its characteristics. Theatre is said to have been the inspiration of Brahma as a means to distract people from their sensual pursuits. Legends hold it that when the world passed from the golden age to the silver age and people became addicted to sensual pleasures, undesirable elements like jealousy, anger, desire and greed have filled their hearts. The world then was inhabited by gods, demons, *yakshas*, *rakshasas*, *nagas* and *gandharvas*. Lord Indra led the gods

and approached god Brahma and, requested him thus, “please give us something which would not only teach us by pleasing both the eyes and ears” (Gupt 86). Therefore, Bharata’s ascription of drama to divine origin is not wrong. He has put down what later playwrights would refer as footnotes.

It is imperative to mention that, according to Bharata, drama is composed of sacred materials and is meant for an audience that is well-versed in the performance tradition. It is performed by members of the highest rank in the caste system that requires special knowledge and skill. To do this, a complete understanding of dance, music, recitation and ritual language is a prerequisite. Drama should be performed on a consecrated space – theatre or stage – and it serves a dual purpose of education as well as entertainment. Bharata’s concept of drama has gone a long way in influencing and inspiring the later playwrights; of which its immediate influence was on the Sanskrit literature, particularly on dramatists.

2. Sanskrit Literature

Sanskrit, in India, has a long history as a language of thought, learning and culture. In the present popular perception of Sanskrit as a major component of India’s cultural heritage, it is best known as the language of religion and philosophy. In fact, it has served as the repository for inspiration for its intellectual and aesthetic achievements. It is popularly believed that from the second century onwards, probably Sanskrit was a spoken language in the whole of *aryavarta* between the Himalayas and the Vindhya range. Sanskrit plays “show that even those who did not speak Sanskrit understood it” (Haksar 3).

Sanskrit literature saw little of prose and largely of verse. Unlike classical literature, *Yajurveda* and *Brahmanas* employed prose style. Excepting perhaps grammar and philosophy, nearly every branch of classical

literature is composed in verse; literary prose being found only in fables, fairy tales, romances and partially in the dramas. Dramas, for the most areas, are written in verse.

Sanskrit plays flourished from the 4th century BC to 13th century AD and most of them are moral plays. *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* have being the repository from where Sanskrit playwrights have drawn their themes and characters. Evidently, therefore, Sanskrit plays have dealt with godly events. Henry W. Wells has rightly observed that Sanskrit drama is “an utmost expression of idealism” (Wells 90). Study of the Sanskrit playwrights will show their uniqueness which “can be described as an experience of life beyond the personal” (Reddy 9).

Besides being rich poetry, Sanskrit plays have dealt with the art of acting and of play writing. The driving force for play writing, during this period, was fundamentally aesthetic. As a result “the Hindu mind shrank not only from violence and physical tragedy, but even from the tragic in moral problems which attracted the Greek mind” (Aurobindo 302). Sanskrit has spread its wing far and wide and its appeal has never diminished. Modern literature, in fact, has looked up to it for its richness and wealth.

The sage Bharata is the mythical inventor of *nataka* (drama) which was already discussed in the former sub-topic. Besides *nataka*, “there are several other forms of dramatic representations, such as *Prakaran*, *Bhanga*, *Prahasana* and others” (Haksar 7). The earliest form of dramatic literature may be found in the *vedic* dialogues such as those of *Sarama* and *Paish*, *Yama* and *Yami*, *Pururavas* and *Urva*. The foremost references to acted dramas, though, are found in the *Mahabhasya*, where *Kamsavadha* and *Balibandha* are mentioned.

The combination of different genres of drama and Sanskrit has resulted into a unique amalgamation of richness that has given us the literary treasure of Sanskrit dramas. Some of the famous dramatists of Sanskrit literature are considered in this chapter for a deeper understanding and better acquaintance and, to lead us progressively ahead in our discussion of Indian English playwrights.

3. Select Sanskrit Playwrights

3.1. Bhasa

Many Sanskrit pandits have created ideological fluctuation regarding Bhasa's identity, authenticity and authorship of the dramas ascribed to him. But references made by some dramatists, poets and many rhetoricians have guaranteed his authorship and historicity beyond any doubt. K lid sa, the best known Sanskrit playwright has referred to Bhasa in the prologue of his first play *M lavik gnimitram*. B abha a, the court poet of Harsavardhana, has eulogized the dramaturgic excellence and social prestige of Bhasa in his *Har acharitam*. A rhetorician, like Acharya Bh mala, has also discussed the theme of the *Pratij n tik* of Bhasa.

Rajendra Mishra has categorized the plays of Bhasa into three groups basing on their themes. The first category is based on *R m yana* and the plays include *Pratim n taka* and *Abhisekan taka*. The second category is based on the *Mah bh rata* and the plays that fall into this category are *Pa char tra*, *Madhyanna Vy yoga*, *D tav kya*, *d ta Ghatitkacha*, *Kar ab ra*, *B lacharita* and *rubha ga*. The final category is based on folktales and Udayana stories. The plays of this category include *Daridrach rudatta*, *Avim raka*, *Pratij a* *Yaugandharaya a* and *Svapnav savadatta*.

Bhasa's contribution to the Sanskrit drama in particular and the dramatic literature in general is prominent. "He is one of the first great

dramatists whose complete dramas are now available to the world” (“About Sanskrit” <[http://www. Sanskrit.nic.in/](http://www.Sanskrit.nic.in/)>). He has derived his plots from the *R m yana*, *Mah bh rata* and *Pur nas* as well as other semi-historical tales. His greatest contribution is the reproduction of the *R m yana* and *Mah bh rata* in the dramatic form. Though the poet does not present the stories in their original form, the success lies in popularizing the episodes of the two great epics which were impounded by scholastic society. He has copiously altered the incidents, dialogues and sequences in his presentation for a better dramatic effect and for the sake of dramatic pleasure as well as mass interest.

Swapnav savadatta or The Vision of Vasadatta is his furthest known work. Acharya Rajashekhara has opined that this play is “the only drama which proved itself non-combustible in the fire of criticism” (“About Sanskrit” <<http://www.Sanskrit.nic.in/>>). His imaginative power is highly commendable and it is reflected in almost all his plays. The concept of Drakula (The Temple) in *Pratima* and the concept of *Svapna* (The Dream) in *Swapnav savadatta* are unique. Bhasa stands toweringly tall above other Sanskrit playwrights in his treatment of dualistic love. This love is not merely a physical hunger for sensual pleasure but an overflowing sensual satisfaction which sluices away all physical traumas and dilemmas. Udayana, the hero of *Swapnav savadatta*, has felt the ecstasy of that love that has ended in an indescribable contentment and eternal peace and, not in sensual lust. His treatment of *Pra rti* (nature) is highly plausible. This drama has its source in *R m yana*. Bhasa’s depiction of the pathetic condition of the unprotected lawless society has reminded us of Ayodhy being deprived of the great king Da aratha.

Bhasa was a born dramatist and has presented other models of Sanskrit drama such as *Prakarana* and *Bhana* (One act plays). In his small plays, he has succeeded in making them extraordinarily dramatic. Although his works follow the rules from the *Natyasastra*, in order to maintain a dramatic integrity, he has often violated them. The outstanding results, as critics assert, only prove that he is a man of the theatre way ahead of his times.

He deliberately plans the purposive use of his dramatic art. His explicit commitment to contemporary relevance is conveyed by a specially coined term “*Kala – Samvad in Prati and Ptatij*” (Rath 55). It is clearly seen that he does not, for a moment, make use of traditional story for his *Udayana* plays. Besides, the concept of disarmament propounded by him is unique for his age of monarchy. He is astutely conscious of “the dangers of oppression by despotic rulers and does not hesitate to portray his Vasudeva pleading guilty of reckless indiscrimination in so many words” (Rath 56). His dedication to the mission of peace and contemporary relevance is unadulterated. He does not aim at converting the stock of popular tales and mythical stories of historical events into dramatic composition. In his support to monarchy, he has always tried to preserve his right to independent judgment.

3.2. Kalidasa

Kalidasa is the tallest figure among the Sanskrit dramatists and his importance as well as greatness in the Sanskrit dramaturgy cannot be compromised. N.P. Uni has stated that he is “the greatest Sanskrit dramatist” (Uni 7). His life history has been debated among the Sanskrit pandits but, inarguably, important and indispensable evidences have shown that he belonged to the 1st century BC.

A mention of classical playwrights is never complete without a look at Kalidasa, the greatest playwright of his time. He is the brightest star in the firmament of Indian poets and playwrights in Sanskrit and occupies the same position in Sanskrit literature that Shakespeare occupies the same position in English literature. He deals primarily with famous Hindu legends and themes. Actually, it is the synchronizing genius of Kalidasa that has made him fabulous and extraordinary. “In his dramatic works he has ably combined the divine and the mortal (heaven and earth), the urban and the rural cultures” (Haksar 111). He takes the entire universe and the creation to be his province and presents them as a one big family. This harmonization is the backbone of Kalidasan literature as a whole.

His most popular plays are *Abhijñānaśakuntalam* (The Recognition of Shakuntala), *Malavikāgnimitram* (Malavika and Agnimitra), *Vikramorvasiyam* (Vikrama and Urvashi) and *Ritusamhara*. *Abhijñānaśakuntalam* is a beautiful tale of love and romance and shows how one moment can make or break a relation. Its plot is taken from *Mahābhārata* and *Padmapurana*. Kalidasa has added the episode of the curse on Shakuntala by sage Durvasas, through his fancy and adeptness in introducing new elements in the main plot and this has given an additional charm to the love story of Shakuntala and King Dushyana. This has also elevated the character of the hero. *Malavikāgnimitram* is an intrigue drama based on the love story of Malavika and King Agnimitra. The plot of the play is cleverly constructed and it revolves around the King’s love interest on a maid in the royal palace. *Vikramorvasiyam* is a play that tells the story of a mortal King Vikramaditya who is in love with a heavenly damsel, Urvashi. It enacts the story of his effort and determination and how he won the love of the divine nymph, who is supposed to be the most gorgeous heavenly fairy. Out of desperation, the king wanders through dense forests in search of his love. A truly intriguing tale of

love and possessiveness, it contains beautiful verses that describe true love. Kalidasa has also written two large epic poems, *Raghuvamsa* (The Genealogy of Raghu) and *Kum rasambhava* (Birth of Kumara), and two smaller epics, *Titusamh ra* (Medley of Seasons) and *Meghad ta* (The Cloud Messenger). His writing is characterized by the usage of simple but beautiful Sanskrit and by his extensive use of similes.

He has treated nature as a conscious counterpart of sensate society. In fact, he has made no differences between them. Nature is fully active and alive and, his sensitivity to Nature is a distinctive feature. Rajindra Mishra has stated that “what the great English poet Wordsworth did in the 18th century, Kalidasa did more successfully in the 1st century BC” (Mishra 112). Kalidasa has taken nature’s flora and fauna to be the constant companion of humanity in their happiness and sorrow.

3.3. Sudraka

Sudraka is a later playwright than Kalidasa. Evidences have made known that he falls between 1st century BC and 7th century AD. Kalidasa, while quoting his predecessors has omitted Sudraka’s name. Acharya Dandin, of the AD 7th century, has quoted Sudraka in his writings. These are the most reliable evidences which have shown that Sudraka was not prior to Kalidasa and not later than Dandin. Acharya V mana has flourished under the patronage of the Kashmiri ruler Jay pida during 779 – 813 AD. He has mentioned the works of Sudraka in his *K vyalank ra Sutrav tti*.

Sudraka is considered to have composed the first social drama in the history of Sanskrit dramatic literature. His play *M cchaka ikam* or *The Little Clay Cart*, composed in 2nd century BC, “is a drama of the *Prakarana* genre” (Mishra 113). The play is divided into ten acts and is distinct from other plays in its dramatic qualities of vigorous life, action and its humour. It is a

comedy set in the backdrop in which love and mistaken identity play a major role.

M cchaka ikam mirrors the contemporary society and Ch rudatta, the hero, is a Brahmana by caste and a great lover of music. His wife Datt is submissive, chaste and virtuous and, has never complained about anything in her life. Ch rudatta was previously a great *Srthavaha* (Merchant) but became penniless. Despite the misfortune, he has always maintained his social prestige in the city of Ujjayini by possessing the virtues of truthfulness, benevolence, gentleness, munificence and kindness. Ch rudatta has never regretted the misfortune of becoming a pauper but was spellbound to behold his friends, visiting his home, slinking down due to his pennilessness. Sudraka has employed love complication in this play to suit the social theme. A beautiful, chaste and affectionate danseuse, Vasantha, has complicated the love plot. She deeply loves Ch rudatta but her love is sought by Shakra who has pursued her to gratify his lust. Vasantasena has hated him and managed to keep herself away from his grips.

The juicy plot of the play anticipates the twists and turns in the further development of the plot. Apart from love complication, the plot is further complicated by thieves and mistaken identities. The play is enriched with elements of hilarious laughter and entertainment. Therefore, “Blending both the serious and humourous, it remains one of the most popular staged pieces of classical Indian drama” (“The Emergence of Sanskrit Drama” <<http://www.narasimhan.com>>).

Sudraka is acclaimed for the handling of social issues of his time in the plays. In his works, he has presented social issues like deviation from prescribed rules of morality, gambling, litigation, bias verdicts and many other social distortions. The qualitative plays, written by him, have shown that he

has lived ahead of his time in his genius. His plays have reflected the powerful topic and themes that are seriously debated and enacted by later literary authors and the 21st century writers.

3.4. Har āvardhana

Har āvardhana has a great academic taste and has even inspired his successors for the same taste. He was the ruler of K nyakubja and belonged to the Vardhana dynasty of Sth nvishvara. He was a great lover of fine arts and an adept in Buddhist canonical literature. He had revived the tradition of high academic taste on kings like Vikram ditya, udraka, Rudrad man and others. As a man of good academic taste, his influence on the later poets and critics is immense.

Priyadar k , *Ratn val* and *N g nanda* are the three plays written by Har āvardhana. The first two plays are based on the *Udayana* episode and the third play bases itself on a tragic story of *Vidy adhara Jim tav hana*. He is well adept in various *Sh stras* and his dramatic art is excellent. *Ratnavali* is his masterpiece dramatic work. The erotic scenes in this play have shown his expertise in the science of sex. Rajendra Mishra has stated that “Dramaturgical rules and regulations have been followed by Har āvardhana in his plays. He knows well, how a lovelorn heart beats” (Mishra 177). Therefore, it is clear that Har āvardhana is a romantic dramatist, whose dramaturgical art has reflected the heart throbbing love stories. This also shows that he has the spirit of modern novelists like Jane Austen and Thomas Hardy.

3.5. Bhavabhuti

Bhavabhuti was born in Padampura, situated somewhere in Vidarbha. He was a K shyapa-gotri Br hamana and belonged to the Taittir ya branch of

the Black Jajurveda. Some commentators have believed his name to be Srikaṣha but later on he became famous as Bhavabhūti.

Bhavabhūti's three famous plays are *M latim dhavam*, *Mah viracharitam* and *Uttaram charittam*. The first play *M latim dhavam* is a Prakaraṇa in ten acts. It is framed in the tradition of Ashvaghosa's *S riputra Prakaraṇam* and Śaṅkara's *M cchaka ikam* but not without differences. *Mah viracharitam* is a play in six acts with a dramatic renovation of the primitive Rama episode. He has brought forth an attractive and ideal personage of the hero in this play. Rama, the hero, has killed the monkey commander Bali who came to fight with him at the behest of Ravana. The adverse, objectionable and improper elements in Rama were due to Ravana's character. The third play has delineated the latter half of the epic *Rāma yana*. In this seven act play, Bhavabhūti has dwelt on the theme of the banishment of Sita by Rama. Rama has banished his faultless wife by sacrificing his personal pleasure, for the satisfaction of his subjects. The play begins with the return of victorious Rama to Ayodhya and ends with the reunion between Ram and Sita in the hermitage of Valmiki.

Characterization in Bhavabhūti's plays is brilliant. Divinity occupies the centre stage of his poetry. His ebullient knowledge in handling his characters is seen in his dealing with the different sentiments in man. With regard to the dramatist's aptitude of superbly enacting the varied sentiments, Rajendra Mishra has this to say, "Although he has attempted almost all the sentiments in his plays, his treatment of pathos (*Karuna*) is superb and unparalleled" (Mishra 120).

Treatment of nature in his plays is only elemental. Rajendra Mishra has commented that Bhavabhūti is "habitual of witnessing only the pristine form of nature where the birds are warbling in ardent passion, hilly rivulets are

flowing swiftly and being echoed by the falling ripe fruit of blackberries” (Mishra 121). In this sense, he is not a Kalidasan who sees the humanized form of nature. He is not as pantheistic as Wordsworth or Kalidasa.

4. A Leap from Sanskrit Drama to Modern Drama

The brilliance and excellence of Sanskrit drama can never be belittled but, sadly, this par excellence did not continue to spread its wings in the later ages. After Bhavabhuti, the enviable trend of excellence in the dramatic art and the grandeur of stagecraft were not the same. Despite the spontaneous flow of dramatic creativity continued, the flavor of Kalidasa or Sudraka or Bhavabhuti has failed to show up in the later period for a long time in the Indian dramatic world. While many have attempted their skills on Sanskrit drama, as years passed by, there has been a steady decline in its popularity. Sanskrit, which was the language of the courts and temples, had begun to be replaced by regional literary traditions that were fast emerging in rural areas. Changes in the field of politics have even influenced the cultural growth of the regional importance.

With the steady decline of Sanskrit plays, Indian dramatic scene has witnessed a dry period for quite sometimes. It has witnessed a decadent period until drama in a new form has stepped into the dramatic scene. The arrival of British to India has awakened the slumbering theatrical taste in India and Indian drama has regained its strength. The rise of a new spirit due to acculturation has, therefore, marked the beginning of modern Indian drama, dating back to 18th century when the British Empire has strengthened its power in India. The impact of Western Civilization on Indian life has also opened the floodgate for a new renaissance to dawn on Indian arts including drama. Besides, English education has given an impetus and a forward motion to the critical study of not only Western drama but also classical Indian

drama. Therefore, the Western impact has triggered “the dormant, critical impulse in the country to bring Indian face to face with new forms of life and literature, and to open the way for a fruitful cross fertilization of ideas and forms of expression” (Iyengar 4).

Drama in India has witnessed transitional periods as it is with the English drama of the West. Indian English drama has its own creativity and richness in its variety. Since its inception, from the Vedic era coming up to the Sanskrit stage, Indian drama has never ceased to appear. In its continuing appearance, it is significantly noteworthy that it also has never come to a close to show a strong Indian character driven by the distinctive Indian spirit. To scan deeper into its historical facts, it is pertinently unavoidable to note that Indian drama had its definite beginning and purpose. According to Maurice Winternitze, a noteworthy fact about the existence of literary drama has been made possible only by the Buddhist Sanskrit texts of the first century (Winternitze 196-197). This has acted as the repository from where Indian dramatic inspiration and module have been oozing out for the later dramatists to either emulate or impersonate.

5. A Bird’s-eye view of Modern Indian English Drama

India has a rich heritage of drama from the ancient times. Drama in India has begun its journey with the Sanskrit plays and, since then India has witnessed the ups and downs of it. A. L. Basham, a prominent historian, has expressed his views in the following words: “the origin of Indian theatre is still obscure. It is certain, however that even in the Vedic period dramatic performances of some kind were given, and passing references in early resources point to the enaction at festivals of religious legends, perhaps only in dance and mime” (Basham 434-435). Indian traditions are preserved in the *Natyashastra*, the oldest of the texts of the theory of the drama. This text claims

for the drama divine origin and a close connection with the sacred Vedas themselves. Drama in India, therefore, has a sure and firm foundation, having a basement on the Vedas, but a creamy continuance of the same vibrant trend. The hope of its vitality lies in the rich heritage of music and dance because India's tradition and rituals are always accompanied with music and dance.

Indian drama and theatre is perhaps as old as its music and dance. Right from the Vedic Era, Indian theatre has made its presence felt amidst Vedic ritualism and ethnicities. It is crucially important to take note at this juncture that Indians were indeed comfortable in illustrating their mood through the artistry of *mudraa*, *lasya* and *Natya*. Therefore, a distinct style of dramaturgy has developed as an exemplification of the rich mores of Indian tradition, rituals, customs and ethnicity. India, as a land rich in articulate feelings, eloquent speeches and diverse manifestations, has a unique history of human expression through dramatic composition and techniques since the remote past which can actually be traced back amidst ritualism of the Aryans and also in the midst of the dance pattern and amidst the style of daily living.

This ritualistic and traditional expression, through the dramatic art, was only the beginning. Indian English drama has moved forward from here by developing over the past richness. Right from the ancient to the modern era, theatre in India has enormously contributed its glorious success to the enrichment and fortification of India's culture to a great extent. With the passage of time, even the larger than life aspects of the ancient Sanskrit drama had gradually faded and Indian drama became a lot more contemporary whilst revealing the naturalistic and realistic attributes of the socio-economic and political scenario of India. Albeit dramas in the past were entirely based on the epics and the *Puranas*, that was only the beginning and, thenceforth, there was no looking back. A paradigm shift has been taking place, since then, in

the choice of subject and theme. The old narrative forms of dramas narrating the stories of heroes and celestial beings were overtaken by the true representation of the unedited realism of human life.

A characteristic feature of the Indian drama is the presence of some amounts of variation in respect of the language. As Maurice Winternitze has critically surmised that a greater part of Indian English dramas are written in prose dialogues, intercepted by verses, some musical and some recitative. Since the initiation of drama till the present day, in certain measures, the Indian drama reflects the actual life in respect of the language used (Winternitze 190-191). Moving back into the factual ground of the Indian English dramatic scene, despite the rich influence and impact English had on the Indian soil, Indian drama in English has shown a sluggish growth because of the language factor. The unacceptability of English as a common language of India has insulated the smooth path for Indian drama in English to flourish like other Indian literature. Furthermore, Michael Madhusudan Dutta's translations of *Ratnavali* (1858), *Sermista* (1859) and *Is this called Civilization* (1871) were not in compliance with the traditional Indian dramatic modes. As a result, they have failed to arrest the interest of the Indian audience and the world. M.K. Naik has made a significant remark in this regard:

Drama is composite art in which the written word of the playwright attains complete artistic realization only when it becomes the spoken word of the actor on the stage and through that medium reacts the mind of the audience. A play in order to communicate fully and become a living dramatic experience thus needs a real theatre and a live audience (Naik 171).

Apart from this, the genre of Indian literature has kept the taste of the audience stale. For a long period of time, the theme of the play has been mythical and celestial. Therefore, it is sad to behold that the story of the English drama in India has assumed mythical structure right from its inception without much change. As such, it has become the sad Cinderella of Indian English literature.

Among the various forms of Indian writings in English, drama seems to lag far behind poetry and fiction. K.R.S. Iyengar has opined that “Modern Indian dramatic writing is neither rich in quantity nor, on the whole, of high quality. Enterprising Indians have for nearly a century occasionally attempted drama in English, but seldom for actual stage production” (Naik 201). However, ever since the English language has firmly established its roots in the country, there has been writing of plays in English in spite of their generally poor stage-worthiness (Bhatta <<http://yabaluri.org/>>). In fact, new and fresh introduction of the artistic quality through the innovativeness of the English drama in India has added a whole fresh look that constitutes a contemporary dimension to Indian *Natya*. A praiseworthy note on the Indian English playwrights is the spirit of challenge that has been pulling them through till today.

The arrival of East India Company into the soil of India has greatly influenced the Indian *Natya*. Dramas in India have become more contemporary while dwelling on social and political themes. The seed of modern consciousness was sown in the field of Indian drama during the British imperialism. However, Indian *Natya* stood apart as the weapon of protest against the British Raj. It is then that English drama has made her presence felt in Indian soil through the portrayal of the realism of daily life. Indian English drama has carved her niche by presenting and illustrating the

finer aspects of life along with the regular instances of poverty, hunger, sufferings and agony of common people. Indian English playwrights have moved forward in their own styles dealing with society, politics, economic, communalism and the like. However, Indian dramatists have found hard to do away with the influence of British in the in subject matter. For a long period of time, a true representation of British culture and ways of life as well as depiction of the British exploitation has reigned supreme in Indian literature.

In fact, Indian drama in English took its birth out of ennui and a need for entertainment at social gatherings and dinners held in honour of the English dignitaries in India. This has served as an opportunity for Indian playwrights to have the taste of western playwrights and it has influenced the regional theatres. The Bombay Amateur Theatre is the first theatre in Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, which was set up in 1776. The plays that were produced, by then, were mainly farces on the Georgian playwrights. Unfortunately, this theatre was sold and its fate of late got into oblivion. But many Italian and European dramatic troupes have set their foot in Mumbai and toured Mumbai and its presidency. They performed many plays, especially those of Shakespeare's. These dramatic companies include the Fairclough Company, Our Boys Company, Norville's Willard Opera Company and the Dave Carsen Troupe. Albeit good had being done by these early theatres on Indian soil as precursor to indigenous talents, there were no rooms for plays originally written in English by Indians. As a result, Indian drama in English has being staggering to carve out a niche for itself for a long period of time, unlike western dramas that has built a citadel for itself in the dramatic world.

Amidst such gruelling demands for indigenous Indian English playwrights in the firmly established and dominant world of Western English

plays, Indian English drama is yet to establish itself as a distinct and viable genre. Since 1831, Indian English writers have been penning down their minds. English dramas by Indians had appeared on Indian soil with the coming of K.M. Banerjee's translations of *The Persecuted* or *Dramatic Scenes: Illustration of the Present State of Hindu Society in Calcutta* in 1831 (Jha 170). Since then, a number of plays in English by Indian writers have come into being and it has continued to appear till today. This flowering Indian English plays include translations from other languages and by doing so it carried forward its heritage with alien tastes and values. But it is imperative to take note that numerical abundance does not ascertain the qualitative richness. This has been the concern in the arena of Indian English drama. At the same time this does not mean the complete absence of qualitative sumptuousness in Indian plays in English. Though English drama in India has not lost the tinge of European life style, Indian dramatists, at the same time, have not lost the indigenous hallmark as Indians. The plays have gradually risen to a typical form by epitomizing the socio-political and economic status of Independent India.

6. Select Indian English Playwrights

Drama in India has, no doubt, gone through a dreamy period after the hey days of Sanskrit playwrights. Indian drama in English, on the other hand, has for a long period of time struggled to carve a niche for itself in the literary world. Theatrical world in India, side by side with the plays and the indigenous products, has been crouching invincibly hard to imprint its own mark. Amidst such gruelling scenario and despite the encouragement pouring in from different quarters, Indian drama in English has been having suffocating moments. This cloudiness on the path of Indian English drama is

“chiefly because of the continued lack of the living theatre and a live audience” (Reddy 13).

The absence of discipline of theatre has predisposed the Indian playwrights in English to overlook the essential differences between the “voice of the poet addressing an audience and the voice of the poet who attempts to create a dramatic character speaking in verse” (Eliot 2). P. Bayapa Reddy has opined that “the blurring of this essential difference has made most of the Indian verse drama in English dramatic poetry rather than authentic poetic drama” (Reddy 13). This frustrating effect has made M.K. Naik to remark that “all too conscious as he is of the fact that his play is not going to be staged after all, the Indian playwright in English, perhaps, allows his dramatic vision to be insidiously warped in the embryo itself” (Naik 185). This effect is conspicuously manifested in some of the Indian verse plays in English by the playwrights like T.R. Kailasan and Harischandranath Chattopadhyaya.

The mirage that has illusively gripped Indian playwrights from seeing the difference between dramatic poetry and poetic drama got swept away with the coming of Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo into the dramatic scene. They have succeeded in writing poetic dramas and this has brought about a renaissance in the dramaturgy of Indian English playwrights. Some of the high-flying modern Indian English dramatists are considered in this paper. For a better analysis and a clearer progressive flow, the select dramatists will be broadly grouped into pre-independence and post independence Indian English playwrights.

6.1. Select Pre-independence Playwrights

The pre-independence Indian English playwrights are the evolved group of playwrights who have come right after the Sanskrit dramatists. In this paper

I will humbly and briefly deal with Rabindranath Tagore, who is the harbinger of Bengali theatre, Sri Aurobindo, a major English playwright and an accomplished craftsman in verse, T.P.Kailasam, who is known as the Father of Modern Kannada Drama, and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, a playwright of the underdogs of society who is more akin to post-independence Indian English playwrights in his modern consciousness.

6.1.1. Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore, the youngest of thirteen surviving children, was born on 7th May 1861 in the Jorasanko mansion in Calcutta, India, to “parents Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi” (Dutta 37). He came from a cultured and wealthy family of the Tagores, who got the taste of books and got into writing at a very early age, “as early as seven, when he wrote his first poem” (Farooq <<http://globalwebpost.com>>). He grew up in a very cultured atmosphere with exposures to religion and arts, with special emphasis on literature, music and painting. Due to the wealthy family background, his early education was through private tutors. Subsequently, he studied at several institutions and even went to England to study law, but did not complete any degree programme. Apparently, he “was recalled by his father in 1880, possibly because his letters home, all indicated his attraction (which was mutual) to English girls” (Farooq <<http://globalwebpost.com>>).

Rabindranath Tagore became one of the most prolific writers in the world; poet, artist, dramatist, musician, novelist, and essayist. He was completely at home with both Bengali and English languages because he was educated at University College, London, in 1879-80. He had become the national poet of Bengal by the time of his Golden Jubilee in Calcutta on January 28, 1912, but his international fame came only in November 1913 when he won the Nobel Prize for literature for *Gitanjali*, a collection of poetry

initially brought out in Bengali in 1910 and then translated by the poet and published in English in 1912 with an introduction by W. B. Yeats. He has also translated so many volumes of his own Bengali poems personally that he can be regarded as an Anglo-Indian poet.

Tagore had early success as a writer in his native Bengal. With his translation of some of his poems, he became rapidly known in the West. In fact, his fame has attained a luminous height that has taken him across continents on lecture tours and tours of friendship. The *Nobelprize.org* has eulogized him saying, “For the world he became the voice of India’s spiritual heritage; and for India, especially for Bengal, he became a great living institution” (“Rabindranath Tagore-Biography” <<http://www.nobelprize.org>>). His creative output speaks a lot about him as a renaissance man and the fecund brain that produced variety, quality and quantity works is amazing. Surprisingly, this great writer has written “over one thousand poems; eight volumes of short stories; almost two dozen plays and play-lets; eight novels; and many books and essays on philosophy, religion, education and social topics. Aside from words and drama, his other great love was music, Bengali style. He composed more than two thousand songs, both the music and lyrics” (“Rabindranath Tagore” <<http://www.schoolofwisdom.com>>).

The inborn gift of Tagore to become a dramatist saw the light of day quite early in his life. At sixteen, he led his brother Jyotirindranath's adaptation of Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (Lago 15). At twenty he wrote his first drama-opera: *Valmiki Pratibha* (*The Genius of Valmiki*). In this opera, pandit Valmiki is found overcoming his sins, blessed by Saraswati and compiled the *R m yana* (Chakravarty 123). Through this work, Tagore has explored a wide range of dramatic styles and emotions, including usage of

revamped *kirtans* and adaptation of traditional English and Irish folk melodies as drinking songs (Dutta 79-80). His other prominent plays are *Chitra*, *The Post Office*, *Sacrifice*, *Red Oleanders*, *Chandalika*, *Muktadhara*, *Natir Puja*, *The King of the Dark Chamber*, *The Cycle of Spring*, *Sanyasi* and *The Mother's Prayer*. These plays are deeply and firmly rooted in the Indian ethos and ethics in their themes, characters and treatment.

Dak Ghar (*The Post Office*) is about Amal who was forbidden by the village doctor to move out of doors. The peculiarity about the boy is that he is not only happy but also makes those who come in contact with him very happy. He is ready to journey from this world to the next. The dramatist has used certain symbols in this simple story which has made the play very powerful. The post office stands for the universe and the king stands for God. The letter represents the message of eternity and the blank slip of paper symbolizes the message of God, which one is free to interpret according to one's own inspiration. The play is also looked at from a different angle as describing about Amal, who has defied his stuffy and puerile confines by ultimately falling asleep, hinting his physical death. A story with borderless appeal – gleaming rave reviews in Europe – *Dak Ghar* dealt with death as, in Tagore's words and quoted by A. Robinson, "spiritual freedom" from "the world of hoarded wealth and certified creeds" (Robinson 21–23).

Raktakarabi or *Red Oleanders* presents a kleptomaniac ruling over the residents of Yakshapuri. He and his retainers exploit his subjects and are benumbed by alcohol and, numbered like inventory by forcing them to mine gold for their ruler. The naive maiden heroine, Nandini, has rallied her subject compatriots to defeat the greed of the realm's *sardar* class with the belated help of the morally roused King. Skirting good verse on the evil troupe, the work has pitted a vital and joyous *lèse majesté* against the monotonous fealty

of the king's varlet, giving rise to an allegorical struggle akin to what is found in *Animal Farm* or *Gulliver's Travels*.

His other works have fused together lyrical flow and emotional rhythm into a tight focus on a core idea, a break from prior Bengali drama. Tagore has accentuated feelings and not of action in his works. In 1890 he has released what is regarded as his finest drama: *Visarjan (Sacrifice)*. It is an adaptation of *Rajarshi*, an earlier novella of his. *Chitrangada*, *Chandalika* and *Shyama* are his other key plays that have dance-drama adaptations and they are known as *Rabindra Nritya Natya*. *Chitra* has been, particularly, renowned for its exquisite lyrical quality. *The King of the Dark Chamber* and most of his other works are sprinkled with songs which are used to highlight a particular disposition or to provide emotional reprieve.

The enormity and sheer emotional power of his output have made him the one Asian writer whose work is widely known outside the region, and whose reputation has endured for many centuries. "Tagore's phenomenal dramatic career encompasses over sixty plays in nearly as many years and occupies a prime position in Bengali and modern Indian theatre. He is hailed as the Ibsen of the East" (Lal <<http://ukcatalogue.oup.com>>). Tagore's occupying a unique place in the history of Indian drama in English is not a mean achievement. Equipped with the classics of Indian drama and, at the same time, alive to the European dramatic tradition, he has definitely evolved a dramatic form in India and has influenced the Bengali and English theatres in India.

Tagore is not without pitfalls despite towering tall among the Indian English playwrights of pre-independence India and even beyond for his contribution to the theatre of India and, Bengal in particular. His plays are weak in plot construction and characterization in the midst of all the rich

variety, symbolic significances and lyrical excellence. His characters are not so complex as to hold the audience awestruck and bamboozled; they are mostly one dimensional. He has also sometimes committed the fault of excesses though there are an abundance of rich symbolic presentations in his plays. Besides, Tagore tends to veer away from the sight of consequences of the overabundance of lyrical appeal; the excessive availability of it, most often than not, gets the better of the theatricality of his plays. Therefore, they become not so much actable because of lack of adequate dramatic action.

All this drawbacks do not throw Rabindranath Tagore into the shadows of other Indian English playwrights. His greatness in his contribution to the Indian English literature has remained intact and particularly his giant presence in the Bengali literature is in the fullest bloom and is hard wither away.

6.1.2. Sri Aurobindo Ghose

Sri Aurobindo Ghose is an Indian philosopher, poet, essayist, critic, historian, translator, journalist, playwright, short story writer, and autobiographer. He was born on August 15, 1872 at Calcutta, the third of six children, into a family with high-caste standing. His father, an eminent physician employed by the civil service, has thoroughly embraced the Western way of life and has attempted to shield Aurobindo from Indian influences from the time he was a baby. Aurobindo had a formal English education at home and abroad and, excelled in “English literature, the classics, and languages, including Latin, Greek, French, German, and Italian” (“Sri Aurobindo 1872-1950” <<http://www.enotes.com>>). Therefore, it is not astonishing that Aurobindo wrote almost exclusively in English, rather than in Bengali, his native language.

Sri Aurobindo is a major Indian English playwright and an accomplished craftsman in verse. He has inherited and carried forward the tradition of the British poetic drama, revived by Stephen Philips and Robert Bridges. His writing bears authentication to his insightful knowledge of Eastern and Western thought. His plays are Shakespearian in cast, written in blank verse, and well knit plots from the classical mythology of the East or the West. His plays are mostly constructed on the Elizabethan model, with great mastery over English. He has authored five complete plays in English. They are *Perseus the Deliverer*, *The Viziers of Bassora*, *Vasavadutta*, *Rodogune*, and *Eric the King of Norway*. His play *Vikramorvasie* or *Hero and the Nymph* is a blank verse rendering of Kalidasa's Sanskrit play *Vikramorvasiyam*. In addition, there are some unfinished plays, two playlets and a collection of five dramatic dialogues to his credit. Of the five complete plays by Sri Aurobindo, *Rodogune* is a tragedy and the other four are comedies.

Perseus the Deliverer is a romantic play revolving round the ancient Greek legend of Perseus. The play is written in five Acts and it belongs to the early period of Sri Aurobindo's literary activity. It is based on the Elizabethan model. The scene of the action takes place in Syria where Andromeda, the heroine, is exposed to the sea monster with whom she fought and braved the consequences. The legend, passing through the pen of the playwright, has finally emerged with a message that love and compassion have ultimately defeated hatred and terror. It is through the decisive action and spiritual prowess of Andromeda that Perseus is brought to her side. United in deep love, they are able to fight against the dreaded sea monster and become victorious.

The story of the play is straightforward. There are no puzzling intricacies in the plot and no psychological conundrums to tax the mind. The

story finds a parallel in the play *Thesmophoriazusae* by Aristophanes, in which Mnesilochus, bound to a plank, is at last rescued by Euripides. It also reminds us of a Celtic myth, according to which, Devorgilla the daughter of the king of the Isles is redeemed by Cuchulainn; and also of our Indian myth of Krishna who has responded to Rukmini's appeal, eliminated his rival and married her.

In the play, Perseus is, of course, the hero. Though he does not appear as often as he ought to have appeared as a hero, he made his presence and also conspicuous absence felt by all. The audience cannot fail to notice his acts of bravery and compassionate dealings. Similarly, Andromeda, the heroine of the play has risked her life for a noble cause and became the cynosure of all eyes apart from her stunning beauty that has enthralled many. Poseidon, the wicked Priest of a wicked God, is the symbol of corruption ever practiced in the name of religion. The story, therefore, is made to have a happy ending by the intervention of the supernatural instead of projecting it to be a powerful tragedy. At the same time, the playwright has never forgotten to give a modern psychological touch to the plot and characterization.

There is good suspense in the play as the special powers of Perseus are not known in the beginning. Next, the Priest Poseidon has successfully overpowered the king and snatched away Andromeda to punish her cruelly. The climax of the story is astutely handled by the author. The tempo of the play is maintained throughout and the title is very significant. This play indeed bears testimony to the intellectual caliber of Sri Aurobindo. Above all, the play shows that when pure love and God's grace combine, satanic forces are bound to be vanquished.

The Viziers of Bassora, also called the *Dramatic Romance*, is a play in five Acts and in the Elizabethan cast. The theme is from *The Arabian Nights*.

It is a romantic comedy which takes us back to the days of the great Haroun al Rasheed. Haroun al Rasheed is the caliph of Baghdad, having full religious authority over the Muslim kingdom and Jaafar is his vizier. Alzayni, Halroun's cousin, is the king of Bassora. Alfazzal Ibn Sawy, noted for his goodness, is his Chief Vizier, and the wicked Almuene bin Khakan, his second Vizier; Nureddene is the son of Alfazzal and Fareed, the son of Almuene, is notorious like his father in cruelty.

The author has excellently handled the theme of love in this play. There are characters of shining contrast: the good Alfazzal Ibn Sawy, the Chief Vizier of Bassora and the wicked Almuene, the second Vizier; Nureddene who though full of youth is good like his father and is a thorough contrast to Fareed, who is a lusty tyrant, the Sultan who is wicked enough to be guided by Almuene and Ajebe who is noble unlike his uncle. Above all, there is the kind Caliph, the Commander of the Faithful, Allah's Vice Regent who puts down all evil and pluck the virtuous out of danger's hand. One noteworthy thing is that almost all the women characters – Ameena and Khatoon who are sisters, Alrazzal's niece Doonya, Anice the heroine of the play and other slave girls – are exceptionally good.

Even though the play is on the model of Elizabethan in cast, it has, at times, shown the influence of Sanskrit poetry particularly in the description of Baghdad in Act IV, Scene 1. There is an echo of the Indian philosophy in the words of the hypocrite Ibrahim and both prose and blank verse are effectively employed in this play. The very good suspense maintained is one of the chief attractions of the play. Therefore, the fourth and the fifth acts demand greater attention and interest from the audience. Unlike in other plays of the playwright, lengthy speeches are interspersed with brief conversations here and there in the play.

Aurobindo has given a special flavor to Kalidasa's Sanskrit play *Vikramorvasiyam* *Vikramorvasie* or *The Hero and the Nymph* through a blank verse rendering. Falling onto the hands of a more dexterous writer, the play is more than a literal translation. He has added colour and flavor into the play. The story is quarried from the range of deathless romance which is engraved in the Hindu sacred Rigveda. Aurobindo, though borrowed the title from Kalidasa's play, has given a modern touch to it.

The story is based on the triumph of love. King Pururavas has helped the gods and displayed his valour. Urvasie, the ornament of Eden and its joy, half-nymph and half-woman was rescued by him from the hands of a Gandharva and, they both fell in love. Meanwhile, while staging a play in heaven, under the direction of the preceptor Bharata, Urvasie has unconsciously uttered the name of her lover Pururavas. Enraged by this, Bharata has cursed her with a damning destiny that she should go down to the earth. Thereupon, Indra, the Lord of gods took pity on her and limited the curse. According to it, Urvasie goes to the earth, lists a married life with Pururavas and disappeared after begetting a son. Stricken with inconsolable grief, the king wandered in the forest nearby like a madman. At last, the compassionate gods have granted him a passage to Indra's kingdom by making him immortal, to be ever united with Urvasie.

Dwelling on the love between King Pururavas and Urvasie, the playwright has given a psychological touch through his careful and skilful handling of the plot. The ever merciful love and compassion of God is given the pivotal role in this play like that in *Perseus the Deliverer*.

Aurobindo's *Vasavadutta* is traced back to "Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara*, dramatised by Bhasa in his Sanskrit play *Swapna Vasavadutt*. The play has been given a more psychological treatment by Sri

Aurobindo and the romance is heightened in the play” (Bhatta <<http://yabaluri.org>>). Vuthsa Udayan, the hero of the play, is the young king of Cowsambie and Yougundharayan, his wise old minister and until recently his regent. Mahasegn, the king of Avunthic, is his principle political rival and Vasavadutta is his beautiful daughter. With the help of his son Gopalaca, he has Udayan kidnapped and kept him in a jail under the vigilance of Vasavadutta, in order to make him a slave and in future a vassal of his empire, acknowledging his superiority. Love has played the spoil sports to Mahasegn’s plan and made the jailor herself a prisoner. Vasavadutta fell in love with Udayan. To be freed from the bondage of Mahasegn, both Udayan and Vasavadutta have escaped into Cowsambie with the hearty assistance of her other brother Vicurna, her captive princess Munjoolica, and others. This prestige hurting event has increased the wrath of Mahasegn, who has suddenly sent his forces to capture Udayan again, but was in vain.

The play is written in blank verse and marked with a meager suspense. It is found that the imprisoned king, Vuthsa Udayan, goes out of his way to fall in love with his rival’s beautiful daughter, Vasavadutta. The two became mutually infatuated with each other. The uneasiness of the progress of the play lies only in Vasavadutta, who became fully enamoured with Udayan and forgot her promise which she has made to her father.

The interest of the play lies in the love between the hero and heroine and, the escape they successfully meet with. Beyond this, there is no interesting suspense to hold the breath of the audience. Aurbindo’s skill lies in his romantic triumph that he intentionally puts it in this play.

Rodogune is a play that is cleverly tailored by the author. It is a modified version of a tragedy of the same name written by Corneille. It is a play in five acts and is placed in the author’s imaginary Syria. The heroine,

Rodogune, a former Parthian princess, is a captive attendant of the scheming queen of Egypt, Cleopatra. Cleopatra's two sons, Antiochus and Timocles, by her first husband were living with their uncle Ptolemy in Egypt. At the death of her second husband, they returned to Syria. The selfish queen has mistaken fulsome flattery for real love and has rejected Antiochus. Timocles has been accepted by the queen as the first born. He has revolted to claim the throne of Syria and, both, Rodogune and Antiochus, who are mutually attracted by love, have joined together in this venture. Timocles too fell in love with Rodogune but temporarily he has submitted to the Chancellor Phayllus' cunningness and his sister Cleone's seductions. A civil war took place between the brothers in respect of Rodogune and the throne of Syria. Antiochus has surrendered himself to his brother unconditionally but is murdered by the order of Timocles. In this regard, K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar has remarked that "His long soliloquy on the eve of his decision to return to Syria and throw himself on his brother's mercy is well-sustained" (Iyengar 1962, 117). The heartbroken Rodogune also dies and Cleopatra and Timocles are left to themselves in the end. The tragic end of the play has only Cleopatra and Timocles left to suffer for their misdeeds.

Aurobindo has framed the play to illustrate how the suffering that comes to men is designed not to crush him but to raise him to a new consciousness. The plot is powerful and the characters of the play are well drawn. Antiochus is a hero subjected to fate. He is frank and straightforward enough to climb the throne not by vulgar riot, nor by fratricidal murder but through the heroic steps of ordered battle. Though brought up along with him by Ptolemy, his brother Timocles is different from him and thus becomes a victim to the net spread by the wicked Phayllus and Cleona.

Cleopatra's mother-love is selfish and possessive and, she resembles King Lear of Shakespeare in her behaviour towards her sons. The main attraction of the play is Rodogune, who is the haunting creature of beauty, romance and tragedy. She fully responds to Antiochus' love. Aurobindo has enriched all this actions in the play with arresting dialogues. The play, in fact, is rich in crisp talk which has accelerated the action.

Eric is another play which is written in five acts. It was written when he was in Pondicherry in 1912 or 1913 and it deals with Norway in ancient times and the Viking culture of the Nordic race. Eric is the elected king of Norway and Swegne is his enemy. Aslaug, the sister of Swegne and Hertha, Swegne's wife, arrived at Eric's court disguised as dancing girls; their motive being to murder Eric. But Eric falls in love with Aslaug and she cannot resist her inner response to this tempting love, in spite of her determination to kill him. Even the tactful Hertha became helpless. In a highly exciting scene, Aslaug lifts the dagger and lowers it twice, then flings it on the ground falling on her knees at Eric's feet. Eric is bold enough to offer a chance to Aslaug to dance with the dagger and fulfill her design, but love triumphs. In the ensuing battle, Swegne is defeated by Eric but left him alive according to his promise. Further, Eric honours him with his lost titles and wife and marries Aslaug.

Viewing critically on the intensity of love in this play, K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar has opined that "Love triumphs over Hate, Freya over Thor, even as Pallas Athene triumphs over Poseidon in Perseus the Deliver" (Iyengar 1943, 89). The play shows the various stages of love; love as passion, love as a union of souls and love as a cosmic force which establishes man's kinship, not only with his fellow human beings but with the universe.

He does not incarcerate himself to one particular place or country in choosing his themes. He has hovered over a wide range of countries from

Scandinavia to India providing material for his plays. There is the romantic impulse in his themes and he tries to view the contemporary problem of slavery and foreign rule against that setting. While presenting his vision of evolution of man, he has accentuated on the harmonizing power of love. Commenting comprehensively on Aurobindo's plays, Viswanathan Bite has said, "Though his plays display a great exuberance of thought and language and have an appeal to the scholar, they cannot fully meet the demands of the stage and are at best closet dramas" (Bite <<http://vishwanathbite.blogspot.in>>). However Aurobindo has opened up new vistas in the Indian drama in English by depicting an element of full bodied optimism about the future of mankind. His plays have also revealed his tight grip on rich poetry and his exquisite skill in the portrayal of characters. S.S. Kulkarni has appropriately eulogized Aurobindo by saying that he has created "extremely interesting men and women by developing the psychological element which endows his plays with exhaustible human interest and significance" (Kulkarni 9).

6.1.3. Thyagaraja Paramasiva Kailasam

Thyagaraja Paramasiva Kailasam was born of a Tamil Brahmin family in Bangalore. His father, Paramshiva Iyer, was an eminent Justice in the High Court of Mysore. He has a keen interest in his son's future prospect of becoming an eminent geologist, holding a high position. Kailasam, on the contrary, nurtures the desire of entering into the theatre. As he was sent to England to pursue his higher studies in geology, he has evinced a keen interest in theatre and stage shows. As a result, he took six years to complete his three year degree course, so that he could extend his stay in London.

During his life time, he has many accolades. A playwright and a prominent writer of Kannada literature, his contribution to Kannada theatrical

comedy has “earned him the title *Prahasana Prapitamaha* (the father of humorous plays) and later he was also called as *Kannadakke Obbane Kailasam*, meaning One and Only Kailasam for Kannada” (“Kailasam” <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). He wrote several plays in English and Kannada and has left a huge legacy. It is said that he has a great sense of humour and his wit was unmatched. His plays are replete with these qualities. His humorous expressions and instant witty observations endeared him to all his followers and fans. Here is a flavor or two of his humour: Once when someone has mentioned about his soured relationship with his famous father who considered Kailasam as a wastrel, he said, “Initially, whenever people saw me frolicking on the streets, they used to point at me and say, look at him, he is Kailasam, the son of the well-known Justice Mr. Iyer. But nowadays, whenever they see my father taking a stroll, they say, you know, he is the father of the famous T.P. Kailasam”. At another moment he has remarked on his addiction to alcohol saying, “I am a pure vegetarian. I cannot drink milk because it is a liquid beef, so I drink the vegetarian alcohol” (“T.P.Kailasam: Humuorist, Playwright and a Great Soul” <<http://shivashankarshastry.sulekha.com>>).

Though he is considered as the father of modern Kannada drama, his genius has found its full expression in his English plays. G. S. Amur has precisely remarked, “A talented actor who appeared on the amateur as well as the professional stage, he brought to the writing of drama an intimate knowledge of the theatre. It is for this reason that his plays whether in Kannada or English, have a uniform technical excellence” (Amur 186). His famous English plays are *The Burden* (1933), *Fulfilment* (1933), *The Purpose* (1944), *Karna* (1946) and *Keechaka* (1949). These plays have elevated him to occupy a prominent place in the firmament of Indian English drama.

P. Bayapa Reddy has remarked that Kailasam “stands apart from Sri Aurobindo in that he has made an earnest attempt to blend both the Indian and the Western traditions of drama” (Reddy 17). He was acquainted with the rich traditions of Kannada theatre and the glorious cultural tradition of the country. His plays are vivacious representations of themes taken mostly from ancient Indian literature. S. Krishna Bhatta has this to say on Kailasam:

It appears that his knowledge of ancient Indian literature and history and his stay in England urged him to contribute something concrete to this spacey cultivated field...his plays breath throughout, a deep reverence for our ancient culture with a modern critical approach. We find in him a blending of genius and intuitive vision, a fertile imagination, ready wit and subtle humour and a serious presentation of the theme” (Bhatta 86).

Though all his Kannada plays are social comedies, his English plays are mythological and tragic. His explanation for writing his serious mythological plays in English was because the language that needs to delineate the ideal character should not be near to us.

Like Aurobindo, he has desired to address the educated Indians who were gradually being disinherited or wanting to disinherit from their cultural heritage. It is, therefore, lucidly perceivable that he wanted to produce a national literature through English. His English plays are a clear reflection of the inspiration of *Puranic* themes, especially the *Mahabharata*. From the inception of his dramatic career, he was preoccupied with the vision of Karna, Draupadi, Krishna, Bheesma, Drona, Bharata, Keechaka, Ekalavya and many other mythological characters. There is a clear and cogent depiction, through his works, that his English plays are concerned with the development of human personality and its inscrutable relationship with destiny. The

development of human personality is unpredictable because the ways of destiny are mysterious and destiny is more powerful than aspirations and, moral intentions of the man who chooses to accept the challenge of destiny. A remarkable hallmark of the dramatist is that he has taken the characters from the epic *Mahabharata* and tried to interpret them in the light of human values.

The Burden reveals Kailasam's skill for plot construction and character delineation. Using English as a medium and with his great dramatic skill, he has expanded a single episode into a powerful and touching play. This is the only play which has its base in the *Ramayana* and is also perhaps the shortest play of Kailasam. The incident is from *Ayodyakanda* of Valmiki's *Ramayana*. The play is about the story of Bharata, who on his way back from his grandfather's place to Ayodhya has learnt that his father is dead. He is so enraged that he did not even spare the royal priest, Vasistha.

Ignoring Rama, the most important character and hero in the *Ramayana*, Kailasam has attempted to elevate Bharata to the status of a tragic hero, though there was only a slight hint of tragedy in the play. It is so brief that it has ended even before constructing the required emotional effect in the audience. The lacuna has also arisen from the vague unraveling of the complication. Here, one wonders whether our dissatisfaction arose from our prior knowledge of the incident which figures in Valmiki's *Ramayana*, or whether Kailasam has allowed it to slip from his hands an excellent opportunity to explore in depth the virtuous younger brother's predicament. This much seems clear in the context of the other plays of Kailasam, that in this play he has definitely wished to focus on a character that is penumbral, in the half-shadows of Rama's dramatic life. In spite of the limited scope for character delineation in this play, Bharata is portrayed vividly with his

anguish and mortal conflict in a very convincing way and he is exalted by the playwright.

The Purpose has delineated Ekalavya's conception of idealism. It is the earliest of Kailasam's plays. The play is more complex in its conception and execution than the plays that followed later, like *The Curse of Karna* and *Keechaka*. If the later plays are concerned with the psychological conflict of an individual and the destiny he confronts, *The Purpose* goes deeper into the exaction of life itself. This play does not explore the destiny of individuals but it endeavours to discover the very meaning of life, the purpose of its creation and growth, life and death. This play, therefore, dwells on the existential problems and its metaphysical complexities.

Fulfilment has delineated the story of Ekalavya who is about to join the Kauravas on the war front. Like all his mythological plays, *Fulfilment* also comes to us with a difference. The location of the play is a glade in Ekalavya's forest. Ekalavya has entered the scene to find a person surrounded by the fawns of the forest. He has remained firm in his valour to participate in the war despite Krishna's effort in trying to dissuade him from doing so. Krishna has failed in his attempt because of Ekalavya's conviction that he owes a duty to his King. He has even reminded Ekalavya of his greater duty towards the fawns but to no avail. Finally, when Krishna has found no way of stopping him and as Ekalavya was relating the story of the Bird's Tree, Krishna surreptitiously stabs and kills him. Ekalavya's mother was also killed by Krishna, once again stealthily. The play ends violently with a piercing scream of anguish heard from behind the trees of the forest.

The play is Kailasam's effort at reshaping traditional interpretations. Doubts arise as to whose purpose has the play finally fulfilled. Our answer to this question may come only when we read the sequel to which *Fulfilment* is,

that is *The Purpose*. The note on *Fulfilment* provides a passage from the *Mahabharata* which supposedly has lent Kailasam the inspiration and support at the time of the creation of *Fulfilment*:

Jaraasandhaha Chaydi-raajo mahaatma
Mahaabaahuhu Ekalavyo nishaadaha
Ekyekasaha twaddhitaartham
hataaha MAYAIVA
(Kailasam 1987, 636).

According to this passage, Krishna justifies to Arjuna of his act in killing Jarasandha, Shishupala and Ekalavya before the actual commencement of the war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. They had to be eliminated for Arjuna's own good, lest they would have posed a major threat to the Pandavas by sheer strength and loyalty to their King. With this realization in mind, Krishna's explanation to Ekalavya, that "Your King, his friends, are wolves that hurt my/ fawns; Paartha and his friends are wolves that might/ Hurt my fawns, and they shall go too", (Kailasam 1987, 649) only seems like a viable tactic employed by Krishna to justify his act of killing Ekalavya. The same thing is witnessed even in the battle scene in *The Brahmin's Curse*. Encouraging Arjuna to slay the paralyzed Karna, Krishna had said:

It is the PURPOSE of the killing, not
the MEANS and MANNER
of the killing that
Decides the FAIRNESS ... JUSTNESS of the killing!
(Kailasam 1987, 820).

Therefore, the purpose is crystal clear; it is to protect the Pandavas and restore their right to the throne, whatever may be the cost to anyone else.

In the light of the fate meted out to Ekalavya, Krishna's brutal act of killing Ekalavya and also his mother, however logical his reason may sound, leaves the readers with the feeling that Ekalavya and his mother have not been justly treated. Ekalavya has not only won the sympathy of the readers but also prompted them to think about the unfair treatment to which he is subjected in the name of justice or destiny.

The Curse of Karna or *The Brahman's Curse* has described the destiny of Karna and the tragedy caused by Bhargava. The play began with a complication when Karna is cursed by his guru, Raama, after it was discovered that he is, after all, not a Brahmin. Karna's repeated confession that he is a *sootha*, which is a forced lie, so as to receive the otherwise unavailable education, does not convince Raama, who has assumed that Karna belongs to the Kshatriya clan, against which he bore vengeful thoughts. Enraged by the deceptions of Karna, Raama had cursed him and, thus, the title of the play. The play does not only revolve around the curse but also the mystery behind Karna's inability to accomplish any task he undertook. Kailasam's dexterity lies in such creative weaving of his plays.

The curse has set forth Karna's downfall in life. The intensity of the post-curse tragedy is further heightened by his discovery that the Pandarvas are his brothers. The thread of conflict is carried forward by Ashwatta, the son of Guru Drona. Ashwatta had cursed Arjuna because he could not bear the tragic plight of Karna. Unfortunately, Aswatta's words in cursing Arjuna had, ultimately, brought a curse to the sinful ones, in which Karna is the condemned one for his own deeds.

Not a

Single scion of Thy sinful House or Seed

Shall ever rule this

Land

(Kailasam 1987, 825).

The play, therefore, ends with Karna, the scion of the same sinful house, becoming the victim of a Brahmin's curse.

This play is akin to Sophocles' *King Oedipus*. It is a trans-creation of it, "... not by creating a new fictional character who would fit an Indian setting but by dramatizing an existing figure from Indian mythology" ("Heroes from the Fringes" <<http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in>>). There are striking similitudes between Karna and Oedipus. As infants, both were separated from their real parents. Though innocent, both became victims of fatalistic curses which have ultimately led them to their death. There are also glaring dissimilarities amidst similarities between them. In Sophocles' play, the complication is unraveled without Oedipus' realization of his predicament. This realization of Oedipus' predicament occurred only in the end scene of the play. In Kailasam's play, Karna suffers his predicament in the knowledge of its causes but he is yet unable to exonerate himself and this has paved the way for a totally tragic situation. Tragically, the predicament is known to those around Karna but not for him.

The last act of the play reveals that Karna has encountered a much more excruciating and traumatic confrontations. Kunti has bartered the knowledge of his royal birth in exchange for a promise from Karna that he will not put the devastating Naga shaft to his bow a second time. The circumstances leading to the gradual revelation of the curse to Suryodana and the princes in each act, along with the final revelation of Karna's royal birth, has reduced him to a mere shadow of his warrior self. This tragic fall of Karna invites the complete sympathy of the audience.

Keecheka, another play of Kailasam, is based on the legendary story borrowed from Vyasa's *Mahabharata*. Keecheka, the protagonist of the play, has been given a different fringe character by the author in this play. Keecheka is portrayed as a villain in Vyasa's *Mahabharata* but Kailasam has presented him as a much misunderstood character. The Pandavas in the same play are also portrayed as fringe characters in a different sense, for they are in their thirteenth year of exile. But they are characters who already have the sympathy of the readers. By making Keechaka the hero, Kailasam has explored the forgotten or ignored sides of the story. His selection of varied fringe characters makes us rethink their fate and function. They also impel us to rethink the history transmitted by a complex and pernicious tradition.

It is conspicuous that all the mythological plays of Kailasam have exposed his sensitivity towards and concern for perpetual problems like the caste system of his society. As a necessary part of his rebellion against such cultural practices, Kailasam has created new ideas out of the ancient myths, thus providing his society with modern alternatives. His creativity as a playwright seems to have cut short before its full bloom. His contribution to the Indian English theatre is greatly upheld but there is a sense of incomplete in his contribution. In a real sense, it is a pity that Kailasam did not write more or more fully since the promise of these English plays is substantial.

6.1.4. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

Born to Aghornath Chattopadhyaya and Barada Sundari on April 2 1898, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya was the first Lok Sabha member from Vijayawada constituency. He is a poet, actor and playwright with a deep interest in theatre. K. Venkata Reddy has termed him as "one of the most versatile and vigorous literary personalities of contemporary India, Harin is a poet, painter, playwright, musician, actor—all rolled into one" (Reddy

<<http://yabaluri.org>>). He has made a significant contribution in the growth of Indian English drama. He wrote poetic dramas in English through his devotional plays and is “the first dramatist in India who wrote *agit prop* plays dealing with the real India with all its problems, with all its ugliness, squalor, dirt and disease” (Reddy 20).

His devotional plays deal with certain situations in the lives of the religious leaders such as Jayadeva, Ravidas, Ednath, Pundalik and Sakku Bai. These devotional plays are written in verse, and are playlets rather than full length plays. These plays have certain weaknesses and the criticism leveled against them is that their plot constructions are loose. Characterization is rather blurred and there is a predominance of poetry over action. As a result, boredom sways the audience. *Tukaram* stands apart among his devotional plays. It is freed from the overabundance of poetry. The saintly ardour, sense of humility and detachment of the hero are markedly brought out in his mellifluous songs as well as dialogues with his wife and Rameshwar. The different scenes are well knit and even the usage of poetry is functional rather than decorative which is found in some other devotional plays. Its chief good point lies in its being effective, both as a closet play and a stage play.

Apart from the poetic plays, Harindranath has to his credit, plays of social protest which are found in his collection *Five Plays* (1937). *Five Plays* includes *The Window*, *The Parrot*, *The Sentry's Lantern*, *The Coffin* and *The Evening Lamp*. These plays are warm, humane, sincere, energetic, outspoken, full of enthusiasm and full of concern. Balarama Gupta has this to say with regard to Harindranath's plays:

Sympathy for the exploited, revolt against stultifying morality, insurgence against brute forces of Imperialism, a plea for purposeful writing – such are the themes of these plays which are either

symbolic or didactic and propaganda. Harin's plays are all products of an earnest commitment to certain ideas (Gupta 17).

These social plays have heralded the emergence of a significant working class dramatist with innate potentialities. K. Venkata Reddy has eulogized Harindranath Chattopadhyaya by comparing him with the novelist Mulk Raj Anand saying, "like Mulk Raj Anand in the field of Indian fiction in English, Harim has succeeded in bringing a kind of life to the Indian stage that was never there before" (Chattopadhyaya <<http://yabaluri.org>>). *The Window* is an authentic account of the slum life of the factory workers, while *The Parrot*, concerning itself with the unendurable life of a woman, is speaking for the hundreds of women who become a prey to conventional morality. *The Sentry's Lantern* is about a poet, a merchant and a worker who are to be hanged. The central theme in this play is the evil of imperialism. *The Coffin* is a plea for purposeful writing and *The Evening Lamp* is about a young man who has fallen in love with shadows.

This new genre of dealing with the underdogs of working people is the hallmark of Harindranath Chattopadhyaya. It is for the first time in the history of Indian plays in English that working class characters have been introduced on stage as the central figure. Ever since Indian playwrights started penning down plays in English, up till Chattopadhyaya, no playwright had ever cut such large slices of the working class life. Chattopadhyaya has, therefore, carved a niche for himself in the history of Indian English playwrights as the author of this group of people.

Chattopadhyaya's social plays are more effective than his devotional plays. His enthusiasm in the working class is basically to pave the way for an egalitarian society, to make their presence felt and their voice heard. The main concern is for the well-being of the low grade workers which is laid bare in

his social plays. This is strikingly noticeable in his acute awareness of the social problems around him. These social plays register the author's protest against the cruelty of capitalist factory owners, the conventional and stultifying morality, subjection of woman as a caged bird and the irresponsibility of writers to social problems. The plays are satirically very powerful with well knit plots and lifelike characters. Prof. Srinivasa Iyengar has rightly described them as "manifestoes of the new realism" (Iyengar 234).

Chattopadhyaya has been deeply influenced by the Leftist Movement during the nineteen thirties. He was a scientist dreamer and a mystic jester. Swerving spasmodically between the extremes of Aurobindonian mysticism and Marxian materialism, he has sampled every variety of experience, and exploited every possible mood, pose and stance. The workman's wife in *The Window* has complained: "We, poor workers' families - untaught, uncomforted, unfed, squalid, ragged, broken - dwelling in dingy holes - frightened walking dead ones, tools' shadow - possessions of man, themselves possessing nothing - filth, degradation, disease" (10-11). The same air of being trampled to suffer and toil because of being a downtrodden is seen in *The Parrot*. The woman in this play puts forth her problem in the following words: "One rupee - and for that one stupid little round coin of silver you have lost your freedom. You have lost the sky and the meaning of your wings" (35). The language used is original and authentically social conscious by really conveying the mood and emotion of the class of people to whom it belongs. Chattopadhyaya is, therefore, the voice for the voiceless in society and he truly represents the underdogs in the Indian society in particular and the world in general. He is a lyric poet, a playwright and a mystic turned Leftist. He is a poet every inch. He bears the distinct mark of the Indian mind and unmistakably an Indian speaking English in any form of his writings. His acute awareness of the modern maladies has made him so

satirical and, at the same time, this has made him to be present to his age and period and, even beyond.

The coming of Tagore and Sri Aurobindo into the world of Indian English drama has triggered off a new source of life in the Indian English dramaturgy. These two great personalities, with their powerful impact of the west, have played a significant role in enhancing this particular genre. Tagore's theme ranges from the pastoral to modern age, from religious beliefs to social comedy, from entertainment and romantic love to martyrdom. Sri Aurobindo's dramatic creations have the Elizabethan impressions. T.P. Kailasam gives a humorous touch and his plays have a modern impact. He has gleaned his themes from the mythologies of India and Greek and, his plays have psychological dealings.

Plays that came to live during the pre-independence period showed certain differences with those of the Sanskrit plays. When Sanskrit plays were engrossed with the mythological and celestial themes, pre-independence plays showed the signs of deviating from these and eying on social themes. The plays of Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and T. P. Kailasam are essentially lyrical, allegorical and symbolic. They wrote their plays in an idiom which has "an archaic quality and this archaicness lends the dialogues a charm, a grace and a kind of distance which produce heightened aesthetic pleasure" (Ramamurti 11). These playwrights wrote English dramas not so much for the stage as for being read. Their plays are about what life should be rather than about what life is. The playwright who was more inclined to social realism is Hrindranath Chattopadhyaya. His plays have veered away from the overabundance of mythical references to the concrete reality of social situations. With his dealings on underdogs of society, he is more akin to the

post-independence English dramatists of India. In this sense, he has the touch and vein of modernity.

6.2. Select Post-independence Playwrights

A change came about from moralizing and idealizing life, as it was in the pre-independence plays, to presenting the stark reality of life in the post-independence plays. The transition has been affected by the economic depression in 1930s and the growth of National Movements. As a result, playwrights in India during this period were shifting their focus to the realistic picture of society. “Subsequently, there emerged the Indo – Anglian drama of social realism and revolution, both as an Indian phenomenon related to the National Movement and as part of the English social realism of the period” (Reddy 19). This new wave of social realism has enamored the playwrights of this era, making them to pen down plays dealing with the underdogs of society.

Indian English playwrights, who came into the dramatic scene after the Indian independence till today, were exposed to greener pastures. The west influence that was finding a more cordial reception, both in language and culture, has given way for cross fertilization. Besides, the post-independence Indian drama was benefited by the increasing interest of the foreign countries in Indian English literature in general and Indian English plays in particular. Moreover, the growth of theatre has allowed the dramatic taste to steadily but surely percolate into the veins of Indians. This has been further boosted with India’s rich history, culture and diverse heritages. Therefore, Indian dramatists have ample amount of sources to devour and translate it into plays that is palatable to them and to the demands of the audience. Whether it is A.S.P. Ayyar, Asif Currimbhoy, Girish Karnad, Pratap Sharma, Vijay Tendulkar or Mahesh Dattani, their plays have the touch of modernity. Most of their plays

follow the genre of social realism. Human beings and their existence, enveloped with varied social situations, are their core concern. Select Indian English playwrights of this period are dealt with in brief to lead us into the discussion of Asif Currimbhoy.

6.2.1. Girish Karnad

Girish Karnad, recipient of *Jnampith Award*, is a living legend in the arena of contemporary Indian English Drama. He is a playwright, actor critic and emissary of Indian art and culture. “He has emerged as the most significant playwright in the post independence Indian literature” (Dhanavel 11). His journey from *Yayati* to *The Fire and the Rain* is a reflection of the evolution of Indian theatre for about four decades. He is a leading Indian playwright and one of the most stupendous practitioners of performing arts. His dramatic sensibility has been immensely honed under the influence of touring Natak Companies and especially Yakshagana which was not accepted as the purified form in his days. He is a man with a different bent of mind and is among the foremost media persons to our time and, his achievement, as a playwright, has received a widespread recognition.

He has borrowed his plots from history, mythology and old legends. Well versed in symbolic usage, Karnad has employed symbols to establish the relevance of history, mythology and legends in contemporary socio-political conditions. Historicity and its contemporariness in the present are, therefore, dearly held by him. His five plays *Tughlaq* (1962), *Hayavadana* (1970), *Nagamanda* (1972), *Tale-Danda* (1989) and *Fire and the Rain* (1994) have been translated into English; the first two by Karnad himself. He has combined classical, folk and western theatrical tradition in his plays. This creativity and innovativeness have won him great accolades in the field of

Indian English dramaturgy and, therefore, his contribution to Indian English Drama is immense.

C. Rajagopalachari's version of the *Mahabharata* has deeply impacted him and eventually his *Yayati* was designed and published in 1964. It is based on the story of King Yayati, one of the ancestors of Pandavas, who was cursed into premature old age by his father-in-law, Shankaracharya, incensed by Yayati's infidelity. The play ridicules the ironies of life through the characters in *Mahabharata*. Karnad's perceptive intellect could weave such a story into a contemporary relevance. In a situation like that he has found a new approach like drawing historical and mythological sources to tackle contemporary themes and existentialist crisis of modern man, through the characters who are locked in psychological and philosophical conflicts. *Tughlaq* and *Tale-Danda* too reflect the theme of historicity and its contemporariness in the present. *Tughlaq*, his best loved play, relates the story of an idealist 14th century Sultan of Delhi, Muhammad bin Tughluq. The play is an allegory on the Nehruvian era which started with ambitious idealism and ended up in disillusionment. With this play, Karnad has been shot to popularity and the most promising playwright in the country. *Tale-Danda* deals with the pain and agony in the life of Basavanna who has sacrificed his life in his bid to propagate his revolutionary philosophy.

The main tenets of Karnad's revolutionary philosophy which are found in this play are abolition of caste, equality of the sexes, rejection of idol worship and the repudiation of Brahminism and Sanskrit in favour of the mother tongue, i.e. Kannada. N.K. Naik and Shyamala A. Narayan have remarked that "the play marks out clearly the dangers of knowledge without wisdom and power without integrity" (Naik 2001, 204). Like other Indian playwrights, Karnad leant on the past mythology and tradition of India for

inspiration. Plays like *Yayati* and *The Fire and the Rain* are drawn from the great Indian epic the *Mahabharata* and has been given a contemporary meaning.

Stories from the age old culture and tradition of India stand as the repository for Karnad to pick and creatively weave it into plays, pregnant with meaning and contemporary relevance. These become vehicles for him to communicate the ideologies and systems of knowledge. The cultural and traditional stories, in effect, turn out to be humble cuisines of Karnad for readers and audience to deliciously devour them. His shrewd mind has penetrated into everything and, in fact, he views everything from a historical and dialectical point of view. Even different ancient stories, which are replete with different cultures and languages, lay fully alive before him and ready to be born anew through his plays.

The plot of *Haryavadana* is drawn from the *Kathasaritsagana* and ancient collection of stories in Sanskrit. Karnad, in his creativity has given a brilliantly innovative touch to this story by not borrowing the complete material directly from *Kathasaritsagana*. He has drawn theme from a 1940 novella by Thomas Mann, *The Transposed Heads* which is originally found in *Kathasaritsagana* (Naik 2001, 203). Folk theatre form of *Yakshagana* is employed in this play. Unlike Thomas Mann's purpose in retelling the story, Karnad's purpose in *Haryavadana* is to deal with human identity in a world of tangled relationships. As the title of Thomas Mann's novella indicates, in Karnad's play, too, there is a transposition of heads by Padmini, giving Devadatta Kapila's body and Kapila Devadatta's body. This has created confusion of identities and has revealed the ambiguous nature of human personality, which is in a sense incomplete. The sub-plot of his play has also heightened the theme of incompleteness. The horseman's search for

completeness has ended comically with his becoming a complete human being. The animal body triumphs over the human head, which is what considered the best in man, is what Karnad reveals through the sub-plot.

There is an arresting theme that cannot be avoided in the plays of Karnad. His recurring theme of sexuality has a Freudian undertone. There is a wave of oedipal pattern being employed in *Yayati* and the relation between Yayati and Purru apparently progresses on the line of Oedipus complex. Besides, the ethical and moral habit, attached to human relationship, is tactfully handled by the author in this play. The common belief that a man's attraction to the opposite sex transcends all barriers is aptly enacted in the play when Yayati, the king, has shared the bed with Sharmishtha, his attendant. Girish Karnad has made the idea of Oedipus complex operational in a mythical story, wherein, he has employed the oedipal pattern of relationship and wove it in the Freudian sense.

Girish Karnad is modern in his entire approach to society and man. He does not even hesitate to plunge himself into the old wine for the sake of bursting it into a new one with a brand new taste and flavor, completely relevant to the people of his time. Aparna Dharwaldker has opined that Karnad “employs traditional Indian narrative materials and modes of performance successfully to create a radically modern urban theatre” (Dharwaldker 355). His contribution to the modern Indian Theatre can never be undermined. G.J.V. Prasad has optimistically remarked, “Suffice to say that at a historical moment, Karnad was among a clutch of playwrights and theatre practitioners who fashioned modern Indian drama, staging the Indian nation in the 1960s and '70s” (Prasad <<http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com>>).

6.2.2. Mahesh Dattani

Mahesh Dattani was born on 7th August 1958 in Bangalore. His early life, after the formal education, was briefly spent on copywriting for an advertising firm. He has been highly acclaimed as one of the best Indian playwrights and he writes his pieces in English. Dattani is the “first playwright in English to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award” (“Mahesh Dattani” <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). He is a playwright, actor, director, scriptwriter and film maker. As he ventured into the creative literary world of India, creative writing in English was quite blunt. Therefore, he went on to explore new genres: from detective stories to comedies. With regard to the choice of his themes, he has revealed to Utpal K. Banerjee in an interview: “I think one recurring theme is the individual’s struggle over societal demands or inflictions” (Banerjee 166).

With this existential dilemma in man bothering him inextinguishably, his first play *Where There is a Will* came to existence in 1986. After his first play has seen the light of day, he began to concentrate on his writing and wrote more dramas like *Final Solutions*, *Night Queen*, *Dance Like a Man*, *Tara*, *Thirty Days in September*, *Bravely Fought the Queen* and *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*. Commenting on these plays, Ratan Bhattacharjee has said that “they are plays of today sometimes as actual as to cause controversy, but at the same time they are plays which embody many of the classic concerns of world drama” (Bhattacharjee <<http://isahitya.com>>).

He has started working exclusively in theatre from 1995 onwards and also wrote plays for BBC Radio 4. Dattani, as a playwright, has never failed to impress the audience with his protagonists struggling to exonerate themselves from the overabundance of life’s sorrows and suffering. *Dance like a Man*

and *Thirty Days* portray the protagonists as striving for their own space or freedom from an unseen, self-inflicted form of oppression.

He does not shy away from acknowledging the fact that he had been inspired and shown the way by his predecessors. In an interview with Utpal K. Banerjee he has frankly revealed that Girish Karnad is his perfect role model of perfection (Banerjee 161). However, Dattani does not fall back to the mythology and history like Karnad to build up the basis for his plays. His mind and heart is inclined towards the social and political realities in India today. It is vividly clear in his plays that the recurring themes, he presents, are the Indian joint family and its impact on the individual, the plight of women in Indian society and homosexuality. There is no denying the fact that his works probe tangled attitudes of contemporary India towards communal differences, consumerism and gender.

His plays *Where There is a Will*, *Dance Like a Man* and *Bravely Fought the Queen* deal with the negative influence of the Indian joint family on its members living together. In *Dance Like a Man*, Dattani dwells on the issue of social prejudice against the art of dance and the plight of dancers. In *Tara*, the dramatist has embarked on the childhood story and powerfully deals on the social evil of gender bias. It is shown that the boy child is preferred to the girl child. The play has shown how the so called, disease of gender domination, has infected Indian society where women are still passive, helpless and shattered in front of the male tyranny.

On a Muggy Night in Mumbai is another bomb-shelling play of Dattani. It deals with a once upon a time taboo thing in India called homosexuality. The playwright has courageously presented this controversial theme to show that homosexuality is nothing new in the Indian society though it has being constantly looked at as something alien to our culture. In the play, a group of

well-to-do homosexuals in Bombay makes a revelation about themselves, exchange mutual relationship, attain self-discoveries and even go through disillusionment. Dattani's interest in venturing into the virgin field, that is the areas of fresh interest and least discussed or not discussed at all, such as that of homosexuals, lesbians, eunuchs or *hijras*, is not something a piece unexplored in our land before but his approach to these topics is certainly peculiar and bold. The play's circling on the homosexuality, lesbianism and sodomy is to show the deeply and psychologically affected people striving hard to find an answer to their mentally dissatisfied self. All the characters in the play fight with their own prejudices and end up in complete meaningless nothingness.

Mahesh Dattani has based his play *Thirty Days in September* on the issue of child abuse and has tried to lift the veil on the hush-hush subject. He has deftly treated the sensitive and generally taboo issue of child sexual abuse. The play with the story unfolding as a flashback, deals with the anguish of Mala Khatri, who is unable to stick to a steady relationship with any man for more than thirty days. It dwells on her trauma with the haunting memories of her abused past. As a child, she had been abused by her maternal uncle and this has left an indelible mark in her deeper self. As a result, she is unable to cope with the present life normally. Her abuser uncle has subconsciously lived with her all the time, as part of her dirty reflections. A nerve wrecking problem is also mirrored in the character of Mala's mother. While Mala is withering under the psychological pressure of her abuser, her mother has consciously and silently suffered but has done nothing to exonerate them from it. Dattani has astutely dealt with the paradox of such love and betrayal that a mother and daughter have gone through. There is the severance of it due to helplessness in their unbreakable bond of love.

Dattani has molded his subject in such a way that it is both topical as well as appealing and the universal appeal of it can never be downplayed. The social interest in his plays is what one is most attracted to. He himself has pronounced it in an interview: “I am strongly affected by social issues, especially when it comes to power play in class and gender. A lot of my plays deal with them and they remain the *leit motifs* of my plays” (Banerjee 166). This is how his plays speak across linguistic and cultural barriers. “There is an abundant use of Indian mythology, rituals and traditions and contemporary problems India is beset with but he has elevated these themes to a higher level, touching the human chords that emanate love, happiness, sexual fulfillment and problem of identity” (Bhattacharjee <<http://isahitya.com>>). It is in this way that Indian English dramatists have become socially conscious and have given their plays a contemporary colouring.

6.2.3. Vijay Tendulkar

Ever since his appearance on the literary scene in the 1950s, journalist-turned-writer, Vijay Tendulkar has captured our attention with his deep understanding of human complexity, social hypocrisy and hopes of the weak, particularly women. He is one of India’s most influential playwrights. He is one among the handful of playwrights along with Girish Karnad, Habib Tanvir and Badel Sircar, who have given a new content and form to Indian theatre by writing about contemporary issues and themes in a novel way.

Born in Kolhapur on January 6, 1928, Tendulkar has spent most of his life in Mumbai, writing sharp critiques of a society that he found increasingly violent and divided. He is one of the conscience-keepers of our society and creative world. He is also an untiring crusader for human rights and justice. This attribute in him has greatly enhanced his caliber as a prolific writer. He has written thirty full-length plays, seven one-act plays, two novels and

seventeen film scripts. His works are not only quantitatively abounding but also qualitatively rich and awe inspiring with sensitive issues of the contemporary era. They have manifested that he is a subtle observer of Indian social reality, a humanist and an innovative playwright. In an interview, Tendulkar has once said, “I have not written about hypothetical pain or created an imaginary world of sorrow. I am from a middle class family and I have seen the brutal ways of life by keeping my eyes open. My work has come from within me, as an outcome of my observation of the world in which I live. If they want to entertain and make merry, fine go ahead, but I can’t do it, I have to speak the truth” (Saxena (<<http://passionforcinema.com>>)). This love for truth and the gift of sharp observation have being the vanguard in his career as a writer and an activist.

His plays, which came in succession, *Ghashiram Kotwal* and *Sakharam Binder*, were penetrating studies in violence. Actually, before these plays, he had been drawing the attention of theatre goers and critics with plays like *Shantala! Court Chalu Aahe*. But he began to get national attention only in the early seventies and became an icon of the young. Kumar Ketkar has wondered at the cosmopolitan knowledge and appeal of Tendulkar: “It is difficult to understand how and from where Tendulkar acquired modernist and, later, post modernist ideas. He had a very modest middle-class background, with little exposure to the European or American world of art and literature” (Ketkar <[Http://www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)>)). This universal appeal of the playwright as an Indian is clearly revealed in his own words, in an interview with Amrita Shah, “Half-a-dozen writers staying abroad and writing in English don’t affect this country as discussed-if you are not rooted in this reality then writing about this reality is either sheer nostalgia or fiction. You may be able to impress the Booker Prize people but you cannot impress. The poor Indian writers writing in regional languages are impressed not by the

book but by the money they earn. They endure the jealousy because of the money not the quality of writing.” (Shah <<http://infochangeindia.org>>). Tendulkar’s words are hard nuts to swallow but this is it. His plays are controversial in most cases because they dwell on hushed themes and social evils that many dared not venture into.

He has depicted the plight of women in a most naked manner. His plays reflect how society adds to the depreciation of women as human being and deprives them of most of human rights, relative to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual. There is a powerful reflection of exploitation of women; the way they are tortured and victimized. He has also displayed the way how society is unfair in its treatment of the fair sex by compelling them to tolerate all types of violence; physical, mental and emotional.

The play *Silence!* deals with Leela Benare who gets pregnant and the case is to be examined in the court, a fake court that assumes to be real. The irony of her charge is that the accusation brought against her at the beginning of the trial turns into a verdict at the end. Dr. Rajni Singh Solanki has remarked that “This very reversal in the attitude of the authorities expresses the basic hypocrisy and double standards on which our society is founded” (Solanki 749). A much more penetrating criticism is made by Arundhati Banerjee: “...The accusation brought against Benare at the trial turns into the verdict in last because contemporary Indian Society, with its roots grounded firmly in reactionary ideas, cannot allow the birth of a child out of wedlock” (Banerjee VII). Besides, in the course of Benare’s trial, her private life is exposed and publicly dissected. When Kashikar, the Judge, listened that Benare is a spinster, he has very irrationally approved the custom of child marriage. All this and more go to show that women’s desires are repressed under the onslaught of reactionary ideas of the fundamentally orthodox

society. The play also has shown gender bias through the character of Prof. Damle. He is equally guilty, like Benare, but the court cannot set a trial against him.

Sakharan Binder is based on lust of the flesh and the virulent eye of men on women and, conspicuously depicts the male dominance and sexual violence. This play revolves round the central character Sakharan, a book binder, a Brahmin by caste but presents an antithesis to the general perception of a member of his community. Contrary to the external appearance of his life, he exploits women, tortures them and treats them day and night as mere objects of lust, both physically and mentally. He keeps six women who had been kicked out of their homes by their husbands. A nerve wrecking story comes from Champa, whose husband, Fauzdar Sindhe, had lived and treated here like an object of his belonging, subjected to all kinds of violent and despicable acts. She exited from the clutches of her husband and landed up in Sakharan's home, ironically to experience an unsafe womanhood again. Sindhe had treated her like a beast to gratify his sadism and sexual needs in unnatural ways. Her words are more than a wonder:

I don't have a heart. He chewed it up raw long ago. He brought me from my mother even before I'd become a woman. He married me when I didn't even know what marriage meant. He would torture me at night. He branded me, and stuck needles into me and made me to do awful, filthy things.

I ran away. He brought me back and stuffed chilly powder into that god-awful place, where it hurts most (Solanki 750).

Tendulkar has pictured the terrifying and horrifying experience of Champa not so much to appease his sense of revealing the naked truth of the stultifying society in which she is placed but to show that such a harrowing

thing does exist in human society even today as it had been in the past. Virginia Woolf has delineated the same picture of women's plight in her *A Room of One's Own*:

Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history.

She dominates lives of kings and conquerors in fiction, in fact, she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger... (and) in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband (Woolf 66).

Tendulkar's *Kamala* is based on a real life incident. Like his other plays of social concern, he has dealt with the disheartening condition of women in contemporary Indian society, women who are toppled throughout and are treated as feeling-less objects as if they have no sentiments. The play revolves around the two women characters, Kamala and Sarita, who experience the same debased status and were debarred of their basic rights to be women with certain abilities. They are prevented from doing certain essential works and suffer an unfair justice. Sarita asks the most painfully recurring questions like why women are not masters like men, why women cannot live her life the way men live and why they cannot have a right to be women. In her most agonized moment, she cries out:

This must be changed. Those who do manly things should be equal to men. Those who don't are women. And there will be some among them who have beards and moustaches too. Isn't being Prime Minister of India a manly thing? And isn't it an effeminate thing to grovel at that Prime Minister's feet? (Tendulkar 46).

The playwright allows his characters to live and have their being without fettering them with his own mind and emotions as a creator. Sarita speaks out from the gamut of her feeling the pain she cannot keep repressing. In fact, it is the universal voice of women in agony and torment and, the dramatist is a genius in this art of presenting his characters authentically in every way.

His modern themes and perfectionist approach have magnetized the critics and his audience. He has never shrunk from public controversy as it gave him a unique opportunity to engage his opponents in public discourse. Balwant Bhaneja has opined that “There has been hardly a play by him that has not ended up in controversy. Most of the call for banning his plays did not, surprisingly, come from the government but from particular segments of the public who saw in his dramatizations attacks on their power positions – challenges to caste, gender or class structures” (Bhaneja <<http://www.hotreview.org>>). His famous and highly controversial play *Gidhare* (The Vultures) has explored the family relationship that lack filial love and understanding. The relationship turns out to be explosive and violent to the extent that the father, brother, sister and the rest get into a murderous mood over a question of property. Another controversial play, *Ghasiram Kotwal* (Ghasiram – Chief Indpector), has enraged a section of society when it opened in 1972. It was protested because the right-wing Hindu nationalists, RSS, have found it anti-Brahmin and described the negative depiction of the noble character, Nana Phadnavi, as historically inaccurate. But the author has rebutted his point later, in an interview saying that this play was not a historical play but “it is a story, in prose, verse, music and dance set in a historical era. Ghasirams are creations of socio-political forces which know no barriers of time and place. Although based on a historical legend, I have no intention of commentary on the morals, or lack of them, of the Peshwas, Nana

Phadnavis or Ghasiram. The moral of the story, if there is any, may be looked for elsewhere” (Bandyopadhyay iv).

Women play a major role in Tendulkar’s plays. They are mainly from the lower and middle classes like housewives, teachers, mistresses, daughters, film actors, slaves and servants. In fact, they are the central figures in the plays and they stand out more conspicuous than their male counterparts. This is not so much to show that they need this stage to voice their concerns but to show their real plight as they live with their dominant male human beings who are inclined to be gender bias. These women bring a broad range of emotions in the plays “from the unbelievably gullible to the clever, from the malleable to the stubborn, from the conservative to the rebellious, from the self-sacrificing to the grasping” (Goklhe 81).

Character portrayal is spectacular because he tends to minimize his personal influence on them and their personality development. They are a composite of contradictory personalities struggling between emotion and intellect, physical desires and conscience, espoused values and conflicting actions, seeking independence yet submissive. His genius in handpicking the characters from among the vast sea of population is hugely responsible for creating plays of a public interest and universal appeal. He himself has revealed that the secret behind real and lively characters is because they are in the play “with their own minds, ways and destiny” (Tendulkar 15).

The playwright’s large body of work represents an interesting amalgam of content and structure. In his plays, he has experimented with almost every form like traditional folk techniques in *Ghasiram-Chief Inspector*, with fifty characters dancing on the stage, to the minimalist Beckettian bicyclist journey in *Safar/Cyclewallahi* and *The Masseur*, a full-length one-man’s body in a hand cart. The dramatist insists that the structure of his plays is driven by the

characters, and it is this uniqueness that has brought out the broad thematic impact.

The author's wide range of appeal does not mean that all his works have been assessed and given a public applaus. With such a voluminous oeuvre written over fifty years, most of it in his mother tongue Marathi, it may be premature to give a comprehensive assessment. His notable creations are at the beginning and end of his career.

7. Asif Currimbhoy: A Virtuoso Indian English Playwright

Equally conscious of the contemporary social situations, like other modern Indian English playwrights, and inextinguishably feeling disturbed about the pandemonium of contemporary society, Asif Currimbhoy has plunged into the Indian English dramatic theatre as a playwright. Indian creative writers have attempted drama in English for a century but seldom for actual stage production. Among those countable Indian English playwrights, who have attempted stage production, there are only a few who have made a dent both at home and abroad. A singular exception to this seems to be Asif Currimbhoy who is "India's first authentic voice in the theatre" (Reddy 22). Currimbhoy has written several plays, both long and short, which show his deep concern for dramatic effectiveness. His plays are primarily meant for the stage and have succeeded in brilliantly producingactable plays.

The coming of Currimbhoy into the Indian English dramatic scene has brought about a sea change in the theatrical field in India. He is one of the first Indian English playwrights to produce plays that could be performed. The watershed in Indian theatre in English came glitteringly inextinguishable after the Indian independence. To this renaissance, Currimbhoy definitely is a mighty contributor. He is the shining star in the new theatrical venture in India. He is one of the most prolific Indian English playwrights and his

position in Indian English theatre, therefore, cannot be compromised. With about thirty plays to his credit, he has written on the social issues that concerned him most.

Born of a Khoja Muslim family in Mumbai, he became a cosmopolitan in his approach to people and places. The family upbringing and the different environment in which he grew up have affected his mental make-up and these have a great bearing on his writing career. Hailing from the family of industrialists, Currimbhoy was introduced into the enterprise of keen observation and intellectual judgment. His father was a liberal minded armchair intellectual and his mother a veteran social worker. This parental dynamism clubbed with their congeniality and the environment of new ebullient ideas has formed an integral part of his temperament in his later life. The varied themes of his plays are a clear depiction of these indelible influences.

His education has backed him in his intellect and wit. Though his early education was in India, those were the days of British Raj. Therefore, he was introduced early into the English language and the influence of the West. He has revealed in an interview:

These were of course pre-Independence days and the colonial influence was felt full blast. It meant going through schools under the institutions that existed at that time for which I have my own sense of preparation and, perhaps, criticism; the family environment was centred around English; we were literally brown Sahibs – as they call it, with a sense of humour and a sense of frustration (*Commentary* 38).

There is a conspicuous corroboration in Currimbhoy that a sense of something incomplete has already being pre-set in his conscience from his early days. This is ignited further with his experiences at the College in USA:

College was in America, those beautiful mid-west landscapes of snow and loneliness. The love for language and life grew, and in the isolation of a groping search and hyper-sensitivity, I tried again to balance withdrawal with participation: Physical activity, vigour and the consciousness of living seeped through my veins, with tremendous sensuality and sex (Reddy 23).

The experience of his university days has deeply percolated into the core of his being. Therefore, “when he speaks of them he sounds more enthusiastic” (Rao 1986). He has been drawn towards Shakespeare as a University student, witnessed numerous dramatic productions and was quite alive to the various trends in drama in the USA (*Commentary* 38). These experiences have put in him much of the sophisticated veneer of the West but in spite of all this, the root of indigenous culture was never liquidated. Though born of a non-practicing Muslim family, he has kept his foot firm on the Hindu culture as an Indian. This has been reflected in his thorough knowledge of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Upanishad* and also the Hindu epics like *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*. Besides, he has lived through one of the most turbulent moments in the history of India and this has imprinted an indelible mark on his mind. A conglomeration of these registrations, of experiences and knowledge, only waits for the triggering moment to get ejected and splashed on paper in the form of plays, like the bullets in a loaded gun waiting for the trigger to get propelled.

He has also made a revelation about the way people in different societies have impacted him and how it has helped him to become a virtuoso

Indian English playwright. He has revealed the truth of his heart in the following words: “There is a sense of a trigger – I think the trigger was life itself, of what I saw around, of how I reached to it, in other words, an emotional reaction” (*Commentary* 39). This trigger has catapulted him to become a prodigious post-independence Indian playwright in English. This clarion call to become a playwright has refused to be extinguished under any circumstance until it is fulfilled through play writing. This call has besieged his other professional engagements and beckoning. As a result, he has given up the respectable and lucrative job with the Burmah Shell Oil Co. to devote his full time to writing and he started writing plays in his early thirties, averaging two plays a year.

The technique of evolving complex personalities and dramatic situations from the interplay of a deep rooted and diverse cultural ethos is typical of him. K.M. George spoke about this great playwright, who lay hidden for so long like a daffodil blooming so beautifully among the bushes and yet to be discovered:

I had heard of Asif Currimbhoy earlier. But it is only recently that I realized the power and vitality of his works... As the chief editor (the Sahitya Academy) the moral responsibility was entirely mine. It was a challenging, though highly enjoyable, task. It was in the course of this work that I came across Asif Currimbhoy’s work. I decided to include a part of his play, the *Dumb Dancer* in the anthology. That was also the time when I decided that I should be seriously introducing this talented playwright to Malayalies (George 5).

He is like a voice crying in the wilderness to let his voice be heard. Sadly enough, his works, initially, have seen a bleak future at home. It was in

United States that he saw his first success when his play *Goa* was staged by the University of Michigan in 1965. Four years later, he has tasted the fruit of his labour at home. It was only in 1969 that his play *The Doldrummers* was staged in Delhi by the Little Theatre Group. From then on, there was no looking back on the success of Currimbhoy, especially in the theatre. He has revolutionized the Indian English dramaturgy, with his plays in English dwelling on the subjects and themes of modern concerns.

Currimbhoy stands toweringly high in the Indian English theatre and his plays are profoundly appreciated. C.V. Venugopal, a great critic on the plays of Currimbhoy, has eulogized his eminent stature in theatre in the following words:

If Indian drama in English has had a significant breakthrough of late, only a handful of playwrights can take the credit for it. Among these few, Asif Currimbhoy most definitely figures prominently. For sheer fecundity as a playwright he has no equal: ever since he began writing in the late fifties, he has averaged almost two plays a year. Although the very titles of his plays, most of them at least, betray their stark topicality assurance with which he handles almost every facet of drama, be it farce or fantasy, comedy or melodrama, does made us sit up and take notice (Venugopal 261).

The accolades he receives are not the fruits of a mere chance. He was fully conscious of his works and the subjects he has dealt with are preconceived.

The influences on him were actively alive and they gradually got unfolded in his plays, ever since he started writing. P. Bayapa Reddy has remarked that Currimbhoy “chose to write for the theatre because he thought that this was the art form which allowed him most to show the complexity of the society he lived in” (Reddy 25). By choosing to write for the theatre,

conflict and emotion were the essential creams the playwright has employed. He has used conflict powerfully in his plays and this is the distinctive epicenter from where action of the play gets reeled out. In doing so, he has never failed to lose sight of the visual and auditory sources to ensure an effective communication. Faubion Bowers, the eminent theatre critic and a specialist in the theatre of the Orient, has said,

In sharp contrast to our own playwrights, very few Asians have been able to be prophets both at home and overseas, especially in theatre. Rabindranath Tagore was an exception, although it was his poetry which got him the first Nobel Literature Prize ever given to an Asian. Mishima was another, although not even his bizarre love–suicide (according to the Japanese) has resulted in a successful production of any of his many marvelous plays. Another exception is Asif Curimbhoy, I think for he has now begun to emerge more and more clearly as a playwright of international stature (Bowers 4).

Eulogizing the appeal of Currimbhoy to the international audience, R.L. Meserve and W.J. Meserve have also said that “among the modern Indian playwrights none has the International reputation of Asif Currimbhoy whose works have been performed in several cities of the United States” (Meserve 30).

As a playwright for the theatre, his themes are gleaned from social situations, even controversial ones. So much so that Faubion Bowers has remarked that “He has written that country’s first plays of dissent. He presents life as it is, not as something it should be, the age-old course of India’s classical theatre. Once again, art, that discredited wonder-box of illusions, finds itself telling the truth while politicians lie and people look the other way”

(Bowers 7). Therefore, there can be no doubting the fact about Currimbhoy's wide range of knowledge. He has written on a variety of themes and subjects. K.R.S. Iyengar has commented, "Certainly, there can be no question regarding Currimbhoy's fecundity as a dramatist. Variety and versatility are the other distinguishing 'marks' of Currimbhoy as a dramatist" (Iyengar 244). Peter Nazareth has appreciated him for writing "Good plays of the events that boggle the moral imagination" (Nazareth 13). Currimbhoy himself had once commented on the assortment of themes in his plays:

Good theatre does not...depend upon language or geography: rather it depends upon inherent situations, and of course, conflicts...Some people tend to confuse conflict with controversy. They can be alike and different. If genuine conflict gives rise to honest difference in opinion, the controversy is justified as provocation to thought, on the other hand, if controversy is generated as showmanship or sensationalism, it goes without saying that it would be self – defeating and unsubstantive (Currimbhoy 43).

His social concern has penetrated deeply into the everyday problems of every society. As a social realist, the naked reality of society lay before him without veil. Therefore, any striking issue that catches his attention has kept him restless and, finally got streaked in his playwriting. In this regard Meserves have opined:

Social realism as a style is attractive to Third World dramatists because it allows the maximum opportunity for protest and comment. But whereas much of their drama is of a low quality, presenting an unsubtle approach to a localized or immediate problem, Currimbhoy's plays are concerned with the problems of man everywhere (Meserve 32).

Man reveals himself through the social and political systems prevalent in his community. Due to these social and political effects on man, Currimbhoy has employed the social realistic world as a starting point. As a man beset with a tremendous verve and energy, he does things which bear out his destiny in the world of the mind as well as the social and political worlds that surround him. Faubion Bowers too has wondered at Currimbhoy's vigour as a playwright:

...But I am saying it is inconceivable to me to estimate what it has meant for Currimbhoy to believe in himself so fiercely, to work for so long totally alone...to be a Bombay-born non-practicing Muslim...to conform and yet create, to obey society and yet destroy it with death-ray words, to write plays like bullets needing only the trigger of a national event, and even to live in this unappreciative world where fame is awarded, others so cheaply and on such a flimsy basis (Bowers 8).

Currimbhoy has an unquenched thirst, not for knowledge but for those things that lay restless in his mind and heart until it rests on the plays. He has lived through some of the most turbulent times in the history of modern India. His preoccupation with socio-literary activities was the result of the climate of the times in which he grew. Independence to India and the consequence of partition of the country have brought some of the most painful experiences to both the countries. Independence and the trauma of partition were responsible for the sudden break down of brotherly relation and the collapse of human values. Clubbed with this anguish is the new current of violence that has erupted in the country in the sixties. Currimbhoy, therefore, has been profoundly influenced by the existential problems and sufferings of humanity.

The playwright has felt a strong urge of “evolving himself in society and seek a full revelation in his plays of what he finds in the world around him and within him” (*Commentary* 39). The new currents of violence that erupted in the country, India, during the sixties have befittingly served his purpose. As he plunged into the dramatic world, he has chosen to write for the theatre because he thought this would allow him to show the complexity of society he lived in. His acute sense of observation on people and particularly on the mode of expression has made him create unique things. This is evident from what he has revealed to Rajinder Paul and Paul Jacob in an interview about his past experiences and places:

The place had always had a considerable fascination for me and dialogue always appeared to me especially when they incorporated a feeling of diverse opinion. In other words a conflict in theatre, conflict at every level – physical, mental and emotional – because from the time really you meet with other people, what is human relationships, its striking sparks with each other that brings about a feel of life (Paul 1970).

The feeling he has for life has made him go a long way. He has always maintained an independent thinking in his journey through playwriting. He chose controversial themes, embodied them in arresting dialogues with constructed and resolved plots in an unconventional way.

The abundance of Currimbhoy’s plays, which appeared in a quick succession, has perceptibly exemplified the force of compulsion in him toward life and this got sparked off onto the stage of his imagination; a stage that replicates the real social situation he had experienced and perceived. The plays of about thirty in number that came up in a short period of time verify to this effect. He has written a one act plays, two act plays, three act plays and

even a four act play on social, political, romantic, religious and art concerns. Figuring tall among the Indian English playwrights, his emphasis is social realism affected with existential dilemmas. Therefore, as a social realist, his plays reveal a social conscience which has a deep preoccupation with the search of truth. Most of the themes and plots of his plays have their sources in the contemporary problems. For instance, *Inquilab* or Revolution (1970) deals with the Naxalite movement of Bengal, *Refugee* (1971) was inspired by the influx of Bangladesh refugees into India during the Bangladesh's fight for self-determination, *Sonar Bangla* (1972) dramatizes the liberation of Bangladesh from the clutches of Pakistan and the dented relation between India and Pakistan, *The Captives* (1962) is related to the Chinese invasion of 1962, *Goa* (1964) took shape from the annexation of Goa in 1961 and *Om Mane Padme Hum!* (1971) is a religious-political play regarding the flight of the Dalai Lama from Lhasa and encroachment of Communism into Lamaism, thereby, raising the question of modern human civilization. This theme of civilization is discussed further in *Angkor* (1973) which deals with the past history of Cambodia and Sino-India relationship. The construction of this play is based on the rise and fall of civilization. There are vicissitudes, the alterations and transformation, the disappearance and the recovery in it. These and more of his plays, of the twenty nine (29) plays of his published works, are social-centric.

Currimbhoy has sought to express himself through his plays. Taking everything to be his province, he has an abundance of sources available to weave it into plays. He draws inspiration from the classics of India and West, from the rich Indian epics, *Upanishad* and *Bhagvat Gita*, from the particular historical happenings, from politics and religion of the world and above all from the everyday experiences of his life. Like Arnold Wesker, he is a playwright with a social purpose and he does not only seek to present men and

things as he sees them but also gives an artistic assessment of them. Nevertheless, he always takes a wise precaution to present his thoughts through implication, indirection and innuendo rather than through direct statements. It is clearly perceivable from his plays that he takes a clever approach to his purpose; that is to provoke human thought rather than to persuade them to adopt a specific plan of action.

The playwright has also expressed his vision of man and life through his dramatic art. He sees man as essentially a creature of passion with a potential for great nobility as well as terrible destruction. Man the creator and man the destroyer has the volition to decide for his action but it is the action which designs his destiny. The dramatist, in all his faith, is, therefore, unable to take man to be so fortunate because at every bend of life, there is either pain and suffering or sorrow and sadness. Despite the dark side of man's life lying indelibly outstretched for every man to tread through, there is always the hope of fulfillment and success, liberation and salvation. Therefore, he sees in man the ideal and the degenerate. This complexity in man makes society to be all the more complex because each human society houses diverse individuals with unique personalities. As a social realist, the author could not but present the conflicting diversities and out of that conflict and dilemma, he has created dramas that are vitally alive.

The dramatist believes that conflicts cannot be divorced from human society which is constantly evolving. He also does not deny the fact that changes are initiated through conflicts. Keeping these conflicts at the basement of discussion, this paper will concentrate on social conflict, inner conflict and human predicament. Prior to the detailed discussion of these themes in the selected plays of Asif Currimbhoy, each chapter will be initiated with some theories.

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CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL CONFLICT

1. Social Conflict

Conflict is an integrative social force that can either unify people against a common enemy or make people go against each other. Tendency towards conflict is an element of human nature and the pursuit of interests generates different types of conflict. In short, conflict is the confrontation of interests or powers. Conflict and struggle in society can promote human existence and, therefore, it is seen as a normal aspect of social life rather than an abnormal occurrence. Through conflict, changes take place in society. Nature of conflict can be varied and it determines the impact and outcome on a society.

Social conflict emerges out of the search for change and the type of change sought could be an alteration in political power, the nature of the state or economy, or the main ideological focus of social life. Therefore, social conflict pictures society in a clash, struggle, opposition or clashing of opposed interests. According to Walter Johnson, “Social conflict can best be described as a confrontational stance among public actors. Social actors can be reduced to social forces representing these actors. Variables that can exert social force might be the power of banks, labor, the state, private gangs, corporate power or religious/ideological power. All of these can exert force and become actors in social conflict” (Walter <www.ehow.com>). Therefore, social conflict is the struggle for agency or power within a society or between different societies. It occurs when people oppose one another in social interactions by

reciprocally exerting social power in an effort to attain scarce or incompatible goals and prevent the opponent from attaining them.

This conflict is not narrowed down to a clash of coercive powers but any opposing social powers. By concept, social is intentionally taking into account of other selves, power is a capability to produce effects and social power is an intentionally directed capability to produce effects through another person. Social conflict is then the confrontation of social powers. R.J. Rummel has opined that “social conflict is not limited to hostile or antagonistic opposition; it is not wholly a clash of coercive powers as often is implied, but of any opposing social powers” (Rummel <<http://www.hawaii.edu>>). For Robert K. Merton, “Social conflict refers to the antagonism of social groups with opposing interests or values. Such conflict is often intense but not necessarily violent” (Merton 522).

It is, therefore, clear that social conflict encompasses a wide range of social phenomena such as class or caste, politics, economic, religion or race. This notion becomes clearer in the following description: “Social conflict is the struggle for agency or power in society. Social conflict or group conflict occurs when two or more actors oppose each other in social interaction, reciprocally exerting social power in an effort to attain scarce or incompatible goals and prevent the opponent from attaining them. It is a social relationship wherein the action is oriented intentionally for carrying out the actor's own will against the resistance of other party or parties” (“Social Conflict” <<http://en.wikipedia.org>>). This conflict may occur in the form of riots, rebellion and revolution. War, strikes, civil disorder, protest marches or gatherings are all signs of conflict. Differences of interests or opinion may spark conflicts in society or between societies. It may be a struggle over values and may occur over a struggle for power, status or scarce resources.

Many sociologists see society as an arena of inequality that generates conflict and change. To analyze a social issue or frame a theory of social conflict, the key terms that they concentrate on are inequality, power, authority, competition or exploitation. Microscopically looking into each of the terms and applying it to a social issue, they synthesize theories to analyze the type of conflict that is prevalent in a society. But it is imperative to note that no single theory is all inclusive or exhaustive. Therefore, there are a number of theories propounded by different sociologists and scholars to understand the type of conflict that is taking place in different societies of the world. Some theories of social conflict are discussed below to herald us into the analysis of this conflict in Asif Currimbhoy's select plays.

2. Some theories of Social Conflict

In any social formation, conflict is as unavoidable as cooperation and is an outcome of clash of interests between those engaged in this social formation or relation. The nature, causes and impact of conflict have being extensively written by scholars, depending on the school of thought they represent, and their explanations have tended to lay greater emphasis on one particular or a set of related theories while diminishing the importance or explanatory relevance of other competing theories. Social conflict theories are attempts by scholars to provide frameworks for the understanding of conflict especially causes of conflict, the condition under which conflict occurs and sometimes the condition for their resolution. Some social conflict theories have being discussed, here, for a general understanding and application in this paper.

2.1. Structural Theory

Structuralists take society to be structurally comprised of oppressors and oppressed. The theory has two main sub-orientations: first is the radical

structural theory represented by the Marxist dialectical school with exponents like Karl Marx, Friedrich Engle, V.I. Lenin and the like and, second is the liberal structuralism represented by Ross, Scarborough and the famous Johan Garltung on structural violence. The main argument of the structural conflict theory is that conflict is built on particular ways societies are structured and organized. Structuralists deem incompatible interests, based on competition for resources which in most cases are assumed to be scarce, as the cardinal cause for social conflict (Collier 2). Therefore, social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustice, poverty, inequity and the like are the sources of social conflict. These theorists maintain that rifts occur in society due to the exploitative and unjust nature of human societies and domination of one class by another. Radicals like Friedrich Engle, Karl Marx, Joseph Lenin and MaoTse Tung hold capitalism as the main cause of creating exploitative system in society, based on its relations of production and the division of society into the proletariat and bourgeoisie. Exploitation of proletariat and lower classes, under capitalism, by the bourgeoisie creates conflict and solution to this type of problem can only come about through a revolutionary civil war or some form of violence leading to the overthrow of the exploitative system in society. On the other hand, liberal structural theorists call for the elimination of structural defects with policy reforms.

2.2. Biological Theory

Biological theory is a complacent theory where conflict is accepted as natural and innate in the nature of man. Biological theorists are content that conflict is innate in all social interactions. They argued that humans are animals, albeit higher species of animals, and would naturally fight over things they cherish. Classical biological theorists, like Thomas Hobbes, St. Augustine, Malathus and Freud, believed that conflict is inherent in man and

this can be explicated from man's inner properties and attributes as well as hormonal composition. This is drawn from the concept of our ancestors' violent behavioural patterns. Therefore, we too must bear destructive impulses in our generic make up because we have evolved from our ancestors.

The aggressive attitude will be provoked when man is faced with challenges and threats. Sigmund Freud has explained the destructive tendencies in human beings as a product of dialectical struggle between the instincts associated with life and survival (Eros) and the instinct associated with death (Thanatos) and, suggested that societies have to learn to control the expression of both life and death instincts. He has opined that both instincts are always seeking release and it is the one that wins the contest of domination is released. As a result, aggression against others is released whenever the Eros overcomes the Thanatos and as he puts it, war and conflict is necessary periodic release that helps men preserve themselves by diverting their destructive tendencies to others.

Further, conflict in society is seen in the difference between "expected need satisfaction" and "actual need satisfaction" (Davies 6), where expectation does not meet attainment, the tendency is for people to confront those they hold responsible for frustrating their ambition. Ted Robert Gurr's *Relative Deprivation* thesis centers on this argument and addresses the issue by stating that "the greater the discrepancy, however marginal between what is sought and what seem attainable, the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will result" (Gurr 24). This frustration-aggression theory explains clearly about violent behavior of men, stemming from the inability to fulfil their needs.

2.3. Realist Theory

Realist theory originates from classical political theory and shares both theological and biological doctrines about an apparent weakness and individualism inherent in human nature. It thus has traced the roots of conflict to a flaw in human nature which is seen to be selfish and engaging in the pursuit of personalized self interest defined as power. Morgenthau, together with his followers, has argued that the imperfection in the world, namely conflict, has its roots in forces that are inherent in human nature, that human nature is selfish, individualistic and naturally conflictive, that states will always pursue their national interest defined as power, and that such interest will come into conflict with those of others leading to the inevitability of conflict. Therefore, actors should prepare to deal with the outcome and consequences of conflict since it is inevitable, rather than wish there were none (Morgenthau 4). This theory greatly justifies the militarization of international relations and the arms race. The theory has being accused of elevating power and the state to the status of an ideology, and has had a tremendous impact on conflict at the international level.

2.4. Physiological Theory

Physiologists take the inside and outside of man to consider their theory of social conflict. They share the biological and hormonal origins of aggression and conflict in individuals with realists, but added by providing the conditions under which this happens. Scott has noted that physiological sources of aggressive behavior are a function of several factors including human nature and environment. Paul Maclean and Locruz have investigated and sought to understand how human brain reacts when people are under stress and threat. They conclude that it is impossible for a person to experience conflict between what he is feeling and what he is thinking. This

then determines whether such a person feels strongly about something or not and whether they act with such feelings or decide to ignore the feelings. In essence, human beings are naturally capable of being aggressive but do not display violent behavior as an instinct. When violence occurs, there is the possibility that it is being manipulated by a combination of factors within and outside the individual's control.

2.5. Psycho-cultural Theory

Psycho-cultural theory emphasizes the role of culturally induced conflict and contends that even though there are different forms of identities, the one that is based on people's ethnic origin and the culture that is learnt on the basis of that ethnic origin is one of the most important ways of explaining violent conflict. Identity is the epicenter of conflict provocation for this theorists, despite the belief that ethnicity is the primary source of identity based conflict. They do not, however, deny that conflict is avoidable despite the concrete presence of ethnic differences in human society.

Psycho-culturalists have argued that social conflict that take a long time to resolve become a harsh reality of creating differences in society when some groups are discriminated against or deprived of satisfaction of their basic (material) and psychological needs on the basis of their identity. These needs are identified in Maslow's *Theory of Motivation* and Burton's *Human Needs Theory*, both of which describe the process by which an individual or group seeks to satisfy a range of needs moving from the basic ones, such as food and sex, to the highest needs that they describe as self-satisfaction or the fulfilment of one's greatest human potential. Crighton has built his conclusion on social conflict based on Horowitz's *Fear of Extinction* thesis, Volkan's *Fear of Dying off* thesis and Rothschild's *Fear of the Futures* thesis and, noted that social conflict that takes long to resolve are identity-driven and

grow out of the feelings of powerlessness and memories of past persecution. These experiences that wear away a person's dignity and self-esteem lead people to resort to vengeance and violence.

2.6. Human Needs Theory

Human Needs theory is similar to Frustration-Aggression and Relative deprivation theory. The main tenet of this theory is that all human beings have basic human needs which they seek to fulfill and that the denial and frustration of these needs by other groups or individuals could affect them immediately or later, thereby leading to conflict. They assume the basic needs as physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs. Therefore, to provide an access to one need and deny the other or hinder access to another will amount to denial and could invite people to resort to violence in an effort to protect these needs.

John Burton has identified the impact of frustration, in man, which forces humanity into acts of aggression and the need on the part of such individuals to satisfy their basic needs. He has noted that individuals cannot be taught to accept practices that destroy their identity and other goals that are attached to their needs. Due to this innate tendency in men, they are forced to react against the factors, groups and institutions that they see as being responsible for threatening the attainment of such needs. Burton has also stated that human needs have components, like the needs for recognition, identity, security, autonomy, and bonding with others, that are not easy to give up. It is pertinent to human needs that, no matter, how vigorously a political or social system endeavour to frustrate or suppress these needs, it will either fail or cause far more damage on the long run. It has been a largely accepted fact that, in spite of a wide range of human needs, frustration of the basic

needs hampers the actualization of the potentials of groups and individuals and, this subsequently leads to conflict in society.

2.7. Economic Theory

Economists have largely assumed the material needs of man to be central in people fighting against each other. Therefore, these theorists take people in conflict to be fighting over, not about, something that is material. This raises the question of the basis of conflict as to whether conflict is the result of greed (intention to corner something) or of grievance (anger arising over feelings of injustice). Paul Collier has noted that some people, commonly referred to as conflict entrepreneurs, actually benefit from chaos, while overwhelming majority of the population is affected by the negative impacts of conflict. He has also pointed out that while the prospects of pecuniary gains are seldom the principle incentive for rebellion, it can become, for some insurgent groups, a preferred state of affairs (Collier 4).

Mats Berdal and David Malone have agreed that social conflict is generated by many factors, some of which are deep seated. For them, across the ages conflict has come to be seen as having a functional utility and is embedded in economic disparities. War, the crisis stage of internal conflict, has sometimes become a vast private and profit making enterprise. They further contend that even though issues in conflict may later be packaged as resulting from ideological, racial or even religious or value differences; these represent, at the most basic level, a contest for control over economic assets, resources or systems (Berdal 1). Economists have given greater emphasis to resources, and to that extent, they are close to the radical structural theory of conflict, except for emphasis of left wing structuralists on exploitative relationships between different parties.

2.8. Systemic Theory

Systemic theorists see the emergence of violent social conflict in the social context within which it occurs. They focus their attention on the political order of society in a period and the effects of it that bring about large scale changes in social, political and economic processes that would usually guide against instability. These theorists also seek to explain the relationship between modernization and political disorder and see movements between different periods of economic and political history as containing a large amount of pull factors, tension and crisis that create conditions of internal conflict and instability. They come out openly with their explanation on the political machinery and noted that in trying to cope with the different challenges and crisis of modernization, most governments that find it difficult to gain the legitimacy, needed to attract support from the people usually resort to unconstitutional means and force rather than processes that are in line with the rule of law. Such governments generally attempt to dictate the terms on which peace will be attained in an effort to surpass the legitimate demands of the people, prevent opposition and civil society groups from criticizing policies that they disagree.

2.9. Relational Theory

Relational theorists have attempted to provide an explanation for the violent conflict between groups by exploring sociological, political, economic and historical relationships between such groups. This theory takes into account that cultural and value differences as well as group interests influence relationships between individuals and groups in varying degrees. Past history has provided the basement on which a number of conflicts have sprouted, that has led to the development of negative stereotypes, racial intolerance and discrimination in society. Such a history of negative exchanges between

different groups have made it difficult for efforts to integrate different ethnic and religious groups in society to succeed because their past interactions have acted as a barrier to trust one another. The concept of otherness continues to blur the societies in conflict and this makes either group feel low or inferior by reason of cultural values or skin colour. This disrupts the flow of communication between the groups in conflict and renders the groups or individuals to nurture ill feeling and prejudicial perception against each other.

The afore-discussed theories provide a comprehensive picture of social conflict. It is crystal clear that none of the theories condemn men but accuses men for causing conflict in society. Differences of interest snowball the crisis and conflicting groups tend to remain insecure. The volatile situations normally get deteriorate due to incongruence of the interests and the frustrated group usually becomes aggressive. Such a conflict in society is not alien because human society is not constructed on the basement of homogeneity. The theories that had been discussed have also taken society as the storehouse of human differences; be it social, political, economic, ethnic, religion, historical, psychological and the like. These differences, exerted by interests, are the cause of conflict and people in conflict are said to be fighting over, not about, something. Therefore, this chapter will base itself on the aforementioned differences while discussing social conflict in Asif Currimbhoy's select plays.

3. Social Conflict in Currimbhoy's Select Plays

Asif Currimbhoy's society is not formed by a homogeneous group of people belonging to the same race, creed and status. As a social realist, he presents the people and society that he came across and those that arrest his attention most come vigorously alive in his plays. It is also evident that

history and the situation of his age have influenced his outlook on society and these have become the repository from where he drew most of his themes.

Currimbhoy had a realistic approach to human society and his social world is enmeshed in a pellucid collage of human anguish and, a conglomeration of ideologies and interests that often collide. Particular events and situations arrest his attention and these are the platforms on which he stands and effuses out his mind as he explored society and its affairs. He believed, as Robert K. Merton, that “societies and people can be changed through deliberate social action” (Merton 14) because in a social situation, people direct their behaviour toward one another. Most of his plays are Indo-centric but have a wider perspective and echo the voice of the universal. J. Meserve and I. Meserve had rightly observed: “But when he deals with India, he becomes that voice of universal revolt, and anguish screaming itself hoarse at the seemingly immovable societies around the world” (Meserve viii). Societies, which are in a confrontational or disturbed state due to different forces that are jeopardizing social harmony, peaceful co-existence or prospects of growth and development, pulls him to venture into it headlong and scan it. He himself has said, “There is a sense of a trigger - I think the trigger was life itself, of what I saw around, of how I reached to it, in other words an emotional reaction” (*Commentary* 39).

The world of Currimbhoy is clouded with conflicting situations. Instability and change in society yield conflict and, therefore, social conflict is a perennial feature of social life. He is a keen observer of human society and, therefore, feels deeply about the impact of conflict on it. As a matter of fact, the conflicting situations, he depicts in some of his plays, are nothing less than the powerfully exploding problems of the world. The conflict emerges out of differences in interest and desire, which is always accompanied by resistance

or opposition but it is imperative to note that “Social conflict is not always destructive” (Merton, 537). Social conflict can bring about change or vis versa; and changes in society are not all undesirable. The conflicting parties often strive to neutralize, suppress, oppress, injure or eliminate their rivals.

Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Tibetan, Chinese and Western societies find a place in his plays and they form a microcosm of his world. Been a social realist, there is no place for superficial beings, in his plays, moving about on magical wings. Faubion Bowers has rightly said that Currimbhoy presents “life as it is, not as something it should be” (Bowers, 1970: xii). Whether it is a social, political, religious or a romantic play, the epicenter of his concern is with the real human beings, indulging in everyday affairs. For instance, in *The Doldrums*, Tony, Rita, Joe and Liza are living on their imaginative worlds and they “haven’t work for a year of Sundays” (DD 16). But they are young teenagers of a small reactionary group, imbued with the physical desires of the present day and are unable to fit themselves into the old conservative Indian society. The author’s concern for the menace of unproductive and monotonous life, in this contemporary world, finds these young contemporary teenagers to be in dichotomy with the old traditional life style. Therefore, the gap between the old and the new lives broaden, as Arundhati Roy has said, referring to the past and present orders of human life, that “the old order has been consecrated, the rift fortified” (Boehmer 231).

Currimbhoy had been affected by the conflict of various kinds in society: social, political, communal, economic, religious, historical, psychological, ethnic, class, caste and the like. This chapter will endeavour to bring about a cohesive discussion on these conflicts under various sub-topics and my focus will be limited to the playwright’s view of social conflict, which is found in his select plays.

3.1. Political Aggrandizement

The dramatist has circumspectly viewed the concept of power and authority and, opined that these two must have a limit and, brilliantly puts forth, that political aggrandizement breeds dissension and tension. He has sagaciously introspected on the liberation of Bangladesh from the hegemonic rule of Pakistan. “In the face of West Pakistani repression, terror and persecution” (SB 11) and “plain loads of West Pakistan troops being flown in under the guise of civilians” (10), a severe conflicting situation between West Pakistan (Present Pakistan) and East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) has being set afoot. With Pakistan continuing to spread her wings of power and authority over Bangladesh, an external dominion and supremacy has been consciously felt by the Bangladeshis. Therefore, collective consciousness was emerging, giving birth to “the fateful day when genocide began in East Pakistan and the seeds of resistance for Bangla Desh were sown” by about 25th March 1971 (9). Currimbhoy has pointed out, here, that ego-centric Pakistani rule is a sure breeding field for clash and conflict. The authoritative assertion of the Major General of Pakistani army is an incitement. He has embarked on the precarious stance where antagonistic resistance can never be discarded when he said that East Pakistan “must be ruled by West Pakistan” (45) and they are “determined to cleanse East Pakistan once and for all of the threat of secession, even if it means killing two million people and ruling the province as a colony for 30 years” (44). Sure enough, Bangladeshi sensitivity has being hurt and a bloody war has exploded.

The dramatist’s knowledge and resourcefulness of political warfare is immensely plausible. His ebullient intellect has percolated into the diplomatic dealings of foreign affairs, especially in the field of war tactics. A special feat of the playwright is the authentic presentation of the mood and intensity of

events he has dramatized. Pakistan's strategic ploy of massacring the intellectual and powerful leaders was like the Big Brother's policy of wiping out (vaporised) those who prove to be "too diligent", "too intelligent" (Orwell 48) and powerful and, pose danger for the continuity of his authority and rule over them. Yassin has revealed to Sen Gupta and his wife that "the military rulers considered it dangerous to give us the liberty of thought, and future leadership. Students, Professor, Teachers alike in all forms of studies and research became the target of their attack" (RF 16). "The rattle of the machine guns is all I remember. A shuttering reality that erased all that followed...pain, suffering and death" (17). Currimbhoy has employed the technique of irony to raise the intensity of the mood in the play. The following dialogue, between Prof. Aziz and a Pakistani Officer, is highly ironical:

Officer: ...immediately.

Wife: He's not going (*Officer looks at her coldly*).

Professor: No, no, my dear. I must go. It won't take long...I'm sure. (*Officer takes out a diary and thumbs through it*)

Officer: (*Casually*) It's going to be an impressive...meeting. Near the river. Would you like to know who's attending...? Professor Nirmal Bose from your University. Nakee Chowdhry of the *Ittfaq* paper. Yes, even Mr. Ahmed, your all important civil administrator. He's friend, philosopher and guide, isn't he...from east Bengal. Oh, I almost forget Dr. ...what's his name...the physician who dabbles in politics. Fine job he did for the Awami during elections, I'm told. (*Spits out*) Indian stooges!

Professor: Is this a meeting er...is it a "questioning"?

Officer: (*Expansive*) Ah...good question. But I'm no match for the intellectuals, am I, Professor? I merely obey my orders.

Professor: (*Dryly*) I've heard of that before.

Officer: It's going to be an impressive meeting, Professor. Thirty... maybe forty...eminent personalities of this town...from all walks of life (*Laughing*) It could be a Rotary gathering (*SB 18-19*).

Through this ironic dialogue, the author has pictured the diabolic design of war loving people. The fact of gathering the intellectuals and able leaders, among the East Pakistanis, in the name of a meeting and liquidating their lives amass is a diabolically shrewd devise to weaken the position of the adversary. The phrase 'impressive meeting' is not only ironical but painful, especially in times of civil confrontation period when antagonistic attitude is at its peak, because this elite had been called to meet their fate of martyrdom. The dramatist's choice of the phrases "hideously wounded" and "crying in agony" (20) are tragically and painfully sounding words to befit the occasion, as it has depicted the hideous act of power hungry monsters in a civilized society of the modern era, where "war makes no sense. But love does" (20).

The playwright's purpose of enacting such a historical event is not for another documental record but to show that human tragedy, once caused, is irrevocable. Besides, his visual dramatization of the horrific deaths, tortures and pathetic refugees trudging on dusty roads in myriads are peremptory gallery of inhuman action of human beings. East Pakistan's liberation from the hands of West Pakistan conveys an astounding reality of a deep political decay when those at the helm of command are ostentatiously self-centred and ego-centric. Currimbhoy is voicing from the gamut of his being that

Pakistan's policy over Bangladesh is affected by the colonial attitude which had been planted into them by the master-colonizer of the British. Their strategy of draining the resources of Bangladesh and functioning accordingly as well as politically, to suit their ulterior motive, is dastardly in this post-modern era. Therefore, Pakistan is poignantly caught between the devil and the deep sea. This is because Pakistan and Bangladesh do not and had never shared any common boundary. India lies between the two so called West Pakistan and East Pakistan countries. Therefore, Pakistan's endeavour to continue their political hegemony over Bangladesh is nothing short of a colonial strategy. Hence, a rigorous antagonism against the incumbent authority and power has been so agile. As a result, through bloodshed and extreme violence, East Pakistan has, finally, emerged as an independent nation on 26th March 1971 with the help of India.

3.2. Political Hegemony

When the conflict between Pakistan and Bangladesh was political in nature, within the same religion, the conflict between Tibet and China is for the state and the tussle between Lamaism and communism. Currimbhoy has presented that expanding the supremacy, beyond the limit, generates a citadel of stress and strain in the people affected by it. "*Om Mane Padme Hum*" has depicted the Chinese's encroachment into Tibet and the clash between Lamaism and Communism; the repercussion of which has led into the flight of the Dalai Lama from his beloved home-land Lhasa to India. The bloody violence that ensued from this conflict has liquidated the lives of so many people. This has made the dramatist's "mind run riot over the stage" observed Faubion Bowers, "while taking the troubling events of the Chinese suzerainty over Tibet in the 1950s" (Faubion 1972, 5). The vexed motive of Chinese is seen in the following dialogue among the Chinese General and his two aides:

General: (*Soft undertones*) This is a grand mission. We're not here merely to liberate or occupy but to stay, stay and fortify. Stay and integrate. From this roof of the world, all of South Asia is ours either to defend or expand, as we choose. Logistics, therefore, is the most important. It takes us six weeks to come from China to Tibet. With two new arterial roads from Lhasa to Sikang and Chinghai it should take us no more than 7 or 8 days.

TAN KUAN SAN: (*Dryly*) It merely means building 1400 mile roads across 14 mountains at a height of 13, 000 feet and over 12 rivers including Mekong and Salween.

General: We built...the Great Wall of China.

TAN KUAN SAN: Not with a handful of soldiers.

General: Who talked about soldiers? We'll take Tibetan labour, and colonize this sparse land with Hans from the North.

TAN KUAN SAN: I see (*OMPH 37-38*).

The ostentatious attitude of Chinese has well befitted the spirit and morale of colonizers. Stretching the wings of political power into Tibet is insidiously termed as a grand mission. Currimbhoy's sharp perceptibility foresees the prolong feud between China and Tibet because of China's endeavour in attempting to supplant the religion of Lamaism with Communism. The motive of China is deeply ingrained in the words 'stay' and 'integrate' because the subtle suggestion of General has showed that they are not in Tibet to liberate or occupy it. Their ulterior motive is to stay in Tibet, integrate their Communism into it and fortify it by being present.

The dramatist's concern is the preservation of Tibet's unique ethnicity which is at stake due to the encroachment of China's political Communism. This has caused a grave concern for the maintenance and continuity of Tibetans' indigenous identity. Survival of Tibet's unique identity, as an ethnic group, depends on the Dalai Lama, fountainhead of the state's traditional religion. Therefore, when the Chinese military has designed an oppressive attack on Tibet with their superior power, Losang Tashi has pleaded that his Holiness leaves Tibet for safety: "Lamaism survive with you. You must flee, Your Holiness" (*OMPH* 15). The playwright has subtly put forth that survival of Tibet's religious leader is tantamount to the survival and continuity of their indigenous identity. The following dialogue among the Abbots and the Dalai Lama spills the beans further about the safety and continuity of this identity:

DALAI LAMA: Om Mane Padme Hum. Why? Why should I leave? They'll kill me? So I shall leave this body. There'll be a 14th...and 15th Dalai Lama. (*The senior most Abbot steps forward*)

ABBOT: Your people will die trying to save you. (*The Dalai Lama doesn't reply*)

SECOND ABBOT: There was an urgent meeting of the *Kashang* and the *Tsonga*: they all...your ministers, your people...urge you to leave quickly. We, the abbots of Drepung, Sera and Ganden, endorse it.

THIRD ABBOT: (*Going over to the window and throwing it open*) Hear them! Hear them. Your Holiness. There're thirty thousand people out there... (*This is outside the Norbulinka summer palace. Restlessness, roar of the crowds*) ...your Khamba warriors, monks, peasants...all

who come for the *Molem* festival...now revolting against the Chinese occupation...concerned for your safety...
(*The Dalai Lama raising his hand in feeble protest*)
...with Chinese guns and mortars aimed against them...this very moment. Stay and there will be slaughter
(13-14).

Therefore, it is lucidly clear that the safety of the Dalai Lama is the safety of Tibet. The author also has cognized that China's ostensible hegemony over Tibet is tantamount to the obliteration of Tibet's basic right for self determination. He has taken this factual historical background to hammer on the universal idea of regressive evolution of human civilization.

The playwright has perceived the Chinese's invasion on Tibet as nothing short of a colonialist strategy. Ngabo has told the Chinese General, "...not in principle, but in faith, the fact being that you are militarily stronger than us, that you are colonizing Tibet and that you are here to stay" (19-20). The General himself had asserted this philosophy to Tan Kuan San saying, "We'll take Tibetan labour, and colonise this sparse land..." (38). The dramatist has utilized modern consciousness in dramatizing China's colonizing process of Tibet. The scene between General Chang Chin-wu and Tan Kuan San discloses further the modern means of intelligently subjugating the less fortunate or developed state:

General: It's been three years.

TAN KUAN SAN: The roads are ready. The military convoys are coming in.

General: (*In cold anger*) I don't want military convoys coming in. Genral Tan Kuan San. I want technicians and scientists and doctors and agriculturalist.

TAN KUAN SAN: Why?

General: I want to colonise, not to conquer.

TAN KUAN SAN: It's the same thing.

General: No, it's not I want Tibet to be part of me... me! (49-50).

Physical colonization of Tibet by China through the usage of modern amenities like technicians, scientists, doctors and agriculturalist is a clever design. The dramatist has consciously positioned China in the play to portray that economically powerful countries tend to take advantage of the lesser advanced countries.

Currimbhoy's ebullient intellect has pierced into the nucleus of modern colonialism and has presented that China's comprehensive design over Tibet is undesirable. This is so because physical colonization of Tibet is only peripheral and does not exhaust the purpose of China; this British type colonization is devalued by China because it is temporal. They want a comprehensive and permanent colonization of Tibet:

General: The Tibetans are national minorities, like the Hul and the Manchu and the Mongolians. But they're all Chinese.

TAN KUAN SAN: What do you propose to do?

General: Integrate, assimilate. Use the roads and all communications for it. Bring in more Chinese ethnics than the Tibetans into Tibet. Intermarry...culturally too (50).

China has aimed for cultural and mental colonization apart from physically netting Tibet into her crease. The author has perceived this act as not only demeaning but perilous because it amounts to robbing off the basic right of Tibetans from preserving their unique identity as an ethnic group.

Therefore, China's motive on Tibet has pre-empted a prolonged resent and revolt:

TAN KUAN SAN: It's too late now. You've wasted too much time, General. The revolt must be crushed. Attack! Bomb the Palace.

General: No, the Dalai Lama is not to be harmed.

TAN KUAN SAN: (*Quietly*) Genera (*Something in his tone makes the General look at him closely*) I'm afraid I must question your authority.

General: (*Reddening*) What!

TAN KUAN SAN: You are the Chief Political Representative...in charge of overall politics. But I'm in charge of the military. The present crisis calls for military action.

General: Harm the Dalai Lama and you'll have Tibet in a state of perpetual revolt (64-65).

The Chinese General's concern is an echo of the resentful feeling of Tibetans that will erupt into a perpetual revolt. The author has foreseen that the repercussion of China's effort in trying to uproot the ethnicity and tradition of Tibet by supplanting it with their godless Communism will cause a perennial conflict between the two groups.

The conflict between China and Tibet has erupted due to China's claim for Tibet and resistance from the latter. The mightier Chinese forces became blind to their demonic psyche when Tibet has revolted violently against their encroachment of power into its land. Command of the authority has enveloped the Chinese personnel in their frenzy. Tan Kuan San has ordered his Chinese officers, "fire, fire. We'll stamp out all revolt... crush them forever" (*OMPH*

66). This is the kind of human tragedy which the author has remonstrated when he has dramatized the horrific scene of cruelty in bloodshed and violence. Bloodbath has swept across Tibet and the Dalai Lama has lamented, echoing the voice of the dramatist, which is the universal voice, “Genocide. The genocide of a civilization” (66). As the Dalai Lama crossed the Tibetan border into India, he has said with a heavy heart, “In any human conflict, the ultimate interests of the combatants are the same, the interests they fight are only ephemeral” (67) which the ordinary people, in life, take so seriously and profoundly.

3.3. Concordant Discord across the Border

The dramatist has discoursed on the philosophical dilemma of concordant discord on border issues. India, Pakistan and China are pitted against each other on the boundary issue, with the same interest of retaining the land it claims to belong to them historically. Alka Acharya has rationalized in the discourse on *India-China Relations* that “to settle boundary question in term of the plethora and counter claims made by both the parties is unfeasible and unworkable” (Alka 4728). Currimbhoy believes that cross border problems have to be resolved but not through irrational militarization. The issue he has raised is pertinent and is apt for universal application and for the consumption of the world’s population. When Bangladesh was drenched in the heat of Pakistan’s rule over them and a terrible conflict broke out between them, India was heated too. The hostility and conflict between India and Pakistan has come from the lack of trust on each other. Alka Acharya had aptly said that “the mutual distrust between India and Pakistan makes the situation a lot worse than it needs to be” (Alka 4729).

There is a lucid trend of Pakistan's apprehension and suspicion on India when it comes to militarization and military power. This has been made clear when Pakistani senior officers were engaged in a heated discourse:

1st : The pressure's growing...

2nd : What do you mean?

1st : Mukti Bahini enlarging in numbers...

3rd : We can handle them.

1st : Not when they're supported by the Indian army.

2nd : Yes, that's serious.

3rd : Why don't they come out and fight? Nibbling on us all the time...

1st : That's what they want us to do. Attack them...

3rd : Not a bad idea.

2nd : Hold on. We're at a disadvantage here. We could be cut off in the East, if the Indian Army comes in total conflict... (SB 80-81).

The 2nd officer's apprehension bespeaks of a genuine feeling of conscious Pakistanis but it is pretentiously concealed with an officious verbose of an external show of strength. This fear among them, clubbed with distrust, is 'serious.' The dichotomy between Pakistan and India is serious and, it exposes trust deficit in their relationship.

Currimbhoy has deftly discoursed on the mistrust relation between India and Pakistan by putting Bangladesh uprising as the dramatic force in the play. Fear has kept the two societies ill at ease and they, both, have concentrated on each other's strength. Pakistan is driven by uncertainty because of their

geographical location. The dramatist has put such a tension in the play not so much for the dramatic interest but to put forth the message that fear can intensify tension and demoralize people. Pakistan is on a disadvantage because they would not be able to handle East Pakistanis if they are supported by the Indian army. They would be on the weaker side in the East because they will “have two enemies here in the East. The Indian army and the Bengali people” (81).

Currimbhoy is eloquent in his dealing of the diplomatic issues. His astuteness is seen in the handling of Indo-Pak delicate ties, in *Sonar Bangla* and *Refugee*. He has shown that solvable problems are frequently nudged aside because of deficiency in trust. Besides, he has pointed out that cross border members deteriorate the relations because of grudgingly pointing fingers and provoking each other. This is clearly seen in the following dialogue:

Ray: (*Shaking his head*) Sorry. Now go. India is a peaceful country.

Hussain: (*Angrily*) Don't give me that Gandhian stuff, Ray. Let's face it: it's in your interest to have Pakistan...dismembered.

Ray: (*Furious*) Watch your words, Hussain! You're pushing me too far! First it was a little help to guerrillas; now you want a full-scale border provocation which will invite nothing short of a declaration of war from Pakistan!

Hussain: (*Getting up, excited, almost embracing Ray*) You've got it, Ray! Hit the nail right on the head! That's the right way to do it: provoke them sufficiently so that they declare war on *you*! (77)

The above dialogue has clearly depicted that cross border provocation has deranged the ambassadorial candidness and it has kept the conflicting countries suspicious of each other. India and Pakistan are delicately walking on the path of bilateral ties due to border dispute. As a result, even “international pressure for a peaceful solution did not work out” (78). The author has hit the nail right on the head that both the countries are tactful about their strategies. There is a subtle suggestion about the usage of an underground support in the words of Ray when he said, ‘first it was a little help to guerrillas.’ The playwright does not pass propaganda but has only presented the issue from what he had experienced and perceived in the volatile situation of the period he had passed through.

The dramatist has dealt with societies of his concern on an equal footing without predilection for any particular country. His true mission, as an artist, comes to light in his treatment of the arch rival countries in South Asia: India and Pakistan as well as India and China. Though a Muslim by birth and faith, he does not soft paddle Muslim countries like Pakistan or Bangladesh. His social concern has kept him hyperactively awake and sensitive to the events of the period. This has triggered his fertile brain to glean the painful social events of the period and they have come out glitteringly alive in some of his plays.

Like Pakistan having two adversaries, India has rough relations with two neighbouring countries which are a leftover from historical issues that were kept unsolved; one from Pakistan and the other from China. India got her share of the sparks of Chinese’s anger and animosity due to the border issue. Despite making only a passing reference to China in *Sonar Bangla*, the author’s purported interest was to lay bare India’s tarnished relation with

China. The following dialogue hammers on the fragility of relation between the two countries:

Hussain: Not to worry, Ray. You're well protected.

Ray: (*Smelling a rat*) What do you mean?

Hussain: (*Almost innocently*) That Russian mutual defense pact was a marvelous bit of diplomacy.

Ray: True. The lady's smart. (*Then suspiciously*) What are you getting at?

Hussain: We're approaching winter. You don't need the colonel to tell you that a snow-bound Himalayas would effectively cut off the Chinese from attempting any...attack on India.

Ray: So...?

Hussain: ...So that just leaves India and Pakistan to fight it out with a double military superiority of India over Pakistan, both men and equipment-wise (77).

The dramatist has struck the cord of India and China's preoccupation with the discord of historical issues. History has it that "India-China relations did enjoy a decade of friendly relations from 1949 to 1959. There was an early promise of their working together to transform the geopolitical landscape. This positive phase ended with the controversy over the Dalai Lama's entry into India in 1959 and the subsequent border conflict in 1962" (Saran <<http://www.hindustantimes.com>>). The long-standing boundary issue, coupled with the Dalai Lama taking hostage in India, has defied solution to the rusting relation between the two countries. Besides, the author has cognized that continued failure in resolving the issue has acted as a

constraint on their relations. This has been reflected in both the countries taking a maximum advantage of loopholes and opportunities of the adversary, as it is said by Hussain in the above dialogue. The author has shown that the imbroglio of territorial conflict has left the conflicting countries ill at ease through the years. This protracted problem which is ‘a left over from history’ needs to be resolved.

The playwright has neither taken pleasure in starkly parading the hatred and avengement among different societies nor has he taken interest in producing an artistic drama out of a sensitive issue; the subject that immediately arrests the curiosity and attention of people. As a social realist, he could not but dwell on the social issues that strike his sensitive intellect. In the imbroglio of Bangladesh’s strive for liberation from the hands of Pakistan, India got involved and, in the tussle between the Tibetans and Chinese, India got entangled into it too. What has bothered the author in these two issues are not the countries but the perennial problems which has kept the neighbours in constant suspicion and in cold war. He has echoed the same voice of Pratap Bhanu Mehta that “we need a political culture that will allow both countries to transcend the sediments of history that are weighing them down” (Pratap 2014).

Through the 1950s, border issues have generated friction along the territorial sections, both in the north and north-west of India; and so bred and steadily increased distrust, growing into hostility, between the neighbours. This protracted problem has shown an incessant smoke of high inflammability until today. Therefore, the author sees it as a left over of history that continues to instigate the conscience of conflicting parties.

3.4. Render-bender between Colonizers and Natives

Currimbhoy has detoured from the political clashes, experienced by the neighbouring countries, to another political event of a different nature in *Goa*. In juxtaposing love and colonial political theme, the dramatist has more critically assessed the latter. He has subtly utilized what K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar had called “the coiled symbolism of the play” (Iyenger 245) to effervescently explicate the render-bender between the colonizers and colonized people.

Alphonso has called Rose as the fairest flower in the whole world and said that “Rose is Goa. Goa is Rose” (*GOA* 37). Powerful symbols employed by the playwright in this play are ‘Rose’ and ‘Goa.’ Just as Rose is fourteen years old, Goa had been under the rule of Portuguese for fourteen years even after the Independence of India from 1947 to 1961. Krishna’s waiting for fourteen years for Rose (68), thus symbolizes India’s wait for fourteen years to merge Goa into the Indian Union. Rose’s name connotes something peculiar and suggests innocent loveliness. Miranda’s words have well befitted the state of conflicting situations when she said, “That’s why I called her Rose, the colour of blood that broke when she was conceived” (64). The raping of Rose by Krishna, an Indian, is paralleled with the invasion of Goa by India. Just as the colour of blood accompanied the conception and birth of Rose, the conception and birth of Goa into Indian union was accompanied with the colour of blood through the conflict between the colonizers and natives, because in the process of her liberation “the innocent and peaceful and moral image of India was blemished with her first act of violence... tarnished was the rose worn in the lapel...” (79). Krishna’s fear in defiling Rose with violence is the fear of Indians in capturing Goa back to her fold; the action that has to be done accompanied with violence, force and bloodshed.

He told Miranda, “terrified that my hands should hold the uncrushed flower ...so pure...and fragrant” (47-48). After violence and surrender of Goa to India by Portuguese “...the Portuguese enclaves of Goa, Daman and Diu were no longer ‘pimples’ on the face of India” (79).

The dramatist’s scintillating intellect has pierced through the darkest recesses of the colonizers’ indolent persistence in holding on to the possession of Goa. He has scanned the conflict between the colonizers and colonized people and has disclosed the dichotomy of their attitudes. The words of Portuguese administrator are titillating the explosion of the clash between natives and colonizers when he said, “And when we, the Portuguese, came to India almost four centuries ago, we made of Goa an *enclave*...(Dim light falls on the GOAN NATIONALIST who is sitting across from him drinking beer) Ah but my friend here who calls himself a...a...(Suggestion of a deprecating snigger) Nationalist insists we made this into a...colony...instead of a small part of Portugal” (17). Besides, when he said, “I’m here to keep you out of mischief” (19), it is nothing but an officious verbose of his superior attitude to keep the colonized in good impression and make them stay in their present position meekly. This has attracted a sharp response from the colonized Goan Nationalist: “You’re exploiting us” (Ibid).

The conflict gets deeper as they try to rebut their stance and the actual attitude of the white colonizers is revealed when the Portuguese Administrator has blatantly told his colonized friend, “I’m afraid you are underestimating me” (53) and, further laid bare their greed as he avidly endeavours to hammer his point saying, “We’re as old as the hills. We’re part and parcel of this life whether you like or not...” (Ibid). The author has depicted, through this divergence between the colonizers and colonized, that ego clash is perilous because there are no rooms for humility to pacify the differences.

The playwright has exposed a more painful side of the story through the colonizers' self-righteousness and lackadaisical attitude towards the actual welfare of natives and their land. The following dialogue reveals the destructive and negative treatment of natives by colonizers:

Senhora Miranda: Tell me that you'll never leave me and go back to Portugal.

Alphonso: (*Frowning*) Now why should I ever do that? I'm quite happy here. Got a lot of friends...and I'm comfortable here. Nothing costs very much. And it's easy being Portuguese. You know what I mean? So I like it here.

Senhora Miranda: But it can't be forever, Alphonso. I mean you can't be living like this forever.

Alphonso: Why not? Plenty to eat and drink. No worries (31).

The above dialogue depicts the author's subtle exposition of the complacent attitude of colonizers in taking advantage of the colonized people. They live on the extracted resources and feel 'comfortable here' because 'nothing costs very much' in the colony. It seemingly looks that Alphonso is lazy but his actual attitude is revealed through his words. Natives and their resources are at his disposal to take advantage of because he feels that 'it's easy being a Portuguese' here in Goa. Moreover, there is plenty to eat and drink in this land even without toiling and sweating for it.

Currimbhoy does not allow his characters to merely speak out their minds without a prior heating up of the situation. Alphonso has been confronted by Miranda and this has served as the catalytic effect for Alphonso to externalize his mind as a colonizer. This does not mean that Miranda is more rational or less racial in her approach to colonized people. Their attitude

towards the natives is further laid bare in the following altercation between Alphonso and his fiancé:

Senhora Miranda: But...but...wouldn't you like to do something, Alphonso?

Alphonso: The Local Administrator gives me a job or two from time to time...and pays me handsomely.

Senhora Miranda: Yes, because he doesn't want you hanging around with nothing and no money. It wouldn't do any good to see a Portuguese doing that (Ibid).

Alphonso does not strive to earn his livelihood but this does not mean that he is a parasite to his fellow colonizers. Unlike the hardworking natives who toil to earn for a meal a day or two, colonizers, like Alphonso, receive a handsome pay despite working minimally. This predilection and partiality on colonizers by the local administration is a clever tactic because they wouldn't embarrass a Portuguese by allowing him to be poorer than the colonized natives. Besides, a Portuguese will not be made to sink below the natives in their status and position by making them hang around with nothing and no money. The way colonizers revel at the cost of the colonized, who were trampled upon and taken advantage of, shows their despicable attitude and behavior. The playwright has purportedly divulged the colonizers' dirty game on the oppressed colonized people to depict the debased nature of man in a colony.

The author has dramatized the psyche of the colonizers to denude their greed and diabolic attitude. The fierce altercation between the Portuguese Administrator and the Goan Nationalist discloses the latter's resoluteness to unfetter the bindings of his counterpart:

Goan Nationalist: Strange that we should be on different sides of the fence and yet have so much in common with each other.

Portuguese Administrator: I told you...we are part and parcel of each other's lives.

Goan Nationalist: And yet it is inevitable that we break away. There's bound to be a reaction, of course, but that is again unavoidable. We do it for the larger good of the larger people in the long run.

Portuguese Administrator: Everything you say sounds like an expediency. Like bringing in an outsider. Like an unnatural alliance.

Goan Nationalist: Perhaps ... but a necessary one. There's nothing ... nothing ... one can do to stop the basic desire. You could float this *enclave* in milk and honey and yet we would want for ourselves that nobody can ever be able to stop us, even though we may be ruthless to ourselves and others in getting it. And if freedom cannot be won alone, I'd be willing to join the devil himself to get it.

Portuguese Administrator: That way...you will lose what you want most.

Goan Nationalist: May be, but there's nothing that I can do to prevent it either, even if I wanted to. We are compelled within ourselves, you understand (54-55).

Sharp exchange of words between them has not only conspicuously reflected the clever design of colonizers but it has also shown that their hay days are waning. Portuguese Administrator's measured words and tone clearly depict the beginning of his end as a superior because his adversary's diplomatic responses are stuffing his throat with dumbness. His adversary's unbending words and tone, on the contrary, pictures the determined effort of the colonized natives to reclaim the land that belonged to them historically and take dominion of the same. Therefore, nothing can prevent them from this inner urge of theirs.

The natives cannot stop the inner compulsion of their basic desire to be freed from the bondage of colonizers, even if by being ruthless to themselves and others. The colonizers and natives have the same aim of gaining the autonomy over the land. An indigestible thing for Goan natives is that they were subjected to the whims and fancies of White colonizers; an administrative processes that involved a strict system of monopolization to afford a greater profit for colonizers only. Natives have revolted against such moves and this collective mood was for resisting the suffocating forces of colonizers in the interest of "the greatest good for the greatest number of people" ("An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation" <<http://librivox.org>>). While on the other hand, colonizers persist in owning the "Beautiful. Like Goa" (55), by verbally assuring the natives that their objective is to "keep people out of mischief," "give the people what they want" (19) and continue to keep Goa under their armpit.

Currimbhoy has brought home the notion that the apathetic attitude of the colonizers towards the actual welfare of the natives has preempted an adverse repercussion. He has also depicted that there is a limit to exploitation, oppression and suppression. Goan Nationalist has told his counterpart,

Portuguese Administrator: “Your days are numbered” (Ibid). He continues taunting his adversary saying, “Wouldn’t you like to go home sometime?” and added, “Would be sorry to see you go” (20). It is inevitable that the colonized people and colonizers “break way” (55) because “there is a breaking point to all patience” (53). The animosity of Indians toward the White colonizers is starkly revealed in the following words of the Goan Nationalist: “You would float this enclave in milk and honey and yet we would want for ourselves that abstraction with all our hearts and nobody, no-one will ever be able to stop us, even though we may be ruthless to ourselves and others in getting it” (55).

The dramatist has astutely pushed forward his perception of the attitudinal differences in a colonial society by suggesting that the superiority complex of colonizers does more harm than not in the coexistence of different social groups. Yoosaph A.K., in his discourse on racism in *Goa*, has said that “conquering and marginalizing local knowledge systems, European colonizing imposed their bias knowledge system on the colonized” (Yoosaph <www.scribd.com>). The ‘knowledge’ here refers to the scientific theories of the European colonizers who have impressed upon the colonized people that white skin means superior. Ania Loomba has critically analyzed that the European scientists’ prejudice about their own racial identity has blocked them from “radically questioning scientific theories of racial difference” (Loomba 62). Therefore, the colonized people were marginalized and discriminated because they could not have any access to the scientific training. This has kept the colonized underprivileged and consciousness of it ignites an ugly conflict which is reflected in *Goa*.

Goa is not only a colonial play dealing with colonial political theme but also enacting the destructive forces of colonizers. It also has dwelt on the theme of love and relationship; love between Alphonso and Senhora Miranda,

Keshav and Senhora Miranda and, Keshav and Rose. But this sub-theme has not completely dissociated itself from the main theme because Miranda swings between the colonizers and natives in her love. It is in these relationships that the major portion of colonizers' dirty game on colonized natives is exposed. Though she is borne of a mixed race parents, she clothes herself with the superior race of the colonizers and abhorred the natives. In her love with Alphonso, she is hidebound because she does not want him to hang about or be intimately familiar with native Indians. On the contrary, she initiates a sensuous relation with an Indian. She seduces Keshav, a native Indian, and gratifies her sexual appetite and, even collaborates with Keshav in raping his own daughter, Rose. Through this unpleasant behavior of Miranda, the playwright has brought home the message of the utilitarian attitude of colonizers.

3.5. Racial Menace

Currimbhoy has presented that a social menace that can be so harmful for a harmonious coexistence of different races and that can create an indelible scar is racial rift. Peter Nazareth has opined that "Asif Currimbhoy interweaves the public event with the private to create exciting drama which asks moral questions about humanity in the cataclysmic period of the decolonization" (Peter. <<http://www.the-criterion.com>>). The theme of colonialism has been dovetailed with the concept of racism in *Goa*. Yoosaph had critically synthesized that "*Goa* is a significant example of Currimbhoy's treatment of colour and race as an inevitable tool of analyzing post-colonialism" (Yoosaph. <<http://www.the-criterion.com>>). The dramatist has chosen this theme to hammer out the ugliness of racial conflict. The beastly treatment of the protagonist in Africa, in *An Experiment with Truth*, is a concrete conflict between the white and black skinned people. Black skinned

people were treated shabbily as though they have no dignity and self respect. Gandhiji's soliloquy has revealed the animosity between the black and white, apart from his discernment of the theme of courage and fear:

Physical cowardice. Fear. Of course I felt it...but moral courage came to the fore..."Hang old Gnadhi by the Apple tree". "Hang old Gandhiji by the Apple Tree". (*Musing*) Catchy tune: (*Feeling his neck*) luckily they didn't catch me...And then the time when the coach-driver in Africa beat me black and blue because I wouldn't give up my seat to a white man...No, that didn't make a coward of me, afraid though I was... (*Distantly, almost trying hard to forget, but he cannot*) Yes...yes...there was a time when I might have shrunk...through fear of physical violence. It was...one night in an African jail. I was thrown in with criminals after my Transvaal March. There was a large African and a Chinese in the same cell with me...They...they were planning...a sexual assault on me. A...a feeling of shame and cowardice...overcame me. I prayed: God came to my rescue... (*AEWT 21-22*).

The playwright's concern is about a wide chasm that exists between the white and black skinned people in terms of dignity and human right. Amidst criticizing the apartheid problem, where the blacks were looked at as a cur having no human dignity, the author has judiciously suggested that destruction of humaneness in man is possible if human beings look at and treat each other on the basis of skin colour.

The dramatist has perspicaciously examined the colour prejudice of the western colonizers and has opined that this discriminatory psyche was deeply ingrained. This colour consciousness, for the author, is an inheritance from the past, the consciousness that has been passed on from generation to

generation. Senhora Miranda's consciousness of the colour differences speaks volumes about such a racial rift:

Senhora Miranda: Why, Alphonso, I've seen you talk for hours on end...with your friends.

Alphonso: Oh, they're different...

Senhora Miranda: I should hope so. I wish you wouldn't mix with...*all* of them.

Alphonso: What do you mean?

Senhora Miranda: Oh, I mean it's alright if you have a drink with the Administrator, or have a chat with the Vicar...but the rest... (*Shrugging her shoulders*)...of the Goans...

Alphonso: Why, what's wrong with them?

Senhora Miranda: They...they don't have the same background. You understand. Oh, it's alright I suppose if you occasionally meet them, but this idea of being too friendly with all and sundry isn't exactly becoming.

Alphonso: Why not?

Senhora Miranda: Well, I don't have to keep repeating myself, do I? We're different, you know.

Alphonso: ...We?

Senhora Miranda: Yes, I remember my parents telling me, me...how it was necessary to keep a distance (*GOA 34-35*).

The term 'different' is deeply embedded in the conscience of the white race and, therefore, they have considered the idea of being too friendly with

all and sundry isn't exactly becoming of them. Miranda has been overwhelmed with a deep sense of superiority complex and this is conveyed in her own words: "Why Rose is so dark and I'm so fair. Like you are dark and I'm fair" (46). This is more of a colonizer's attitude towards the colonized to avoid familiarity and maintain their superiority over the colonized. The racial conflict of this sort is dreadful when it comes to the point of segregation and alienation, as it is found in *Goa, The Darjeeling?, An Experiment with Truth* and *The Tourist Mecca*.

Currimbhoy's dealing with the theme of racial conflict has shown that this rift gets uglier and fiercer when pride and selfishness sway the mind and heart of the races in variance. Senhora Miranda is not so much supercilious than racist as it is seen in her dialogue with Alphonso:

Alphonso: (*Frowning*) Now why should I ever do that? I'm quite happy here. Got a lot of friends...and I'm, comfortable here. Nothing costs very much. And it's easy being Portuguese. You know what I mean? So I like it here.

Senhora Miranda: But it can't be forever, Alphonso. I mean you can't be living like this forever.

Alphonso: Why not? Plenty to eat and drink. No worries.

Senhora Miranda: But...but...wouldn't you like to do something, Alphonso?

Alphonso: The local Administrator gives me a job or two from time to time...and pays me handsomely.

Senhora Miranda: Yes, because he doesn't want you hanging around with nothing and no money. It wouldn't do any good to see a Portuguese doing that (31).

There is a revelation about the exploitative mindset of the colonizers in the above dialogue. Sensitivity to their superiority complex has embalmed them with insecurity because they fear that their dominion over the natives will be dismantled if ever they are found hanging around with nothing and no money (31). There is also a grim reality about natives being exploited by the colonizers. People like Alphonso are complacent about their lives by taking advantage of natives and their resources because there is plenty to eat and drink without working in the colonized enclave (Ibid).

Currimbhoy has excavated the deposit of racial conflict deeper through the conscientious behaviour of the White. Colonizers abhor the coloured people despite reveling over the resources extracted from their land. Senhora has treated the dark skinned people derisively, as it is seen in the following dialogue:

Alphonso: (*Quietly*) I told you before...it makes no difference to me.

Senhora Miranda: Ah, but it does to me. Can you imagine my feelings, Alphonso? Now you know why I don't like coloured people. They make me feel dirty.

Alphonso: Rose is the cleanest girl I know.

Senhora Miranda: No doubt. No doubt. But give her time. She's only fourteen, you know. Time may come when she's no different from me. Only I'm fair and she's dark (37).

The author has cognized that irrational people, like Senhora Miranda, depends on colour privileges to enhance self-confidence. Miranda has ostentatiously said, "See how white my skin is" (26). She herself has "got

shades of black within her” but she “won’t be conscious of it any more” (61) because of her racial paradigm.

Painful social interactions fit tightly on Currimbhoy’s conscience and he has unearthed these interactions, not for a renewed clash but to “...derive its influence...from past and future...because it vitally concerns us today...there is the ever present it influences with its collective consciousness...And so, there are others too who will shape the future event...” (*AEWT* 16-17). Jennie has poured out her anger on her husband’s illicit affair. She has lashed out at Mac saying, “It’s an old planter’s custom, isn’t it? Fuck them and leave them” (*DT* 42). She continues with her revelation of the dirty affairs of foreigners in a foreign land saying, “There’s many a planter who left his child at Kalingpong. All they missed was a name” (50). The dramatist has touched upon this pathetic condition of coolie planters to press on the inhuman treatment of man.

The immoral behavior of white people in a foreign land, even in the post-colonial era, is denting the possible and peaceful co-existence because natives tend to feel ill respected due to foreigners’ taking advantage of the native girls, as Jennie has uttered. The dramatist has treated this infidel behavior in an uglier manner in *Goa*, during the decolonization period. Senhora’s prostituting and her treatment of Krishna, an Indian, are nerve-wrecking and a morally disturbing behaviour. She has “got shades of black within” her (*GOA* 61) but she does not “like the coloured people” (37). Her daughter is also born of a non-Portuguese father, as it is conveyed in her own words: “That girl’s either got the blood of her father...in which case he wasn’t a Portuguese...or she’s got the blood of her grandfather, in which case my father was not Portuguese” (*Ibid*). Her treatment of Krishna is shabby and ignoble because to reach Rose, he has to pass by her mother first (49); in a

sense he has to fall a prey to her amorous desires first. This sounds ridiculous because Krishna had been robbed off his innocence and got blemished by Senhora (75) and, she has even whored him. He has rightly accused her of spoiling him when he said, “till you spoke...about my having whored her love...with you” (Ibid). Senhora is on a defensive because “what you fear is only yourself” (62). She has even attempted to suppress her ‘Indian-ness’ and behaves like a Portuguese, a revelation of her mean attitude. ‘Indian-ness’ or an Indian blood is being compromised with while still in India by trying to assume a supposedly white race for the sake of prestige and pride.

The dramatist believes that racism is closely linked with pride and frustration. Joseph’s long period of living in India, during the post-colonial period, has not altered his mind set. He has treated Indians as strange and considered the name of Tara as “rather strange sounding and foreign” (*TANL* 33) while living in India. It’s humiliating and embarrassing for a foreigner to treat natives as strange and foreign. Joseph’s superior attitude has bounced him to consider an Indian name as strange but David, his son, has immediately corrected him saying, “I’d say foreign sounding names are ours...” (33). Joseph could not concede to such a logic because his mind is preoccupied with his own problems, thereby making him to be bogged down with a sense of lost, caused by the guilt of failure in taking decisions at the right moment. Therefore, the author has shown that conflict between Jewish and Indian societies is largely due to dissimilar cultural ethos and Joseph’s narrow mindedness.

Currimbhoy has subtly depicted that people occupying higher position, in society are hungrier for prestige and respect from the people they are commanding. Those occupying a bureaucratic position are all the more stubborn to hold on to their dignity and status. Mac and Hugh have debated

over the issue of their origin and on the process there was a disclosure about Big Mac's attachment to tea gardens because of the respectable position he occupies, besides having a daughter by a coolie woman:

Hugh: I've been thinking... (*Mac looks up, his eyes smiling*)...I'm going to miss you.

Mac: Same here.

Hugh: Wish it could continue.

Mac: Don't see how it's impossible.

Mac: Bound to.

Hugh: No place for a foreigner!

Mac: (*Shot of anger*) I'm no goddam foreigner. Three generations, you've just said.

Hugh: You're still a foreigner, Mac, whether you like it or not.

Mac: (*Coldly*) I don't look at things the way you do, Hugh.

Hugh: (*Controlling himself*) I'll and that, Mac, because I have more important things to tell you. (*Mac looks up. So also does Jennie*) Sally...we...thinking of retiring, going back home. There are lots of planters like us drifting around, wanting to settle down. In fact there's quite a sizable community in London... (*DT 35*).

The visible conflict within the same group of foreigners, in India, shows how mean people can become due to egocentricity. Mac is enraged at the attribution of being a foreigner in a foreign land. His attachment to tea gardens is not a guarantee for him to become an indigenous Indian and

begetting a daughter from a coolie woman is not the justification either for him to automatically acquire a legitimate Indian citizenship.

The dramatist has deduced from the slack life of lascivious white Managers of tea gardens that pride has induced people in command to take advantage of coolie men and women. White Managers of tea gardens are attached to physical pleasures and merry-making. They “booze all night, work out in the club, rest in the Nursing Home. Drive these goddamn Assistant Managers to drive those goddamn coolies” (15-16). The author has scrutinized the white people’s behavior and attitude and, has depicted their destructive approach to life and people.

The playwright is antiracist and has depicted this by dissecting the ugliness of humanity’s behavior that creates cleavages in human relationship along the line of skin colour. He has suggested that black skinned people are not destined to be inferior to the white race, who has not only attempted to physically colonize the land but mentally as well as culturally colonize the people. Senhora Miranda’s scathing remarks on the coloured people are sharp enough to cut wide open and wound the conscience of the colonized people. Yoosaph has opined that “her scathing remarks would have accelerated the colonized’s internalization of the colonizer’s notion about the colonized that they are inferior and under-privileged” (Yoosaph <www.scribd.com>).

The dramatist has echoed the feeling of intense insecurity through the presentation of a fissured world caused by colour prejudice. He has also deftly handled this sensitively delicate situation and has opined that a day will dawn when the colonized people will become conscious of the injustice and react to it in ways their wisdom prompts them. This idea is subtly brought out when Krishna, a black Indian, has intelligently subverted the Whites’ notion of the black skinned people when he said, “You may have white skin, but also have

albinos. It doesn't prove a thing" (*GOA* 60). Through this, the author has intended to convey that white skin does not prove and guarantee the race to be superior to blacks. He has made his stance clear that skin colour does not determine the status of a person in society.

The dramatist believes that colour consciousness has not diminished even during the post-colonial era and the hangover of it still hovers about in this modern period. In *Darjeeling Tea?* the Young Man has enthusiastically told Marwari that "there's a new breed replacing the white Sahibs" (*DT* 14), indicating a colour conflict. This new breed has been called as the "Brown Sahib" (*Ibid*), echoing colour distinctions on the basis of skin shade.

Currimbhoy has ingeniously presented that differentiating the races on the basis of skin colour reflects an uncongenial atmosphere where harmonious co-existence of black-white is a pie in the sky. Bunty's words, "...We've got to carry the white man's burden" (16), is an echo of the philosophy of servitude, a social situation where coloured people have to conduct their life in accordance with the command of the White. This oppressing treatment of the black skinned people pictures a conspicuous racial rift that will be hard to mend because of the emotional hurt received by the oppressed group. In fact, Bunty's words are a catalyst for the eruption of a violent animosity between the two races because he felt that since he is black he has to be at the back and call of the white people. Marwari, on the other hand, has perceived the Whites' strategy of utilizing "Indians who've studied abroad and quite *pucca*..." (14), and sounded the trumpet of dissent when he cynically remarked, "it's not what they're paid that matters. It's what they are worth" (14). This shows that Marwari is astute enough to read the clever designs of White race because he has felt that this race handpicks the worthy Indians to work for them. There is also a second meaning, a more relevant and pointed

one, he has meant; the wage that Indians receive is not important but the worth, abilities and capabilities of Indians, that is at par with White's is crucially important. Therefore, he has vehemently hammered the right to equality.

The playwright has sagaciously scrutinized the West's intelligence of embarking on utilitarianism to meet their end. He has also criticized the White Sahibs who have hand-picked Indians, the Brown sahibs, to work for them. These Sahibs behave like their masters due to the strong influence of Western mentality and education. White Sahibs have utilized them for the sole purpose of benefitting themselves and to cover up their ulterior motive.

3.6. East and West Collision

Currimbhoy's penetrative observation has pierced into the subtle happenings of society that are not easily perceived by the common people. East-West differences, that are causing rift and conflict, are depicted in his different plays. He has shown that these fissures are due to selfishness and conflict of interests. Joseph, in *This Alien...Native Land*, could not hide his dislike for India despite living here for many years as a Jew. Despite deliberately choosing India rather than Jerusalem, his venomous words against India have not ceased:

Joseph: Jerusalem. Oh, Sarah, Sarah, Jerusalem. I wonder if we made a wrong decision of not going there, child. You were a child then, clinging onto me...See how this city has grown. I...I can't cope with it... (*His rocking become a little more agitated*)

Sarah: (*Taking back his pipe, replacing his burn-out toba*) Jerusalem will have grown too. Remember...it was long time ago...

Joseph: But not like here...Here it's dirty and filthy and...and...ingrown. There it's the wide spaces...and a new life... (TANL 13).

Joseph's downgrading India's environment, through his sarcastic words, amidst his regret and inner turbulence, is seemingly symptomatic of the West's inherent attitude towards India because of the factually uncongenial environment of India. His harsh remarks on the skyscrapers that "Each, taller, bigger, dirtier than the other. Filth, filth, all around" (9) are in sharp contrast with the kind of places found in Europe.

Currimbhoy has brought out the differences between spiritualism and rationalism in *The Hungry Ones* and has criticized the pride and superior feeling of the West. When the two American beatnik poets have ventured into their search for the mystery of India, they have landed up in more confusions than demystifying the mystery of India. Al has proceeded with his rationalism to gain the knowledge of Indian mysticism despite results of failures and discouragement. He told Sam, "it has still to be proved to me. This contrast and friendship. This need and rebuke. I...will...still...break...their...reserve ...their secrecy...if only to prove my superiority" (THO 35). Evidently enough, Sam too displayed the same attitude when he wanted to penetrate into the reserve and secret of Indians and, "break...it...if only to prove that I am stronger" (35).

The dramatist has examined the differences between spiritualism and rationalism to depict the East-West collision. Apparently, Al has attempted to prove the superiority of his rationalism when he wanted to test Ramesh of his "...complete absorption...complete detachment" (49). The means to prove this was through the most violent form of human abuse called rape. Al's rational justification, "that I rape you (Razia, wife of Ramesh) through no

desire or ill-will, but merely to show my superiority over his..." (Ibid), invites a moral ramification. The following rebuke of Sam, "He's not faking, Al. It's true what he does. It's real. Not like us, faking strength and superiority, pretending to know about their religion and yoga" (50), has explicated the naked truth of an egoistic and rationalist's approach to life.

The author has satirized the superior feeling of the West, over the East, in the above episode and has presented that pride veils human mind from penetrating into the truth of spirituality. He has suggested a virtuous and humble path for gaining knowledge: "Have the humility to learn" (Ibid). Evidently, pride and self centeredness have veiled Sam and Al from understanding the true India and, therefore, they could only understand that they cannot comprehend the real India and, finally, left for their native land in America. The author has purportedly dramatized such an intellectual endeavour of man to bring home the message that pride stands as a barrier for gaining new knowledge and learning the truth.

Currimbhoy does not feign in his perception of the real India, in comparison with the West, despite harping on the tourist avenues available in India. Lady Toppin, like Senhora, has made Keshav, the tourist guide, her prey in sex. She and Janet, her daughter, are in love with Keshav, a professional lover (*TTM* 59); the love triangle happens but the motive is to satisfy the sexual urge of Lady Topin. At the same time, Keshav too has flirted with Janet knowing well that she is Lady Topin's daughter. The author has allowed Lady Topin to reel out her impression of India to her daughter and it is through this that we come to know some truths about the real India. She has warned her daughter saying, "...when there is no more this Keshav, you'll find other Keshavs. One of them in every filthy stinking gutter" (49). This shows that foreign tourists can easily endear the likes of Keshav and

gratify their physical longings. At one fell swoop, the author has also exposed the ulterior motive of these tourist groups coming to India; they are either escapists or pleasure seeking tourists who lustily move about searching for gullible and sensuous youths, like Kesahv, to satiate their sexual appetites. Keshav is another hunter who reaps the opportunity at the need of time. He had being an actor on stage until he met Janet “off-stage” (61).

There are certain similarities amidst dissimilarities between East and West but the differences are more conspicuous according to the perception of the author. There has been an intelligent clash between the East and West when the American couple played on their formula of bargaining the price of things and Indians doubling the price of the same on foreign customers (67). Through this, the dramatist has conveyed the message that “no one carrying travelers’ cheques of hard currencies can ever hope to make genuine friends in passing” (43).

3.7. Caste and Social Segregation

Currimbhoy has vehemently propagated the ill effects of social segregation and fervently stood against the menace of dehumanizing a person basing on caste system in India. He has situated himself into this indelible problem of untouchables in Hindu society not only to demonstrate the humiliating exploitation of the downtrodden, like Mulk Raj Anand in his *Untouchable*, but also to expose the minds of both the oppressor and the oppressed.

Chuhra, the sweepers, and other untouchables find a place in his *An Experiment with Truth*. He has depicted, in this play, the disabilities of a section of people within the same society. Sharon Daniel has poignantly pointed out in *Untouchables in India* that “the untouchability feature in the caste system is one of the cruelest features of the caste system” (Daniel

<<http://adineal.tripod.com>>). Despite a stern protest from Kasturba, Gandhiji's wife, Gopal, an untouchable, has worked so closely with Gandhiji (AEWT 22). Ambedkar, also an untouchable, is the "Champion for the Untouchables" (46) working politically for the cause of untouchables. The upper castes have held on to their privilege and the oppressed Untouchables were made to sit on the pins, eagerly waiting for their emancipation. The dramatist points out that, in such an imbalanced social situation, harmony and mutual coexistence is a farfetched idea.

If Ambedkar is the voice of Currimbhoy, Gandhiji is his action in his experiment with Truth. The evil effect of creating cleavage within the same society, on the basis of caste, is not a pie in the sky even in the modern era. "Caste discrimination has allowed, and still does allow, upper castes to maintain their control over cultural, social, political and material capital" (Rabeh <<http://www.suite101.com>>). R. Delige has also observed that "untouchability was still thoroughly alive today" (Delige 9). Kasturba, wife of Gandhiji and representative of modern mentality, has indelibly nurtured the hierarchical order and its ideology of purity and impurity; the same that had percolated into the social system and conscience of Hindus. She is deeply caste conscious and has detested the job of sweeping "every room, every toilet" (AEWT 43). She has vehemently protested Gandhiji's invitation to do these debased works that are done by Untouchables:

Gopal: Does it relax? You want to rest now, Bapu?

Gandhi: Yes (*The untouchable goes to the basin, washes his hands again, then raises them before his eyes. He leaves. Whispering, looking at his hands in the same manner as the untouchable*) Ba...Ba...his hands are the same as mine. Why did I have to force you to submit always...

(Gandhi's mind flashes back; the light fades on him, and the action is transferred to the Ashram. Shots and screams).

Kasturba: *(Screaming)* No! Bapu, no! *(A somewhat younger Gandhi drags Kasturba out with one hand, holding an untouchable's broom in the other).*

Gandhi: *(Shouting)* He's our guest, Ba! No different from anyone else! *(Throwing down the jharu)* We'll sweep every room, every toilet, you and I.

Kasturba: *(Crying)* No... *(Covering her face)* No. It lies...deep within me. Even the shadow contaminates. Don't make me do it... *(Recoiling from the jharu)* Don't, Bhapu... (43-44).

Kasturba represents the orthodox Hindu high castes, who believes that Untouchables truly exist and contact with them contaminates. The author has passionately treated this issue to press on the irrational, debasing and humiliating treatment of this group of people because high caste Hindus consider that even their shadow contaminates. Sharon Daniel had opined that "the orthodox Hindus treated anyone who worked in any kind of polluting job as untouchable and did not have any contact with them" (Sharon, <<http://adaniel.tripod.com>>).

The playwright has dwelt on this painful social quandary of Hindu society to depict the debased nature of man in considering another man as low grade and unclean by birth. He has depicted, through the portrayal of Gandhiji that untouchables are also human persons and not beasts, they have the same dignity like any other persons but the cleavage within Hindu society will not be mend easily, as it is seen in the character of Kasturba. I.P. Desai, in his

classic study on this subject in the 1970s, in Gujarat, has said that “when it came to traditional relations that included the domestic and religious life of the people, untouchability was highly practiced” (Desai 9).

The author has consciously and irresistibly dissected the ugly picture of social behavior, basing on social purity and impurity, to present the broken society among modern Hindus in India. It is extremely devious, according to him, to utilize an evil means to extricate the truth from a criminal or even to intimidate a person by going against his belief and, much worse still, to take advantage of Untouchables by treating them as an object and not as a person with a conscience. While presenting the stark reality of disability and impurity, of certain castes among Hindus in India, he has unreservedly exposed the pathetic state of prisoners in jail and the diabolic intent of the prison attendants that has been kept hushed. Untouchables have been shabbily treated as an object and not as a human being moving about with a heart and mind. Patel has intimidated Madanlal, the accused prisoner and a Brahmin, with an untouchable’s “*jharu* and touching the fibre-strands” (AEWT 45) as if to bash him with. The intimidating tactic took an abhorring turn when Govind, an untouchable and “a large, powerfully built dark Sudra” (49), was used as a tool to defile Madanlal. He “comes, wearing loincloth, with *jharu* in his hand” (Ibid). He had been made used to sodomize and sully a Hindu Brahmin in the prison, which is lucidly conveyed in the following episode:

Govind...tie him up the right way... (*Govind turns him over and ties him, so that he is spread-eagled this time with his face down. Whispering in prisoner’s ear*) Madanlal, I haven’t washed him clean. You won’t mind it, will you? You’ve picked up enough scum on the way...(Madanlal opens his mouth to scream or talk,

but Patel calms it with his hand) Not ready to talk already, are you? What's the hurry? The journey's not over yet. (*Stuffing a handkerchief in his mouth*) Later...later...we'll give you another chance to talk. (*Govind begins at first to massage the prisoner's legs...and starts to remove his pants*) It won't hurt, Madanlal. Why don't you try a bit of self-control? Relax. Detach your mind...beyond pain, fear, desire. It's only an experiment after all. (*Patel laughs at the prisoner's terror*) Sometimes...sometime...the obsessive balance tips...and then one wants to save first, and kill later. An opposite measure...of Gandhian values: *my* humanity (Ibidem).

Through this nerve wrecking episode, the author has revealed the cruelty of man in authority, on the one hand, and an inhuman treatment of Untouchables as beasts, on the other.

Exploitation and debasement are, obviously, a disincentive for Hindu Untouchables or Dalits to proselytize to other religions as a means of bettering their condition. Ambedkar has told Patel, the Brahmin, "We could change over...Islamic brotherhood...or have our souls saved by Christians, or follow the way of Gautama...Tell me, Brahmin friend, what have you to offer me?" (48). Ambedkar's question is a million dollar worth query that had being asked, has being asked and will be asked by untouchables. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956), champion of Dalit rights and regarded as the movement's chief protagonist, once said, "My final words of advice to you is educate, agitate and organize; have faith in yourself. With justice on our side I do not see how we can lose our battle. For ours is a battle not for wealth or for power. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of the human personality" (Buchan <<http://www.qub.ac.uk>>). Currimbhoy had imbibed this ideology

and relived it dramatically in his play to emphasize the Untouchable's plight in Indian society. He has pictured the fissured political world where divisive and vote-bank politics are socially inflicting the people:

Ambedkar: Come off it, Patel. I've said it before and I'll say it again: his fasts are pure political stunts.

Patel : Ah, then, why call it off?

Ambedkar: Simple. He's twisting my arm. He may say God is responsible for his death, but the nation will point a finger at me.

Patel : Oh come now. Everybody's either suffering from guilt as Gandhi calls it, or a false sense of self-importance.

Ambedkar: Neither, Patel. Just plain politics and balance of power. You, no doubt, understand what I mean.

Patel : No, I don't.

Ambedkar: (*Wearily*) I'm fighting for separate electorates for the untouchables; Gandhi's fasting for joint electorates between Untouchables and Hindus. I feel separate electorates will give us more power and say as a minority: Gandhi feels it will break up the Hindu fold and weaken us. This is purely a show of strength, Patel. I was born an untouchable and 50 million untouchables identify with me. Gandhi says he is an untouchable by adoption and calls us all *harijans*, the children of God. He fasts in the name of God! Now

how am I going to fight a God! I call it downright unfair! (46-47).

The author has emphasized on plain politics and balance of power without corruption because through this ideology, different castes can co-exist without animosities. But the reality of Hindu society cannot belie the fact of suppression and oppression of Untouchables by higher Hindu castes. This fact has rendered the atmosphere uncongenial for this downtrodden lot to rise in society. Therefore, a divisive force of separate electorate is looked at as a possible alternative for Untouchables to express themselves. Ambedkar has felt that "...separate electorates will give us power and say as a minority" (48), detouring from Gandhiji's philosophy of "joint electorates between Untouchables and Hindus" (Ibid). Untouchables are "no different from anyone else" (43); they are human beings and not beasts. Through this unbiased treatment of the plight of Untouchables, the dramatist has sympathetically scored the desperation of Untouchables and exposed the factual possibilities of their reaction.

Currimbhoy has starkly denuded the obvious discouragement and deepest longings of Untouchables. The repercussion of these social disability and debasement as well as violence, on untouchables, is glaringly painful and frustration among them is always explicit. It is really pathetic to behold Ambedkar profusely pouring out his heart as he squabbles with Vallabhai Patel:

Ambedkar: (*Interrupting*) ...Yes, Gandhi takes everyone's cause as his own. Yet he professes not to love power or earthy things. At least we're a little more frank, huh?

Patel : Meaning?

Ambedkar: An untouchable vote today is a Hindu vote. Tell me, why should I...the untouchables...remain as the lowest caste in Hinduism? We could change over...
(*Looking at him slyly*)...Islamic brotherhood...

Patel : No!

Ambedkar: ...or have our souls saved by Christians, or follow the way of Gautama...Tell me, Brahmin friend, what have you to offer me? Or Gandhi? I want no love; I want the right to enter nay temple I choose, the right to drink water from any well I want...without being thrown out and made to feel like a cur or leper... (47-48).

The author's intent, here, is not to make Ambedkar a rival of Gandhiji, in fighting for the cause of untouchables, but to explicitly bring forth the miserable condition of these outcastes in Hindu society. Ambedkar is made to represent untouchables and his feelings and longings echo the feelings and longings of every untouchable. Andrew M. Stracuzzi has called Mulk Raj Anand "the fiery voice of those people who form the Untouchable caste" (Andrew <<http://65.107.211.206/post>>). Currimbhoy is also the same fiery voice for the voiceless untouchables but with a difference. Unlike Anand's Bhaka, who is young, naïve and had painfully trudged through the severity of humiliation and exploitation, Currimbhoy's Ambedkar is astute and reacts to exploitations boldly. The playwright has perused the possibilities of an Untouchable's reaction, which in effect may further sabotage the already existing cleavage within the same society and depicts that dissent among the untouchables can impact religious and political activities.

There is an apparent conflict between the philosophies of Gandhi and Ambedkar but the ultimate aim, in both, is same: emancipation and betterment

of Untouchables. Their divergent means, passive in the former and active in the latter, does not precipitate the end purpose the playwright has intended to arrive at. The former means took its root from self-control, patience and spirituality, while the latter means took its birth out of desperation and frustration. It is implicit in the dramatist's treatment of this burning problem of social segregation, within Hindu society, that this issue can be doused either through empowerment of Untouchables or through Gandhian philosophy.

3.8. Inter-religious Conflict

Currimbhoy has examined the aspects of orthodoxy and self-righteousness in different religions. He believes that religious intolerance shuts the essential side of being spiritually humane and it causes much of strife and enmity in a society. He also feels that religious fundamentalists are a stumbling block toward the furtherance of social growth and development. In "*Om Mane Padme Hum*", apart from the main plot of political concern, the dramatist has dwelt on the friction between Chinese's "Godless Communism" (*OMPH* 15) and Tibetan's religion of Lamaism. Faubion Bowers has opined that there is something fascinating about the dramatist's handling of the "...religion of Communism which will in timeless time supplant the religion of Lamaism" (Faubion 1972, 6). Intrusion of Chinese's Communism into Lamaism has caused unrest in Tibet and this has led to the flight of the Dalai Lama. Currimbhoy had a premonition that this conflict is beyond a short time solution because the Chinese have come to Tibet "to stay" (20).

The playwright is a non-practicing Muslim but does not have a predilection for any religion and gives an unbiased treatment to all the religions of the world. He has astutely dramatized the sensitive issue of religious bigotry and has examined the severity of conflict between different

creeds in some of his plays. The focal point of his concentration was the seriousness of a clash between Hindus and Muslims. In his dealing of the Hindu-Muslim intolerant co-existence, he has denuded their extended ill feeling for each other's belief and critically scrutinized the seriousness of sacrilegious treatment of worshipping objects. Maltreatment of the other religion is the breaking point of inter-religious coexistence besides shuttering the secular nature of a state. Amidst the liberation war for Bangladesh, from the tyrant hands of Pakistan, the author has depicted Hindus and Muslims at loggerhead with each other and also showed that everything is not hunky dory within Muslims as well. The following episode divulges the Muslim Jawan's sacrilegious treatment of Hindus' worshipping objects:

Jawan: Where's your husband?

Sunita: I don't know.

Jawan: When is he coming back?

Sunita: I don't know.

Jawan: (*Grinding cruelly*) Is he coming back? (*Sunita is silent*) You're Hindu, aren't you? (*He sees the image with sudden and total fury he takes the butt of his rifle and smashes the image; both women recoil with fear*) That's what I think of your god...or gods. (*Under his breath*) Infidels! (*Prowls around the house, still looking for something*) (SB 36).

This deed of desecration of the images of God has shown the extreme intolerance and hatred between Hindus and Muslim fundamentalists.

Currimbhoy has embarked on fear factor and spy tactic to lay bare the dirty game of intimidation executed by Muslim fundamentalists. It is also disheartening to behold Tikka segregating and branding "all Hindus" as

“traitors” (22). The ulterior motive of Tikka, in persuading Bihari to be an informer, is displayed in the following dialogue:

Tikka: You can’t remain neutral. You have to take sides. You’re already committed to us. And we’re the side that will win.

...

...

Tikka: Many of your people have been killed. Women and children too. You need protection. The police can’t...or won’t give it. The BSP and Bengali rifles ignore your pleas. (*Bihari says nothing*) In the next 24 hours I’m going to have Bengal in the grip of my hand... (*Clenches his palm into a fist*) With sword and fire. This is going to be our *jehad*. And you’re a *mussalman* too, not like these mixed-blood types. We’re pure. We’re Pakistanis. (*The Bihari starts to sweat for the first time*) but there is only so much the military can do. I must have a façade of the civil. You know this a part of the country and the people. I want to build *razakar* and a... (*laughing harshly*)... “Peace committee” organization...to sort out all Bengali traitors...Who are they? Oh, almost anyone. Students, professors, *all* Hindus, and Awami League leaders, of course. I’ll take care of the Bengalis in the Eastern Regiment and the police. I know the Bengali nature. They’re cowards at heart. Kill a few and you cow them all. We’ll just have to sort them out...and liquidate them.

Bihari: (*A whisper now*) What makes you think I’ll join you? Give you information? (21-22).

Tikka has laid bare his feelings for Hindus in the above dialogue. The extreme sense of enmity between them is also brought out in its severest form because Muslims desire to sort the Hindus out and liquidate them. Major General's announcement to his officials is clearly an incitement on inter-religious clash, when he announced that "when the Hindus have been eliminated by death and flight, their property will be used as the golden carrot to win over the underprivileged Muslim middle-class" (45). The author has cognized that such provocation only adds fuel to the already burning conflict because Hindus will react to it with an equal or more vigour. There is also an implicit depiction that religious conflict, in its severe form, can be deadly and is hard to get reconciled.

The dramatist is famous for his exposition of human sensitivities and presentation of those religious sensitivities, which when tickled may be precarious. He has tactfully dramatized the altercation among different religious groups, during the Salt March in *An Experiment with Truth*, by juxtaposing it with humour, keeping in mind the delicateness of the issue:

Hindu : (*To Muslim*) I don't see how you can stop five times a day to pray. Surely *Allah* can hear well enough. And every time: (*Mimicking*) "Where's the west" "Where's my carpet?" (*Laughing; Muslim flushes*).

Muslim: (*Retorts*) What about you? We can't pass a single *murti* on the road, without you stopping to do all your fanfare. Praying to a stone, just imagine! (*Less laughter; discomfort growing*).

Sikh : (*Benignly combing his long hair; looking enviously at the Pathan's long red handkerchief*) That's a beautiful hanky. It would hold my beard well (*AEWT 37*).

There is an undertone of discomfort amidst humour in the above episode. The author has depicted, through an ironic scene of a united Salt March, that Hindu-Muslim rift is hard to mend and sensitivity to this divergence is extremely delicate, which is illustrated through the contest of arms wrestling between a Muslim and a Sikh:

Pathan: The old hand-clasp. Crook your arm on the elbow, and test your strength. There's nothing stronger in life than a strong arm. And I'm the strongest.

Sikh : I think I am. (*The two burly men look at each other, balanced with game-friendship and potential enmity*).

Pathan: Come on then, Sardarji. Let's have a go; the hanky to the winner. (*Enthusiastic cheers from the crowd, who assemble, break up, back their winner, subconsciously with Hindus backing the Sikh, and other minorities backing the Pathan. The giants lock hands against each other, and heave powerfully. The divisions in the group become more clear-cut, with shouting and screaming; and waving of fists...*) (37-38).

In this dual of arms wrestling between a Muslim and a Sikh, balanced with game-friendship and potential enmity, there is a prominent exposition of a clear cut uneasiness and animosity. The author has displayed the discomfort relationship, through the vivid division of group support, in order to paint a flamboyant tableau of hypersensitivity in Hindu-Muslim relation that cannot be doused easily. Therefore, the dramatist has purportedly dovetailed this highly inflammable situation with a long march of different religious groups, under the aegis of Gandhiji's leadership, to hammer his point of the fragility of Hindu-Muslim co-existence. Hindus and Muslims got into a sensitive

exchange of words and even the division became more explicit as the march continued, which is conveyed in the following:

(More marches; more discord. Another trudge, this time with the proud Pathan wearing the red handkerchief around his neck, looking disdainfully at the cowed Sikh)

Pathan: Easy. I could have won with my left hand. All that the *sardarjis* have learnt to do these days is to hide a pair of scissors in their turbans... *(Derisive laughter and jeering from his crowd; the polarization and conflict has set in here, the same way as it is growing in the rest of the country...till the inevitable happens: a mirror scuffle takes place between a Hindu and a Muslim)* (38).

The playwright does not make a propaganda, by incorporating the idea about polarization and conflict that has cropped up even in the microcosm of the Salt March, as it is in the rest of the country, but to paint the naked picture of a rickety adventure India and Pakistan have ventured into, in their bilateral relationship since the bifurcation of the two countries.

Currimbhoy has a sharp penetrating intellect that has pierced into the deepest crevices of social inconsistencies. With this intellect as the search light, he has scanned the damaging causes of distrusting relation and hateful coexistence between Hindus and Muslims. Patel, the fitting counterpart of Tikka in *Sonar Bangla*, has acknowledged that “there are extremist Hindus and extremist Muslims” (14). Peculiar to a fanatic’s ideology, he has nurtured an irreconcilable hatred for Muslims as it is conveyed in his outburst: “All Muslims are extremists, so we need to balance them out with a few fanatics like you. So I’ll shut my eye to what R.S.S does...” (14). This distorted image of each other has eventually flurried into a wary confrontation

at any provocation. The following dialogue is revelatory in terms of Hindus' feeling against Muslims:

Savarkar: My dear Patel...your personal views are not altogether unknown. We may not stand together, but we're not far apart...Muslim atrocities, Muslim killings...would have gone unavenged, if you hadn't given us the opportunity of striking back...

Patel : I deny that, Savarkar!

Savarkar: You can hardly admit it, Patel. Oh, I have no doubt you did it for reasons of your own: perhaps a power balance, where the so-called extremists cancel each other out...Your motives...the sly Gandhiji suspects...you are an important part of the Congress, capable of influencing others. His fast is a protest against this too...
(*Patel is about to reply*) No, let me have my say. I'll be specific. An issue has come up where Gandhi is insisting that the Congress...you...pay Pakistan...Pakistan mind you, its old assets in India worth 550 million rupees...

Patel : (*Distracted, angry, not at Savarkar but at Gandhi*) Impossible! Gandhi's suggestion is impossible. Pakistan will use this money for aggression in Kashmir. It's political suicide (31).

Patel has breathed out his own foul breathe in speaking out venomous words against Muslims. The kind of language used and the tone of his voice is a cursor to his own fanaticism. The author has indicated that such an extremist behavior, like an earthquake at the base of an ocean that causes deadly tsunami, triggers explosive conflicts between Hindus and Muslims.

The dramatist has also planted his foot on the controversial issue of force conversion and genially points out that changing belief through the enforcement of threat and power, thereby inducing fear, is tantamount to curtailment of freedom of choice. The traditional practice in the shift of faith and belief through inter-religious marriage does not necessarily entail forceful conversion of faith. The playwright has candidly depicted this notion through the romantic conversation between Sumita and Mulla:

Mulla : (*Struck by her, some unknown quality, in his own peculiar mind*) My way is your way, woman. Lead and I shall go there. I shall follow thee to the ends of the earth. For there's something...hear me, men...hear me, you all...for there's something about this woman...that is...divinity.

Sumita: Are you out to convert me, Maulviji? I'm a Hindu woman.

Mulla : Ah...I knew it. From the moment I set eyes on you, I knew it. You have given me an added mission in life, woman. Without you, heaven would not be complete. Yes, I shall proselytize, not by the sword, but by my love.

Sumita: (*Glint in her eyes*) And I shall try to convert you into a devout Hindu (*SB 73-74*).

Converting a person into another religion, not by the sword but by love, is a vivid reflection of a conscious decision making through personal choice without force or fear. The author has gone deeper into this issue of changing beliefs through the presentation of incongruent privileges in Hindu society. He has cognized that social disability causes frustration, which is seen in the outburst of Ambedkar:

Ambedkar : ...Tell me, why should I...the untouchables...remain as the lowest caste in Hinduism? We could change over... (*Looking at him slyly*)...Islamic brotherhood...

Patel : No!

Ambedkar : ...or have our souls saved by Christians, or follow the way of Gautama...Tell me, Brahmin friend, what have you to offer me? Or Gandhi? I want no love: I want the right to enter any temple I choose, the right to drink water from any well I want...without being thrown out and made to feel like a cur or leper... (*AEWT 48*).

The anguish of Ambedkar is born out of disappointment and frustration due to suppression and oppression within his religion of Hinduism. Therefore, his proposition of proselytizing to other religions is justifiable because disabilities, as it is seen in the above quotation, within the same society are a disincentive to personal growth and development. This is a non-violent form of protest but a violent form of curtailing personal freedom comes from force conversion. Patel's harassment and humiliation of Madanlal through a violent abuse by saying that his mother "Perhaps she was forcibly converted into Islam" (28), is an echo of a serious allegation because the ideology of such forcible conversion reflects a callous conflict of interest. Such a conflict gets into its cruelest form when mass conversion takes place under threat in a situation of civil unrest. Major General of Pakistan's incitement and flashes of "ISLAMISATION OF THE MASSES...ISLAMISATION OF THE MASSES..." (*SB 45*) are the tableau of a serious human right violation in terms of freedom of religion. The author has rationalized that such serious deeds of wrong doing and forceful conversion are an offence because they

damage the humaneness in man; they render the conflicting groups to sit on the pins like the boiling larva under the earth's crust waiting for the opportune time to push its way out through a volcanic explosion.

The playwright has seen the conflict within the same religion as an act of arrogance and selfishness of fundamentalists. Muslims of Pakistan and Bangladesh, then West Pakistan and East Pakistan, got into a ruthless rift and undermining the brotherhood, due to an extremist ideology coming from the side of Pakistan. This conflict among Muslims is spearheaded by "Islamic fundamentalism or pan-Islamism" which is uttered by Alka Charya in the discourse on Kashmir issue (Alka 4728).

The dramatist has presented the controversial ideology of Islamic State through Ali's statement: "It's difficult for a Muslim to love anyone...other than a Muslim" (AEWT 32). This statement is a precarious philosophical discourse because the universal meaning of love gets eschewed and an egotistical meaning is implied. Therefore, the author's intent, in *Sonar Bangla*, is not only to depict the egoistic ideology of Islamic State but also to satirize the notion of Muslim brotherhood.

He has also showcased the elements that are hampering the unity among Muslims by painting the tableau of Bangladesh uprising. Love makes sense only when it is shared with others but if any slightest indication of neglect for Muslims makes them feel that "the protection given to Muslims isn't good enough" (SB 34), then universal brotherhood is a pie in the sky for them. Besides, altruism among Muslims seems a far cry because slogans of Islamic ideology had been taken up to counter the Bengali Muslims' anger. Moreover, Islamic fraternity has been eschewed by the fact of terrorizing and massacring the people in the Muslim country, which is conveyed in the following dialogue:

Sen Gupta: (*Acidly*) I can see the Muslim community in India has been remarkably restrained (*The old man is stung*).

Professor Mosin: (*Quietly*) I'll pass that, my friend.

Sen Gupta: (*Angry at having hurt his friend but unable to stop himself*) Well, you can't deny it, Mosin! There's a massacre taking place out there – in a Muslim country – and their Islamic brothers keep quiet here (*RF* 31-32).

The author has an ulterior message to convey through the silence of Muslims in India. Complexity of the situation might have made their brothers, in India, to keep quiet but Islamic fraternity is under the scanner in their silence. Islamic fraternity is not devalued or undermined by the dramatist through the depiction of Islamic brothers keeping quiet in India when there is a massacre in the Muslim country. Silence provides time for contemplation and chiseling the future course of action. The playwright has made the Indian Muslims to keep quiet for this purpose, which is conveyed in the later part of *Refugee*, but more importantly, he wished to convey the secular attitude of Indian Muslims (32); they are more altruistic and accommodative than their Islamic brothers in the Muslim country who are parochial and egoistic.

Currimbhoy has placed self-centeredness of fundamentalists as the primary cause of Islamic conflict. Nevertheless, Islamic brotherhood has enabled Muslims to be selfishly bound to their fraternization and, hence, fighting for the Islamic state has glued them to egotistical love. Therefore, we can deduce from the conflict among Muslims, which is found in *Sonar Bangla* and other plays, that desire and endeavour for the formation of an Islamic state has made Muslims to be at loggerhead with one another.

Pakistan's selfishness of desiring to spread her political wings to a geographically separated area, called erstwhile East Pakistan, spearheaded by fundamentalists, has hampered the continuity of Islamic unity between the two Islamic states. It is also evident that extremist Muslims can be so orthodox that none can question their religion. This is the reason why Ali has threatened Patel: "Question the Muslim loyalty in public, and I'll smash you" (AEWT 35).

The author has played down the ideology of this extremist loyalty and believes that they are playing havoc by causing conflict between the Muslims of East Pakistan and West Pakistan, which is found in *Sonar Bangla*. Muslims of West Pakistan feel that "the Bengalis have proved themselves unreliable and must be ruled by West Pakistanis. The Bengalis will have to be re-educated along proper Islamic lines" (SB 45). This trust deficit has made Hamza Alavi to remark that "Rather foolishly Pakistan's ruling elite, instead of going some way to meet Bengali demands, thought that they could isolate the Bengali nationalists by raising religious slogans. Slogans of 'Islamic' ideology and 'Islamic' identity were taken up to counter Bengali anger" (Hamza 5119). The severity of conflict is seen when flashes of "Islamisation of the masses" (SB 45) are flashed on the screen. The author's conclusion in this context is that the acrimonious behavior of Pakistanis will only aggravate the distrust between them and rust the situation further.

The dramatist has trumpeted the non-violent means of bringing about change in modern society. He has vivaciously and vehemently played down the violent means of bringing about a change by attempting to supersede each other through terror and bloodshed. This has been dramatized through the enactment of historical events marking the Bangladesh uprising and Indo-Pak war, the impact of which lingers on even today.

The author believes that extremist ideology, spearheaded by the fundamentalists, has snapped the ties frequently and kept India and Pakistan touchy. He has brought forth Gandhiji's ideology of "fraternization between Hindus and Muslims" (*RF* 33) to diffuse the conflict between them. Dwelling on the conflict between India and Pakistan, he has clearly demarcated Hindus and Muslims as denotations of Indians and Pakistanis, who have been at loggerhead since the bifurcation of a nation into the independent nations of India and Pakistan. The relation between the two has corroded and mending the wound has been eating up the major energy of both countries. Therefore, apart from universalizing the Indo-Pak border issue as the problem of all countries of the world that are facing the same dilemma, he has endeavoured to bridge the gap caused by boundary dispute through Gandhiji's philosophy of fraternity and non-violence by neutralizing race, caste and creed. Ali, a Muslim, has said, Gandhiji's "... fast has given rise to some touching senses of fraternization of Hindus and Muslims" (*AEWT* 33). This ideology should be the vanguard for heralding unity and peaceful co-existence between neighbours.

3.9. Refugees: The Fruit of a Severe Social Conflict

Currimbhoy has emotionally dealt with the universal problem of a world fissured and made incredible by clashes and displacement. The refugee problem of "who am I?" and "where am I?" (*RF* 42) has been deftly dealt with in *The Refugee* and *Sonar Bangla*. For the author, refugees are the proofs for extreme social conflict where people are forced to flee their homes to escape war or abuse. It is a nerve-wrecking social situation to behold the influx of refugees "trudging the endless road with their pitiful belongings...Knowing not where they're going, but just following for it must lead somewhere, to escape and safety" (*SB* 42).

The dramatist has painted an awful sight of refugee outbreak into an art form out of a social reality with “an unending stream of tableaux, each telling its own story of horror and bestiality” (42). He has also deeply lamented the repercussion of East Pakistan’s liberation war in 1971, which resulted into the trickling of refugees to India’s West Bengal. This is expressed in his letter to Faubion Bowers in deep anguish: “Yet there seems to be very little choice. A mistake committed at a particular point of time seems to have a cumulative effect and one inevitably gets drawn into it all” (Bowers 2005, 7).

The dramatist has charged the word ‘refugee’ with an explosive notion of ‘why are the refugees so called? Why are they refugees? And Who make them refugees?’ He has shown that refugees are the proofs for extreme social conflict in a volatile situation where people are forced to flee their homes and experience psychological trauma, physical alienation and emotional bereavement. This social situation does not create itself but is caused by human beings and, therefore, it speaks of the nature of man. K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger had opined that “It is because of this primary human dimension is ignored that history is replete with stupidities and brutalities” (Iyenger 2005, 11). It is an issue that creeps into the very core of a person who is conscious of the seriousness of being uprooted.

The grim fact of flushing out people as refugees, due to the collision of conflicting societies, brings forth “The creeping feeling of fear and death. Despair too. An existence devoid of hope, a past too terrible to remember, a future of further futility” (*SB* 42). The playwright is able to touch the gamut of human feeling by dramatizing the stark reality of such a human tragedy. The creeping feeling of wonder is seen in the following dialogue:

Sen Gupta: I’m worried, Mosin my friend, I’m worried about the whole thing. It all started as a small thing – a few

refugees across the border – it happens every year. Now it's a holocaust and we're completely unprepared for it. Why, there are more refugees today in this town than local inhabitants. Our development projects have come to a standstill. The refugee, with his minimum rations, is better fed than the local unemployed. Something's going to explode soon!

Professor Mosin: (*Shaking his head*) True.

Sen Gupta: They cry for help, we give it. After all, they are Bengalis. And we can't send them back to be killed. But we're going under ourselves. And nobody's coming to our help (*RF 29-30*).

The holocaust like situation is a sufficient reason to make us understand the gravity of conflict. This weighty state of affairs is further exposed in the following description:

There is frantic activity all around the place as streams and streams of refugees pour in. Hastily putting tents, families living in large drain-pipes, temporary structures of tin and mud, palm leaf and bamboo, sometimes just a matting for individual cover, from the sun and all else. Overcrowded hospitals, Red Cross workers, OXFAM volunteers, local helpers, planeloads of rescue material, food, milk, medicine, tarpaulin, Government and army and Municipal help, everything being geared in spurts and starts to meet the gigantic problem, that overcomes all, through sheer numbers and need (*SB 54*).

Currimbhoy has looked at this problem as a serious human tragedy caused by human beings themselves, largely due to political conflict. Sen

Gupta tells Yassin, “The refugee exodus is an undeclared war by Pakistan (*RF* 32) against India. The author has viewed this “...grinding, tearing reality” (28) of the refugee situation as a purportedly designed game by Pakistan to realize her dream. This is explicitly conveyed in the words of the Third Pakistani Officer:

3rd : One Pakistan *jawan* can outfight ten Indians.

1st : No doubt. But remember we’ll have two enemies here in the East. The Indian Army and the Bengali people.

3rd : Ah! We can handle both. Tikka did a thorough job of the Bengalis. Too bad he’s being replaced by Niazi.

2nd : He’ll follow the same policy, I’, sure.

3rd : Yes. Push more refugees out. It’ll equalize the two populations in East and West. Who knows – we may end up with a majority! (*SB* 81).

The selfish design of Pakistani officials has made refugees to be “...reduced to inhuman existence robbed of dignity and essential life” (*RF* 18). The playwright feels it to be too much for refugees to bear the brunt of such a conflict. The painful and pathetic condition of refugees is conveyed in the following description: “Fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, young, old, everyone, including domestic animals like goats and cows. Each relates a story to the other, incredible, nightmarish...” (*SB* 51). A down-to-earth dramatist, like Currimbhoy, finds it hard to be euphemistic in his language while presenting the terrific and horrific scene of such people who are displaced and do not know what their tomorrow is.

Refugee problem is caused by the action of men and, therefore, it has to be solved by them. Herein, the dramatist becomes the voice of the voiceless

refugees. “Someone has to do the fighting” (RF 46) to alleviate the extreme suffering of refugees. Mita and Elizabeth are Florence Nightingales working for the cause of refugees to assuage their pain and suffering. Mita addresses her concern to refugees of the universe:

Yassin: (*Moved, miserable, yet oblique, removed*) It was an accident, Mita. It was all an accident. I should have been killed. Perhaps I was and the part you see now wasn’t. All pain comes from attachment, all wrongs come from self-interest. That is why we should each...lead our own lives...

Mita : No; no. I don’t agree with you. Life for me means action. Leave it alone, and you commit wrong.

Yassin: (*Surprised, affected for the first time*) What do you mean?

Mita : Oh Yassin, touch me! Can’t you see I’m a human being? Can’t you see I’m real? Aren’t you moved? (*She touches his face tenderly*) The refugees exist the same way. They’re alive, and oh, only too real. They bring tears to my eyes, their suffering touches my heart. I can’t bear to leave them alone. All of life draws me...the human condition. The need and recognition. If...if all of us were to...abstain the way you do, we’d be doing harm, don’t you see, the kind of harm that is deliberately done through neglect. Do you understand, do you understand me, my dear? ...tell me! (29-30).

Refugees are too real to be unconcerned like Yassin, when he first landed up in West Bengal, and Sen Gupta, who has by now securely settled after being uprooted. The academic wisdom of Yassin has blurred him from

seeing the concrete reality of refugees' plight. His logical reasoning of attachment and self-interest are misplaced because he sought his own escape and has neglected the most essential need of the hour.

Currimbhoy believes that there will be an inevitable kick back from the host of refugees when the burden, pressed upon them by the sheer number of this uprooted people, becomes overweight. This has caused another pathetic conflict between the Bengalis of India and Bengali refugees. The glaring tragedy of the suffering lot and sheer number "of a bird of passage" (42) has definitely caused worry and anxiety for those on the India's side of Bengal. Sen Gupta's fret has represented the feelings of those whose land and open spaces were occupied by refugees:

Sen Gupta: No. Of course I feel sorry for the refugees outside, but look at what a filthy mess they've made of things. Where's my open field and coconut palms and pond? They...they're encroaching. How long are they going to stay there? When will they turn...antisocial? And they're growing in numbers all the time. We've called an emergency meeting of the town elders. This can't go on. We'll seal the borders.

Wife : (*Worried too*) One thousand miles, or more? And in the monsoon?

Sen Gupta: We'll push them back! (20).

There will be a cold reception of refugees as the number grows and reaches beyond the caring capacity of the host. This is clearly perceived by Ramul and he has felt panicky about it, as it is vividly conveyed through his words: "As our numbers grow, the warmth and welcome will cease. The hearth and home will grow cold. And they will want the refugees to move on

and on, out of sight, out of mind. But where can millions go... (*Laughing queerly*)...I ask you...Where can millions go?" (19). The dramatist has penetrated into the conscience of the people and has cogently exposed the possible reaction of the refugees' host. He is also able to arouse people's sympathy for this homeless crowd, victims of political conflict and war, through the genuineness of emotional and physical dramatization.

The playwright has considered the social conflict of this sort as the fruit of a grievous mistake committed by people and has felt that this problem needs a feminine approach to alleviate the suffering of victims. Both political and civilian involvements are required to address the needs of the displaced people. Mita is moved deeply by looking at the plight of refugees and, therefore, she has voiced her concern saying, "They bring tears to my eyes, their suffering touches my heart. I can't bear to leave them alone. All of life draws me...the human condition" (29). Life for her is action (*Ibid*) and she has convinced Yassin to wake up to the problem of refugees and work for their cause. She has even sternly rebuked him saying, "There is so much you can do. You'd understand their problems better than the others...could help...in their rehabilitation" (28). This same ideology of consciously volunteering for the cause of uprooted people has been echoed by Elizabeth:

Elizabeth: It's a traditional Western concept; Religion, God, Proselytization, Conscience, Colonization, Reformation, even Nightingalism.

Hussain : Isn't that why you came?

Elizabeth: No, I come plainly and simply because there was a need, and it didn't matter to me whether it was in my country or in any other. Because the need seemed greater here. I was drawn to it (*SB 58*).

The author has detoured from the stereotype mentality of the colonial writers who have attributed the westerners or colonizers as resource suckers of the colonized areas through the character of Elizabeth. In the midst of his attempt to lay bare the impression he has about the 'traditional Western concept,' he has accentuated on the humanitarian service that the West renders to the needy people through the phrase 'even Nightingalism.' Refugees obviously arrest the attention of people with their grave and grim condition. This state of affairs has magnetized Elizabeth to volunteer unconditionally to work for them because 'the need seemed greater here.'

The grave situation of the overcrowded refugees has overloaded the caring capacity of the available resources. The author has neatly combined realism and rationalism to bring about the specter of refugee situation in the world. This is lucidly seen in the following dialogue:

Hussain : You've taken on quite a job.

Elizabeth: (*Her blue eyes sobering as quickly as they smile*) Mr. Ray, I need money, and medicines, and food, and milk and tents, and...

Ray : (*Feigning defense*) Hold on, hold on, one at a time. I've just got through with Hussain, and now you...

Elizabeth: (*Continues as though uninterrupted*) ...and more doctors, and more nurses, and better administrative controls...

Ray : Why don't you ask the Red Cross H.Q., my dear? Maybe there should be some other countries too who should be prepared to bear part of the burden.

Elizabeth: Do you think I haven't tried, Mr. Ray? They think I'm crazy the way I'm at them. The problem here staggers all imagination. They can't believe it (57).

The fact of Elizabeth's continuing to press the point, without minding the interruption of Ray, has clearly shown the urgent need of the hour. She does not even bother about her dignity or position, keeping the need of the uprooted people at the foremost of her concern: "I'm not Florence Nightingale. We're a very small part of the total effort required here. That's why we have to push hard" (Ibid).

The playwright has presented a possible adverse reaction, apart from humanistic approach, to the agonizing condition of the uprooted lot. This is conveyed in the words of Hussain when he told Ray: "I'm not saying go to war with Pakistan. I'm merely saying it's no use giving help to the refugees unless you give help at the same time to the Mukti Fauj" (56). The author has echoed, here, an effective defense mechanism to prevent greater human tragedy. War is not the solution to refugee problem and, therefore, Pakistani aggression could possibly be prevented by building up arm guerrilla which "might as well then close the gates for all refugees..." (56).

3.1. Naxal Revolt and Social Unrest

Currimbhoy has moved from such a serious social problem to another problem of an equal seriousness in *Inquilab* and has scrutinized the Naxalite revolt; the revolt that is in direct conflict with the constitutionalists. P. Bayapa Reddy has said that "*Inquilab* is a direct response to the Naxalite revolt in west Bengal where the agrarian communists opted for violence" (Reddy 31). Naxalites held on to the philosophy of the "Marxist Leninist that force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one" (*IQ* 25) as they resorted to fight for "proletarian internationalism" (12); 'new one' refers to

“Mao’s thought... people’s war...peasant mass action” (25). Use of irrational force and violence are at loggerhead with constitutionalism and democratic functionalism. Ahmed, a revolutionary leader, has trumpeted the common voice of Naxalites when he said: “Parliamentary democracy is not an effective weapon for socialist revolution: an arm struggle is inevitable...A revolution in backward countries can only be brought about by peasants...” (25).

The dramatist has gone deeper in his scanning of the Naxalite’s revolutionary ideology and depicts that Naxalites’ concern for peasants’ servitude to tyrannical Zamindars is fiery because of the suffocation they are facing. Shaomik, a firebrand and champion of Naxal revolt, spoke forcefully and persuasively to the crowd of peasants:

Comrades, both sides are right, but our cause is the only cause that matters: liberation through revolt! (*At once a new electric feeling. Here is a natural leader amongst men. Murmur of consent*) Nobody denies that our landlord Jain is just. Nobody denies that he works as hard as we do. (*Raising his voice effectively without shouting*) But he’s working on our land and not we on his! (*Cheers; animated consent amongst villagers*) We want our law! Not the landlord’s and not the Government’s! How long have we heard the political workers come here and tell us about land reforms. Our fathers were serfs, and even if we’re not, we’re not free either! (*More cheers, hot consent to this persuasive firebrand*) No...No...No more waiting. The law cannot work equally for both of us. It’s either ours or theirs. At the moment it’s theirs, so we have to reject it. But the only means we know: Fight, FIGHT! ... (27-28).

This non-compromising stance of the agitators is in direct conflict with the democratic functioning. Besides, a utopian idea of perfect equality for all

men through the distribution of surplus land of landlords to the peasant farmers is not only impracticable but is also diametrically opposed to the interest of landlords. The following altercation lets drop the conflicting interests:

Amar: Tell me, they've been with you for many years, haven't they? Possibly their fathers and grandfathers were serfs to your ancestors?

Jain : Yes.

Amar: And you looked after them, like one big family. And their problems were your problems. In fact you were like a father to them, indulging yet correcting them, with a firm and gentle hand.

Jain : Yes, what's wrong with that? I've seen lots worse landlords.

Amar: (*Still with trace of sarcasm*) In fact you were one of the more progressive ones. No *adhiyar* system of contract labour for you. In being absolute master you could measure out your charities, and still keep them in their place.

Jain : (*Still uncertain about him*) I still don't get you. What's so wrong with that! (*Amar doesn't reply*).

Prof : Revisionist. Revisionist. A pacifier for maintenance of an existing order. An order of vested interest.

Jain : Show me one better.

Amar : Land to the landless. Collective farming. Community holdings. A distribution of surplus land to be done immediately (18).

Jain does not hesitate to continue holding on to the old system of landlordism and act as the pacifier of this order of vested interest. Amar's

astuteness has perceived Jain's clever design of whitewashing his ulterior motive of utilizing the peasants by a mere show of charity in times peasants' difficulties. This is also cleverly done by carefully measuring the limit. His fiery nature is also utterly opposed to Jain's 'firm and gentle hand.' Moreover, Amar's immediate demand of a distribution of landlords' surplus land is not only theoretical and unfeasible but is also unswervingly against landlords. As a matter of fact, Amar's words have fanned the flame of their diverging interests.

The playwright believes that revolutionists, like Naxalites, are inflexible; they cannot see beyond their immediate experiential knowledge. They fail to rationalize the pros and cons of their motives. As a result, they will oppose tooth and nail all those things that do not appeal to their wisdom. Naxalites are least interested in the rule of politics because they have found no reprieve for their pathetic status in the rule of constitution. They have found that parliamentary democracy cannot serve their purpose:

Devdas: (*Unsteadily*) I...I stood for socialism as much as anyone else.

Ahmed: You stood for yourself, Devdas.

Devdas: The ...the socialist revolution will come, but it must be done constitutionally.

Ahmed: These are opposites, Devdas.

Devdas: It...really is absurd that we should fight. Ours is still a common cause. It's just that the methods are different.

Ahmed: As between heaven and earth, Devdas.

Devdas: Your way won't work. You're too few. We can achieve more through votes.

Ahmed: In order to get votes you are following the same old dirty path, having to pander to people like the landlord, who in the last analysis still controls the Government.

Devdas: Is your path any cleaner? It's washed with the blood of innocent people (38).

There can be no meeting point in their ways because their objectives are diametrically opposed to each other. Through this swerving clash of interests, the author depicts the destructive force of being inflexible and adopting extreme means to meet an end. He has also clearly shown that Naxalites, Landlords or Politicians are all inflexible and indomitably willful in their ways. Therefore, none of the ways can humanely take care of the actual well being of human society, in terms of alleviating the suffering and enforcing an upward growth. As a result, the author has reiterated his stance saying that there is the need of "a bit of moral rectitude" (*MLA* 27) in all human affairs.

Currimbhoy is meticulous in his analysis of social conflict. He has viewed the self-styled revolutionary group as anarchists because of their intractability that has crushed the sense of law and order in society. Shaomik's persuasive and fiery speech is instigative and schematic:

Shomik: (*With raised challenging voice*) Any man...who removes this spear...gets it in the throat. (*Wild cheers; an excited crowd*) We have staked our claim, brothers. On the same spot where your fathers worked as slaves, you will earn your freedom... (*Cheers again; men with measuring tapes busy demarcating...*) that's right. Each man an equal share.

.....

Shomik: How long are we going to wait, huh? Till we grow old and infirm? Meanwhile he makes deals with landlord Jain and others like him who controls the Government (*Nod of consent and approval*) Lets not fool ourselves. We are taking laws into our own hands...because this is the only law that produces results! (*Nods of wise approval; the measurer of land whispers to Shomik. Shomik turning to crowd*) (49-50).

Amidst mocking the “revolver” of timorous “Jain-sahib,” “lathis” of “police” (Ibid) and criticizing the hollow promises of politicians, the author has exposed the beastly nature of Naxals who have taken law and order in their own hands. They became blind to law and order in their frenzy and excitement to meet their end. Besides, Devdas’ good sense of endorsing the need of constitutional power is also conveniently nudged aside by them. The dramatist has pressed on the need of certain guiding principles for a harmonious existence of men in society: “...There’ll be no end to it if you take the law into your own hands too” (32).

Currimbhoy has detested the kind of strategies adopted by Naxals because they are the sure breeding ground for anarchy and strife. Naxals have taken society for a terrorized ride on their violent boat without minding their evil means. Their terrorizing strategy has oozed out from the mouth of Ahmed:

Ahmed: I repeat, “Without the poor peasant, there can be no revolution. To reject this is to reject the revolution”. Remember the four commandments: One, we must go among the masses and concern ourselves with their weal and woe. Two, the mobilization of the people will create a

vast sea in which to drown the enemy. Three, seem to come from the east but attack from the west...avoid the solid, attack the hollow...deliver a lightning blow, seek a lightning decision. Four, the only way to final victory is the strategy of protracted war.

Flashes: THE RED BOOK...THE RED BOOK...THE RED BOOK...

Ahmed: (*Voice steely, hard but still cold, chillingly dishing out the hot words*) Establish peasant bases. Appoint area committees to launch violent struggles...As Mao put it bluntly, "It is necessary to bring about a brief reign of terror in every rural area." Learn to combine persuasion, terror and aid...Organize the Peasants Union, the *Krishak Sabha*... (*Semi-darkness*)Your weapons: combs, spears, knives...yes, the sickle too, for these are peasant armaments... (25-26).

The author has depicted that terror tactics only breeds violence and this causes greater damage to social harmony. He has seen the poisonous strategy of Naxals as an adversary to the constitutional provision of the country. Prof. Datta has struck on the note of constitutional provision for human rights and the right to own as well as dispose property but in democracy, where the rule of law prevails, our action must be performed through appropriate legislation (41). He has even embarked on Gandhiji's non-violent method of protest and accentuates the need of proper regulatory system in society, where one has to express his resentment democratically:

Professor: (*Protest rising to a scream*) BOYS! BOYS! ORDER!
ORDER! DEMOCRACY! DEMOCRATIC

FREEDOM! PROTEST WITHOUT VIOLENCE!
RATIONALISM! SANITY! REASON!
CONSTITUTION! THE ULTIMATE! MAN'S LAW
IN SOCIETY! LAW AND ORDER! ...

SHOUT FROM ONE OF THE BOYS: THE LIBRARY! GET
THE LIBRARY NOW! BURN THE BOOKS!

Professor: (*Aghast, alarmed*) NO! NO! (*Shelves ransacked, books
torn and flung, bonfire*)

BOYS : GET GANDHI! THE GANDHI BOOKS!

Professor: STOP! (*He is flung back, becomes conscious and
alarmed for the first time of physical impact*) (77).

In the face of anger and excitement, student Naxals became blind to reason and good sense. They just ran amok in frenzy by nudging aside the frantic and vehement call for non-violent means of expressing their resentment by Professor. The harum-scarum strategy of Naxals, though born out of desperation and frustration, has further sabotaged the harmonizing force rather than magnetizing the oppressed lot for their common good. The author has downplayed such strategies and stressed his stance that violent self expression of resentment, which is abundantly active and alive in modern society, can never bring about a harmonious solution to the modern day differences and problems.

Currimbhoy has offered a “golden mean”, which is termed by Bayapa Reddy (Bayapa 35), to the Naxal violence through his dealing of conflict between the Naxalite Revolt and Constitutionals. Amar has served as the pacifier in the conflict among Naxals, Constitutionals and Landlords. He has realized, towards the end of the play *Inquilab*, that the violent means employed by Naxals and the passive theorizing of politicians and landlords

can never effect a tangible change in society, towards heralding equality and dignified self expression. The following altercation between the brothers has depicted the need to shun violence in order to bring about a desirable and acceptable change in society:

Ahmed: Do you mean you've given up...the cause?

Amar : No, I still believe in the socialist revolution. But I disagree with their methods.

Ahmed: Meaning?

Amar : (*A faraway look of sadness*) I...I think...my father was right. I mean...his approach was right. That ...that change should come through the will of the majority...expressed through a free vote...That society...such as we live in, must follow certain norms...of law and order...to make such democratic expression possible... (80).

Human beings must allow the law and order to have a space rather than chaotic rule of Naxalites to bring about change in society. The dramatist has genuinely felt that the answer to enmity and hatred among the different societies of the world is the generosity of understanding and women's radiant love, like Amar who has found affection and understanding in Suprea, daughter of the Landlord.

3.11. Corrupted Educational Institutes and its impact on Society

Currimbhoy has critically viewed the corrupted and non-committal educational institutes and, hold them responsible for creating much of social strife and struggle. He has also subtly depicted that corruptions have held the educational set ups to ransom and opines that corruption starts from the top, in the hierarchy of the administrative body. This is revealed in the dialogue

between Manubhai and his son, who is also a leader in the university students' body:

Manu : (*Eyes smiling*) Dissident, yes. Too far out of the stream, no. Dissident enough to be effective. Also a knowledge of the old tricks of the trade.

Ramesh: (*Smiling too*) With a few new ones on our side.

Manu : (*Slapping his son affectionately on the back*) Hah! You were right to come to me. Now listen, son. Where does corruption start from? The top. You all go around pushing professors. Small fry. Most of them are on your side anyway. Go for the big one (*MLA 12*).

Manubhai, being an MLA, is not ignorant of the governmental functioning and procedure of bureaucrats' appointment, if not the lower ones, in different departments of the Government. He is in the knowledge of the old trade of corrupt practice of appointments, the practice that is unmindful of even the incompetent candidates. This has affected the entire spectrum of society because people at the lower rungs get encouraged and tends to fall into the footsteps of the corrupted high ups. Manubhai has told Ramesh, his son, the ugly twist of appointing the Vice Chancellor, without any inhibition:

Manu : (*Shaking his head*) The V.C.

Ramesh: (*Slightly astonished*): You ... you mean the Vice Chancellor?

Manu : (*Smiling*) Why not? I know them all. (*Then suddenly serious and shouting, flying off on a tangent*) I KNOW THE WHOLE BLOODY LOT OF THEM... (*Then suddenly in excited confidence*) You've heard of the

fiddle in the appointment of the V.C. Do you think he got it on merit? It was maneuvered. The bloody C.M. maneuvered it. Pull it down boy, pull it down (12-13).

Manubhai's knowledge of bureaucrats, within the government, has credibly steered clear that corrupt practice in appointments obviously does exist. His excited confidence has added weight to our faith that the Chief Minister's maneuvering of the appointment of Vice Chancellor is verily probable. The dramatist has critically screened the spectrum of educational institutes, the seats of learning and wisdom, and has depicted the corroded system of governance in India; the system that has adversely affected the serenity of society.

The playwright has hit hard at the valueless practice of examination and promotion in educational institutes and, has even severely criticized the dirty practice of procuring the examination question papers. Healthy competition and qualitative expectation for the upward growth and development of society are a pie in the sky with the quality of a highly honoured educational process being compromised with and the head command of a university's appointment being maneuvered politically. Ramesh had hammered the nail on the head, with regard to the purposelessness of receiving formal university education:

Ramesh: (*Knocking the second finger down*) The exams are tough... (*Father raises his eyebrows*) ... I mean they're irrelevant (*Father nods his head*) ...provide no job opportunities...

Manu : Right.

Ramesh: You can buy exam papers. All you want to do is to pass.
The whole system's corrupt. We're in a hot, boiling

mood, Bapu. We want to do something about it. Fast and sure (12).

The dramatist has criticized the obsolete system of education that is sabotaging the precious value of formal learning. He has censured the purposelessness of education and irrelevancy of examination system because they provide no job opportunities. Therefore, students' future prospects are thrown into the oblivion. The author has hit at the bull's eye of the exigency in the need of revamping the outmoded educational system through the words of Ramesh, 'We want to do something about it. Fast and sure.'

Corrupt systems are sure to impact society because they have become the breeding ground of enmity and animosity. The author has deduced from the redundant university educational system and has opined that conflict in society, born out of such corruption, will be explosive. This is because the knowledge imparted is not pragmatic and job oriented. Devdas, the politician, has complained, "Why, every boy coming out of College expects a white-colour job and often ends being a labour" (*IQ* 72). Such a lackadaisical approach to the foundation of knowledge and wisdom is due to the bookish education and learning that lacks practicality.

The playwright has severely criticized the educational system of our country; the "Institutes of education that have now shackled us for generations and generations" (14) are hugely responsible for the unproductive and unprogressive state of the country. Even the head of the University does not occupy the chair out of merit. This corrupt system cannot yield a clean and good result because "All you want to do is to pass" and, therefore, "you can buy the exam papers" (*MLA* 12). So, the dramatist has strongly censured the educational system and lack of future prospects without mincing with words. He has also directly attacked the exam system saying, "...they're

irrelevant...and provide no job” (Ibid). Young College students talk of Bengal famine, Hindu and Muslim conflict, British Regatta, Tagore... Hunger and poverty but are least affected by it (*THO* 30-31). This has made Ram Sharma to remark that “when the great men of India are referred, their patronage should have been imbued and their greatness emulated” (Sharma <<http://www.amazines.com>>). It is ironical that despite such eloquent references of the past historical events and great men of the past, they remain as dullards. Therefore, the author’s purpose is to show that no creativity and innovativeness can come out of such education.

Currimbhoy has purportedly presented the Universities and study centres as the epicenter of revolution. *Inquilab* has starkly presented a classroom as the clandestine meeting place of the “student Naxalites” (*IQ* 25). Ahmed has told his friends, “...what better place to hold our secret meetings...our own class rooms...than here...” (24). *The Dissident MLA* has shown that students have become mere tools in the hands of the corrupt politicians and they are being funded by the politicians to work for them (*MLA* 44). The playwright has not merely lamented the corroded system of education but earnestly desires to voice his concern that value-based and pragmatic education should be the priority, that has been uttered by Yassin: “the University...learning...offered a way of life...non-political, non-party” (*RF* 12).

3.12. Social Change through Non-violent Means

Currimbhoy is a man of veracity with a clear conscience and has vehemently detested human violence. He has denuded his mind and laid bare his detestation against the violent behavior of human beings, who cause unrest in society, through the presentation of conflict between violence and non-violence. He has exposed that retaliating and protesting against the menace in

society can be done humanely because men are different from beasts. He has imbibed the virtuous ways of Gandhiji and pictured him as an ideal person:

Gandhiji: Before you get carried away, let me remind you that our earlier attempts at satyagraha failed. Don't you remember the violence that followed *hartali* and the *chauran-chaurai*? The dividing line between retaliatory violence and retaliatory non-violence is very very fine.

Desai :Well, the Salt March has certainly established the satyagraha principle.

Gnadhiji: But Mahadev, I want it to go deeper. I want it to impress on the nature of man that survival is not violence and men are not beasts.

Desai : And you feel love can make that change?

Gandhiji: Yes (*AEWT* 54-55).

The dramatist has cried foul against the usage of violence and animalistic behavior to achieve one's goal. Taking Gandhiji as an ideal person, he has accentuated the non-violent means adopted by him to liberate India from British. Gandhiji had led the country to her independence through non-violent means of protest. His Salt March comprised people from all creeds and castes (50-51); the symbol of unity in diversity, heading for the same goal.

The author has taken this lesson as his principal moral guide in pressing his voice against human violence. In spite of the police force brutally bullying the peaceful *satyagrahis*, under the command of British colonialists, there was "none who raises a hand either to strike back or defend himself" (55). This is

the kind of violence, a violent self restraint against brutal violence, Gandhiji meant when he said, “I would prefer violence to cowardice” (20).

The dramatist has felt that though “Police brutality is nowhere unknown: the very arm of law which restrains is itself capable of excess” (52). This does not mean that he has passively accepted the guardians of law and order resorting to violent deeds. Of all kinds of violence, he could not for once accept the brutal violence meted out to the non-violent protestors. On the other hand, he has directly responded to perpetrators of human right with the powerful weapons of self restrain and non-violent resistance:

Desai : ...there isn't much more left to say. Madanlal was injured along with the others, but will recover. I've never come across such sadistic brutality before. It was almost as though they *enjoyed* beating the *satyagrahis*. Perhaps their passive resistance infuriated them further...

Gandhiji: (*Urgently*)...the resistance...the resistance...

Desai : Not an arm was raised to ward off the blow, but those who witnessed the incident swear that they felt the...*force* of resistance...

Gandhiji: (*Relieved*) ...ah...

Desai : I...I admit it came from courage of a different sort.

Gandhiji: The *force of resistance*, you said. A *moral* force? Yes. A non-violent resistance? Yes. In other words, Mahadev, you have a true *satyagrahi* (54).

Of all forms of violent actions of men, there is the need to differentiate between the man with conscience and the beast without conscience. Through the presentation of a clash between violence and non-violence, he wants it “to

impress on the nature of man that survival is not violence and men are not beasts” (55). Therefore, change in society should be brought about through non-violent means.

3.13. Inextricable linkage between Human Existence and Social Conflict

Human society is constantly evolving and change, therefore, is inevitably linked with human aspirations. The words of Senhora Miranda, “Aren’t we after all victims of survival” (*GOA* 51), has powerfully reflected human struggle for survival. The author’s outlook on human life is serious and uncompromising. He has looked at this life as a serious affair and in the midst of this struggle for existence conflicts are more prone than not.

Currimbhoy’s realistic approach to social issues has made him to present human life as a serious affair, paddling with survival struggles. Life is not an imagination but a concrete reality, which is reflected in the words of Shean: “History is often written with bias: the heroes become greater, the villains more base...But this I witnessed personally, and I see it over and over again...Man is beast and man again only if he learns to take the long, long march...” (*AEWT* 41). This does not mean that men are defeated beings but are challenging beings, living and conducting their lives against all odds.

The dramatist’s social world is streaked with war, refugees, untouchables, poverty and hunger, loot, riots, violence and drought and, individuals making up the population of this world are both righteous and unrighteous. There are victims of war, natural disaster, suppression, oppression, abuse or corruption. There are also people who are consciously aware of humanity being caught in different trials and tribulations.

In this complex world of conflicting situations, persons like Gandhiji has served him as an ideal person and, in the light of Gandhiji’s ideology,

intellectuals like Prof. Datta and Prof. Mosin have endeavoured to bring good sense into the minds of the people. Compassionate people like Mita, Elizabeth and Amar are obsessed with the plight of “the poor, the needy, the down-trodden” (*RF* 21) and they strove to alleviate their sufferings. There are politicians, physicians, Naxals, students, prostitutes, farmers, priests, rural and urban dwellers and the like making up the microcosmic world of the playwright. This is Currimbhoy’s variety in plenty, having different shades and temperaments.

In this complex world, where people are striving to fulfil their aspirations, Currimbhoy has seen the inevitability of conflict and rift. For a politician, power and authority is at the helm of his affair and dealing. War and fights go on in the field of politics because “for a politician there is nothing greater than power” (*SB* 104). For a Naxalite, who fights for his ideology of socialism and liberation from oppression, “there is the harsh inevitability about it (revolt), the struggle for birth, for survival, where one has to kill to live again” (*IQ* 81). Therefore, they take “the law and order in their own hands” (32).

Innocent civilians view the complex world of today and feel that “it’s one thing to theorize, quite another...to...kill” (57). On the other hand, staunch supporters of non-violent movement take a stand “that should there be an outbreak of violence we will resist it with a stronger show of peace” (*AEWT* 21). This will defeat violence, like Gandhiji who has armoured himself with peace and non-violence in the midst of brutality, bullying and bloodshed.

The dramatist believes in the theory of probability and downplays the theory of absoluteness in life. In the life and existence of man “there’s really no absoluteness in life” (*MLA* 55). As a result, differences are inevitable

aspects of life and existence and, this differences herald conflicts in society. In the absence of absoluteness in life, there can be no absolute justice: “Absolute justice...there is none” (*RF* 60). But this does not mean that there can be no justice at all in life and operation of justice needs a space: “Justice...cannot operate in...vacuum” (62). Through this philosophy of justice, the playwright wants to point out that in the fight for justice societies inevitably get into clash and on the process, innocent civilians get “caught between the devil and the deep” (64).

The author’s understanding of man and his nature is seen in the following statement: “every great man...ah...his weakness, his *chamchas*” (*MLA* 55) and, “we’re...fallible” (59). Therefore, in the social world he sees that “there’s something wrong in our society, our teaching...” (*IQ* 75) and in the administrative world, “the problem at its roots is not one of law and order. It’s...one of administration” (64). This is the world view of Currimbhoy and the philosophy he imbibes is that life is a struggle for survival in the midst of aspirations and dreams.

The playwright believes that conflict in society is due to differences of interests and through these conflicts, changes are initiated. Changes through conflicts can be useful in some cases, like enforcing unity among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs during the Salt March under the leadership of Gandhiji, but it can be detrimental on many cases as well. Severe social conflicts that lead to the breaking up of society, like the Bangladesh war for liberation, China’s forceful extension of its Communism into Tibet or India’s taking over of Goa are suicidal because there is a colossal loss of lives and wealth and, refugees are sent out tragically as beasts. Above all, political conflict that leads to riot, violence and massacre is a mistake committed by human beings that will have a long lasting negative impact. Therefore, he has bluntly conveyed that any social conflict that leads to serious damages to human lives

and resources are the “genocide of a civilization” (*OMPH* 66) in this post-modern era.

Man is a social being and, therefore, he lives in association with other beings. As a matter of fact, whatever happens in society affects him. Conflicts in society are manmade and these conflicts invariably have an impact on him. Moreover, man has desires and aspirations which do not always are in concordance with experiences. This incongruity causes anxiety in man and provides undesirable spaces for him to be in the furnace of inner conflict. This conflict will be discussed deeper in the next chapter titled, Inner Conflict.

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CHAPTER THREE

INNER CONFLICT

1. Inner Conflict

Asif Currimbhoy has dealt with the people who stayed so close to his heart and conscience in his plays. As a matter of fact, he knows them in and out. Since he detests servitude and oppression, he does not chain his characters to his whims and fancies but allows them to live and have their being as they find themselves in society. Human beings crowding his world are infested with psychological dilemmas, confusions and wrong choices, as any person would do in real life. He has recognized the external and internal beings of a person as the two essential components of a human person. There is an inextricable correspondence between these two components and, therefore, they cannot be divorced from each other. Complexities, frustrations, distress, tensions, anxieties, anguish, fear, alienation and the like are experienced differently by his characters at varying degrees and at different points of time, as it is in real life. Therefore, his plays are replete with inner conflicts.

When we speak of inner conflict, it means clash, struggle, opposition or clashing of opposed interests that go on in a person, organization, state, country and the like. Asker Acharya had opined that, “While an outer conflict involves a character wrestling with exterior obstacles, such as other people, an inner conflict implies that the character is struggling with emotional or mental obstacles within him/herself. A moral or ethical dilemma is a classic example of an inner conflict” (Acharya <<http://answers.yahoo.com/>>). According to

Linda Adams, inner conflict arises every time we are faced with making a decision and generally involves a struggle between doing what we think we ought to do and being our true self. She said, “Usually, when we think of being in conflict, it’s between people - between us and our boss or co-worker or spouse or child. But even more often, we experience personal, inner conflict within ourselves. Simply, put, inner conflict is when you’re battling with yourself” (Adams <<http://www.gordontraining.com>>) For Mrs. Dowling, “A struggle that takes place in a character's mind is called internal conflict” (Dowling <<http://www.dowlingcentral.com/>>) and according to Kathy Temean, “Internal conflict is the dilemma facing the character inside – the internal battle within a character and its impact on that character” (Temean <<http://kathytemean.wordpress.com/>>).

The above definitions and descriptions do not distinctly demarcate or mark the differences of meaning between the words inner and internal. Asker’s differentiation is lucidly clear and Adam’s reference is to do with something that goes on within a person and affecting the entire being. Dowling takes internal as something to do with the mind and Kathy takes internal as inclusive of something inside of a person. Therefore, what happens inside of a person is referred to as inner or internal happenings. Inner or internal conflict is, thus, a private war within a person and the heat of it is either violent or sober. It may be to do with the mind, emotion or feeling of a person and this conflict is inextricably intertwined with the external world. Therefore, this chapter will humbly deal with the inner conflict, dependently with the external conflict and the words inner, internal or psychological will be used synonymously and alternately.

Internal conflict model has churned out its own proposition to understand and explain the conflict. It simply puts forth that when something

is consistent with our desires, we feel comfortable but when something is inconsistent with our desires, we feel anxious. Therefore, it is clear that inconsistency between the desire and experience will cause inner conflict. To understand deeper and to herald us into the discussion of inner conflict in Asif Currimbhoy's select plays, some psychological theories are generally dealt with below.

2. Some Psychological Theories and Inner Conflict

There are dozens of psychological theories that have dealt with the mind and conscience of man to examine, analyze and assess the internal being of a person. Inner conflict cannot be independently understood without accounting the environment and situation in which a person is placed. Therefore, these two factors cannot be divorced from each other for a comprehensive comprehension of a person's personality or inner world; lest a partial knowledge will mutilate the authenticity of the person in observation and destroy the facts and figures. For clarity, I will confine myself to three perspectives: Psychodynamic theories, which focuses on the inner workings of personality or mind, especially internal conflict and struggles, Behaviourist theories, which places greater emphasis on the external environment and on the effects of conditioning and learning and, Humanistic theory, which stresses on subjective and personal experiences.

2.1. Psychodynamic Theories

Different psychologists have proposed theories that try to explain the origin of personality and the outcome of inner inconsistencies. One highly influential set of theories has stemmed from an Austrian neurologist, Sigmund Freud, who has first proposed the theory of psychoanalysis. Collectively, these theories have come to be known as psychodynamic theories. It is imperative to be taken into account that, in spite of many different

psychodynamic theories available, they have all emphasized unconscious motives and desires as well as the importance of childhood in shaping the personality of a person.

2.1.1. Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud grew to prominence in 1800s and 1900s through his technique of treating mental disorders. He, then, developed his own device that he called psychoanalysis. According to this theory, personalities arise because of attempts to resolve conflicts between unconscious sexual and aggressive impulses and societal demands to restrain these impulses. This conclusion was drawn on his personal encounter with the live patients, who came to be treated of their mental disorders.

Freud has viewed human psyche as a dynamic system directed by three structures and each of these is a complex system in its own right but most behaviors involve the activity of all the three. He has presented that internal struggles and rechanneled energies typify most personality functioning. He also believes that most mental processes are unconscious and to bring about the understanding of different levels of human mind, he has proposed three levels of awareness: the Conscious or Id, which contains all the information that a person is paying attention to at any given time, the Preconscious or Ego, that contains all the information outside of a person's attention but readily available if needed and the Unconscious or Superego, which contains thoughts, feelings, desires, and memories of which people have no awareness but that influence every aspect of their day-to-day lives. Toru Sato has stated that "As the originator of psychoanalysis and psychodynamic tradition, Sigmund Freud discussed internal conflict in relation to the three structures of the mind. Anxiety according to this view is caused by the psychic tension

among the forces representative of the Id, Ego and Superego” (Sato <www.tandfonline.com>).

The ego sometimes gives in to the seduction of the Id, and sometimes forced by Superego to displace or sublimate behavior to other activities. The Ego is always in the middle, dealing not only with Id and Superego, but also with external reality. Freud believes that information in the unconscious emerges in slips of the tongue, jokes, dreams, illness symptoms and the association people make between ideas. It is given that anxiety may occur when the ego feels overwhelmed, neurotic anxiety when impulses from the Id are barely kept under control and moral anxiety when there are threats of punishment from the Superego. He also believes that the Id, Ego and Superego are in constant conflict. He has focused mainly on conflicts concerning sexual and aggressive urges because these urges are most likely to violate societal rules. Internal conflict can make a person feel anxious and this disturbs the normal behavior. In Freud’s view, anxiety arises when the Ego cannot adequately balance the demands of the Id and the Superego. The Id demands gratification of its impulses, and the Superego demands maintenance of its moral standards.

Each person develops habitual ways of calming these anxieties, and many resort to using ego-defense mechanisms to lessen the degree of internal conflict. Defense mechanisms are behaviours that protect people from anxiety. There are many different kinds of defense mechanisms, many of which are automatic and unconscious. These mechanisms can be repression, reaction formation, projection, rationalization, displacement, denial, regression or sublimation. Through negative mechanism of defense, inner conflict occurs in a person.

2.1.2. Alfred Adler

Alfred Adler broke away from the Freudian psychology and developed his own school of thought, which he called Individual Psychology. He has disagreed with Freud's emphasis on the unconscious, instinctual drives and the importance of sexuality. He believes that the main motivations for human behavior are not sexual or aggressive urges but striving for individual superiority. He has pointed out that children naturally feel weak and inadequate in comparison with adults. The normal feeling of inferiority drives them to adapt, develop skills and master challenges. On the other hand, his perception of striving for superiority indicates a struggle to overcome imperfections, an upward drive for competition, completion and master shortcomings.

Adler has used the term 'compensate' to refer to a person's attempt to shed normal feelings of inferiority. He feels that everyone experiences feelings of inferiority and this occurs mainly because we begin life as small, weak and relatively powerless children surrounded by larger and more powerful adults. The feeling of inferiority may also come from our personal limitations and the struggle for superiority comes from the feeling of inferiority. However, some people suffer from an exaggerated sense of inferiority, or an inferiority complex, which can be due to either being spoiled or neglected by parents. Such people overcompensate, which means that rather than trying to master challenges, they try to cover up their sense of inferiority by focusing on outward signs of superiority such as status, wealth and power. He believes that while striving for superiority, each individual tries to compensate for different limitations, and each chooses a different pathway to superiority. This situation creates a unique style of life for each individual, whether young or old.

2.1.3. Karen Horney

She is a Neo Freudian psychologist and gives a feminine touch to her thoughts. Though faithful to Freud, in most of her ideas, she resisted his mechanistic, biological and instinctive ideas. As a woman, she rejects Freud's claim that anatomy is destiny, woven on Freudian psychology that males are dominant or superior to females. Horney was the first to challenge an obvious male bias in Freud's thinking. She has also disagreed with Freud about the cause of neurosis, as is shown below:

Theories	Horney	Freud
Neurosis	-feeling and attitudes Determined by culture -deals with problems -driven by emotional forces -compulsive drives but are neurotic	-instinctual drives or object relationships determined biologically -deny problems -ego concepts without instinctive or executive powers -compulsive drives but not driven to neurosis
Psychoanalysis	-seeking self-realization -help from analyst to cope with life	-avoids self-realization -love the analyst
Inner Conflicts	-abilities to be a decent person -man can change	-repressed or repressing -disbelief in human goodness and growth

(Langenderfer <<http://www.muskingum.edu>>).

Freud has held that neurotic individuals and anxiety-ridden individuals are struggling with forbidden Id drives that they fear they cannot control but for Horney, a core basic anxiety occurs when people feel isolated and helpless

in a hostile world. These feelings, she believes, are rooted in childhood. Basic anxiety then causes troubled individuals to exaggerate a single mode of interacting with others. She has put forth her perception clearly that each one of us can move towards others, move away from others or move against others.

Freud was aware of an inner conflict in a person but saw it as repressed or repressing. He has regarded man's inner self with a disbelief in human goodness and growth. So, his theory shows that he has a negative believe in the life and existence of man; the negative believe that man was condemned to destroy and suffer. Horney has seen this conflict in a different way. The different types of conflicts were between contradictory neurotic trends and the attitude toward self, qualities and set of values. She believes that each of us has the capability and potential to become a decent person. This comes from the relationship with ourselves as well as with others, which is disturbed with problems. However, man can change and go on changing as long as he lives. So, Horney has disagreed with Freud and has established her own perception on these ideas when looking at psychoanalysis and neuroses that involved an inner conflict.

She has opined, while referring to inner conflict, that "inconsistencies are as definite an indication of the presence of conflicts as a rise in body temperature is of physical disturbance" (Karen 35). Although Horney, like Freud, sees psychological problems as originating in early childhood, she does not see the adult as simply repeating earlier patterns, and she does not explain adult behavior through analogies with childhood experience. Once a child begins to adopt defensive strategies, his or her particular system develops under the influence of external factors, which encourage some strategies and discourage others, and of internal necessities, whereby each defensive move

requires others in order to maintain its viability. Character structure of the adult has its origin in early childhood, but it is also the product of a complicated evolutionary history, and it can be understood in terms of the present constellation of defenses. Such a synchronic or structural approach is highly suitable for the analysis of literary characters, since we are often supplied with ample information about their existing defenses, however sketchy their childhoods may be. Because it describes the kinds of phenomena that are actually portrayed in literature, it permits us to stick to the words on the page, to explicate the text.

2.1.4. Carl Jung

Carl Jung has also parted from Freud when he began to develop his own ideas. He, like Freud, calls the conscious part of the personality the ego. However, he further notes that between the ego and the outside world, we often find a persona or mask which is the public self. The persona is presented to others when people adopt particular roles or when they hide their deeper feelings. Actions of the ego may reflect attitudes of introversion or extroversion.

He has coined his own phrase called personal unconscious in place of Freud's unconscious. This is the storehouse for personal experiences, feelings and memories that are not directly knowable. There is another consciousness called collective consciousness, which is a deeper conscious shared by all humans. Jung believe that from the beginning of time, all humans have had experiences with birth, death, power, god figures, mother and father figures, animals, the earth, energy, evil, rebirth, and the like. According to him, such universals create archetypes: original ideas or patterns.

2.2. Behaviorist Theories

Any model of personality that emphasizes observable behavior, the relationship between stimuli and responses and the impact of learning come under this theory. The behaviorist's stance is that personality is no more than a collection of learnt behavior patterns. Like any other behavior, personality is acquired through classical and operant, conditioning, observational learning, reinforcement, extinction, generalization and discrimination. This group of thinkers also includes the learning theorists. They reject the idea that personality is made up of consistent traits. Situational determinants of behavior agree that some situations strongly affect behavior. Other situations are trivial and have little impact. Thus, external events interact with each person's unique learning history to produce behavior in any given situation. Trait theorists also believe that situations affect behavior. But in their view, situations interact with traits. So, in essence, learning theorists favour replacing the concept of traits with past learning to explain behavior.

This theory includes social learning theory which has laid greater emphasis on social relationships and modeling. This theory is an approach that combines behavioural principles, cognition like perception, thinking and anticipation, social relationships and observational learning. These breed of social learning theorists focus their attention on perception, thinking and other mental events.

2.2.1. John Dollard and Neal Miller

They are of the view that habits make up the structure of the personality of a person and for the dynamics of personality, they believe that habits, mainly those that are deeply ingrained and learnt pattern of response, are governed by four elements of learning: Drive, which includes any stimulus that is strong enough to goad a person to action like hunger, pain, lust,

frustration fear and the like; Cue, which are the signs or external stimuli that guide responses, especially those that signal the likely presence or absence of reinforcement; Responses are any behavior, either observable or internal and lastly Reward or reinforcement.

2.2.2. Julian Rotter

He has brought forth the idea of cognitive behaviourism of social learning theory. This theory is understood through the following concepts proposed by him: Psychological situation, Expectancy and Reinforcement value. Psychological situation depends on how a person interprets or defines the situation in which he is placed. Expectancy is the anticipation that making a response will lead to reinforcement. To predict a response, we would also have to know if a person expects an effort to pay off in the present situation. Expected reinforcement may be more important than actual past reinforcement. Reinforcement value explains that humans attach different values to various activities or rewards. This, too, must be taken into account to understand personality.

2.3. Humanistic theory

Humanism is a reaction to the pessimism of psychoanalytic theory and the mechanism of learning theory. At its core is a new image of what it means to be human. This theorists view human nature as inherently good and they seek ways to allow our positive potentials to emerge. They have rejected the Freudian view of personality as a battleground for biological instincts and unconscious forces, and even opposed the mechanical thing-like overtones of the behaviorist viewpoint. They strongly opined that human beings are not merely a bundle of moldable responses but are creative beings capable of free choice. To a humanist, the person you are today is largely the product of all of your previous choices. The humanistic viewpoint also places greater emphasis

on immediate subjective experience, rather than on prior learning. Humanists believe that there are as many real worlds as there are people. To understand behavior, we must learn how a person subjectively views the world.

2.3.1. Abraham Maslow

His idea is called the Idea of self-actualization. This theory studies people living an unusually effective lives and lay interest on people who use almost all of their talents and potentials. His primary contribution was to draw attention to the possibility of continued personal growth. He has considered self-actualization as an ongoing process and not a simple end point to be attained only once.

2.3.2. Carl Rogers

According to this psychologist, the fully functioning person is one who has achieved openness to feelings and experiences and, has learnt to trust inner urges and intuitions. He believed that this attitude is most likely to occur when a person receives an ample amount of love and acceptance from others. He has based his theory on a clinical experience. According to him, experiences that match the self-image are symbolized and contribute to gradual changes in the self. A person is said to be in conflict when information or feelings are inconsistent and incongruent with the self-image. This is the point of difference and failure to perceive this difference causes problems. Toru Sato has put forth that Carl Rogers “discusses how internal conflict arises from incongruence between the self-concept and experience” and “this incongruence is the main cause of anxiety” (Sato <www.tandfonline.com>).

He believed that inconsistency between self-image and experience causes mental tension. Experiences that are seriously incongruent with the self-image can be threatening and they are often distorted or denied conscious

recognition. This builds a wide gap between what is experienced and what is idealized and, bridging this chasm needs a herculean effort because blocking, denying or distorting experiences prevent the self from changing. When this happens, it creates a gulf between the self-image and reality. As the self-image grows more unrealistic, the incongruence with the realistic image makes the person confused, vulnerable, dissatisfied or seriously maladjusted.

Rogers' theory has endeavoured to encourage and construct a positive growth of a person. It is believed that when a person's self-image is consistent with what he really thinks, feels, does and experiences, the person is best able to actualize his potentials. Therefore, Rogers has considered it essential to maintain congruence between the self-image and the ideal self. Inconsistency between the two will cause havoc to a person's behavior and personality. Greater the gap between the way a person sees himself and the way he would like to be, tension and anxiety experienced by that person will be greater. Those persons with a good match between the two will be socially poised, confident and resourceful and, those with a poor match tend to be anxious, insecure and lacking in social skills.

These theories have a rich contribution towards a better understanding of human behavior and personality. None of the major theories can be proved or disproved. If any could be proven as true or absolutely true, it would no longer be a theory, it would be a law. It is given that the implications and predictions of theories are also neither true nor false. By present standards, psychoanalytic theory seems to over-emphasize sexuality and biological instincts. These distortions were modified and rectified by the neo-Freudians but problems still remain. Neo-Freudian theory is good at explaining things after they have occurred but offers little help in predicting the future behavior.

Behaviorist theory, on the other hand, has provided a good framework for personality studies.

These theorists have made the best effort to rigorously test and verify their ideas. The weak point of this theory is that it has underestimated the impact of a person's temperament, emotion and subjective experience on personality. This weakness has being lifted to a certain extent by the Humanistic theory. One of the great strengths of humanists is the light they have shed on positive dimensions of personality. However, they have utilized imprecise concepts that are difficult to measure or study objectivity. Even so, humanistic thought has encouraged many people to seek greater self-awareness and personal growth. Denis Coon, in his *Introduction to Psychology, Exploration and Application*, has given a summarized picture of the comparison of these theories:

	<u>Psychoanalytic Theory</u>	<u>Behavioristic Theory</u>	<u>Humanistic Theory</u>
View of Human nature	: Negative	Neutral	Positive
Is Behaviour free or determined?	: Determined	Determined	Free
Principle motives:	Sex and aggression	Drives of all kinds	Self- actualization
Personality structure	: Id, Ego, Superego	Habits	Self
Role of unconscious	: Maximized	Practically non-existent	Maximized
Conception of conscience	: Superego	Self-enforcement	Ideal-self, valuing process
Developmental	: Psychosexual	Critical learning	Development

emphasis		Stages situation:	of self image
		Identification	
		and imitation	
Barriers to	: Unconscious	Maladaptive habits;	Conditions of
personal growth	conflicts;	pathological	incongruence
	fixation	environment	

(Dennis 105).

3. Asif Currimbhoy and Inner Conflict

Currimbhoy has presented his characters as human beings who are fully alive and sensitive; they are thinking, feeling and reacting to the forces around them. Tuan Andrew, Manubhai and Ram are tyrannical and harsh but Dalai Lama, Mahatma Gandhi, Prof. Datta, Prof. Mosin and Kantibhai are altruistic, compassionate and wise. Monsoon and Sumita are complex females who are stormy and soft and, protective as well as strong like a mother eagle. There are also people in the face of violence and people in the romantic world. Human beings plunging into hunger and poverty stayed so close to his heart and they are sympathetically dealt with. These are the variety in plenty in Currimbhoy's world where human beings move about, conducting their lives, as the situation in which they live enveloped them. He is a keen observer of people and a person coming alive in his plays experiences the forces of life and expresses himself in ways he reacts to it.

The playwright believes in the power of inner forces of men and has presented that they are driven about by the authority of their inner functioning. He has also depicted the inseparable relationship between the body and mind of a person and has proved that they are mutually affective. To bring out a comprehensive view of the author's perception of human psychology,

especially the inner conflict of man, which is found in his select plays, this chapter will be discussed under different sub-topics.

3.1. Psychological Dilemma

Currimbhoy has never disconnected his characters from their environment and has dealt with them psychologically by placing them firmly into the situations and conditions of their habitation. In *The Miracle Seed*, Ram has found himself in the deadliest situation of a drought, where his family had being plunged into the problem of hunger and fear of an imminent death. His life had become pathetic and worry as well as anxiety in him and his family have no respite because “Two seasons. Two years, and there’s no rain” (TMS 9), and their granary had emptied out. He is caught in the mental distress due to the anxiety for an imminent beckoning of hunger because “there’s never enough of anything” (10). The angst in him is surmountable because “the water in the well is getting less and less” (Ibid), nature around is “dry and dying, the seed not catching the rain” (9), the “cow”, “is getting thinner and thinner” (10) and, human beings are “not getting enough to eat” (Ibid). Therefore, his inner conflict is whether to believe Laxman, a city boy (19), about the scientific green revolution (20) and the miracle seed (27) or continue to hold on to his age old traditional knowledge of nature’s cycle, even in times of great tribulations, where hunger and death are constantly knocking at his door. All this trials have made him to be harsh and angry all the time. The author has played on the mind of Ram and exposed the degree of his endurance and patience by making him go through an acid test. Ram had trudged through inner turbulence and had being put on a disconcerting trial. He has also being put on a balance to decide whether to continue to stay in the village or to leave for the city by yielding to the temptation of Laxman.

Whether the decision made by Ram, to stay back in the village, was a boon or a bane, the playwright had ingeniously played on his mind without expunging the pain and suffering. Ram is stoically ludicrous in his challenge of the Nature's behaviour. This agrarian family loved the land but hated the land, at the same time, because the land did not respond to their pleas. The glaring and tearing reality of drought, which stared at the hungry farmers, has frightfully pierced the mind and heart of Ram's family, like a sharp dagger that has been pushed through the alive flesh, and kept them wriggling for emancipation.

The dramatist has taken this farming family, as a representative of drought affected families, to depict how fear and insecurity have shaken the affected people. He has also brought home the message that nature's uncompromising delay in bringing rain to quench the thirst of the parched land can cause havoc to the serenity of human existence on earth because men are dependent on land for survival.

Currimbhoy had gone further in his exploration and realistically examined the pain of being caught in the web of decision making. Mita's inner pain, caused by the sight of refugees dying like flies, stabs our conscience. Refugees are increasing in number everyday and yet labourers are few. So, she cried out in deep agony to her parents and Yassin in an "uncontrolled voice" (*RF* 34): "refugees dying ...like flies" (34). Her disconsolation was added with a greater compression due to non-committal Yassin, a refugee himself, who had rationalized on his freedom of choice (33) and refused to charitably behold the plight of his fellow refugees. Her conscience is clear, on her humanist activity, but her inner being is deeply unsatisfied due to meager relief workers who are out-numbered by an astounding volume of refugees flocking in hungry, maim and sick. The

playwright believes that the likes of Mita damp themselves by attempting to harness the responsibility that is beyond their individual capacities. Therefore, this does more harm than good.

Jennie has felt a similar compressive impact of inner conflict, as Mita has encountered, but her conflict is rooted in her married life. The conflict has pained her with no sign of any mitigation as she kept waiting and persuading her husband, for his decision to leave the Darjeeling hills. Her nostalgia sprouted out of jealousy and she kept on brooding over the lost past. She felt that her husband had led himself astray and was responsible for the birth of Didi, his bastard daughter. She could not put up with the very presence of Didi, her stepdaughter, and asked BigMac to leave India sooner than later as she has been leading a very miserable and alienated life for the past nineteen years. She, therefore, passionately told Mac, “Been hurting myself for nineteen years. Mac. Anybody would think I’d be insensitive by now. But no. It keeps growing and growing...Away from here, that’s all I want” (*DT* 42). These jealousy and dejection have continued to devour the vitality of her life and she grew wearier day by day.

The dramatist has lucidly depicted that the seemingly irresolvable inner conflict is disastrous. The vitality of a person’s life gets exhausted if such conflicts are not diffused in time. Ram’s hot temperament and depression, Mita’s over-enthusiasm in trying to handle the responsibility beyond her capacity and Jennie’s undying jealousy are poisonous potions to consume the essential vigour and serenity of life. The author has made it clear that such conflicts gradually degrade and wane the preciousness of being alive to one’s age and cuts short a person’s life, if there is no sincere and honest attempt to resolve it.

3.2. Cowardice and Inner Restlessness

The dramatist has analyzed the effects of being dishonest to oneself and opined that this can cause great damage to life and will leave the mind and heart restless. Sen Gupta has refused to examine his conscience due to the fear of exposing his true identity. He is a refugee, “uprooted after partition” in 1947 (*RF* 14) and has, by now, settled securely, “worked hard, built proudly our own positions in life, but not without a sense of responsibility and social purpose” (14). Therefore, he is very vocal in speaking out his anger against the influx of refugees:

Professor Mosin: (*Tight lipped, controlled*) What would you have us do?

Sen Gupta: (*Changing from anger to friendship, touching Mosin on the shoulder*) ...Mosin my friend, you know, as well as I do, the greatest threat posed by the refugees. Listen: as every week goes by, who's coming in? No longer University intellectuals, persecuted politicians and defeated Bengal Rifles. No! They're Hindus now—minority Hindus being exterminated and driven out to purge Pakistan! If this pressure keeps and the hordes of Hindu refugees grow, how much longer will we in India remain secular?

Professor Mosin: (*Shaking, his voice quivering, agitated*) I know...I know...

Sen Gupta: (*Continues passionately*) My house is breaking apart, Mosin. My son wants to join the Mukti Fauj, my daughter's killing herself working for the refugees and my...my Muslim friend seems influenced by

a...peculiar pacifist. (*Whispering to himself, momentarily obsessed*) Son of Rukaiya, who cast her Muslim spell, upon one who loved too well... (32).

In the midst of being too vocal, he had been struggling to conceal the pretension and trying hard to put out of sight his true identity as a refugee.

For a refugee, like Sen Gupta, the past is too terrible to remember and, therefore, would love to cast it aside with all the strength available. The playwright has conveyed that the more Sen Gupta tried to forget his unfavourable past, the more, and with even greater force, reality has pushed itself vigorously into his conscience. As a result, he continued to battle with it and, since he did not want to be reminded of the painful things of the bygone days, he strove tooth and nail to cover up the painful past with a mere complain and escapist justification saying, “No time for the past” (10). In this regard, the dramatist has tactically used compassion and faithfulness of a wife to confront the pretense of a husband:

Sen Gupta: We'll push them back!

Wife : What are you saying!

Sen Gupta: (*Flushing, embarrassed*) Well, alright, we'll find a place for them. But not here!

Wife : Have you forgotten the time...when you were a refugee? (20-21).

Therefore, it is clearly seen that Sen Gupta took all pains to forget the past and even attempted, with witty efforts, to avoid all instances of being reminded. So, his mind has consciously thrashed about warring with all occasions and people that have to do with refugees. This has sabotaged his

inner peace and serenity and, has made him aggressive as well as argumentative.

The author has explored the inner conflict of man deeper in Yassin, who has struggled philosophically between action and inaction. He has justified his inaction saying, refugees are “being looked after very well from what I see” (28). His rationale seems acceptable but the ulterior motive is under suspicion, which is seen in his assertion that “all pain comes from attachment, all wrongs come from self interest. That is why we should each lead our own lives” (29). P. Bayapa Reddy had critically viewed Yassin’s motive and stated, “Yassin is torn between his involvement in the cause of a suffering humanity and his academic detachment and moral withdrawal from a world of simmering realities” (Reddy 43). It is also evidently provable from his escapist endeavour that his university knowledge has stood on his way and acted as a stumbling block towards living a faithful life. His problem lay deeply embedded in his fear and self interest complacency. Therefore, he has suffered the squashing effect of it internally and could not decide as to choose to act or not.

3.3. Insecurity and Escapism

The playwright believes that the habit of escaping from unpleasant and painful things of life takes its root from within a person. Escaping from the undesirable realities and inevitable painful things of life adversely affect the action and behavior of a person. He has also observed that external objects and events stimulate the mind to react and the reaction may be to move towards or move away, move against or even become complacent. Therefore, the author’s perception of fear for or courage to encounter things is a response to the external stimuli and this impacts a person either negatively or positively.

The dramatist believes that the act of running away from reality has an adverse effect on men because “the kind of harm that is deliberately done through neglect” (RF 29) can be colossal. He has depicted in some of his plays that escapism sprouts from within a person. Despite the complexity of human psychology, conflicting situations can prove to itself the motive of people indulging in action. The playwright has rebuked the likes of Yassin and Gupta for being so morose to the suffering people. It is pertinent to note that there are Yassins and Guptas who can be so complacent to the world simmering with homelessness, epidemic and the dying due to the lack of moral rectitude to take courageous decisions and act at the need of time. Just as Sarala has brought sense into Gupta, Mita drove sense into Yassin when he was caught in the dilemma of action and inaction, “as though they didn’t exist” (18). Yassin did not bother about the morality of human relationship that needed understanding, care, compassion and love, as it is conveyed in the following dialogue:

Mita : (*Uncontrolled voice*) Cholera! Cholera! Cholera’s broken out in the refugee camp! (*Subconsciously everybody looks accusingly, apprehensively at Yassin, as though he who personifies the refugees, brought it in. Flushes, feeling guilty and oppressed once again; without knowing why, without being able to escape his identity, the indelible stamp of the unwanted refugee*).

Yassin: (*Inadvertently bursting out*) I...had the cholera shot on crossing... (*He stops, realizes, feels acutely embarrassed*).

Wife : (*Softly*) Nobody meant you. Yassin... (*But of course everybody did look at him*).

Mita : (Continues) Refugee dying...like flies. Disease...spreading... (Breathless) Trying hard...to contain it. Much sympathy...from outsiders. (Looking straight at Yassin, the tears at last streaming down her face) They say...at last... (Laughing and crying hysterically)...the conscience of the world is aroused. At last, in crisis. The conscience. THE CONSCIENCE. What a word, oh my God, what a meaning. Don't tell me it escaped us all along. The morality of it all. Here we are talking about politics and refugees and even taking sides. It's not the lack of commitment that matters; it's the lack of morality that does. And we must ...both aggressor and giver of shelter ... search for our own conscience (34).

The dramatist has struck the cord of moral conscience that needs to be awakened. Lack of morality has siphoned off love and respect from the conscience of politicians who are hungry for power and victory. It has also swayed the fortunate refugees like Sen Gupta and Yassin to seek for escapism. But Mita has hammered the nail on the head that one needs to wake up to the glaring human tragedy that has been caused by war. Politics or refugees are only subsidiary at the time of great crisis; the greater need of the hour is not even commitment to the alleviation of the victims' suffering but awakening of one's conscience. This awakening will lead to the realization of right and wrong and, finally, affect a reasonable diplomacy, negotiation or cessation of war.

Fear of being discovered or identified, as a refugee, has kept these characters pretentious. Therefore, their minds and hearts are burning with insecurity and anxiety. Prof. Mosin has scathingly remarked on Yassin's

dodging away from the unpleasant realities of the moment and fearing to look into his conscience:

Professor Mosin: (*Continues*) He does not want to get involved in politics.

Sen Gupta: (*Grumpily*) That's why he doesn't like. Thinks I'm a politician.

Professor Mosin: You are imagining. But he has a point of course, about politics that is.

Sen Gupta: My dear professor, the affairs of men are all dictated by politics...Even the problem of refugees and Bangla Desh must have a political solution. We all know that... (*Smiling*) Besides, as the old saying goes, bring two Bengalis together and you'll have three political opinions.

Professor Mosin: (*Seriously, pensively*) True. Politics is the inescapable reality of our lives. Yassin must find out for himself that there is no getting away from it. And we ... (*Turning to Sen Gupta*)...in University and Town Committees and Parliament...must learn to strike a balance ourselves (31).

There is no getting away from the unpleasant realities of life, however painful it is and Yassin has to face the humiliation of being chided by everyone closely associated with him, before waking up to the real need of being involved personally for the cause of his fellow refugees. The author has employed this technique of progressive realization of truth by allowing sufficient time to lapse for his characters to go through much of stress and

strain before waking up from their slumber. Yassin was brought to his sense of the real need of the hour by Mita. Her binding words had shaken his conscience:

Mita : (*Bursting out*) How would you know! (*Yassin is stung. He does not reply. Then apologetically*) I...sorry. I meant...

Yassin: I know what you meant

Mita : (*Looking at him*) You...you avoid the refugees. You don't talk about them, or help them. As though they didn't exist. (*In Yassin's eyes a haunted expression. He still does not reply; then softly*) Why don't you come with me...with me, Yassin?

Yassin: No.

Mita : There is so much you can do. You'd understand their problems better than the others...could help...in their rehabilitation.

Yassin: No.

Mita : (*Hard, angry*) Do you think by closing your eyes, they'll disappear?

Yassin: (*Bitter smile*) They don't. I assure you.

Mita : Don't they have as much right...as you, to find themselves a home? (28).

The emotionally charged words, 'do you think by closing your eyes, they'll disappear', was sufficiently explosive enough to quiver Yassin's escapist mind and burst open the cocoon of his bounded conscience and, made him detour from his decision of escaping from contributing humanitarian

service to his fellow uprooted refugees. Therefore, he has, finally, decided to join the work force for the cause of refugees:

Sen Gupta: But...but where are you going?

Yassin : Does it matter? Aren't we all interested in...the dispersal of refugees?

Sen Gupta: Well, since you put it that way.

Yassin : I know. I am appreciative of it.

Sen Gupta: Then why do you want to leave?

Yassin : Because I want to...preserve our friendship. It means a lot to me.

Sen Gupta: Does it, Yassin? I...I'm sorry there were times when I misunderstood you.

Yassin : You didn't. In fact you helped me make up my mind.

Sen Gupta: I did?

Yassin : You showed me the way...very clearly...very forcefully (44).

The fact that he had been shown the way very clearly and forcefully speaks volumes about the power of external forces it has on man. Yassin's attempt of escaping from the stark reality of suffering refugees got shuttered with his realization of the truth. The author has made it clear that, much like Isaac Newton's third rule of the 'Law of Motion' which states that "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction" (Cannon <<http://www.mindbodygreen.com>>), Yassin's vigorous attempt of getting away from the unpleasant and painful realities required an equally opposing force to bring him back to this actuality.

Currimbhoy has gone deeper into the exploration of human approach to the misery of humanity in Amar, in *Inquilab*. Amar was constantly confronted internally, being stimulated by his external experience of landlords and, the seemingly hopeless, politicians. He was bogged down by the sheer poverty and servitude of a section of his capitalist society. This disparaging experience has pricked his mind and heart to the point of not only making him to be explosive in his temper but also join the left wing force of Naxalite movement, for the cause of proletariats. As a Naxalite student leader, he had being incessantly reproached by his father for the choice of naxal violence. Even Suprea has rebuked him on his lukewarm and divided love for her. His conscience has wavered in his choice between the Naxal's violent revolt and his father's path of peaceful expression of one's will in addressing the resentment. His wrong decision of leading the violent revolt has paid the price only when his father was killed. Violence and bloodshed, therefore, have, finally, woke him up to the wrong choice and he uttered regretfully, "I think my father was right. I mean...his approach was right. That change should come through the will of the majority...expressed through a free vote..." (*IQ* 80).

The dramatist has portrayed his characters at critical moments of their lives, not necessarily those of violent physical action as in melodrama, but of the inner crisis that has penetrated the social façade and given insight into their desires, aspirations and frustrations (Natesan 104). This inner crisis has enhanced the intensity of the plays he has enacted. He has made his characters feel the fullest heat of this intensity and in such moments of great heat, he has exposed their weaknesses and strengths. *This Alien...Native Land* has explored the inextinguishable inner crisis of Joseph. Joseph's failure, as a father, has derailed the family and affected its members to the point of demoralization. Discouragement and regret have percolated deeply into the

deepest abyss of their conscience and recuperation from it has appeared to be a farfetched idea. Lack of courage and fragile family bonding has further sabotaged the possibility of recovering from their lost world. Joseph lived in his pensive world, his wife got into oedipal relation with David, David shifted from one job to the other, Sara got compartmentalized into the four walls of her regret and frustration and, Jacob brought home Tara, who has established her cultural dominion over her husband's culture. Evidently, therefore, Joseph's failure to act manly and wisely, in time, has caused himself and other family members to go through conflicting situations and psychological dilemma.

The playwright believes that an inner conflict can be so delicate to a person who does not know how to conduct his life. Joe is a Ph. D scholar but is caught up in the web of disillusioned young teenagers, like him, who are imbued with physical desires. He can be sensible enough to remark Tony and Rita during their passionate kissing: "You both sicken me. You're messy as two children with a single lollipop" (*DD* 13). But he could not handle his own guilt after finding out that Rita is pregnant because of him (91) and committed suicide by drowning (90). The boy who taunted Tony for being heartless towards his girl friend (54-55) became callous when opportunity tempted him and yielded to it by sleeping with the same girl. This has impacted his scholarly knowledge and the mistake committed became intolerable to get reconciled due to such a delicate conscience. Through this concept of inner conflict, the dramatist has pointed out that mistakes and weaknesses are not alien to any human being on the earth but failure to recognize and rectify it in time causes havoc to life.

3.4. Obsessive Impulsion

Currimbhoy has delineated that obsessive impulsion leads a man to seek for surrogates to contain or overpower the heavy weight of obsession when external pressure opposes the desired plan. This inner crisis can be so delicate on some people but can be dangerous for some others when the affected person fails to recognize it, even at the point of explosion. Manubhai is a dissident MLA, who is “dissident enough to be effective” (*MLA* 12). He dared not take pains to look into his conscience and did not care an iota about the means of his action, as is divulged in the following dialogue:

Manu : Do you think I’ve been disloyal, Bapu?

Kantibhai: Come here, Manubhai, come closer. There’s a strange glint in your eye. A fighting glint. Do you feel you’ve compromised with yourself?

Manu : No.

Kantibhai: Well then, how can you be disloyal? These are matters of conscience; not rules and regulations laid down by the party.

Manu : (*Looking steadily at Kantibhai in the eye*) I’ve encouraged the use of violence...as a means to an end, of course.

Kantibhai: Now, that’s bad.

Manu : But you said it was a matter of conscience.

Kantibhai: There’s divine conscience besides a man’s conscience. And God’s conscience is greater. It forms the basis of natural Law. Man’s law may be broken but not the Natural Law (39).

Manubhai does not want to acknowledge that Natural law rules the moral world of human beings. Besides, he dares not venture into his conscience and examine the means he employs for his actions. As a result, his countenance could not belie the inner tension and anxiety. His inner conflict is so intense that he even became tyrannical, always angry and even called his own mind a “schizophrenic mind” (11). Overindulgence in wine and excessive desire for sex have served as the expository means to show that something is drastically wrong with him. The Astrologer of Manubhai knows well about his weaknesses and warned him: “Go slow on food, wine, women. Avoid the excesses of your nature” (16). He is even sadistic and delights in humiliating the Vice Chancellor and Minister for Social welfare (24). The severity of his psychological disorder finds a temporary relief when the students have successfully carried out his diabolic plan of humiliating the Vice Chancellor and Minister. The playwright has made it clear that Manubhai has taken recourse to these actions to appease his disquieted conscience but it has offered only a temporal satisfaction. His son, Ramesh, has rightly rebuked him saying, “I’m...saying...you’re...doing... this...for yourself. Your own madness” (36).

The political game, played by Manubhai, has overwhelmed his better wisdom and this has severely affected his entire being. His objective is to pull down the government from power and this has not only clouded his mind but destroyed his candid sociability with the people around him. He becomes tyrannical to his wife and irrational with his son in the heat of his mind’s restlessness. The inner crisis has made him behave very silly with his wife and even with himself, to the extent of speaking out to himself of what actually goes on within him:

Manu: (*Eyes rolling widely and insanely*) What's that! WHAT'S THAT! One *thali*. A hundred *thalis*. A thousand *thalis*. All hanging away. A quartet empty, half empty, full empty. Women in silent procession. Masks over their mouths. Each with thali in hand. Surrounding the Assembly, the Raj Bhavan, and all else, SHANTI, CURSED WOMAN, YOU'VE PLAGIARIZED MY IDEA, YOU DID IT TO DEFEAT ME. DON'T YOU? BUT YOU ALSO ENDORSED YOUR SON'S PROTEST. WELL DONE, MY INFERNAL MATE. WE'LL BURN TOGETHER. YOU AND I, MY DEAR...(Sound of one thali around him, his room, his house) So, you've come to haunt me now, have you, woman! You're not really protesting against the Government and high prices. You're protesting against me, ME. I don't care. I'll survive. I was born in the image of my son, woman. I NEVER MADE LOVE WITH YOU, WOMAN, I ONLY HAD YOU, REMEMBER THAT. And my son was born. (*Darkness; sound of despair*) (25).

The fact of his eyes rolling widely and insanely is a clear proof of the terrible fear and insecurity that are bogging him down. His affected mind has even started hearing what others don't hear and he feels extremely insecure and disturbed. He could trust nobody, let alone his better half who has begotten him a son. His pessimistic mind could only behold the empty *thali*. Through this ingenious handling of a schizophrenic person, the dramatist portrays that an insecure man's "mind's compulsive. There's no restraining" (24). He also wants to show that "what we most need is a bit of moral rectitude" (27) in our lives.

3.5. Psycho-somatic Relation

The dramatist has psychoanalytically dealt with the severity of conflicting desires and emotions in men. He believes that there is an unstoppable reality about the mutual affectation between human body and mind and presents that the severity of mental war gets itself exposed externally through different ways. He has also utilized the stream of consciousness technique to explicate the severe mental disturbances in a person.

In *The Dissident MLA*, the protagonist behaves weirdly and irrationally. The severity of his inner conflict gets denuded when he started speaking even “while apparently being fast asleep” (*MLA* 50). The playwright has superbly dissected the inner crisis of Manubhai and his wife by allowing them to speak to themselves quite often. He has also shown that when a person is extremely disturbed, weird actions are being done. Even while snoring on the couch, Manubhai’s “one hand (is) being raised occasionally to swat away a fly or something invincible that bothers him” (50). He fears the darkness and even sees the ghost of Ramesh and starts speaking with him (56).

BigMac, in *The “Darjeeling Tea?”*, could not express himself as long as Jennie was rebuking him of his divided love. On his death bed, he speaks in a delirium and the real hidden mental conflict gets sneaked out of his mind when he was down with a heart attack. Didi tells Bunty, “Sometimes...in his delirium...I can’t make out...but he seems to be calling out...my mother’s name...and then...Jennie...too. He’s become obsessive...as though bearing a guilt...” (*DT* 57). In fact, guilt has made him to live a miserable life.

The playwright has ingeniously entwined the inner world of man with the external appearance of the physical expression to authentically reveal the business of the busy invisible world of human mind. In *The Miracle Seed*, an

agrarian family goes through the hardest trial of a drought. Ram, the head of this affected family, had being severely bogged down with relief-less tribulations. Nature's relentless drought had continued for two years and everything around is "dry and dying, the seed not catching the rain" (TMS 9).

The dramatist has externalized the internal storm of Ram through his restless movements. The inner dialogue comes out manifestly when he moves about with "his hands clutching and unclutching, pacing around, looking at the land, and at the clear blue cloudless sunny sky" (Ibid). He has "Turned the soil over and over again" (Ibidem) without being able to sow the seed. This is too terrible because lack of rain for two seasons has completely disabled the seed from germination. The author has portrayed him moving hither thither to indicate the intensity of worry and anxiety in him. Labour gone waste and energy spent for no fruition have kept him questioning the merciless force of nature.

The dramatist has tactically made this affected person to expose his extreme inner agony when he allows him "go(es) over to the wooden furrow, clutches it familiarly and hard...and, clutching tighter the hoe" (Ibidem). The overdose of inner pain has clouded his mind from getting convinced with Laxman's news about the Government's proposal of bringing about Green revolution. He becomes stubborn and a dunce rather than being credulous to the impressive offer of a hopeful future. The dramatist is a realist and, therefore, does not irrationally sympathize the suffering people, like Ram, by offering them a *deus machina* like redemption.

The playwright has cognized that people can become either credulous or obstinate in the heat of Nature's disaster like drought. Ram is in a fix and could not steer clear his conscience because to believe or not has being confounded with his rootedness in the traditional agricultural profession. The

grave situation of drought has planted fear and anxiety in this agrarian family, juxtaposed with the beckoning of an imminent hunger and a bleak future. These trying problems have intensified their angst to the point of an irresolvable fret. The climax of Ram's confusion and anger have led him to "let out a yell of anger and pain, and slaps his nephew who stands stock-still" (30). The dramatist has brought forth a vivid message, through this, that extreme trials and tribulations in life make a person to store the pain and suffering in the mind and heart until it pushes its way out through an outburst of anger at any slightest provocation.

Currimbhoy is acutely aware of psycho-somatic relations and firmly believes that human beings, deeply affected by inner conflict, are prone to suffer the impact of it physically. Andrew becomes severely ill because of his intense mental conflict and lack of easeful heart. His search for exoneration from the influence of black magic and excessive fear of it has made him suffer a high fever. There is also the fear of Monsoon's revenge on him due to the influence of Grandmother's black magic on her (*MON* 98). This fear and anxiety have sunk deep into his conscience and he feels all the more insecure. He continues to panic about the influence of Grandmother's black magic and this has aggravated his mental condition. Therefore, he behaves weirdly like Manubhi and even begins to hear the tapping sound of Grandmother's walking stick, though she is dead:

Dr. Juan : Is something disturbing you Andrew?

Andrew : (*Preoccupied with the sound*) Huh?

DR. Juan: This house should be relaxing to you, Andrew. Instead I find that over the years you have become more and more tense...more and more unpredictable...less and less communicative.

Andrew : (*Absently*) I have become ... more and more ... communicative ... with myself.

DR. Juan: Tell me, Andrew, are you still thinking of...of this situation in terms of an...an experiment, in terms of ...of real living? You know what I mean.

Andrew : (*Looking at Juan, his preoccupation broken*) No, I know what you mean, Juan. How can you separate what you call as experiment...from real living? They're one and the same (97-98).

Andrew is obsessed with the preoccupation of his own thought and, therefore, he becomes more and more communicative with himself and less and less predictable. When this obsession has reached the pinnacle of no return, his physique begins to feel the pang of it by experiencing physical illnesses. Finally, he is bogged down with "high fever", which is "getting worse" and he begins to talk in "delirium" which "doesn't make much sense" (103).

The author has made it clear, through the worsening condition of Andrew, that internal conflict can impact physical body and the blow on the physical body depends on the degree of this conflict. Big Mac gets "the second heart attack" (*DT 57*) after his wife, Jennie, has left for Scotland. He is torn between Jennie and Didi's mother and, this love entanglement has tortured him, both physically and emotionally. The statement, "calling out...my mother's name...and then...Jennie...too" (57), reveals that his mind is boggling with the confounding thoughts between the two ladies. He feared to decide courageously and choose one from between the two ladies. So, he has incurred the consequence of indecision and hoaxing the two ladies by suffering a heart attack and fever.

Currimbhoy has allowed his characters to remain silent but gives them action to show that something unpleasant is going on inside of them. Sam's extreme anger is exposed through his facial expression. At Al's attempt to rape Razia, in order to prove his superiority, Sam's countenance could not belie his inner storm: "his face coolly ferocious, a giant of a man, his hands clutching and unclutching, immense physical force and anger building within" (*THO* 50).

The dramatist has confidently measured out his perception of the ill effects of being bogged down with confusion. Psycho-somatic relation in Sam is subtly revealed, though the fact of his fever seems to be the result of an excessive physical exhaustion. He has been, all along, seeking for the revelation of the mystery of India. Dissatisfied with the search, in spite of his strenuous effort to the extent of hungering himself, his body starts responding negatively in the form of fever (42). He has even started hearing a voice telling him in the high heat of his fever, "...the hunger that goes with fasting, Sam...learn this now, stranger..." (43). The dramatist has used this technique, of externalizing the internal functioning, to depict the harmful impact of unsolved inner conflict on the physical body.

3.6. Physical inertia: the effect of an extreme perplexity

Currimbhoy has a piercing sense of observation and a precise as well as subtle versatility in unfolding the reason of human silence. He has shown that silence in a person has different causes and can also convey different meanings. Even staring point blank is suggestive of an inner dialogue. Analyzing the character of Tony, in *The Doldrummer*, P. Bayapa Reddy has opined that "when the playwright wants to show low spirits which settle on Tony, he does not give him much speech" (Reddy 64). The more Tony gets disturbed internally, the more he becomes silent and externally immobile. The

dramatist has employed this technique to suggestively portray the high degree of inner turbulence in Tony. The low spirit in Tony is because of an inner warfare that is trying to outshine one another and this has bogged him down. Such a battle continues to drift him about because his desires and the external experiences have failed to meet congruently. This dissonance has made him to be unstable in his relationships and dealings. He sings merrily in the past but alters his way of life as he gets to know Rita more. The effects of confusion and heartache have benumbed him and consumed his ability of rational judgment. This is clearly manifested when he plays the guitar near the tree and stares point blank at “the sky with his hands folded behind his head. He has a faraway look, as though he sees and hears nothing, but is living in a world of his own” (*DD* 64). He even becomes immobile during the most crucial time of the need of aggression. When he encounters Rita with the fat and bald man, he stands like a statue and fails to act even at the command of Rita, his fiancée:

F & B Man : What are you doing here anyway?

Rita : I give him “paying guest” accommodation.

F & B Man: Him? You don’t need any P.G., honey. Hope he does not annoy you or anything. Tell me if he does and I’ll put him straight.

Rita : Why don’t you ask him?

F & B Man: Look here now, Antony. I hope you don’t bother this young lady. I have a special...er...interest in her. You understand!

Rita : He understands. He understands very well. I thought he didn’t, but he does.

F & B Man: Oh he does, does he? Does he help out too?

Rita : (*High pitched, neurotic tone*) Why didn't you speak out, Tony. The gentleman asked you a question. He wants to know if you help me in procuring friends like your friend here. Say something, Tony. For God's sake, say something! (*She is crying now*) If you can't speak, take your guitar and smash it on his fat face...and I'll buy you a thousand more...

(*Tony stands like a helpless animal, crying*) (57).

Tony's sheer inability to act, at critical moments, speaks of his inner fragility that can be easily overpowered by any painful experience. This fragility has rendered him to become immobile in the face of severe crisis and critical challenges. When Joe confronts him about his lukewarm response to Rita's affectionate love and sacrifice by selling her flesh for his sake, "Tony almost doubles up covering his face. His body goes through mute convulsions, in the agony of one who feels but cannot speak" (54). This is an evident proof of the disquieting inner pain that has benumbed him. Inner turbulence has shuttered his speech, cowardice has fettered his nerves and the needed courage, to counter the crisis, has taken the repugnant form of remorse. Apparently, it looks as though, he is conscious of Rita's fettering love, which is seen in the following altercation:

Joe : We know you haven't worked for a year of Sundays.

Tony: (*Ignoring Joe's remark and now exhibiting the watch proudly*) It's lovely, isn't it. 17 jewels. All-proof. Why I once forgot to take it off when going for a bath...

Joe : (*Interrupts*) You haven't worked for a year of Sundays.

Tony: (*Aggressive*) So I haven't worked for a year of Sundays. So I haven't worked for a year of Sundays. What's it to you, huh? What's it to you?

Joe : (*Shrugs his shoulders*) Nothing. That's if Rita doesn't mind.

Tony: (*Angrily*) Why should Rita mind it? What right has she to mind! After all, I'm not married to her!

Rita : (*Softly*) But I don't mind Tony darling. I really don't.

Tony: (*Still sulking*) Just because she gives me board and lodging doesn't mean I should work for it. What do you expect me to do? Sweep the floor and wash her lingerie? (16-17).

The author has depicted that instability and rootless-ness have made Tony feel remorseful at one point of time and even feels fettered at another moment. His inclination to Rita and love for gifts has chained him with an irresolvable confusion. It is not out of his love for Liza but for the silly reason of being overpowered by the enticement of her gifts and presents that he has disappeared from the world of Rita.

The playwright has deftly handled the psychological dilemma of his characters and presented the precise cause of it by gradually unfolding it layer by layer. Mental tortures, incurred by the characters, are the accumulated effects of their actions. Tony is aware of what is happening around him but has no courage to face it. He has revealed, in the moment of consciousness, about his own inability to act courageously saying, "I got to drink myself drunk to face the ordeal every time" (73). Been tortured mentally, divided emotionally and obsessed sensuously, he could neither be aggressive nor argue rationally. Therefore, he gets easily thumped and inert in the face of trials and tribulations.

3.7. Evasive and Suppressive Behaviour

There are certain cases where people become evasive of internal pain and burden and, try to suppress it. The author has portrayed that suppression of inner conflict is perilous and, sooner or later, the suppressed feelings, emotions or thoughts will find its way out of the heart and mind of a person. According to him, some people take recourse to physical pleasures as surrogates to suppress the inner pain. While some people get indulged in sadistically inflicting pain on others, some others become tyrannical and even unpredictable by getting lost in their fantastical world.

Manubhai has tried hard to suppress the internally conflicting pain by excessively indulging in wine, smoking, reading and idly lying on the couch. His Astrologer has rightly warned him to “go slow on food, wine” and “excesses of his nature” (MLA 16). Consciously or unconsciously, Manubhai has described his own mind as “the schizophrenic mind” (11) and even wants to “change the fortune to suit his (your) needs” (15) when his desired longings have failed to meet a successful end. He delights himself in sadistically humiliating the Vice Chancellor and Minister of Social Welfare and, “goes through the cathartic experience of witnessing in absentia, in the same manner as the V.C.’s *gherao*, the humiliation of the Minister” (24). This baddie has shown no sign of remorse because his nature is akin to the brutishness of animals which are driven by their instincts alone. He has being debased into such a low due to the extreme affectation of incongruity between what he desires and what he has experienced. Therefore, he even fights tooth and nail to prevaricate all that is painful and those that reminds him of his evil deeds. His wife and son have a hard time with him due to his diabolic nature and weird personality. He has treated his wife tyrannically, to the extent of using

the abusive words like “shut up, woman!” and “shut up, you bitch or I’ll smash your teeth!” (24).

The dramatist has delved deeper into the conscience of man by critically portraying the touchy character of Ram, in *The Miracle Seed*. While trying to suppress his irresolvable inner pain, Ram becomes very touchy that any slightest provocation invites his tyranny. Like Manubhai, he also becomes irrational while trying to contain his extreme worry and anxiety. His mind is confounded because of a meager ray of hope for survival due to two seasons without rain (*TMS* 9). He bursts out at any person; even the grandfather of his home is not spared from being shouted at. When grandpa has gone to see if there is anything in the kitchen, Ram has remarked angrily, “Can’t he think of anything except food?” (14). The person who deserves an utmost respect and honour in the family has received the harshest shout from Ram, who is terribly infected with mental agony:

Savitri: The...the cow. It’s...dy...dying. (*They get up. Go to another side of the house, near the stable, where one imagines the cow lying, and hear its painful dying breath*)

Ram : (*His teeth clenched*) I could see it coming...day after day. He had become a shadow of himself. (*Old man comes doddering up*)

Grandfather: That’s going to happen to us.

Ram : (*Angrily*) Shut up, old man! And go away! (*Old man hobbles away, mumbling*) (27).

It is odd for Ram to ill treat his father with such words of disrespect but the situation has overwhelmed him and this has affected his mood and mental state. Hunger and fear for imminent death have disillusioned him and,

therefore, he could not steer clear his mind to see things obviously. This confused mind cannot even decide on what to do with his dead cow, the one that has helped him all through its life until death:

Laxman: Government's planning on setting up a cattle farm.

Ram : (*Angrily again*) Planning! Planning!

Laxman: It will make the difference to a lot of farmers.

Ram : I'm not concerned with others! I'm concerned with me, my family, my cow! And I'm concerned with it now! Now that my cow is dying!

Laxman: Sorry, Manu, there is nothing you can do about it. There is a slaughter-house not far away. I'll dispose of it.

Ram : (*Stubbornly*) No. (*Malti comes, having heard the last bit of the conversation*)

Malti : (*Calm, composed*) Yes (*Ram turns around to look at her*) There's no sense in waiting to see it die hour after hour. Laxman's right. It has to be disposed of.

Ram : (*The fury still inside*) He, not it! He! He with whom I have tilled the soil season after season. He with whom I've planted seed year after year, toiled with the same yoke, wiped our sweats with the same cloth. He, with whom I shall never reap the harvest again. Take him to the slaughter house if you wish. I will not be part of it (*He gets up and goes. Malti looks at Laxman and nods her head*) (27-28).

This inconsolable sadness, coupled with the heavy weight of fear and anxiety due to drought, has misted up his mind and this has made him to

behave irrationally. He has being bogged down with tragedies one after the other. Therefore, the conflicting experiences he has warred with are beyond his tolerance and this oppressing anxiety has maddened him to the point of almost losing his sanity.

Currimbhoy has strongly asserted that men have a propensity to become irrational. It is also prpbable that when the mind is fogged up it can render a person's mind inoperative to take logical and wise decisions. Manubhai, in the political field, and Ram, in the agricultural field, are haunted by their fear for the future. They taunt their wives for praying to their gods and least bother about the need of a harmonious co-existence with their family members because their minds are preoccupied with their own problems. The dramatist has endeavoured to bring home the message, through Ram and Manubhai, that when things do not yield the desired results, man tends to get "locked in the death-struggle" (*MLA* 37). He has even rationalized that in the locked up struggle, "part of us (you) dies everyday...The part we (you) want to purge out of our (your) system...our (your) essential life" (36). Man's immunity to physical illness weakens and the essential sanity depletes with the gradual shedding of the essential vitality and vigour of life.

3.8. Gripping Compulsion

The playwright has assiduously delineated the spellbound commpulsion in man and portrayed the dumbfounding ill effects of humanity using another person as a subject. He has scrutinized the senseless endeavour of man using human beings as experimental tools and surmised that compulsive attachment to this experimentation can make a person insane. He has also explored that this insanity in man can lead a person from one crime to another without any feeling of guilt. The author believes that this outcome is induced by man's failure to rationally asses the intent of his action.

He has also brought home the notion that a person becomes suspicious and insecure if he or she is obsessed with a strong possessive attitude. Tuan Andrew is a psychopathic; he could not bear to live with both Grandma and Monsoon in order to fulfill his objective. In his internal fight between choices, he chooses Monsoon to live and sacrifice Grandma, who appears to stifle him from achieving his end. He takes an extreme step, in his severe inner conflict, of killing the grandmother by creating a gaping hole on the veranda (*MON* 52), through which Grandma disappears into the abyss of the dark sea (55) and, confines Monsoon and the child within the four walls of his house. His rationale shows a seemingly logical design, which is depicted in the following argument:

Dr. Juan: My dear fellow, you can't keep her locked up there all the time.

Andrew: Why not? Besides, she's not locked up, as you call it. She has the freedom of the house.

Dr. Juan: But the wall, Andrew! The wall!

Andrew: That's meant to keep others out more than to keep her in.

Dr. Juan: Is that why you haven't ever invited me?

Andrew: I'm sorry, Juan. I didn't mean you.

Dr. Juan: It's quite preposterous, Andrew. I suppose you did it because of the unfortunate incident to the child. But you can't let that throw you off balance, my dear friend. The child...the child...needs the company of others... (66).

The above dialogue shows that Andrew's argument seems rationally wise but it belies his mental affectation. He has desired the isolation of Monsoon, so that she does not get affected by the influence of society but the

girl needs the company of others to grow up as a social being. The fact of secluding her and keeping her in a cloistered house only divulges Andrew's mental imbalance, as Dr. Juan has suggested.

Andrew feels guiltless in whatever diabolic actions he has taken recourse to. His initial conflict is between Monsoon and Grandma but this has been overtaken by his obsession with the fear of black magic. He has a presumptive fear about Monsoon being overpowered by the black magic of Grandmother and this has aggravated his fear and disoriented his mind. Moreover, an unspoken fear of the influence of black magic on him has disturbed his conscience. This was confirmed by Dr. Juan:

Dr. Juan: (*Half-joking, half-serious*) Local rumour has it that Grandma threw a spell over you.

Andrew: Oh?

Dr. Juan: *They* say in the interior...that there's only one way in which the spell can be broken...

Andrew: Yes?

Dr. Juan: It's quite preposterous, of course.

Andrew: What is it?

Dr. Juan: The same old superstition that the goodness of a child...a girl...her virtue can overcome the evil of the magic spell...

Andrew: (*His face hard as granite, showing no emotion*) ...that being ...?

Dr. Juan: ...that being that ... Monsoon conceive from you...?

(Deep, deep, silence; Andrew's reactions unknown; he's frozen like a statue, transfigured mystically and momentarily into another world; Juan watching; now worried...and regretful for having said it. Distant sound of tapping-Andrew's fingers tapping regularly on the table. The tapping sound grows, outside of Andrew's tapping. At first Andrew doesn't realize that the sound is independent of his own tapping finger, until suddenly it is obvious that the "tap" "tap" can be heard by others too. He looks around wildly in the darkness, and gradually, emerging from the darkness, is the form of an old woman tapping a stick to support himself while walking. Andrew clutches on to the table, spilling the drink, his eyes opening wide...) (67-68).

Andrew's restlessness, at the revelation of Dr. Juan, is a confirmation of his disturbed mental state. Besides, his hearing the tapping sound and looking around wildly in the darkness have ascertained the seriousness of his inner turbulence. He, himself, has substantiated this point by confiding his hidden storm to Dr. Juan:

(Smiling slightly) Yes, Juan, even I. But that's what makes it so challenging, living with her alone. Sometimes, my friend, I feel a subconscious struggle, or rather...or...rather I feel a struggle in my subconscious...which tires and drains me... (His finger is tapping the table again)...without my quite knowing why... (67).

The befalling of Andrew, due to the effect of his extended subconscious struggle, is largely facilitated by his lack of courageously deciding against "experimenting on the innocent child" (94).

Currimbhoy has shown his disfavor and opposition against the usage of human beings as specimens, like Guinea Pigs, by man for a scientific experimentation and considers this kind of experimentation as crazy. Andrew has being rebuked and reproached for his inhuman treatment of Monsoon but he gives a deaf ear to all this oppositions. His passive reaction to Dr. Juan's rebuke shows that something is amiss in his conscience:

Dr. Juan: It would take a lot imagination ... a staggering lot of imagination. Ordinarily I suppose it would be quite harmless, but in this case...

Andrew: (*His eyes cold and hard*) Yes, go on, doctor...

Dr. Juan: ...there is the girl to be thought of...

Andrew : ...ah...

Dr. Juan: ...a girl without parents...or grandmother...being brought up alone...absolutely alone...

Andrew: I'm listening, doctor...

Dr. Juan: Andrew, I'm talking to you as a friend, now. A friend who's also much older than you. Give it up, Andrew. Give up this crazy experiment...for the sake of the child if not for your own sake

Andrew: (*Looks at Juan steely, calls out*) Monsoon, Monsoon. (*Dr. Juan appears disconcerted. He begins to look around with a sense of discomfort not unmixed with an immense amount of curiosity*) You want to see her, don't you, Juan? (*Juan opens his mouth, then closes it*) Why didn't you say so earlier; it would have been much

simpler...than preaching to me... (*Juan reddens*)... (93-94).

Andrew becomes aggressive in his defense of the projected plan and adamantly proceeds ahead to reach his targeted end. He is in the tight grip of his impulse and has conveniently brushed aside Dr. Juan's candid pleas. In fact, he has been hurt sentimentally because his enthusiastic experimentation on Monsoon has been disapproved by his friend. Andrew's cold glance and hard look at Dr. Juan shows his impudent attitude and this also reveals his stubborn attachment to the experimentation. Besides, Dr. Juan's plea is in dissonance with his desires and, therefore, he becomes cynical and inconsiderate to his faithful friend, who was truly interested in his well being:

Andrew: (*Holds up his hand to interrupt Juan*) Monsoon... (*He takes the key out from his pockets, the key with which he opened the door to the wall, and throws it on the table with a clatter*)...Put the key back in the usual place, will you, please? (*Monsoon looks down at the key, slowly picks it up, and leaves. A very, very long moment of silence*) ...The dungeon key, doctor, is with the prisoner, if you would prefer to think of it that way...It's become a habit with her...to take the key whenever I return from outside...and keep it safely...so that *no one* else may come *in* from *outside*...of which *you* have been the sole exception, in all these years...to have shared *our* hospitality. (*Juan's shoulders begin to droop, and he hangs his head down. Andrew gives him a friendly pat on his back*) ...Oh, come on, Juan, no need to feel so depressed. You should feel happy to see so healthy a girl.

...

...It was then that I had to assume different roles in her growing-up process; ...the gregariousness of a child...all that and more to ensure a normal growth... (95).

Dr. Juan's uneasiness is clearly seen in his drooping shoulder and head down and, these are proofs of his disapproval for Andrew's intention and deed. Ironically, Andrew's friendly pat is an ostentatious pat because his succeeding words are not as amiable as it sounds. It looks as though he nurtures a positive pride over his tedious upbringing of Monsoon but his deeds have disclosed the ulterior motive. Dr. Juan has called Andrew's project as a crazy experimentation and this shows that all is not well with him. It is also lucidly perceivable that fear has gripped Andrew tightly and he impetuously speaks out to unjustifiably impress his friend, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to hush him from speaking out further disapprovals. The startling thing about Andrew is that he does not regret about his subjection of Monsoon as a specimen.

The dramatist has cognized that Andrew's mental breakdown is due to his extreme act of handling himself and it is obviously perceivable that he is against such human experimentation. The repercussion of inhuman actions, like murder and handling of human beings as an object for achieving an inhuman selfish result, will obviously incur mental disorientation when the desired result does not come up as planned at an expected time. It is also vividly seen that Andrew's high fever was the direct response of his excessive and heavy burden of mental tension.

The playwright digs deeper into the mental imbalance of human beings; of those who resort to solitude and ego-centric actions. He has synthesized that there is a possibility of such persons becoming destroyers of life. Tuan

Andrew could have redeemed himself from being mentally tortured, were he to respect the dignity and humanity of another person. His unabated search for solution to his fear and mental torture has further worsened the already existing problem. His search for solution to the grave state of his mental dissatisfaction has led him to have sex with Monsoon, the object of his experiment and Nooroo, a virgin whom he has baptized. The former has failed to cure and exonerate him from his obsessive fear, though she has conceived a girl child for him, because she has already been raped by a syphilitic man prior to conceiving from Andrew (*MON* 50) and the latter, though a virgin when he has an intercourse with her, still fails to heal him of his illness because of an obscure reason or because of his perverted faith.

The author has intended to put across the message clearly that Andrew's affected mind has led him to nurture an irrational belief and this rootless superstition could not uproot his psychological affectation. The ultimate result of all this is that he lands up in a situation of deep psychological unsteadiness. This mental unsteadiness has even made him to wait for an opportune time to fall on his own daughter when she grows up. Monsoon has perceived the motive of her husband and smothers the child before he could commit this heinous crime and, finally, she has to pay the price of been strangled by her husband (148) for redeeming the child from the devilish gripping intention of her husband.

Prema, like Andrew, is fettered with a gripping impulse; an inextinguishable desire to experiment on the treatment of Bhima's mental illness and adamantly holds the notion that a live demonstration can unfetter her client from his obsession with the character ideal of the mythological persona. She becomes unusually interested in her client and inordinately attached to her plan without seriously considering its repercussion. Her inner

conflict ensues from this obstinacy and, like Andrew, she refuses to yield to the persuasion of Dr. Dilip and the Guru because of her stubborn desire to fulfill the targeted project. It is pathetic that she herself becomes insane by identifying herself fully with her client. She says, “The desperation grew. Identification. I searched for it” (*TDD* 81). She could not let loose herself from the search of her identification with Draupadi, which is revealed through her own words: “I found myself slipping into the terrifying abyss of darkness...slipping, slipping without being able to hold myself back” (80). Like Tuan Andrew, she has even started hearing the voice which others do not hear. In her intensifying insanity, she utters, “Listen! He calls out to me again. Listen. Listen. Hush” and her lips moved, but the audience does not know who has called out the name (82).

The author has affirmatively portrays that search for identification with a fantastic persona can destroy a person psycho-somatically. Bhima gets destroyed irretrievably because of his irrational endeavour to identify himself with his character ideal. The following dialogue has revealed the affinity between the doctor and her patient and the dampening process of Bhima:

Prema: I...I...don't know. The idea of any...institution...conjures up different meanings for him. He does not think of things...separately, if you know what I mean, but together. Similarity of experiences...becomes one...without any time-bar. It's...it's difficult to explain. (*Her voice growing in intensity and involvement*) It...it wouldn't normally matter, but with Bhima, it's different. He has...a very forceful personality. The analysis of his case...has to be conducted with great care. Because...because he cannot speak, the study must go deeper...on a personalized

basis...until it becomes a living experience both for doctor and patient.

Guru : Your letter...showed some anxiety. What did it mean?

Prema: (*Does not give an immediate reply*) Do sit down, please.

(*She returns to her table*) Bhima's condition is...precarious. (*Shakuntala gets up with a slight cry, but Prema waves her to sit down*) No, I don't mean precarious in the normal sense of the term. I mean...that unless we do something soon...he is likely to lapse into a state of permanent insanity...

...

He's been under my observation for some time now. (*She glances at Shakuntala*) ...

(*She looks towards the Guru*) He is ever trying to break away from this world into one of complete identification with his character-ideal. (*She has unconsciously picked up a piece of string from the table and is pulling and twisting at it with her fingers*) The danger...grows. A slow transition would be fatal. We must bring about...a drastic turn-around. Employ... (*She is now virtually talking to herself*)...the same media that set in his mental lapse...Duryodhana's slaughter! (57-63).

Prema's mental state is externalized through the tonality of her voice and physical action. The growing intensity of her voice and getting involved in her speech are a justifiable proof of her anxiety. Besides, glancing at Shakuntala, prior to looking at the Guru, as she shares the exigency of retrieving the sanity of Bhima, has revealed her preconceived plan of utilizing

Shakuntala to achieve her desired end. Further, the grave state of her inner conflict is seen in the unconscious pulling and twisting of the string with her fingers. On the other hand, Bhima's endeavour to identify himself with his character ideal has made his mental condition quite precarious. Prema has facilitated this downward degradation of her client's mind, through her unconscious blunder of consciously planning to execute a life parody for his cure and this blunder has landed her up into the same world of Bhima, instead of curing him. She has even murdered Shakuntala for the sake of her client and becomes a destroyer instead of a savior.

The dramatist has seriously viewed these bunch of pseudo saviours who have taken recourse to their selfish designs rather than an altruistic effort of reviving lives. He has deftly walked into their conscience and reeled out, step by step, the destructive procedures adopted by these characters. He has also lain bare to the world that there are Andrews and Premas in this world and also forewarns those people who are prone to take recourse to such egoistic strategies.

Currimbhoy has a deep knowledge of Hindu philosophy and has incorporated the same into his writing of the plays. This has empowered him to look into the problem of attachment to human desires. He has cognized that attachment to physical desires causes psychological disturbances and, therefore, propagates that "we must be detached" (*TDD* 65) from these physical factors. In *An Experiment with Truth*, he has brought forth the message of destructive forces of attachment to physical desires. Gandhiji, getting up from his bed with his hand around the neck of Manu, feels the sensation of a girl's touch and distractedly speaks to himself, "I realize now...the dream...that my great struggle...for chastity...isn't over yet. And that my experiments...to prove my detachment...will have to be... bolder"

(AEWT 27). He has been battling to master his sensuous desires and this endeavour has rendered his inner being to sit on the pins.

The Upanishad of Hindu philosophy has given clearly that a person has to be detached from the fruits of one's Karma, if he or she wants to live in peace and harmony with himself and others. The playwright has echoed this moral teaching in *The Doldrums*, in the words of Guru, who tells Prema that "we must all learn to be detached" (TDD 65). The Guru's intent is that Prema should not be attached to the fruit of her labour like Bhima, who wants to be great and even greater than Madhu the blind singer (45-46). This attachment to the fruits of labour, which is firmly planted on the floor of selfishness, has led Bhima to sever his tongue (46) and ultimately gets doomed into mental disorientation.

"The world fulfils itself through self-destruction" (OM 21), destruction of the mundane attachment. Svetaketu goes through an intense struggle to shed physical desires, in his gradual realization of Atman and to be one with Brahman, the Universal Being. There have being prodigious struggles in him to be completely detached from and to the attachment with his wife. In his search for the neutralization of desire or renunciation of *Maya*, it has dawned to him that "nurtured on human desire, the renouncement lay better afar than near" (36). He has also realized that while living on this earth, with the physical body, one should remember that "destinies are not laid out for us beforehand, that we should remain fatalistic" (21), but it is important to know that "Karma, the deeds! That's all matters..." (17). Nevertheless, it is also imperative to be noted that attachment to the fruits and ignoring the deeds generate problems because to live means to perform an action for survival. So, the dramatist has made it clear that "All pain comes from attachment, all

wrongs come from self-interest” (RF 29). As a result, actions in life are inevitable but the motive has to be altruistically selfless.

3.9. Pride and Jealousy

Currimbhoy believes that pride and jealousy are great destroyers of inner peace and sobriety. In *The Dumb Dancer*, Bhima is initially chiseled as an excellently innocent young boy but with the passage of time he becomes an intractably proud dancer. He has a normal beginning in life but time and the environment in which he grew up have implanted undesirable qualities in him:

Prema: What is your opinion on Bhima’s...illness? Do you think it can be cured? (*Both Prema and Shakuntala looks at the Guru who remain silent for a long while*)

Guru: (*Quietly*) I saw it coming for a long while...but there was nothing I could do to avert it... (*pause*) He was quite extraordinary, this young boy. Were I not obstructed by what we call sanity, I would willingly have been his disciple and not he mine. His immersion...his complete dedication...his supreme control over body movements...was one sphere of his perfection. The other, the more important, the more dangerous, was the complete abandon of the mind. I speak of it, in artistic terms, as a virtue. The limitless mind. Unfettered. The cosmic embrace. Universality. The sacrifice he made for his greatness...was inevitable (*TDD 64-65*).

The sacrifice Bhima has made was inevitable because of the complete abandonment of his mind and physical attachment to pride and worldly glory. Through this, the author has suggestively hinted that obstinacy, pride and jealousy have gradually destroyed this young and promising boy. The problem

of 'sanity', in Bhima, comes about due to his attachment to arrogance and defiance and, failure of rationalizing the purport of his desire and action. Therefore, he has failed to pay heed and comprehend the Guru's advice and admonition. His sole desire is to become greater than Madhu, the blind singer, who recites from *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* for the dancers. This indomitable ego has played the spoil sport by standing on the path of his dancing career and from living a sane life:

Guru : Well done, Bhima. (*Bhima looks flushed and triumphant. Madhu again in silent contemplation*)

Bhima: I was greater than he, was I not? Was I not? (*Guru does not reply*)

Bhima: (*Frowning angrily*) Well...was I not?

Guru : (*Quietly*) No.

Bhima: (*Angered*) No? But...but...did I make a single mistake?

Guru : No, but you're speaking of greatness now.

Bhima: He is not greater! I am greater! (*Guru does not reply. Bhima goes up to him*) Show me who is greater (44-45).

This desire to be 'greater' is a pure mundane fame and it is transcient. But Bhima's mind and heart remained unfulfilled until he is proved greater than Madhu. This has prepared the ground for his terrible downfall and irretrievable lunacy.

The playwright has opined that attachment to worldly glory and fame can make a person to sacrifice anything in life to achieve the intended goal. He has substantiated this point through the abnormal behaviour of Bhima and further validats that such indomitably obstinate mind can destroy and derange a person's good wisdom. Bhima has desired to be greater than Madhu and

wants his Guru to pronounce and treat him like wise. His mind is restless until it is gloriously satisfied with the achievement of worldly greatness and this has made him to misconceive Guru's advice and severs his tongue:

Guru : Let go of me!

Bhima: (*Still holding on desperately*) Don't you see? I must, Bhima must! This half-way world must disappear.

Guru : (*Shrugging his hand off...almost fearfully*) I don't know what you're saying. Get back to work. There can be no greatness...without sacrifice. Speech interferes for you. Blindness does not for him. Practice being the dumb dancer.

Bhima: (*Whispering to himself, and retreating, and contorting his body into an agonizing dumb dancer on the far side of the line, his movements slipping, then wakeful...*) ...the dumb dancer...the dumb...dancer... (*He recedes into the shadows...then suddenly a scream that turns hoarse...Bhima emerges again into the flickering light, dancing with the shock of one about to collapse. His eyes gleam with satanic victory, and blood gushes out from his mouth. He throws at the feet of his Guru...his own severed tongue*) (46).

The author has depicted, through the above episode, that Bhima's mad and inordinate desire for worldly glory and fame have destroyed his judging ability. This failure of assessing the right from wrong has led him to misconceive Guru's advice, when he tells him that 'there can be no greatness without sacrifice.' Therefore, his mad thirst for attaining mundane greatness

has made him to sever his tongue and, this is how, his insanity has driven him to the pinnacle of no return.

3.10. Disoriented Canalization of Sexual Urges

The playwright has extensively dwelled on the problem of man's struggle for appropriate conduit of expressing the sexual desire for physical lust. There is a direct hint in some of his plays that a morally upright person painfully struggles to contain the temptation of lust of the flesh. He has also depicted that those who are held hostage to this temptation seldom feel guilt conscience about their misconducts. Gandhiji, in *An Experiment with Truth*, is internally insecure due to an incessant failure of mastering his weaknesses. Therefore, he goes through the stormy fight against this frequent failure in containing an excessive desire for physical lust:

Gandhiji: My vows. You must be tired of them by now, Ba. (*She looks at him with quiet eyes*) But you understood why I took them didn't you? (*A slight weariness in her face shows no reply. Gandhi continues, almost as though justifying to himself*) It was the ultimate resolve. It stopped my wavering once and for all. I...I have always found...abstinence difficult...at least in the earliest stages.

Kasturba: Yes.

Gandhiji: ...Strong appetites...lust. I all came from there, Ba. Don't you see I had to overcome them? I had to.

Kasturba: Yes, Bapu, I know.

Gandhiji: You...you didn't mind my celibacy, did you, Ba. After all, I did force myself on you during our early

marriage...that's why I call it lust. But when I took the vow of chastity it became more than mere abstinence: it transcended all restraints (*AEWT* 23-24).

The actual problem of the protagonist has stemmed from the 'strong appetite...lust.' He has tasted it and the savour of it has percolated into his senses and the containment of it needs a herculean effort. Therefore, he has taken a vow to abstain from indulging in lustful acts by living a celibate life but this has caused greater troubles. Restraining his desires from yielding to lustful temptations was exhausting the vigour, the energy that is required to keep him morally upright. As a result, the conflict in him is splittingly painful that he has to keep taking vows after every falter, which is conveyed in the words 'my vows.' He has confirmed this inner conflict in the following words: "I realize now...the dream...that my great struggle...for chastity...isn't over yet" (27).

The author believes that unfaithful people, painfully infested with an inner conflict, tend to search for a surrogate to suppress its overwhelming infliction rather than resolving it. It seems all is well with the person who does not recognize his weaknesses and obsession. A person continues to indulge in the behavior or conduct that is socially and morally evil when the inner conflict is hidden in the Superego, as Sigmund Freud has termed. The playwright has critically viewed the behaviour of people indulging in illicit behavior, dishonouring the sanctity of married life. *The Dissident MLA* has portrayed the collision between Manubhai's diabolic interest in dissolving the Gujarat assembly and his honest conscience. So, his obtuse intent has induced him to indulge in evil things and this excessive indulgence has blurred him from recognizing his socially unacceptable acts. Therefore, he does not feel guilty in having sex with Sonal, his maid (*MLA*30), when his wife works

outside. This failure of realizing the impact of his evil behaviour has made him to continue indulging in his flirtatious deeds. He has even shamelessly asked for another sexual favour from Sonal when she decides to free herself from his clutches by going to Kantibhai's house:

Sonal: (*Picks up the bundle*) I'm going.

Manu: Before you go, I'd like you to know something... (*She looks*) Sonal, my dear, you were the loveliest, highest-assed woman I ever had and I shall miss you.

Sonal: Thank you.

Manu: How about a quickie before you go? I'll give it to you from the front this time.

Sonal: No.

Manu: (*Sighing*) Oh! Well, I guess all good things come to an end. Goodbye, love. Look after the old goat...the old man. If there's any trouble, call me.

Sonal: I will (*She leaves. He picks up the phone, dials*) (51-52).

Manubhai's mischievousness is conveyed through his shameless words and ironical dealings. The fact of addressing Sonal as 'love' and naming Kantibhai as 'the old goat' speak of his disconcerted mind. He dares not venture into his conscience to find out the cause of his internal mess and resolve it. Therefore, he gets attuned with physical pleasures to forget and suppress the hurtful and chaotic internal pain. The above episode has also plainly depicted his opportunism; he waits like a hungry lion, ready to devour the prey that comes by at any opportune moment.

The dramatist has portrayed that when the conflict is deeper and more severe, the internal pang is greater and the affected person's behavior tends to

become weird and less unpredictable. He has explored this type of mental conflict in Tuan Andrew and Daisy, in *Monsoon*. Tuan Andrew had baptized Nooroo, a virgin, at the persuasion of Daisy and makes her to confess her sins, so that she can start committing sin, the sin of indulging in fornication as a prostitute. Daisy's profession of prostitution has disoriented her wise conscience to judge rationally and rectify the distorted perception of the concept of baptism in Christian faith. Her fluency has made the already ill Andrew to yield to her rationale. Their Christian faith has being hazy and perverted but Andrew, the clergy, could not even diagnose the problem.

The severity of his internal conflict has truncated all his sense of reasoning. Therefore, he guiltlessly gets indulged in having sex with the one he has baptized, expecting to thrash down the influence of evil. Andrew is paradoxically obstinate and credulous. He is intractable in his decided mission of experimenting on the conditioned growth of Monsoon and he firmly believes in a distorted Christian faith of Immaculate Conception to outshine the evil influence of black magic in him. At the same time, he becomes credulous by flexibly believing in the irrational effect of black magic, in spite of his in depth knowledge of theology as a learned man. Therefore, he has to face the unpleasant and painful reward of his demeaning action through physical illness, inner pain and separation from the daughter he dearly loves and intently desires to posses.

3.11. Faking Self

The dramatist has made a candid study of people living in the superficial world of fantasy and presents that failure to accept one's natural age and physique can make a person to brood over the impossibilities. He has also scrutinized that snobbishness can destroy a person's inner peace and by effectively utilizing the stream of consciousness technique, he has exposed the

destructive effects of refusal to accept oneself as it is. Jennie, a western lady in India, has brooded over the loss of her past glory as a fashion icon. She could not maturely relate with her physical change, as her age demands of her. As a matter of fact, she constantly gets locked up in the cocoon of her own world and fails to communicate with her surroundings. Feelings of loneliness and alienation have bogged her down. Ironically, she persists that she does not regret about her waning beauty and ageing, but her words have betrayed all this pretenses because things of her young age, as a model, constantly knocks at the door of her conscience (*DT 22*). The following dialogue speaks volumes about Jennie, who broods over her lost past:

Jennie: (*Mac's wife*) We really should pull ourselves up, shouldn't we? I mean...everything seems to be...fading. Couldn't we bring some life to this club?

Sally : (*Hugh's wife*) It takes a log of *energy*, my dear. And when I see the children growing, I think...I'm not as young as I used to be... (*Then cutting herself short*) You were a model at one time, weren't you, Jen?

Jennie: (*Lays down the cake she was about to eat, looking at herself in the glass; passively*) Could make it again...could make it again. Not too late. I keep saying, not too late yet (13).

The assertion that she 'could make it again' and reinvigorate the lost beauty and energy seemingly sounds like a positive determination but this is eschewed by her previous statement, 'everything seems to be fading'. Her upbeat notes are only an irony and this has further laid bare the regret she has nurtured all along her ageing days. Therefore, she has to experience the thunder storm of a clash between her true self and the faking self.

Sally is another lady who clamours internally for the bygone days. The above dialogue has clearly divulged her to be sorry for ageing physically. The very fact that she is not younger, as she was, shows her deep regret. She suffers from the psychological weakness of comparison. She compares herself with the children and regrets for not being younger like them. This sense of loss has precipitated her inner ease. She does not want to explicitly expose her regret about the loss of youthful beauty and vigour and, through this act, her faking self is subtly depicted.

The dramatist has desired to show that brooding over the irretrievable does more harm than not. Faking the true self renders a person to be in the whirlpool of insecurity and anxiety. It also makes a person to be stagnant and live an unproductive life, apart from experiencing an untold mental torture.

3.12. Pugnacious battle against change

Currimbhoy has shown that pugnacious attitude of opposing the change of time invites mental and emotional restlessness. Nienke Hinton has said in her discussion of *Inner Conflict* that “A character's inner conflict is not just being in two minds about something, not just being torn between obvious incompatibles but is about being in a new situation where old attitudes and habits war with and hinder the need for change” (Nienke <<http://nienkehilton.blogspot.com>>). *Inquilab* has explored the feud between the ideologies of capitalism and freedom of self determination. Jain, the landlord, has held on to his traditional belief of owning the land, called “an order of vested interests” (*IQ* 18), and refuses to change the system in keeping with the order of the day. This is in direct confrontation with the new mentality of liberalism and intellectualism of the contemporary age. Therefore, his selfish interest is at loggerheads with the fear of an imminent

possibility of dethroning him as the landlord and, yet he does not want to accept the change of time, which is conveyed in his altercation with Amar:

Amar: (*Standing up, spilling the food, in anger*) Now, you look here, old man. I've had my fill of you. Yes, I'm one of those, and I'm, here to stay. Like your dirty landless underprivileged labourers, who are also your friend's sons by your own definition...

Prof.: Amar!

Amar: No, Baba, let me have my say. And I meant it for his good, whether he believes me or not. Time's changing. Jain-ji, time's changing. And you'll be swept with the change unless you change too. Listen, listen to me. It's no longer a question of distributing surplus land. You've flaunted that law, laws that well-intentioned men like my father made. It's too late now... (*With deadly earnest*) We'll grab the land, old man, because the young like me are impatient and hungry. Then there'll be no distinction between the good and the bad landlord, because being landlord is bad enough! (*Jain gets up in anger*)

Jain : Enough!

Amar: (*Measuring his anger*) That's what I say! Enough! You have enough land! Don't go putting it in your brother's and sisters' and dog's names. Don't go on having captive labour through compulsion or reward. The land belongs to the tiller.

Jain : (*Quivering with anger*) It belongs to me! Me! Me! My father,
my grandfather, my son, my grandson! No one's going to
grab it from me! ...
... (19).

Time is changing and unless Jain changes, he will be swept away with the change of time. Amar's words are greatly provocative because they are diametrically opposite to Jain's interests. As a result, Jain has quivered with anger when Amar has alleged that he has been grabbing the land and putting it in his brothers, sisters and dog's names. His emotional outburst is expected and it befittingly as well as congruently allies with his indolent mind. This confrontation has left Jain's mind and heart in retaliatory mood and, as a result, he goes through a stormy nightmare due to fear for Naxalite students.

The dramatist believes in the forward flow of time and advancement of human age. With this belief as the search light, he has explored the arrogance of people who rebel against the inevitability of waning beauty and old age. Jennie's greatest difficulty in accepting the change of time is that she and her husband could no more be attractive and vigorous, as they were when they first got married. This is so because they dart away from the inevitability of passing time and become evasive to the concrete physical changes. Like Jain in *Inquilab*, BigMac, in the *Darjeeling Tea?*, has also opposed the unavoidable flow of time and its impact of bringing about changes in life:

Mac : The...the garden depends upon me. The workers, the supervisors, the managers, all. We're the only large Agency House left. People I've worked with...have been with me...for the last forty years...ever since I was a boy.

Jennie: (*Anger bursting out*) And you've never grown up, Mac!
This garden became your hobby and you've lived it the

way you wanted to. Now things are changing and you're resisting it.

Mac : No, Jen. I...it's all...part of me. It goes deep. It's the only life I know.

Jennie: The only life you have too, Mac, mine included. Oh, Mac, Mac, I'm not going to quarrel with you. Mac, you're killing yourself here: one more of those "do's" and you've had it! Doc said you must take it easy. Retire, more for your sake than mine, Mac.

Mac : (*Slowly*) No (36).

Mac's slow tone of asserting a negative reply shows that he is attached to the garden and he vehemently resists any one's allurements; at the helm of which is the enthusiastic plea of his wife, to retire from it. The playwright has emphatically stated his view that it is not easy for an egoistic person, like BigMac, to change because egoism has become "part of him, it goes deep" (36).

The author has critically viewed the egoistic attitude and opines that people possessing such an attitude tend to defy the universally accepted code of conduct because they desire that every happening, in their lives, has to function and yield the result according to their whims and fancies. Manubhai's problem is to do with his conscience because he is too self-will and too egoistic (*MLA* 54). The dramatist has purportedly brought in the basic principles of natural law (39) that guides the moral behavior of humanity, since the civilization was ignited in the history of human society, to assess the odd behavior of mankind. Manubhai has opposed the universal civilized code of conduct because it does not serve his purpose. Currimbhoy has satirically looked at this lot of egoistic people, who ironically accept the change of time

but fail to heed and obey the civilized sense of morally acceptable code of conduct (48). This group of people has even strove hard to change the fortune to suit their desires (15), having been drowned in the heat of their internally disturbed states. As a result, they are “locked in the death struggle” with themselves (37).

Currimbhoy believes in the impact of the environment on the life and personality of a person and, therefore, he does not isolate his characters from its conditioning. The environment in which the characters are placed has got much to impact their struggles and hassles. He feels for each of his characters as they move on with the natural cycle of life; every one of them warring with their internal disturbances and incongruities. In an interview with Paul, he has revealed, “I am sympathetic to the human condition which is really fairly universal in any part of the world. But human condition exists in an environment. And environment always brings about its own pressures” (Paul 48). The condition he refers is the situation in which each human individual is placed. The pressure of the environment is not always congenial and suitably adaptable; it can become too heavy to withstand and this can bog down a person.

Andrew’s distorted understanding of the Christian faith was the cause of his ailing psychological imbalance and this has locked him up in the state of an irredeemable distraught. He had anthropomorphically applied the divine intervention of an Immaculate Conception story, of the Bible, into his own life, equating himself with God. This wrong understanding of Christian faith has been facilitated with the persuasive approach of Daisy, requesting him to baptize Nooroo, so that Nooroo can make a confession (*MON* 76) to initiate herself into the world of sin; the sin of prostitution (79). Andrew is desperately in need of something which will overpower the evil in him and

this is provided by Nooroo. Without any fear and guilt, he has invited the girl he has baptized to sleep with him:

Andrew: (*Taking the girl by the hand*) Come, child. Come behind the screen...that I may baptize you...

Daisy : (*More audible*) Warmer...warmer...

Andrew: (*Softly*) None in the room...except us... (*Daisy starts to withdraw from the room, closes the door, but the sound of her voice remains saying "warmer" "warmer" which becomes one, so to speak, with the tapping sound of the cane, as though both sounds were ringing incessantly through the mind of Andrew*) ...and as Daisy said it might just as well be me...as someone else... (*Voice distracted*) ...and I the Holy Ghost? ...in communion (*His hand going over his weary face*) ...There is a confusion in my mind, child, that overtakes me...which I must confess to you...in your ignorance and innocence...(Leading her behind screen door)...like...like sin that finds repentance...guilt that finds innocence...must my evil be overcome by your greater good...(Voice "warmer" "warmer" ...sound: "tap" "tap"...growing in volume as their embracing forms can be seen outlined through the screen) For you can be my shepherd...as I shall not want...so also may you baptize me to the harsh repentance of your religion... (*Voice: "Hot!" "Hot!" "You got it! You got it!" Sound of "Tap" "Tap" disappearing into a distant scream*) (81).

Andrew's mind is paradoxically wise and logical, clouded and boggled with confusion as he himself has acknowledged in the above dialogue. He has logically argued that just as sin can be absolved by repentance and guilt can be wiped out by innocence, his evil must be thrashed down by the greater good of the innocent child. Despite an impressive and logically sound argument, his action speaks of his clouded mind which is pictured in his hearing the simultaneous voice of Daisy and the tapping sound of Grandmother's stick. Besides, his act of sleeping with the virgin girl, he has just baptized, is a carnal sin and blasphemy and, according to the Christian faith, it cannot be easily given an absolution because he has committed this act consciously and wilfully. The playwright has sympathized Andrew, as much as he would sympathize any human being facing similar psychological dilemma, but his purported interest in enacting such a harrowing drama is to clearly put across the message that the situation, in which a person is placed, has an obvious impact.

Much like Andrew, Bhima too has plunged into an irredeemable state. His extreme lunatic psyche was initially conditioned by his ego (*TDD* 45-46) but this was facilitated to the fullest bloom by his psychiatrist. The moment he becomes a psychopathic, the ego gets itself hidden into the unconscious level, or the Superego which is termed by Sigmund Freud, of his mind and this has been aggravated by assuming into himself the character ideal of Bhima and, furthered the problem by Prema, his psychiatrist, who has enacted an alive act for his recovery (78).

The befalling and disaster of Bhima is a gradual process, as K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger has opined, that as a *Kathakali* dancer "who so completely identifies himself with the character of Bhima that it leads himself from one misapprehension to another, one disaster to another" (Iyenger 245). The

ultimate outcome of this psychological therapy and experimentation is that both, the client and psychiatrist, were doomed into the same ugliest state of being mentally disoriented (*TDD 79-81*).

Currimbhoy believes that intention and means employed by men for an action is as crucial as the result. He has explored the kind of means employed by men to meet the end and depicted that abnormal and extreme means yield undesirable results. Prema's worsening mental condition is a gradual process and the unpleasant outcome is largely born by her indolent and inflexible attitude. She could not extricate herself from getting damned because her mind was restless until she rested in the arms of Bhima, identified with him mentally and united with him physically. Dr. Dilip has reproached Prema, as she becomes hysterical in her attempt to get merged with Bhima:

Dilip : Prema! Prema! What are you saying! (*He slaps her violently*) You're hysterical. You don't know your...state of mind. (*Slaps her again*) Now! Come out of it! What's the truth? What happened. (*The slap shocks the edge of sanity back to her momentarily*)

Prema: (*Voice low, shaking, appealing, then far away again*) Who is sane, Dilip, and who is not? Remember, I tried, Dilip. Really tried. But it drew me closer instead of further. The vertigo...the vortex...I found myself slipping into the terrifying abyss of darkness...slipping, slipping without being able to hold myself back.

How much of the insane fantasy was true and how much was not. Sanity lay...as a fine dividing line. It seemed to move...and engulf me. No words can tell you what its

discovery means because it lies beyond...the point of no return.

...

They...the real ones...recognized it. It...interfered with the...rapport. I could never find myself, so tired...so tired was I. The desperation grew. Identification. I searched for it. But the other image of myself lay in his world...not mine (80-81).

Attachment to Bhima has rendered Dr. Prema to be lost in his insane world. Despite Dilip's effort in bringing her back to the world of sanity, she slips back to her dreamy world. This, in fact, has enabled her to externalize the actual state of her inner being. There is a clear revelation about her conscious attempt in endeavouring to experiment on Bhima's deranged mind but her attachment to him, rather than maintaining a wise relationship between a psychiatrist and the client, has made her to slip into the terrifying abyss of darkness without being able to hold herself back. The dramatist has clearly shown that desperation and frustration have made Prema to search for identification with her client. It is also evidently clear that Bhima has proved himself stronger than his psychiatrist and this has despaired Dr. Prema. She could not extricate herself from her client because half of her self lay in his world and this has rendered the situation all the more complicated. As a result, she gets damned into the insane world of her client. Therefore, there is no retrieval because she has reached the point of no return.

The playwright has affirmatively put forth that failure to perceive the unexpected and untargted results of one's actions or read the signs of undesirable occurrences in human behavior can be perilous. Prema has failed to read the befalling signs of her strategy and even the painful repercussion of her inordinate enthusiasm to the "eerie study of abnormal psychology"

(Iyenger 245). As she becomes over enthusiastic in her patient, she begins to experience a deeper internal disorder, of which she is unconscious but Dr. Dilip has noticed it and openly rebukes her:

Dilip : (*Calmly*) You're really a very peculiar woman. (*Prema looks at him to see whether he's being facetious or serious, but cannot make it out*)

Prema: (*Haughtily*) What do mean?

Dilip : (*Waving a hand vaguely*) Perhaps peculiar is not the right word ...

Prema: (*Interrupting*) It certainly is not!

Dilip : (*Absorbed in what he's saying*) What I mean is ... you're ...you're, not easy to understand.

Prema: Is that intended as a compliment?

Dilip : Yes and no. You seem as much engrossed in your patients as they seem to be in their own malady. I'm not so sure that's a good thing. It wears you down...makes you behave most unexpectedly... (70).

Dilip is wonderstruck at Prema's weird behavior and has found hard to actually understand her. He has subtly put across to her that she is getting disoriented by being engrossed in her patient. In fact, he has fallen short from terming her as a psychological patient. Her extraordinary involvement in her patient has made her to behave in a weird manner. The phrase in the above dialogue, 'behave most unexpectedly,' shows that she is mentally unsound and her sanity is questionable. It is also clear that Dilip's remark on her malady is indicative of her disoriented mind. By utilizing his scintillating intelligence, the author has creatively employed a psychologist, in his *The*

Dumb Dancer, to press the point that over enthusiasm in dealing with patients can invoke disaster and catastrophe.

3.13. Shallowness and Frivolity

The playwright believes that lack of seriousness and vigour has been rendering many modern youth off balance. J. Meserve and I. Meserve have rightly commented on Currimbhoy, when they said, “He has something to say, something he must say, a message to deliver, a vision to fulfill” (Meserve vi). This inner urge has propelled him to be acutely observative on the societal happenings of his time and has made him to speak out in an art form. There is no inhibition in him to step into any event of his choice, even controversial ones, and transform it into plays of theatrical excellence.

The author has deftly enacted the impact of modernization on Indian youth, in *The Doldrums*. Through his calm wisdom, Joe has exposed the state of youth who are thrown off balance and are unable to stand on their own feet to counter the challenges of changing times:

Rita : (*Anxious*) Be careful. There are a lot of prohibition squads around these days. (*Tony twangs the guitar and begins reciting...*)

Tony: Pro-hi-bi-tion. Pro-hi-bi-tion. ‘Twas...

Joe : (*Interrupts, taking out a pair of scissors from his pocket, and snips it round airily, calling out...*) Snip! Snip! Snip! Snip!

Tony: (*Starts again*) Pro-hi-bi-

Joe : (*Interrupts again*) Snip! Snip! Snip!

Tony: (*Angrily*) Say, what’s all this “Snip! Snip!” mean?

Joe : I'm the little man with the large pair of scissors. Kill-joy and kill-truth put together, and when I can't cut any more, I cut my own nose to spite my face. I'm the public that has no opinion, because I can't bring myself to care a damn. I'm...spineless, because it's easier to crawl around that way. Damn you! I'd like to spit in your eye... (*Then weakly*) only I don't salivate enough (*Giggles*). But I've got a pair of scissors...and with this little axe, I can lop off all the big shady trees in my Papa's garden (*DD 14-15*).

The message is very powerfully conveyed, in a light vein of playfulness, that spineless youth live their lives by floating in the air, without seriously considering the value of life. This lot of people search for an easy route to existence without minding to sweat and earn their bread. They dislike getting involved in social concerns; they only attracted to living a pleasurable and selfish life. This is the reason why Joe has uttered that he is the public that has no opinion and is spineless, who favours to crawl about without any struggles.

The playwright has suggestively brought about the actual drama that goes on in the inner world of easy going people and showed that pleasure loving people have a heavy share of unexplored inner pains and confusions. Joe has being going through the stormy world of fear and insecurity. Love, for him, is "not mathematical...it gets deeper and deeper, and love becomes no different from any other four-letter word" (13); the four-letter word may be lust or hate but it is clear that love for him is not different from lust. His mind is overcast and does not feel the obligation of abiding by the universal moral code of conduct:

Rita: (*Cynical now*) It would be simpler to receive cash, wouldn't it? And it would be simpler to procure strangers, wouldn't it? But no. We must play the game according to the rules. It has to be a friend and it has to be presents, whom are we fooling, Joe? Certainly not me or you. Do you think Tony will swallow it?

Joe : Tony won't object.

Rita: Then he won't love me. You can't love someone you don't respect.

Joe : (*Angrily*) Love! Respect! Love! Respect! What does it mean? I get *sick* bearing people talk about it all the time. And what does love have to do with respect anyway? There're the very opposite. You think of the world love like something from a fairy book, patented and germ free. Like it had to have respectability. Well, it's not. It's love that the whore dispenses around the street corner, and it's the most respectable that pay its price.

Rita : Joe, from hating you I'm beginning to hate myself (41).

Joe has also equated love with sensual pleasure that can be lured with money without any respect. This academic philosophy of life has led him to propose his friend's lover for a "blind date" (Ibid) and this, in fact, has depicted his guiltless life up till this moment which has made him to act in such a weird manner. But this action has made him to experience an irresolvable inner conflict when Rita gets conceived because of him. This vile deed has drawn him to drown himself in the sea.

The playwright has hit the bull's eye, through this, that Joe's problem has sprouted when he took all the women as "women with something nice between their legs" (40) and nothing more. Joe's mind and action are unmistakably congruent with each other. Love and respect are redundant moral code of conduct for him because he is sick of hearing people talk about them. He does not love Rita but he sleeps with her and makes her get pregnant. Besides, he commits suicide by drowning after getting to know of Rita's pregnancy. This shows that he neither loves nor respects his own life or others, especially Rita and his own seed which is growing in her womb. Lack of courage to accept the fruit of his labour has consumed his good sense. Therefore, guilt and insecurity have defeated his youthful vigour and energy. The dramatist has made Joe as the representative of the likes of him who are imbued with an unusual passion and not with any real love. Therefore, they are destined to suffer mentally and emotionally.

3.14. Collision of two Beliefs

The dramatist has portrayed that when a man finds hard to differentiate the right from wrong and reality from imagination, the essential part of life gets sacrificed. He has critically viewed the impact of superstitious beliefs on man by firmly basing his scrutiny on its negative influence. Some men struggle to contain their inner confusion, being predisposed to superstition, and live in disillusionment. Therefore, their aspiration to live in peace is interfered by their superstitious belief and fear that comes along with it. Malti, wife of Ram, and Tuan Andrew are infested with superstition. The effect of it on the former has led her to live a peace-less life. While the effect of it on the latter is very serious that it leads him to commit a sacrilegious act and murder. Malti is frequently angered and saddened by Savitri's speech defect. She has considered her stammering as the outcome of an inauspicious time of the year

that she was born. Sixteen years ago she was conceived when there was a drought in Maharashtra (*TMS* 13) and her mother has a firm believe that Savitri's speech defect is due to this Nature's action:

Malti: (*Touching her stomach inadvertently*) Will that? I... I remember ...sixteen years ago...that terrible drought...when our first child was born. It...was ...normal.

Ram : (*Sternly*) Savitri is quite normal.

Malti: I didn't mean that...her. Though she is quite strange at times. I meant my condition...thoughts, depressions...they shape, you know...

Ram : Enough of that!

Malti: Savitri's...too withdrawn. As though guarding the secret of her own nature from all of us.

Ram : She stammers...and she's shy. That's all that's to it.

Malti: But she should have outgrown it by now. It was that drought. I know. It was that terrible drought sixteen years ago when she was conceived. And it's happening again...

Ram : Stop it! (13).

Malti has a superstitious belief about drought and its impact on her daughter. This belief has taken control of her mind and has created fear in her that Savitri can never be cured of her stammering. There is a dreadful conflict in her because she terribly fears that she has conceived again after sixteen years when drought has visited them. The more she consols her husband that she will "never lose this child. And it will grow strong like you" (13), the more she exposes her inner inconsistencies and she is all the more tortured.

The playwright has explored the inner discrepancy deeper, in *Monsoon*, through the examination of collision between the Christian faith and black magic. Tuan Andrew is enveloped with his confusion between two believes and this has dumped him in the valley of no return because he has never dared to take personal effort in exonerating himself from it or heeded the wise advice of his associates. His fear of the black magic has destroyed his peace of mind because he has constantly felt the threat of being overpowered and pressed down by it. This fear has exhausted the essential and manly vigour in him. What started as a revisionist's experiment to "bring about conditioned growth...response to selective stimuli..." (*MON* 30), which no church has dared to perform (43), has ended up with a series of moral crimes and mental disorientation. His inner conflict was immense because of fear of the influence of Grandmother's black magic. The life in the dead started haunting him after he has liquidated Monsoon's grandmother. His fear has overwhelmed him because he begins to believe in the influence of "superstitious omen" (113). He could not acquit himself from this belief because Monsoon has already been exonerated (87) from the befalling of the magic by the syphilitic man when she was raped by him (50). So, he goes on to make love with a virgin, Nooroo, to overpower the assumed influence of black evil in him (81). This has failed and even Monsoon's giving birth to a girl child has failed to exonerate him. Therefore, his target is on his own daughter that is perceived by Monsoon and, therefore, she has redeemed her daughter and prevents Andrew from committing a further heinous crime by smothering the child before Andrew could lay his hands on her.

The author has a sharp perceptibility to read human behaviour and, by utilizing this flair, he has assessed the human desire for physical pleasures and opines that a great portion of human strife is caused by this factor. This element of sexual urge in human beings has being extensively used by him to

bring out the universal idea of human relationship and its impact on the internal functioning. He has deftly examined that an unfulfilled sexual life can cause much of human restlessness. *This Alien...Native Land* has portrayed Rachel's development of an oedipal relation with her son, Jacob. There is a subtle disclosure that unfulfilled sexual urges has prepared her the way for developing such an unhealthy relationship with her own son. Joseph, her husband, has smelled the rat about his wife's affinity with Jacob, their younger son:

Joseph: There is such a thing as a lover, you know? (*Rachel looks but doesn't reply*) That's right. Be silent. Be non-committal. So that I can think the worst.

Rachel: About me?

Joseph: Of course not. About me. How I failed you every time.

Rachel: But you haven't, my dear. Have you ever found me...unhappy?

Joseph: No. Not unhappy. But...unfulfilled...in certain ways. And then of course there's always been...Jacob.

Rachel: Every woman finds fulfillment in her children, dear.

Joseph: Not to the exclusion of everything else, Rachel. Or everyone, like me, for instance. I'm sitting here most of the time and you don't even see me...

... (*TANL 19-20*).

Although, Rachel has meant to hush the hint of her husband, with a general statement, it has, all the more, signaled that she has an oedipal relation with her son. Joseph has continued with his subtle reference of this ugly relationship and this has brought out to the fore his own internal disturbances.

He gets absorbed with his problems and becomes more intensely engaged with his rocking chair rather than confronting it robustly. The statement, "...While I weary underneath...ageing...with a feeble heart" (14), is a clear revelation about his inner tension that is mounting up day by day. His troubled self has agonizingly pressed him down and he experiences a severe heartache, which is shown "when he puts his hand to his heart, and slowly and carefully settles back in the rocking" (18).

The dramatist has used fantasy and reverie to externalize the inner longing of people. Besides, he has employed sexual desire to explicate that a person is highly prone to get into daydream when the extreme longing for satiating the sexual urges is left unfulfilled for a long period of time. Joseph sees Salome in his daughter-in-law, Tara, and has an intercourse with her (34-35). Like Robert Browning's *The Last Ride Together* where 'moment' is made into eternity, Currimbhoy has utilized the same concept to communicate the effective impact of emotions on human relationship, when Joseph wants the "moment made to eternity" (35). The playwright's specific intent in dramatizing such a perverted behavior of men is to bring home the message that a person's desire for the satiating moment of sexual urges that has gone dry for so long and is been fulfilled wants that moment to last forever.

Sarah's problem was one of a failure to get married at the right age and this has continued to haunt her and keeps her unsatisfied with her life. Therefore, she beholds her Muslim lover and Ruth in her illusion, in the form of a shadow and in Tara. She has attempted to gratify her physical desires in both the cases; heterosexual in the former (*TANL* 50-51) and lesbianism in the latter (58-59). When she tells the Shadow, "Ah, but I'm never satisfied...I will never be satisfied" (35), it is a clear revelation about an inner longing that has gone unfulfilled for so long and that it may get expressed in any form of sexual

relationships. The author has shown that the inner pain and desperation may take varied form of external expressions in such cases of non-accomplishments and, may even end up disastrously, like Joseph and Sarah.

3.15. Women's tortured self

“Woman's pain...and woman's pleasure...goes deeper” (*MLA* 31), utters the frustrated wife of Manubhai, Shanti. She has echoed the universal voice of women who experience sour married life in a patriarchal dominated society of the world. The dramatist has purportedly allowed some of his women to pass by the storm of inner pain and conflicts, apart from their obligated responsibility of bearing the burden of bringing up the family, soaked in the heat of living with their infidel, lecherous, tyrannical or angry husbands.

The Dissident MLA has vividly pictured the harrowing life of a wife in the hands of her unfaithful and irresponsible husband. Manubhai behaves weirdly and even senselessly with his wife. His irresponsibility has pierced Shanti's conscience like a sharp dagger. Therefore, Shanti is frustrated with her married life and taunts him without any inhibition:

Shanti: Why are you so calm and self-possessed, Master of this world? And why the candle-light? Why don't you put the lights on...(She goes over and switches on the light. Manu opens his mouth, sees the light, then closes his mouth and does not reply) Why don't you reply? Cat stolen your tongue? There's no stopping when you start. No, then you start yelling and yelling. As though to make the stones weep.

Manu: You?

Shanti: Yaaa. I'm made of stone. See, I'm hard, my nails. I'm cruel and vindictive. I make my husband into a mouse. I thump him. I hump him.

Manu: What have I done to deserve this?

Shanti: You make me mad. You think you're the only person with the right to be mad. What about woman? Woman's pain...and woman's pleasure...goes deeper (31).

Manubhai's unusual calmness is due to the effect of Sonal and this has not only enraged Shanti but also provides the ground for her to let out what is going on within her. The playwright has tactically utilized this incongruously hot and cold temperament of Manubhai to starkly denude the woman's world, saying that they have their "moments of longings, of needs" (32). Sexual life gone sour in married life can cause turbulences in the family, more so in the inner self of the individual members.

Manubhai's infidelity and Big Mac's illicit relationship are serious enough to shutter the inner peace in their wives. Manubhai's mind is deeply engrossed in his political affairs and has least bothered the emotional needs of his wife and welfare of his family. He has sensuously utilized Sonal and when Shanti wants to satiate and consummate her married life, he shrewdly brushes aside the invitation of his wife saying, "...we should practice abstinence" and that he also "needs time to recharge like the Government, that takes time to RECHARGE THE POWER-LINE" (Ibid).

Currimbhoy has critically scanned the lackadaisical attitude of husbands toward their wives and scathingly attacks those who do not give "Shanti" (MLA 10) to them. So, he has warned the ladies to "beware" (Ibid) of this kind of loose men. The *Darjeeling Tea?* has pictured the happy go lucky fellows of

tea garden managers, who lead a life of loose moral behaviour and make their wives feel jealous of them. Jennie could not bear to see her husband, Big Mac, concentrating on his Tea Garden and Didi, the life image of her mother and the extra-marital lover of Mac, and least bothers about her concerns. She could not tolerate her husband's affair as much as she could not bear her inner pain. The conflict in her mind has eaten up the essential vitality in her like a parasite. The thing that has bothered and troubled her the most is jealousy, which she has exposed it openly before her husband. She has hunted for an outlet to shed the fuming pain in her and finds this in Bunty, to whom she has released the heavy burden of her heart and even asks him to look at the drunken Mac, who is trying to forget the memory of Didi's mother by drinking the country brew (*DT* 45). She has even let out her anger against her husband's unfaithfulness by saying, "I took your act as being one of infidelity...a lifetime's frustration rushed back..." (51).

The playwright has felt for certain that frustration in married life will lead a person astray. Jennie realizes her mistake only when she is on the verge of falling into the temptation of gratifying her frustrated sexual urge with Bunty; she retreats from Bunty by bursting "out shamefully in tears closing her face with her handkerchief" (48). Through this intense inner conflict of wives, the dramatist conveys a stern message that, in marriages, women "chose a man...not a way of life" (*Ibid*). He continues to state his point of view that though "we all make our mistakes in life" (40), if husbands drive everyone in the family all around the bend (*MLA* 46), and as the women "grow older every year, (they will) find a vacuum within" (*DT* 49). This vacuum will suck their lives and gradually lead them into their graves. Besides, as the essential vigour in their lives dry out, the cream of love and

affection to keep the family relationship going will get drained out and, this will demoralize the entire family.

3.16. Misconception of love and its impact

Currimbhoy has a critical outlook on human love and relationship and opines that love and peace cannot be bought with money (*DT* 37). *The Doldrums* has satirically portrayed young teenagers who are confused with love, passion and infatuation. Rita pronounces her love for Tony but in actuality, she is infatuated with him; her attachment to him is only out of passion. The unsettled relationship between Rita and Tony, according Dr. Ram Sharma, is “because there is no love but only passion. Therefore, it does not rest on faith and conviction, but feeds on indecisions and speculations” (Sharma <<http://www.amazines.com/>>). This has made them go through the rough path of mental and emotional frictions. In the absence of Tony, Rita feels “lonesome” “like one of the front teeth missing” (*DD* 77). She has even sold her flesh to buy gifts for him and, therefore, could not withstand against him receiving gifts from others (29). As a matter of fact, her mind and heart are constantly burning with pain and jealousy. Lack of correspondence of genuine human love between them has kept Rita unsatisfied and Tony has being bogged down with the heavy pressure of Rita’s overwhelming attention on him.

The playwright’s piercing sense of observation has penetrated beyond the peripheral level of human relationship in his assessment of individuals and their bonding with each other. P. Bayapa Reddy has rightly commented: “Asif Currimbhoy’s genius lies not only in the vivid topicality of his plays...but also in getting under the skin of situations and characters thereby involving the emotions and feelings of the audience and making them think” (Reddy 53).

The Tourist Mecca is a critical study of tourists in India, with the focal point of its concentration on the variegated purpose of their visit to the country. Keshav is a happy-go-lucky fellow tourist guide, an actor on stage and living his profession artificially, only to attract and help the needs of the tourists. The dramatist has subtly hinted that Keshav's artificial life style has incurred dampening effects on him when he encounters an authentically emotional and rational love in Janet. But the irony is that his inner self could not belie and deceive itself when Janet refuses to yield to his earnest demand. This has made him pay the price of faking the emotional responses to the demand of tourists for a long period of time. Therefore, he has trudged through the rough path of internal hiccups, without reprieve, when Janet kisses him and bids him farewell:

Janet : ...Can one love forever? Perhaps one can with unfulfilled love. But when the unobtainable has become an ordinary fulfillment, the fear of its repeated boredom arises. The effort of reconciling differences becomes unbearable-differences imposed by nature and circumstance. Perhaps you're right after all in saying that I spoilt it by wanting you to touch me. Overnight the magic of it must have flowered...and died within me.

Keshav: Then you love me no more.

Janet : No. I love you, Keshav. But not the way you love me. Your love would be too demanding too serious and perfect for me to meet. I would love you...ordinarily. And you wouldn't accept that. Perhaps you'll understand what I mean when we meet again after a while.

Keshav: Again!

Janet : I shall come again for a holiday next year with Mother. It will give us the chance to think things over-more calmly.

(She kisses him. He is passive)

Janet : Farewell, Keshav darling...until next year. *(He says nothing. She leaves the room to join her mother at the reception counter)*

Keshav: *(Whispers audibly to himself in the room)* Goodbye, Janet, until next year...and the year after that...until love will have lost its meaning: but for no reason we'll still be there *(TTM 72)*.

Keshav's actual trouble had begun when he started living his life as an actor on stage and not as a real being going about with real flesh and blood, clothed with emotions and feelings. This is conveyed in his own words when he said, "I had been bound like an actor on stage, destined to play the role laid out for me. But I met you off-stage and that was for me the breath of new life" (61). This breath of new life is like a twinkling light that does not persist because the old habits die hard. As a matter of fact, when the magic of love flowered overnight and died down, he could not handle it and was completely shattered. This shows that he has never experienced real love and affection, as he has received from Janet. The present stormy experience could have been avoided and irreconcilable inner pain nudged aside conveniently, were he a tourist guide with flesh and blood and, not an actor on stage as a professional tourist guide alone. He is doomed to go through a dampening experience because Janet has failed to be convinced beyond the knowledge that he is nothing more than a professional lover (59) and this has made him feel dejected and frustrated.

Janet too has gone through the emotional pain because of her rivalry with her mother, who is also in love with Keshav. This knowledge of Keshav's profession, as a tourist guide and a lover, has completely altered her initial impression about him. She has overturned her first impression of Keshav, which at first seemed firmly rooted, which is shown in the following dialogue:

Lady Topin: He'd be a freak there, even without his beard. People would look at him closely to see if his hair is curly or his nails are curved. They'd look at you knowingly too, and you'd feel embarrassed at their insinuation.

Janet: Then we'd settle down here.

Lady Topin: Here? This would be no week-end holiday, my child. You'd want to raise children. And do you know what they call half-breed children here? "Chi-chi" meaning dirty. Like the mistaken product of some "Tommy" during the war-days. Sure the men would make a great deal of you, for they'd think that a white foreigner who has a weakness for one Indian can also have a weakness for another.

Janet: What a disgusting outlook you have. I cannot believe that what you say can turn out to be true. I love him, Mother. That can't change. A man and woman who love each other can earn their own respect in life no matter where they come from or where they go.

Lady Topin: (*Murmurs more to herself*) He will not marry you. He dare not marry you (47).

A clear revelation is made in the above altercation that Keshav indulges in multiple affairs and his love for Janet can never last. This has happened verily and both of them are caught in an unexplainable internal turbulence. Janet's previous unshakable love and wish of getting married with Keshav have trickled down as and when she gets into the knowledge of Keshav's manifold love affairs, including Lady Toppin, her own mother. Through this, the playwright has clearly divulged that true love cannot happen overnight; it takes time to develop, grow and assimilate.

3.17. Disrespect to the Sanctity of Human Sex: A moral diminution

Currimbhoy has greatly valued the sanctity of human sex and sexual abilities of human beings. This appreciation for the uniqueness of procreation machinery in man has made him to have a critical view of those who sell their flesh for fund and who are least bothered about getting entangled with multiple partners. He has also affirmatively put forward that this elite will not have a successful and settled life, both emotionally and physically. He vividly depicts that they can seldom have a peaceful and happy ending in life because of overindulgence in sensuousness.

Lady Topin comes to India as a tourist to enjoy but she could only enjoy with physical pleasures. When she said, "Agra has become quite a place of pilgrimage for me. Every year I seem to be learning something more. Of course everything here is so...so...profound" (*TTM* 23). His words obliquely meant that she makes pilgrimage to Agra only with a view to quenching her sexual urge from Keshav, the gigolo (Reddy 59). Lady Topin's activity of going about quenching her sexual appetite is also evident in her own words, "I've been changing husbands so fast that I did not give myself the time to be your mother" (46).

The author has scathingly satirized the irresponsible mothers who openly indulge in loose moral behaviors and are least concerned about the welfare of their children or daughters' decent growth. Senhora Miranda loves Alphonso but, at the same time, utilizes Krishna to satiate her sexual desire. She is a whore and has moulded her daughter to walk on her footsteps:

Krishna: W...what's her name...Senhora? (*SENHORA MIRANDA turns around like a flash; then the distraction overcomes her, and she looks past time*)

Senhora Miranda: (*Part recognition*) What's her name, did you say? What is her name? But that didn't sound odd. It's the way you called my name "Senhora" that sounded odd. Not Senhora Miranda. Just Senhora. Senhora by itself. Her name is Rose, Sir. She's made of sugar and spice and everything that's nice and it will cost you only twenty rupees for a single time. Above all, she's a virgin, sir, I should know. I was there. I was there when her innocence was born. You see, I taught her to be innocent, to fear the touch, to be afraid of peace, to have horror of love. Isn't that what a mother should do to equalize her love?

Krishna: Y...you have made of her...a whore.

Senhora Miranda: Clean to the touch, sir, clean to the touch, sir. It is...an honest living. She protects me in many ways, sir. She tries them out first, to match my innocence and beauty. She has a feel...that tells her the truth. Most of all, she waits...and waits, and waits, lying there like some warm and tender animal. She's not a whore, Sir. I

am that but not her. She is Rose. And Rose is Goa; and Goa is Rose (*GOA* 87-88).

Miranda has shown that her mind is clouded and, therefore, she contradicts herself by saying that Rose is not a whore, when she had already let slip her tongue that 'she is made of sugar and spice and, everything that is nice and it will cost you only twenty rupees for a single time.' The most nerve wrecking deed of hers is that she collaborates with Krishna and makes him rape her daughter, Rose, as it is seen in the following words:

Krishna's voice: Now! Now! Come, Maria! Hold her! Hold her...by the black hair! See for yourself! Feel...for her! (*MARIA rises fainting, beyond herself, yet rising to his command*) Come, Maria! Now! Now! Hold her! (*Maria goes in. The scream itself reaches a pitch of insanity, then goes dead in the faintest sobs*) (78).

Miranda had initiated her daughter into the abhorring profession of prostitution instead of taking measures to mould her righteously and showing her the way toward moral uprightness. Therefore, she has to pay the price of her evil deeds at the end when Rose commands her not to touch her but to dart away from her:

Rose's Voice: ... (*Screaming*) DON'T TOUCH ME...MOTHER! DON'T HOLD ME! IT'S HIM, MOTHER! IT'S HIM! (*A scream that turns hoarse. Senhora Miranda and the Smuggler are already halfway up when Rose emerges, still with blind over her face, the negligée torn and blood-stained, to her*

mother's arms, crying. Maria holding her, holding her tight...)

Rose : Take the blind, mother! Take the blind off! I want to see ...I won't have to wait any longer... (*With trembling hands the mother removes the blind. Slowly, Rose disengages herself from her mother's arms, walks back to the room, shifts aside the curtain, as Krishna's nude body falls out, with a dagger in his heart*) (91-92).

The above dialogue has vividly depicted that a morally deficit person gives a damn to the repute of public face; least of all, emotional bonding and family ties are a pie in the sky for them. Such a person is rich in sensuousness but bereft of socially acceptable emotions and feelings.

The playwright has put across his moral principle to the audience that ethical deficiency and lack of civic sense cause emotional emptiness in human relationships. People tend to nurture animalistic relationship of physical needs only and neglect the essence of humane affiliation with each other; the essences of human relationship-emotion and feeling-are replaced with physical sensuousness in a morally deficit world. The author has suggestively presented that the empty spaces are, perhaps, occupied by internal problems and conflicts. This is lucidly depicted in *The Doldrummers*. Rita has mourned and brooded over Tony's lackadaisical response to her gifts and sensuous love. She even goes to the extent of selling her flesh to buy gifts for him; to keep him physically close to her. This is revealed to Tony by Joe through an emotionally charged words:

...

She never forces you to go to work, and worships you like God Almighty. Well, doesn't she? (*He shakes Tony's neck like he were a dog and Tony can do all but nod*) She's nature's own child, sweet and loving. Her heart is pure and she lives for you alone. There's nothing she wouldn't do for you, would she? Would she? (*Shaking Tony by the neck. Tony looks at him pop-eyed, and nods vigorously*) She'd even whore for you, you filthy dog! (*Tony gapes uncomprehendingly*) What do you think she's doing for you at this moment? Signing contracts? That fat man full of pig's lard is signing out a cheque for her to complete a contract. Do you know what the consideration is, Tony darling? ...Herself. Do you know whom she does it for, Tony dear? ...You! (*The drink is evaporating fast out of Tony. His silly face begins to take on a glimmer of understanding*)

She is selling her pound of flesh neatly cellophane. It comes in beautiful boxes, with gardenias and jewels. With these she buys you first-hand guitars and lavender Vaseline that grooms your hair like Rudolph Valentino (*DD 53-54*).

Apparently, Rita's dedication and commitment to keep Tony physically close to her is plausible but it has gradually got rusted and deviated from a morally accepted code of conduct. Currimbhoy has mocked at such mean relationships because the means employed by Rita is despicable. Rita signs sexual contracts to earn money for the sake of keeping her sensuous relationship going with Tony. But this relationship is destined to encounter inconsistencies because the foundation is constructed on passion and infatuation only.

The dramatist satirizes the kind of lovers who degrade the beauty of human relationship by centering the essence of it on mere physical gratification and sensuousness. Getting into the profession of prostitution did not affect Rita's life because earning money is her priority. Therefore, her flip-flop relationship with Tony is not strange and her inner restlessness is not an odd result. Her action and intention in life, which are physically based, have adversely flowered into the fullest fruition with mistrust, insecurity, fear and alienation. She considers physical needs as an a priori to emotional and psychological fulfilment. This has made her to go mad at Tony, who has gone after Liza, having being lured with the gift of a new watch:

Rita : Why did you do it, Tony? Why did you do it! Isn't my love enough for you? I've given you all of it. Why shouldn't I expect all from you? Woman's no different from a man. Why did you do to her? Was it for her, or the watch? Did the watch mean so much to you?

Tony: Everybody's got a watch. I like to have a watch too.

Rita : At what expense?

Tony: How should I know what the watch is worth? I didn't ask her price. But it's got 17 jewels...

...

Why do you look at me like that? Like I'd done something wrong. You got no claim over me, like we were married or something. (*Rita looks down and tries to suppress her tears*) So what if I got a present? I wouldn't object to *your* getting a present.

...

Rita : Don't say that, Tony.

Tony: I mean it.

Rita : A present wouldn't mean so much to me.

Tony: Well, it does to me. I'd do *anything* to get a present. A woman does it, so why not a man? (29-30).

Rita's infatuation for Tony has made her to bind and fetter him but, he, in turn, has felt the suffocation of it. Tony is rootless and a block headed lover boy. Therefore, he suffers the repercussion of shallowness and meanness of his approach to life and relationship. Like a reed on the sea-shore, he is blown towards the direction of presents and gifts. As a result, when Rita taunts him for abandoning her for the sake of Liza's gifts, he retorts facetiously. He reacts distastefully to Rita's physical bindings and even argues with Joe:

Tony: (*Angrily*) Why should Rita mind it? What right has she to mind! After all, I'm not married to her!

Joe : (*Softly*) But I don't mind Tony darling. I really don't.

Tony: (*Still sulking*) Just because she gives me board and lodging doesn't mean I should *work* for it. What do you expect me to do? Sweep the floor and wash her lingerie?

Joe : Well, you need not make her wash *yours*.

Tony: (*Yelling*) I'm not the type you think I am, you...you...egghead.

Joe : (*Shouting*) You're a slob!

Tony: (*Yelling louder*) You're a swine! A filthy swine (16-17).

Tony's sharp response to Joe's words shows that things are not amiably easeful with him. In fact, dissatisfaction of one thing or the other has made him to be very touchy and this has caused him to be easily angered. As a

result, his warring zone gets tickled and finally explodes when Rita and Joe confront him on his non-committal relationship.

The dramatist has pointedly screwed the behaviour and attitude of such irrational people who are bereft of emotions and feelings by prioritizing physical satisfaction in their lives. There is a conspicuous portrayal in his plays that such immoral people are destined to suffer the heat of emotional emptiness. This is the proof of the author's moral principle where he holds firmly that overindulgence in sensuousness and physical pleasures, like sex and lust, will make a person emotionally empty. It will also slacken family bonding and evaporate emotional relationships.

3.18. Irredeemably twisted minds

The playwright has ebulliently and tactically dealt with the inner world of man. He has inventively presented that no two human beings experience internal problems in the same manner and degree. The invisible world of man, which is so complex, finds itself exposed through silence, facial expressions, words or action. This complexity of the inner world of man needs a conscientious and daring effort to understand, analyze and deal with it. The author feels that failure to realize the inner warfare invites unpleasant consequences in life.

An Experiment with Truth has pictured Gandhiji as a man who has consciously fought against his weaknesses despite failing repeatedly in his attempts. On the other hand, his conscientious effort of leading the united force of the Salt March was amazingly successful. Through this, the dramatist intends to convey that the inner world is a much more difficult one to handle because human mind is very complex and there can always be loopholes in its readings.

Currimbhoy scrutinizes the general human trials and tribulations to bring forth the message that temptations are always there in life. He has also cognized that human inability to contain physical and emotional enticements will generally lead a person to a trail of downfalls and this will finally result in complex psychological malfunctions. Understandably enough, he has dealt with the psychopathic persons like Tuan Andrew, Bhima, Dr. Prema and Manubhai. All these characters have shown weird behaviours and glaring facial expressions, in one way or the other. Their invisible warfare, fiercely going on in the mind and heart, gets reflected outwardly and are perceived by their associates.

Tuan Andrew could not overcome the temptation of experimenting on the young virgin, under a conditioned growth, to vanquish his assumed influence of the black magic. On the course of his journey to exterminate the supposed evil, he estranges himself from his close associates, becomes irrationally harsh with Monsoon, consciously baptized a virgin to initiate her into the profession of prostitution and becomes her first client, suffers a prolonged fever and becomes a murderer.

Bhima and Dr. Prema are closely linked with each other in their journey to achieving insanity. Bhima could not overpower the enticement of being considered greater than Madhu, while Dr. Prema gets fixed in her plan of experimenting on her client and refuses to pay heed to the corrections and rebukes of others. As a result, Dr. Prema murders Shakuntala to revive Bhima from his insanity but, ironically, she gets inextricably entangled with Bhima and lands up in his lunatic world. Tuan Andrew is another character who has gone from bad to worse and becomes less and less communicative and, finally, becomes a murderer. Manubhai becomes sadistic, lecherous, adulterer,

mentally cloudy and this has led him to see the ghost of his son and speaks with him.

The dramatist's characters, however weirdly and strangely they behave, are destined to a known end. Their indomitable inner conflicts are always born out of their desires and been facilitated by their actions. His plays are replete with such characters who are locked up in their predicaments and desperately wriggling to free themselves. On the road to carve out the meaning, purpose and value of their lives, they are incarcerated in the dead struggle, which will be explored deeper in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER FOUR

HUMAN PREDICAMENT

1. Human Predicament

The quest for meaning, purpose and value of life has being a long and arduous process. This has being a back-breaking investigative programme from ancient to contemporary philosophers. Theist and Atheist existentialists have attempted to philosophically promote a robust answer to this quest. Every human being has been caught in this predicament. There has being self-reflective analysis or self-questioning to the problem of existence since time immemorial. This problem has being further aggravated by our search for meaning, purpose and value of life amidst the factual experience of difficulties, suffering, pain, unknown future and death. Every day, the thoughtful creatures are bombarded with the question of “death and prospect that our lives are only but short stints against the backdrop of a universe that has existed for almost fourteen billion years” (Guthrie <<http://sguthrie.net/>>). This question brings home the notion of the great existential problem known as the human predicament.

Human predicament “is a situation lived and felt from the inside. It is something you seek to ameliorate or rise above” (Conolly <<http://www.thefreelibrary.com>>). Warnock has placed his perception of human predicament on the wants, needs and interests of man; biologically looking for the fullest satisfaction but “there will absolutely be no reason to believe that his total satisfaction, meaning thereby satisfaction of all his needs, wants and interests, is, in any order of priority, even logically possible, let

alone practically” (Warnock <www.econ.iastate.edu/>). Sophocles has found our predicament to be one in which multiple gods - or forces, it is not entirely certain which - are either indifferent to human welfare or hostile to it. Our predicament, according to him, involves how to negotiate life in a world that is neither providential nor susceptible to consummate human mastery (Conolly <<http://www.thefreelibrary.com>>). A godless existentialist view of human predicament is the endless game of life and death. A comprehensive understanding of human predicament can be found in the following:

Animals live from day to day doing what their instincts tell them to do, enjoying whatever pleasures they can, giving no thought to the future, totally unaware of the pain, suffering and death that await them. But man is acutely aware of the potential suffering he faces and of the inevitability of death, except to the extent that he can distract or deceive himself. Moreover, this endless game of birth, growth, reproduction, suffering and death goes on and on, and as is true for all life on earth, *the game is totally meaningless*. It's not really going anywhere, and there are no real winners. In the long run you're dead. Life is absurd. It's a cruel joke of nature, a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Man is the only creature that can appreciate the joke and realize that he has been thrown into a situation that is absurd, without meaning or purpose. *This is the human predicament* (“What is the Human Predicament?” <<http://wiki.answers.com>>).

Existentialists are entrapped in the search for the meaning of life. It is this human predicament which has kept both laypersons and intellectuals constantly striving towards an end. The end, here, refers to the fulfilment of the search. Laypersons seek to find their niche in society through a sense of

contribution or through a sense of accomplishment. Philosophers through the ages have approached the question from a rational perspective. “Thus”, says Shandon L. Guthrie, “people desire to determine the meaning of their lives and not the mere abstract notion of ‘life’ as existence” (Guthrie <<http://sguthrie.net/>>).

2. Existentialism and Human Predicament

Existentialism holds the idea that human existence is a peculiar kind of existence in and for itself and it holds that existence precedes essence. Just as life and experience, conceptually, differ from person to person, existentialists too have diversified approaches to life and existence. Therefore, it is difficult to pigeonhole existentialism as a singular thought because there are a variety of approaches to the issues relating to self-purpose (Guthrie <<http://sguthrie.net/>>). Different schools of thought have perceived the existentialist individual as chewing over the “philosophical realization of self-consciousness” (Solomon 328). In an unambiguous portrait of the human predicament, Robert C. Solomon has stated that “the irresolvable confusion of the human world, yet resists the all-too-human temptation to resolve the confusion by grasping toward whatever appears or can be made to appear firm or familiar—reason, God, nation, authority, history, work, tradition, or the other worldly, whether of Plato, Christianity or utopian fantasy” (Solomon 328).

The crux of the matter lies in the irresolvable confusion and existentialists have been confounded in trying to shell out the meaning of the human predicament. This enterprise has been suffused in a cornucopia of ideas and attempted resolutions. The quest for an answer to this predicament has continued since the beginning of humanity setting its foot on the earth. Philosophers only heighten the quest rationally. John Dewey has analyzed and

considered the issue to be one of an endless game. He has believed that the existentialist pursuit of resolving the problem was the quest for certainty (Boydston 21-39).

Existentialist's quest is again battered with the notion of freedom in attempting to explicate the human predicament. The irrefutable stance of existentialists is that human individuals are objective beings and they are beset with the capability of volition. Endowed with this gift of volition, man is a free being. Jean-Paul Sartre has said in his lecture that "we will freedom for the sake of freedom" (Sartre <<http://www.btinternet.com>>). He has continued to hammer his point on subjective freedom when he said, "We are alone, without excuses. That is what I mean when I say that man is condemned to be free" (Sartre <<http://www.btinternet.com>>). Existentialists, especially the notable Sartre, have expressed freedom as paramount for personal decision-making and this is, in general, an arduous pursuit of existentialists. Assessing the existentialists' attitude on the magnitude of human freedom, Robert Solomon has opined that "every decision must be considered a choice. Yet the existential attitude itself is apparently not chosen. One finds oneself in it" (Solomon 240).

Human predicament ensues from this dilemma. The problem of the self in a world asking that pressing question about the meaning of life is itself not a matter of choice. This encapsulates the existentialist's holding on an individual's freedom of choice. A person finds himself in the choice of choices. "In such a world where the individual is truly an individual, there are choices that can be made unhindered by what others think one should think and do" (Guthrie <<http://sguthrie.net>>). But the real problem arises when certain things sneak out of this existential perception. Natural death cannot be a choice because it is there as the ending of mortal life. Therefore, the threat

of existentialism is the imminent death. Even a passing thought of our own mortality is enough to jerk us out of our current involvements, though for a moment, and force us to look at our lives.

3. Select Existentialists

Existentialists are engrossed with the quest for meaning, value and purpose of life. Some philosophers who have embraced existentialist movement are considered for the purpose of explicating the human predicament. Their philosophies, whether it is an idealism or phenomenology are an effort at pursuing the escape from the human predicament. Select existentialists are considered for discussion and application in this chapter.

3.1. George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

He is not within the proclaimed group of existentialist thinkers but his thoughts have a bearing on those who would be. His philosophy has stemmed from the schism between Kantian Idealism and British empiricism. In the philosophy of Kant, we come across his suggestion of two existing worlds: a phenomenal world, which is an empirically verifiable reality, and an unknowable noumenal world, which is the actual reality of the empirical world. Hegel has synthesized the two competing philosophies in his dialectic, in which he has brought forth the notion of consciousness, which he calls it *Geist*, and this stands as the bridging element in the universe, which is filled with different perceivable objects.

Swami Krishnananda, while discoursing on Hegel's philosophy of life, has commented that "Hegel appears to bring down the Absolute (Spirit) to the relative realm of the individuals when he makes it realize itself in art, religion and philosophy, so that there is the dialectic even in the pure Spirit" (Krishnananda <<http://www.swami-krishnananda.org>>). He has drawn this relationship to enunciate deeper on the validity of consciousness in

correspondence with the objects it perceives. Shandon L. Guthrie has opined that “on a global level, the notion of consciousness could be understood as a universal Ego intimated with every individual ego” (Guthrie <<http://sguthrie.net>>). Solomon has carried further the conception of *Geist* in a phenomenological reasoning and explained the relationship between a universal Ego and individual ego. He has opined that “*Geist* abstracts from the peculiarities of individuals and focuses attention on their similarities: *Geist* is a convenient way of talking about the common properties of a society, of a people, or of all people while ignoring, but not denying, their differences” (Solomon 89).

Consciousness, therefore, does not need any particular reference to be addressed. *Geist* is metaphysical in nature but it becomes phenomenological while dealing with it in relation to the world. There exists a relationship between consciousness and the object it perceives. Joseph Anton Goebhardt has opined that “Consciousness *distinguishes* something from itself and at the same time it *relates* itself to it” (Goebhardt 40) and calls the perception of this as “sense-certainty” (44). This philosophy heralds us to Edmund Husserl’s conception of phenomenology.

3.2. Edmund Husserl

Husserl’s philosophy is characterized by his emphasis of consciousness and the relationship it holds on the world. He believes that a perceiver could take in the experience of an object but only concentrates on the experience itself of what it is like to see, hear, touch, smell or taste. This philosophy is called phenomenology (Guthrie <<http://sguthrie.net>>). He has philosophized that essential Being must be distinguished from actual existence, just as the pure Ego must be distinguished from the psychological Ego. Essences are non-real, while facts are real. The realm of transcendently reduced

phenomena is non-real, while the realm of actual experience is real. Thus, phenomenological reduction leads from “a knowledge of the essentially real to a knowledge of the essentially non-real.” “Husserl’s Ideas on a Pure Phenomenology and on a Phenomenological Philosophy” <<http://www.angelfire.com>>).

Through phenomenological reduction, Husserl has arrived at a conclusion that the metaphysical status of the objects perceived are no more considered and brackets the empirical data. Bracketing empirical data away from further investigation leaves pure consciousness, pure phenomena and the pure Ego as the residue of phenomenological reduction (“The Phenomenological Reduction” <<http://www.iep.utm.edu>>). The ego only needs to enjoy the physical state of pleasure of the experience.

Phenomenology presents a very loose knit system in which problems and philosophies are brought together only by the slack and definitive vacuous insistence that a first person description of one’s own consciousness of the world must precede all philosophical theorizing. Phenomenology is, therefore, an effort at improving our understanding of ourselves and the world by means of careful description of experience. Through the conscious experience of objects by the ego, one can venture out further into experiencing the world. A Phenomenologist stands on this foundation to assess his metaphysics. But the existential hurdle mounts when subjective consciousness supersedes universal consciousness. As multiple is the perception and conception of the world by as many individuals existing at a time without theoretical bias, the predicament of existence will also be multifarious if subjective experiences are taken as the ultimate force of the guiding principle for existence. There will be no consolidated effort or concordant force to unite the existing

individuals because each individual will have his way. This leads us to the assessment of a godless world of Nietzsche.

3.3. Friedrich Nietzsche

Nietzsche is famously associated with insanity and atheistic proclamation of God is dead. His assessment of the human predicament is surprisingly similar with the Christian Kierkegaard in his affirmation that life is devoid of any objective meaning, value or purpose. We are usually reminded about Nietzsche's madman who runs in the street crying, "I seek God! Seek God!" (Nietzsche 1954, 95). Nietzsche himself has said in his *The Portable Nietzsche*, "Wither is God?" He cried, "I shall tell you. We have killed him – you and I...God is dead..." (Ibid).

The vocabulary here is clearly dictating the death of God, but the sense of his death is representative. That is, God is dead because tradition is veering away from itself and the related Christian attachments. In this scenario, which is envisaged by Nietzsche, the madman claims that he has arrived too early and that the actual death of God is still in process. Nietzsche has acknowledged in his madman story that with the death of God comes the implications of atheism and nihilism. This nihilism is the destruction of all meaning and value in life in the absence of God. In fact, Nietzsche has said, "Our European culture is moving for some time now with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade, as toward a catastrophe: restlessly, violently, headlong, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect" (Nietzsche 1975, 130-131).

It is lucidly perceivable from what Nietzsche has said that modern thought recognizes the death of God. Therefore, with the death of God, tradition has also been murdered. As a result, life trudges through the path of meaninglessness, devoid of any value and purpose. The journey of life is just

a meaningless struggle and nihilism surges into the path of existence. This nihilistic percept is not only due to the traditional values but a strident demand to a release or freedom from the imposed values.

Nietzsche's philosophy presents an astounding perception of the atheistic discernment of life. Life for the existentialist is heading towards a crushing point of nihilism. To inverse the tragedy of meaninglessness of life to something meaningful, it is at this stage of confrontation with nihilism that human beings must work from to produce their own path to meaning.

3.4. Martin Heidegger

Heidegger was influenced by the ancient Greeks as well as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Dilthey, as well as Husserl. He was particularly engrossed with an exploration of the verb 'to be,' particularly from the standpoint of a human being in time. Although he was strongly influenced by Husserl's phenomenology, his interests lay more in the meaning of existence itself. The nucleus of his quest is, therefore, "behind all our day-to-day living, for that matter, behind all our philosophical and scientific investigations of that life, how is it that we are at all?" (Boeree <<http://webpace.ship.edu>>).

Existence is being present. He has brought forth this idea in the form of relationship with the world. He calls the human existence as *Da-sein*, which means being-there or being-in-the-world, existing in connection with things in the world instead of being a detached observer (DiSalle <<http://instruct.uwo.ca/>>). This is the special relationship that human beings have with the world, totally immersed in the world and yet stand out as well.

Heidegger's perception of freedom is akin to that of Sartre but differs in the sense of 'becoming' of the being. A big part of our peculiar nature is that we have freedom. We create ourselves by choosing and, therefore, we are our own projects. This freedom, however, is painful, and we experience life as

filled with anxiety (Angst, dread). Our potential for freedom calls us to be an authentic being by means of anxiety. One of the central sources of anxiety is the realization that we all have to die at one point of time. Our limited time here on earth makes our choices far more meaningful and the need to choose to be authentic is urgent. We are, he says, “being-towards-death” (DiSalle <<http://instruct.uwo.ca/>>). We become authentic by thinking about being, by facing anxiety and death head on and, here, he says, contains joy.

Heidegger’s perception of human beings as heading towards death makes life no different from inorganic objects. Life is nothing but a hopeless being heading towards an end with no higher value to strive for. Being conscious of the objects of the world and relating with it in existence do not call for any value derivation from it. There is meaninglessness, hopelessness and purposelessness of life and existence. This leads to the godless philosophy of Sartre.

3.5. Jean-Paul Sartre

Sartre is one of the most prominent and influential existentialist philosopher of the modern day. He is a confirmed atheist and he clearly straddles the line between a philosopher and a psychologist. He was influenced by Martin Heidegger in his thought process. He has perceived ‘Being’ in two states of existence as ‘being-for-itself’ and ‘being-in-itself’. The being-in-itself represents a brute fact of reality, such as a rock or a flower. The latter, the being-for-itself, is human consciousness that is free from a world where God exists. This being-for-itself rejects any values imposed on it by anyone else. Thus, the human individual must make external objects as well as other people a part of his own world and they must be made valuable to him, as a perceiver. All objects in the world, particularly those that are

being-in-itself, are given an interpretative framework, whereby they gain value and meaning in the world.

Contrary to the medieval scholars, existentialists take existence as preceding the essence. This means that we arrive in this world as a conscious being, but our worth is defined only by what we do to make it worthy. And we, as human beings, have the atheistic freedom to choose which value system to follow and to make all external objects have a purpose for our existence. As is opined by Sartre, man is condemned because he did not create himself. The sentence that man must serve is that he must accept at first his nothingness and has no say regarding when or why he is thrust into existence. At the same time, man is free because once he has come into being, every choice that there is to be made he must make, and is solely responsible for doing so.

The freedom that Sartre speaks of is not one of liberty or emancipation, but rather the enormity each decision plays in the formation of mankind. As he has stated in his piece, "And when we say that a man is responsible for himself, we do not only mean that he is responsible for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men" (Sartre 346). When it is all pieced together, his main point which he is trying to convey is that we as mankind are sentenced to the punishment of creating ourselves. This notion can be traced back to the main idea of Existentialism that existence precedes essence. He has defined this as, "first of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and, only afterwards, defines himself" (Sartre 344).

This concept of freedom, in Sartre, evokes mental disturbance. In *Being and Nothingness* he has outlined a theory that human consciousness was a sort of nothingness, surrounded by the thickness of being. As nothingness, human consciousness is free from determinism, resulting in the difficult situation of

our being ultimately responsible for our own lives. Man is free to choose to live and perform an action and anything that he picks up is a choice. This is the meaning of his famous dictum: "Man is condemned to be free" (Sartre 350).

On the other hand, without an essence to provide direction, human consciousness is also ultimately meaningless. Robert Solomon posits this response to Sartre in his imaginary dialogue that "the question of freedom is a question of subjectivity, a question of how the subject must see his own situation...Whether in fact one can do it is not the question of freedom. It is rather a question of will" (Solomon 288-289).

Choice is subjective and situational. Solomon's concept of freedom entails a situation where one is no longer under the constraints of a value system apart from the agent. To choose or not to choose is an act. Therefore, from this standpoint Shandon L. Guthrie has remarked that "one is genuinely free by virtue of acting in accordance with what will be done" (Guthrie <<http://sguthrie.net/>>). Hence, Sartre's famous saying "Man is a useless passion" (Sproul <<http://www.ligonier.org>>) stands in conflict with will.

3.6. Soren Kierkegaard

Kierkegaard has presented a three-category view of human existence. Each category, or stage, is a progression toward achieving the virtues of meaning, purpose, and value in life. His philosophy foreshadows the problem of life that bespeaks the existence of God. The first category of existence is the aesthetic stage. On this level, human beings are primarily concerned with personal gratification and living for self-complacency. This does not necessarily mean that the aesthetic man is a gross hedonist; rather, he is simply very circumspect about his life. Everything revolves around the

aesthetic man but Kierkegaard has explained that this ultimately leads to unhappiness.

Pursuers of meaning, purpose and value are, ultimately, compelled to arrive at the ethical stage. At this stage, the struggling individual attempts to recognize certain moral and absolute goods and live in conformity with it. The problem for the ethical man is that this stage, too, leads to despair. Such a man perceives the ethical life to be a fruitless task and an impossible achievement. The last stage, the impending conclusion of the struggling individual, requires a drastic leap of faith for the realization of the existence of God. This irrational step compels man to view the meaning, purpose and value of life through the perspective of divine providence. In this sense, the notion of truth is subjective because the perceived truth is quite real to the perceiver. Solomon has concluded Kierkegaard's perception of truth by saying that "A subjective truth is a psychological truth about the author. The object of the author's belief may be false, but it is true that the author has that belief. This account could also explain how it is that subjective truth is for only one person (Solomon 75).

Kierkegaard has made a leap of faith to God for a release from the existential dilemma. God becomes the ultimate source of meaning and satisfaction. The irresolvable confusion breathes a sigh of relief in Kierkegaard's philosophy and this resolution brings a deep sense of respite to the struggling individual. His only disagreement with Christianity is the usage of over-intellectualization within the religion. He hoped to salvage man from the "strings" of an "established order" which "imprison life" (Kierkegaard 1941, 190); the imprisonment was composed by a pattern of feelings, thought and behavior, in which men tend to live and with which they tend to identity their own selves.

There are some affirmations in the existentialism of Kierkegaard. He has cognized the tragedy and nonentity of placing all sensitivity and response under subservience to abstract reasoning. The tendency to identify life with its abstraction is a major aspect in the problematic predicament of man. Nolan Pliny and Jacobson have opined that this tendency “is the tragedy at the root of all misplaced desire” (Pliny 241). The tendency of man to incarcerate the feeling and response in the form of abstract thought is part of a universal and unavoidable direction that man, as a culture-bearing and culture creating creature, tends to take quite naturally. Evidently, man’s volition to choose, however erroneous or false the choice may be, bespeaks of his discriminatory behavior because the specific good things of this world that appeals to him most will inevitably get into the web of his choice. Man’s suffering sprouts from here because he discriminates one thing after another and grab only the minimal from all other possibilities of existential good things and lives in and for this least distinguishable. Kierkegaard, however, presents that “the relationships of an individual to the source of his fulfillment must be individual relationships, fashioned in the crucible of personal experience” (Pliny 244).

3.7. Concluding observation on Existentialists

Summing up the existentialist philosophy that had been discussed, it is generally observed that existentialists are engrossed in the mundane struggle for life. Quest for meaning, purpose and value of life had occupied the centre stage of their strenuous activity. Life does not seem to them to be so fortunate to go through. Theirs is a humanistic perspective on the individual situation, a philosophy of existence, of being, of authenticity and of universal freedom. It is a quest, beyond despair, for creative identity. It is the philosophy that is a

counselor in crisis; a crisis in the individual's life, which calls upon him to make a choice regarding his subsequent existence.

It is evidently perceived from the existentialists' views that existence does not mean being alive alone but to maintain a perfect, powerful, self-conscious, responsible and intelligent life. The nucleus of existence is man rather than truth, laws, principle or essence. Existence precedes essence and man is characterized by decision making, will and choice.

Man's uniqueness conspicuously stands out in the existentialists' analysis of life and its meaning. This uniqueness of man comes from his emotions, feelings, perception and thinking. This philosophy stresses on the meaning of life. Only through the development of meaning in his life, man can make something out of the absurdity that surrounds him. Man is the maker, and, therefore, the master of culture. It is man who imposes a meaning to his universe, although that universe may well function without him.

Man is connected with other beings in the world and communicates with them. He is free to choose commitments in life and in his choice, he becomes himself. He is the product of his choices and he is, therefore, an individual different from others. He is a free agent capable of shaping his own life and choosing his own destiny. Thus we cannot treat people as machines, first pulling one lever, than another, and expect predictable results. He transcends both himself and his culture.

A Godless world has been delineated by existentialists. Faced with the concrete reality of physical world, existentialists like Sartre, Nietzsche, Heidegger or Dostoevsky have no faith in a supra-natural Being. It is discernible in their philosophy that, in the absence of God, man searches for power; power to determine his life. In the absence of God life and existence

incur innumerable problems. Dostoevsky's percept that 'in the absence of God everything is permitted' holds true for the existentialists.

Freedom in the guise is a curse; there is no release from freedom. In fact, one is fettered in the freedom. A person does not have the freedom to choose but be in the choice. This is the reason of Sartre when he pronounced that man is condemned to be free. As a result, life and existence is absurd.

Sartre's account on responsibility does not entail accountability and, therefore, this calls for an ethical emptiness. There is a moral deficit in the existentialists' philosophy of godlessness. Power and authority reign in each individual's consciousness. As a result, social and political derangement will invariably happen in an environment filled with human power and authority only. There will be subjective perception of truth and its application in life with power and authority will invite chaos and anarchy.

When there is no traditional ethics to guide the mass of people in the universe, personal interests will sway the world and human society will be infested with clashes and war. Society will find itself in the Darwinian world of survival of the fittest. Instead of a humane world, we will find ourselves in the animalistic world of ferocious domineering fight.

Therefore, we are all aware of our situation in life, limited by death, and existentialists have rightly remarked that man is the only being in the world who knows that some time he will die. That is the reason why, his existence is, throughout, permeated by dread, anxiety and fear. He cannot escape or transcend these situations and he must learn to live with anguish, dread and anxiety and, he must also learn to love death.

4. Religion and Human Predicament

Beliefs are central to every religion of the world and these beliefs have set forth the kind of life and thinking in man. Though no single definition of religion is complete and all inclusive, in meaning, for all religions of the world, I would like to quote Roger Schmidt because it serves a wider purpose of understanding the meaning of religion. According to him, “Religions are systems of meaning embodied in a pattern of life, a community of faith, and a worldview that articulate a view of the sacred and of what ultimately matters” (Schmidt 10). Ninian Smart has suggested seven dimensions for a better understanding of religion. These include ritual, narrative, experiential, doctrinal, ethical, social and material dimensions of religion (Smart 1-8). A particular group of people positing faith in a religion is expected to live in a certain way and to regard everything about life from a particular perspective. This particular religious tradition can be thought of as expressing a distinctive worldview or way of understanding reality and adherents of that tradition are expected to embrace that worldview.

At the heart of each religious worldview are some basic beliefs about the nature of the cosmos, the religious ultimate and the relation of humankind to this ultimate. Religious beliefs are significant, as Smart observes, for “the world religions owe some of their living power to their success in presenting a total picture of reality, through a coherent system of doctrines” (Smart 5). Religious believers are expected to accept the teachings of their tradition and to pattern their lives in accordance with such teachings.

Looking at Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, which will be discussed in this section, they all have a general believe in a life beyond the physical life. This non-physical life is the ultimate goal which is called Moksa, Nirvana, Salvation or Liberation from the world of death and decay

into the world of everlasting peace and joy. This attainment is not automatic; it is the reward of a person's conscious and earnest search. The search, according to the religions mentioned above, involves suffering, pain and struggles. Therefore, there are always the tempting tendencies for man to cling on to the immediate sensual pleasures. This will tarnish the path of search and blur the goal of the ultimate end. It will, then, deteriorate the relationship between man and his deity or object of his belief

Religions of the world are based on faith in the object of belief and all of them are Divine-human centric. Relationship between the Divine and His creatures, especially man, determines the consequence of man's life. God *is* there; but man is unstable. This is the reason why different religions of the world, especially those that will be dealt with in this paper, concentrate themselves on the ways of man, his fallibility and his possible redemption, depending on his action or karma. It is believed that all the major religions are more or less equally true and have effective ways of responding to the religious ultimate. No single religion can, therefore, claim legitimate superiority over other religions, in terms of truth or in relating appropriately to the divine.

Dealing with human affairs, along the line of faith and belief, there are concrete evidential proofs that show that human beings are caught in a predicament or other, from where extrication requires a strenuous and conscious effort. Christianity and Islam take human fallibility, sin and attachment to the world as the root cause of human predicament. Ignorance stands as a barrier to all forms of realizing the Self in Hinduism and Buddhism. All of these religions consider human beings as susceptible to the temptations of mundane life.

4.1. Hinduism

Hinduism is the predominant and indigenous religious tradition of the Indian Subcontinent. The religion is known to its followers as *San tana Dharma*, a Sanskrit phrase, meaning the eternal law that sustains, upholds and surely preserves amongst many other expressions. It also includes a wide spectrum of laws and prescriptions of daily morality based on the notion of karma, dharma, and societal norms. A great degree of freedom of belief and worship is granted to its followers.

Hinduism centres its concern on Brahman, *Atman* and *Moksa*. Human – Devine relationship occupies the nucleus of its recourse and activity. The *Vedas*, *The Upanishad* and the great epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, delineate the affairs of gods and human life in relation to the gods and the cosmos. A human individual is made to be deeply conscious of his essential karma and his inevitable destiny depending on his karma. The ultimate destiny is, basing on the karma, either to attain Moksa or to receive Samsara.

Believing in the immanence of the Ultimate, Hinduism is pantheistic. Therefore, it is natural that Hinduism denies the existence of any one exclusive way of reaching God. Brahman is infinite, omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent but He may appear differently in different forms. He is the Ultimate Reality, who is the Knower, Knowledge and Known. He is Attribute-less (*Nirguna*) and Attribute (*Saguna*). Therefore, the apparent conflicting views of God may be nothing more than the infinite aspects of the same Supreme.

Hinduism affirms that the world emerges out of Brahman, the impersonal Ultimate Reality. The sacred scriptures ultimately teach that the world not only emerges out of Brahman, but that the true Self just is Brahman.

The material world is taken as *Maya* (illusion) and Self, which ultimately is Brahman, is the only reality.

Human life, therefore, is taken as a journey towards the attainment of liberation. Since human beings are beset with senses, ignorance locks them up in the sensual world. Human beings take the unreal as real in his ignorance. Hinduism teaches that while living the earthly life, man considers the physical world as real and he gradually gets attached to the things of unreal because his desire endorses him to start craving for the things of transitory and impermanence. This veils the vision from seen the real, the Ultimate Supreme.

Hinduism offers a deep knowledge of existential predicament of human beings. Men are believed to be one and the same with Brahman but they get entangled with the material world due to ignorance. And *ayida*, which is the spiritual ignorance of our true nature, is taken by the Hindus to be the root cause of our suffering on the earth. When human beings are in a bondage to *ayida*, they experience aversion (*dvesha*), attachment (*raga*), self-centredness (*asmita*) and fear of death (*abhinivesha*) because they are clinging on to the physical life and mistakenly believing that our physical bodies are real and the sole identities. In *Bhagvat Gita*, we find that “Whoever perceives the supreme Lord to be the same in all beings, who recognizes the eternal one amidst those who appear to be dying, that person sees the truth” (*Bhagvat Gita* 13:27). Therefore, Hindus belief that ignorance of the Self and the Lord or Brahman would lock a person in the cycle of birth and rebirth or *samsara*.

To extricate oneself from *Samsara*, Hinduism recommends *Dharma*. This step requires a conscious and constant effort to fulfill the life’s purpose. It means doing what one is called to do; doing it ethically, purposefully and with the best ability. It calls for living the inner truth, which is the essence of one’s duty in life. Hinduism preaches the purpose of life to be gradually

achieving spiritual perfection, which is one's own divinity. The gradual achievement of spiritual perfection should be done by purifying the consciousness. One should move from ego to divinity. There is a need to strive, to continually focus on divinity and one's own real unity with that oneness. Since the divine is flawless, one will become an actual reflection of the divine, utterly perfect, without blemish or pain. This will enable a person to see divinity in everything. *Bhagavat Gita* has confirmed this Hindu faith: "Those who have realized the Self, see that same self equally in a humble scholar, a cow, a dog or dog-eaters" (Bhagavat Gita 5:18).

Existential predicament cannot be divorced from this self realization of the Self. Living the everyday life, however enlightened a person is, that person faces the daily reproaches of humaneness that prowls around as if to devour him, like a hungry lion roaring in hunger. *Bhagavat Gita* exhorts man to be vigilant and steadfast. It says, "If you perform the duties of your own nature imperfectly, that is no reason to abandon those duties and begin something else, for all your undertakings, at the outset, are enveloped by evil as smoke surrounds fire" (Bhagavat Gita 18:48).

Hinduism has envisaged such an existential truth of human condition. Amidst consolation of an assured liberation, man gets caught up in the cycle of birth and rebirth due to his ignorance and karma. It is the spiritual self which is responsible and accountable for all the choices taken. To understand deeper about Hinduism, Vedanta School of thought will be accounted; Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva's thoughts will be taken up for discussion.

4.1.1. Sankara

Sankara has considered *Dharma Marga* (The way of righteousness) and *Bhakti Marga* (The way of devotion) as possible paths to salvation. They are clearly considered to be subordinate to *Jnana Marga* (The way of

knowledge). The former two lead to a better *Samsara*, either in this world or in the world of gods. Therefore, “they are at best preparatory and cannot in and of themselves lead to complete spiritual liberation. For it is only through the discipline of *Jnana Marga* that one can find absolute liberation” (Netland 54). So, Sankara believes knowledge to be the key to liberation and, therefore, the source of the present predicament is ignorance, concerning the true nature of reality.

It is discernible from Sankara’s philosophy of *Jnana Marga* that suffering or painful life is primarily caused by ignorance. This ignorance keeps the individual in bondage and he gets into tussle with the world. All that is negative in the world, then, befall man. Man indulges himself in different activities which are divinely not approved. Man, therefore, lands himself up into a difficult situation from where extrication is difficult. This is the human predicament according to Sankara. Ignorance is the root cause of all human predicaments in this world, let alone the realization of Brahman.

Sankara has acknowledged two concepts of God or Brahman: *Saguna* Brahman or *Isvara*, is the God with qualities and *Nirguna* Brahman is the God without qualities. The former is thought of as the cause, creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. He is endowed with qualities like love, kindness, mercy and the like and, is worshipped by man with different names like Rama, Shiva or Krishna. He stands in relation to man and the world and, is a personal God. But qualities and relation can only belong to the realm of appearances and, therefore, *Saguna* Brahman is only God as appearance and not God as reality.

Solution to the confusion between the appearance and reality comes in *Nirguna* Brahman, God as reality. *Nirguna* Brahman is neither the cause nor creator nor sustainer nor the destroyer of the universe. He can neither be

prayed to nor be worshipped. He is *SAT*, *CIT*, *ANANDA*, meaning God as Pure Being, Pure Consciousness and Pure Bliss. Sankara has put forth that, only with respect to God as *Saguna* Brahman, one can talk about Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience and Omni benevolence and, accordingly, hold Him responsible for the good and evil appearances. Therefore, *Nirguna* Brahman serves the foundation for attaining the knowledge of reality. Detached from God, then, man will be inundated in ignorance, thereby, causing confusion and chaos in the world.

Sankara's theology affirms that the true Self is not the impermanent body-mind complex but rather the Atman. Atman is the eternal light of consciousness (*Cit*) that illuminates the mind but it is not itself the mind; rather it is the inner witness of the workings of mind and body. He has laid emphasis on the teaching of Hindu scriptures that this Atman is Brahman. Brahman is ultimately ineffable, but it can be characterized provisionally as the unchanging and infinite ground of the world. It is not a being among beings but is rather being itself (*Sat*). Precisely, this affirmation of the identity of Atman and Brahman qualifies Sankara's position as non-dualistic. Moreover, Sankara has laid down that only that which is everlasting and unchanging can be called truly real. By definition then, there is only one reality that qualifies as real in this absolute sense and that is Atman-Brahman. This is yet another strict non-dualism. The role of discipline in Advaita Vedanta is knowledge (*Jnana*) of the identity between one's true Self and Brahman. Only such transformative knowledge leads to liberation from *samsara*, the beginning-less cycle of birth and death.

Sankara has accounted the non-duality in which human beings are never other than Brahman. Nevertheless, he has also presented human predicament as marked by ignorance, desire and aversion. However, there is a possibility

of liberation while still living a mundane life because the true Self is Brahman. This is so, because human beings are never really at a remove from divinity and the true Self is Brahman and divine immanence occasions a radical hope for sanctification. As a result, one is assured of the possibility of attaining *Moksa*. But as it is given in *Jivanmukti*, which means while still alive physically, human beings experience and recognize that we suffer acutely and cause others to suffer as well. This physical experience causes doubt and fear in man. As a matter of fact, man gets inclined to lesser pain and more pleasurable experiences. This hinders the realization of Atman-Brahman union and ultimately causes *samsara* in man.

In the light of presenting human world, with all human experience of various sorts like suffering and pain, confusion and dilemma, Sankara cannot avoid positing a sharp duality between an unreal, but experienced world of flux, and a real and unchanging Brahman, which Nelson calls dualism of non-dualism (Nelson 61-88). But this conflicting perception does not eschew the real situation of man that is delineated by Sankara. The world of flux, caused by human ignorance, desire, aversion, suffering and pain, has deluded human beings to get disarrayed. This causes confusion, chaos and conflicts in society, making the condition of man all the more difficult.

4.1.2. Ramanuja

Ramanuja holds Brahman as the ultimate and the sole reality, like Sankara. But he deviates from Sankara by maintaining that the cosmos, the phenomenal world, is not illusory. Brahman is said to be an all-inclusive unity which includes within itself real ontological differences and destinations between both selves and the material world. The distinctions are objectively real, albeit they ultimately fall within the one inclusive reality, the all-encompassing Brahman. Thus, the material world and material individual self

are regarded as the body of Brahman, created by Brahman out of His own creative Being. Just as a human self animates a human body, so also Brahman is the Higher Self underlying the individual human self. Sankara's view of dualism, that each individual self is ultimately identical with the one Self, Brahman, is clearly rejected by Ramanuja, who maintained, instead, that individual selves are objectively real and eternal.

Ramanuja's primary concern is to argue for the legitimacy of the way of theistic devotion. He holds *bhakti marga* as an effective means of salvation (Netland 54). For him *Samsara* and *Karma* are objectively real. In this sense, he is more akin to the existential considerations than Sankara who is more akin to rational spiritualism. His path to *Moksa* requires devout meditation of the worshiper; *jnana* alone was inadequate for liberation. In such a release, the individual self is not completely absorbed into the higher self but maintains its own consciousness of blissful devotion to the Lord. Thus, while accepting much of the broader structure of Sankara's thought, Ramanuja turns his soteriology upside down; it is devout worship and not knowledge alone which produces a release (Neville 55).

Ramanuja holds Brahman to be unity-in-difference. Unlike Sankara's teaching, he holds that Brahman is not quality-less and undifferentiated pure Being but is with real qualities. The three essential qualities of Brahman are *Satyam* (reality), *Jnanam* (Consciousness) and *Anantam* (Infinite). He has maintained that Brahman is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. Similar to Christian belief, God creates the world out of His will. He has created the universe not out of nothing. Since selves and matter are co-existent with God, creation means, God's bringing about the world of variety and multiplicity, which is potentially present in Him. God wills Himself to be many and divide Himself into the manifold of the animate.

In the creation, God has manifested Himself as selves and material objects. The kind of body a self receives depends upon its Karma. Ramanuja's conception of creation and existence of man is similar to Christian concept. God gives every individual self freedom of will and, therefore, He is not responsible for its good or evil deeds and Karma. Man, as a result, is wholly responsible for his state of existence. Ramanuja has maintained that evil in the world cannot be traced to God who is the embodiment of all the positive virtues in highest perfection. It is clear from this consideration that unlike Sankara, Ramanuja has rejected complete identity of man with God. Man is identical with God only in the sense that God pervades and controls the whole universe.

4.1.3. Madhva

Madhva, whose view defines the *Dvaita* of Dualist School of Vedanta, reacted even more strongly against the Monism of Sankara than Ramanuja. For this school of thought, Brahman, individual souls and the material world are objectively real and are clearly distinguished from one another. Although, Brahman, ultimately, is the only independent reality, the world and individual selves are also eternal and are not created by Him, albeit there is a sense in which they are dependent upon Brahman.

Madhva has advocated devotion to Vishnu and held that "there are three cloves of souls. The first clove includes those who are devoted to God alone and are destined to attain liberation. The second cloves are those who will never attain liberation but are destined to perpetual rebirth and finally those who reject Vishnu and are thus subject to damnation" (Netland 55).

Within Vedanta school of thought, varied views are advanced regarding the nature of the cosmos and its relation to Brahman and, the way to attain liberation from *Samsara* and karma. Such differences of views, on basic

issues, within a major school of Hinduism, to say nothing of the sharp differences between the broader Hindu traditions themselves, is frequently regarded by non-Hindus as evidence of fundamentally internal inconsistency within Hinduism. But such diversity is not an immediate concern and the diversity, on the other hand, is also not necessarily problematic by Hindus themselves. The major concern of speculation and discussion is the essential Hindu thought of the general assumption that there are many ways of approaching God. One can approach Him through knowledge (*Jnana*), proper action (*Karma*) or devotion (*Bhakti*). Each is in its own way legitimate and effective.

All the Hindu thinkers accept the fact of ignorance and *Samsara* as the cause of preventing human beings from attaining *Moksa*. Another concept of human suffering propelled by Hindu thinkers is that, it is the desire in man that makes the world and its material beings so dear to him. Therefore, the unreal is considered real. This is the predicament of man and he is responsible for been chained in the cycle of birth and rebirth.

4.2. Christianity

Christianity believes in the doctrine of creation. “God created the universe” (*Genesis* 1:1) and before creation there was God and, with the Word of God (*1John* 1:1-2) everything in the universe came into being. This doctrine of *Ex Nihilo* makes theologians speculate at providing robust answers, which, on the one hand, proves the power of the Almighty and, on the other hand, to make the created human convinced. Man, having received life and started living his being in the Garden of Eden, began to show his fragile humanity despite the presence of his providential and watchful Creator. This shows that the creator and the creature live in relationship but man is beset with his will and freedom to accept or reject this rapport. Through this

admission, it is clear that man requires an unequivocal placing of faith in his Creator. This entails that when man is misguided or is self-absorbed, then, the faith is placed in other people, status, wealth, power or notoriety. Misplaced faith, therefore, causes man's life to become unmanageable. So, to live securely while still alive and to attain salvation, after the physical being ends the mortal life, man has to rely on his Creator as it is revealed in St. John's gospel: "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (*John* 15:5).

A traditional Christian commits itself to positing a radical and relatively impermeable separation between the creator and creature. The doctrine of creation, which appears to erect an unbridgeable chasm between God and the world, stands in sharp contrast with Hindus' commitment to non-duality, especially the *Advaitins*. In this context, one is tempted to think that those who live in a postcolonial globalizing world, the world of Rushdie and postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha, may speak of "multiple religious identities and hybridity, but when it comes to theology, there can be no blurring of lines, no crossing of boundaries" (Bhabha 4). Inter-religious dialogue, on the other hand, has developed a way to converge various theological ideas. Theological anthropologists have shown the way out by presenting the divine as immanent in the universe.

Intimately related to the question of divine immanence is the matter that concerns theological anthropology. Christian tradition posits not only a sharp distinction between God and His creatures but also insists upon the fallibility and sinfulness of human beings. The doctrine of original sin has maintained that human beings are radically broken and diseased; therefore, they are veiled from realizing the good, apart from receiving divine healing through faith. It is in God that all comfort, healing, and resting are found. St. Mathew's gospel presents the affectionate invitation of God: "Come to Me, all who are weary

and heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (*Mathew* 11:28). But God never forces His will upon His creatures. Creatures have the free will to determine their action and destiny. St. John’s gospel affirms this: “If you abide in Me and My word abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you” (*John* 15:7). This confirms the free will of man. God offers Himself and His grace to man, but it is the will of man, to accept or reject, and this determines the flow of God’s graces into him. The above quotation also accounts a deep underlying unity between humanity and divinity. The only barrier that tarnishes the close tie is man’s will to cling on to worldly pleasures.

Clinging on to the worldly things and craving for whatever is physical and, ignoring the spirituality is held as opposing the teachings of God. Man is forfeited the reward of heaven because of sin. Christians accept the reality of sin; an action deviating from the ways of God. Man has fallen short of the graces of God due to his sinful ways but it is the mercy of God that He has revealed Himself in Christ for the salvation of man. St. Paul’s Letter to the Hebrews says:

In the past, God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us through His Son (Jesus Christ). He is the one through whom God created the universe, the one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end. He reflects the brightness of God’s glory and is the exact likeness of God’s own being, sustaining the universe with his powerful word. After achieving forgiveness for the sins of mankind, he sat down in heaven at the right-hand side of God, the Supreme Power (*Hebrews* 1:1-4).

God, the Supreme Power, is a merciful God who has humbled down to the level of man in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Salvation is a gift of God's grace and is possible only because of the unique person and work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Sinful human beings are saved by God's grace through repentance of sin and faith. Thus, Jesus Christ is the one Saviour and Lord for all people at all times. But there is a clear specification about an individual's choice of abiding by the offer of God's grace and gift of salvation: while God's love and mercy are extended to all, salvation is limited to those who repent and accept by faith in God's providential love through Jesus Christ. St. Peter has said: "Salvation is to be found through Him (Jesus Christ) alone; in all the world there is no one else whom God has given who can save us" (*Acts* 4:12). Jesus Christ has responded to a question from His apostle Thomas by stating, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one goes to the Father except by me" (*John* 14:6). Timothy has echoed a monotheistic notion when he said, "For there is one God, and there is who brings God and mankind together, the man Christ Jesus" (*1 Timothy* 2:5).

The particularity of the Christian gospel has always rendered difficulty for many to comprehend and accept the faith. It was widely accepted in the ancient Mediterranean world that the same deity could take on various forms, like the God of Hindus, and be called by different names in different cultures. According to historian Robert Wilken, "The oldest and most enduring criticism of Christianity is an appeal to religious pluralism...All the ancient critics of Christianity were united in affirming that there is no one way to the divine" (Wilken 27). It is within this context of religious syncretism and relativism that we find the New Testament of the *Bible* putting forward Jesus Christ as the one Saviour for all people. Within this consensus of a Saviour, available for all, there is the true nature of man. Man continues to sin and disobey God's commandments. Christianity accepts the fact that the flesh is

weak though the spirit is willing (*Mark* 14:38) to turn to the side of God and be saved. This is the human predicament delineated in the Christian ethics. Another difficulty faced by the creatures is the desire to hold on to the flesh and make use of God-given abilities in ways that attempt to be egoistic.

This sinful nature of man contrasts with the ever merciful nature of God. To dismiss this notion of paradox, Christian faith posits that man receives his reward from God according to his deeds. This entails the notion of hell and heaven. Heaven or salvation is gracefully offered to man but it is man who can decide to accept and live according to the plan of God or reject the offer by living a life of concupiscence, selfishness, lust and all that is against God.

To understand Christian theology deeper, Paul Tillich, a modern Christian Existentialist, has been considered here for discussion. Some important aspects of his theology will only be discussed to serve our purpose in this thesis.

4.2.1. Paul Tillich

He is a twentieth century existentialist theologian, who best understood that the time had come to formulate a Christian theology and worked it out in dialogue with the history of religions. Tillich has vigorously announced and championed God's immanence in the world in Christian tradition. His theology amounts to a twentieth century distillation of the history of Christian mystical theology. He is deeply indebted to mystical theology even though he doubts that mystical experience can offer an adequate religious solution to problems of the human predicament.

Like Sankara, Tillich has characterized divinity, not as an infinite being among beings but rather as being-itself, that which gives being to all beings but is not itself one of those beings. A striking point about Tillich is "his

radical claim that it would be truer to say that God does not exist than to say that God does” (Tillich 1951, 205). Rationally, then, beings exist and are determinate. To utter that God does not exist is to mean that God is not a determinate being but rather is the source of being for all that exists. He believes that encountering this God is a matter of recognition and not by chance. He has stated that “man discovers himself when he discovers God; he discovers something that is identical with himself although it transcends him indefinitely, something from which he is estranged, but from which he never was and never can be separated” (Tillich 1959, 10).

Tillich is anti-dualistic and beholds that any conception of divinity, imagining Him to be a supra-natural being or deity who can and does regularly intervene from without into natural networks of causation, is supra-naturalistic. This is problematic for a relatively straightforward recourse, most especially because it is not only utterly incompatible with science but also because it puts God in the position of regularly disrupting the “inviolability of the created structures of the finite” (Tillich 2:6). At the same time, conceiving God as a Being who is against the world is dualistic and raises weighty philosophical problems. This is a challenge because it “transforms the infinity of God into a finiteness which is merely an extension of the categories of finitude” (Ibid). The God of dualism is an entity who resides in heaven, acts in time, causally interacts with other beings, and is one substance in the universe that proves to be more encompassing than God is. Thatamanil has opined that “precisely this desire to avoid so unworthy a conception of God drives Tillich to insist that God is better regarded as the creative ground of being rather than as a supra-natural deity” (Thatamanil 19).

The conception of God as an item in the world definitely will make the world go topsy-turvy. Tillich’s ebullient brain foresees the possible

misconception which will derange man's understanding of the true power and holiness of God. To make matters clearer, he has considered the notion of distance between the creatures and the creator. He has posited a distance between God and His creatures for phenomenological reasons. In any encounter with the holy, human beings experience the holy as that which exceeds them utterly. Here the word distance is a figure for the sheer depth and awe-inspiring of the God who is encountered (Tillich 2:7).

This notion of distance that is applied to the creatures and the creator entails the idea of freedom. In the human-divine encounter, the meaning of distance is not from the side of divinity but from the side of humanity. Therefore, distance here bespeaks of human estrangement from the divine life. It also entails freedom of both the human and divine. Tillich's conception implies the mutual freedom of God and creatures. Therefore, we can perceive from his concept that distance and freedom are not the terms which suggest that God is elsewhere or that a creature is ever at an antic remove from God. But to be is to be sustained in being by the God who is being-itself.

Whatever may be the notion of distance, Tillich has maintained that God is always radically present to the creatures. The heart of his thought process is that, in spite of the realistic independence and freedom of human beings, they have no being apart from God. Thatamanil has summarized Tillich's notion of human existence in the following words: "when human beings exercise their freedom in separation it leads, ultimately, to estrangement, characterized by unbelief, hubris and concupiscence, of the human predicament" (Thatamanil 20-21). Human beings take mundane life as the *a priori* in this process of exercising their freedom. The separated creatures, getting estranged from their Creator through freedom, make

themselves centers of their own lives and then attempt to draw everything else into that center.

Tillich also believes that theology has been helped immensely by existentialism and psychoanalysis. They have offered theology an important contribution concerning estranged existence. In his essay *The Theological Significance of Psychoanalysis and Existentialism*, he has argued that psychoanalysis belongs to the general currents of existentialist thought. He has accepted estrangement as a serious issue that man combats with in earthly life, but disagreed with Marx with regard to the notion that we can isolate a specific cause of estrangement. We can never get rid of the entire dilemma of estrangement by isolating the cause of class conflict and by eliminating that specific problem. For Tillich, “such a hopeful belief is utopian nonsense. Therefore, all naturalistic anthropologies, which seek to identify the fundamental, finite cause of human estrangement, are doomed to fail” (Tillich 1995, 67). If so then, for a solution to human estranged existence, one has to transcend beyond our predicament. There is no one particular aspect of human predicament. In this regard, Tillich has aligned himself with neo-Freudian and humanistic psychologists as well as Marxists who believe that estrangement can be overcome by human effort.

Finally, Tillich has discerned that psychoanalysis and existentialism share a common platform of revolting against the philosophy of consciousness. Existentialism and psychoanalysis delve into the deepest crevice of human beings’ life and their thought, while philosophy of consciousness, on the other hand, takes human thought at the face value. As a result, the actual human predicament is left with unsolvable dilemma at the end. So, Tillich believes that to get into the core of human estrangement or human nature, existentialism and psychoanalysis are indispensable.

4.3. Buddhism

Buddhism thinks of the human predicament in terms of bondage to *Samsara*, the cycle of birth and rebirth, characterized by a pervasive suffering or dissatisfaction. If *Samsara* is a disease, it needs a cure. The need for overcoming the human predicament is not simply improvement of one's lot within *Samsara*, but an escape or complete liberation from *Karma* and *Samsara*. This is possible through the elimination of *Tanha*, which means desire, thirst or crave. To accomplish this, strict adherence to the Noble Eightfold Path is necessary. Together with this, Right View is an indispensable tool, which involves having an accurate understanding of the nature of the cosmos. In other words, the key to eliminating desire, thirst and craving is the denial of any enduring, substantial self. By doing so, one can be released from *Samsara* and attain *Nirvana*.

Buddhism investigates deeply into the human nature and accepts the real presence and concrete experience of suffering in human life. It believes that suffering has an origin and cessation, and indicates that there is a path to follow, to bring suffering to an end. This tradition recognizes that suffering is a reality of human experience. Buddhist's canonical tradition provides the following account of the Buddha's first sermon:

The Noble Truth of suffering (*Dukkha*) is this: Birth is suffering; aging is suffering; sickness is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering, association with the unpleasant is suffering; dissociation from the pleasant is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering – in brief. The five aggregate of attachment are suffering. The Noble Truth of the origin of suffering is this: It is this thirst (craving) which produces re-existence and re-becoming, bound up with passionate greed. It

finds fresh delight now here and now there, namely, thirst for sense-pleasures; thirst for existence and becoming; and think for non-existence (self-annihilation)...The Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of suffering is this: It is simply the Noble Eightfold Path, namely right view; right thought; right speech; right action; right livelihood; right effort; right mindfulness; right concentration... (Neville 50-51).

The Noble Truth is the guiding principle for the Buddhists to lead their lives until the attainment of *Nirvana*. Life is full of *dukkha* according to this tradition and it has a cause. Craving for what we don't have, for more of what we desire and attachment to these both causes suffering. This attachment is due to ignorance of man and this ignorance gives rise to inordinate desires and cravings which create the condition for *dukkha*. *Majjhima Nikaya* also confirms that "Birth is suffering; sickness is suffering; death is suffering...not to obtain what one wants is suffering" (*Majjhima Nikaya* 9.15). These existential realities of man come from holding the world so dear. As it is stated in the Second Noble Truth, man's suffering is due to his ceaseless desire for physical pleasure. According to Buddhism, this comes from human predicament, called ignorance of the Truth. *Majjhima Nikaya* has clearly stated the same: "It is craving which is accompanied by delight and lust that is craving for sensual pleasures" (*Majjhima Nikaya* 9.16).

Buddhism sees human beings with multiple problems. The Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Paths are the tools to set man free from all divine abhorrence. The Third Noble Truth offers the way to get rid of the human craving and attachment to all things in life that are impermanent, unsatisfying and without eternal substance. Man cannot experience *Nirvana* or bliss until he lets go of his clinging nature.

This religion presents the existential nature of man comprehensively. In the Right Speech, Buddha has taught that words and speeches have the potential to create and to heal as well as to harm and produce chaos. *Anguttara* states that a person is a true Buddhist if

He avoids slanderous speech and abstains from it. What he has heard here he does not repeat there, so as to cause dissension there; and what he has heard there he does not repeat here, so as to cause dissension here. Thus he unites those that are divided; and those that are united he encourages. Concord gladdens him, he delights and rejoices in concord; and it is concord that he spreads by his words (*Anguttara* 10.176).

Thought manifests itself as words and words in turn get manifest in deeds which will develop into habit and finally habits get harden into character. Therefore, Buddha has advised the Buddhists to maintain right intention, the intention of renunciation or detachment, the intention of good will and the intention of harmlessness. Right view also entails the link between action and intention. As a matter of fact, generosity, virtuousness, renunciation, karma and the Four Noble Truths should be the foundation for all human affairs. It is apparent that Buddhism views the human nature realistically. It is a pragmatic approach to mend the twists and turns of human nature.

The basic tenets of Buddhism, on ethical existence, are found in the five precepts. In the first precept, it is given that we abstain from killing any being, be it people, animal or all living creatures. Safety should be given to all beings without discrimination. We should abstain from taking things which have not been given freely to us because things not given freely belong to someone else. The third precept says that we should abstain from sexual misconduct

which is defined as sexual abuse, extramarital affairs and sexual relationships with those who are underage. In simple terms, no sexual harm should be caused to anybody. The essence of Buddhist practice is to seek the truth. And the fourth precept states rightly that we should abstain from lying. Finally, the fifth precept speaks about abstaining from intoxicants. This is to prevent any potential harm to others and ourselves. In short, these five precepts emphasize the potential human nature of causing destruction.

4.4. Islam

Islam is monotheistic and it takes Allah as the only one True God and Saviour. Every action of man should be guided by Allah's words given in *The Quran*. This sacred scripture frequently depicts unbelievers as having hearts which are diseased. This belief is in alignment with the medical model of addiction. It also aligns with the fundamental belief that those who do not have spirituality in their life, experience disease for which they continually seek external means of fulfillment. In Islam, Allah provides the solution, which is submission to His will.

Like the Christian belief, Islam understands and accepts the fallibility of man. It is this fallibility of man that makes Allah to be merciful. It is in His mercy that He has offered heaven and salvation for His creatures. Like Christian belief, repentance of man will open the way for receiving the eternal reward. The weak nature of man makes him commit sin and offend Allah. The reward for sin is hell but repentance from sin is awarded with heaven as its abode after death. *The Quran* mentions:

The avarice of plenitude keeps you occupied

Till you reach the grave.

But you will come to know soon.

And yet if you knew with positive knowledge

You have indeed to behold Hell;
Then you will see it with the eye of certainty.
Then on that day you will surely be asked about the verity of
pleasures (*The Quran* 102:1-8).

Sin is the greatest predicament of man for attaining unity with God because God is all pure but man is impure due to his sin. To attain this unity, man should not confound the truth with falsehood, or knowingly conceal the truth. This will enable a person to get rid of sin and falsehood. Muslims wholeheartedly believe that Allah will show them the path to liberation and salvation. “God guides to the right path whomever He wants” (2:213). However, it requires that each person makes his spiritual path and work for a lifetime. The results are not up to God, but a combination of God’s mercy and man’s right actions. “Those who seek the protection of God will certainly be guided to the right path” (3:101). The path is described by Allah as an uphill path and it outlines the required works like freeing people in bondage, helping those in need and feeding the poor. Those who obey Allah will be successful: “But the Prophet and those who have embraced the faith with Him, and have fought wealth and soul (in the way of God), are blessed and will be successful” (9:88).

Submission to the will of God is a supreme act of an *Iman*. A complete submission to the will of God includes belief, profession and full commitment to Allah’s will. *Iman* has two aspects: recognizing and affirming that there is only one Creator of the universe and worshipping only this Creator. According to Islamic thought, this comes naturally because faith is an instinct of the human soul. The other aspect is willingness and a commitment to Allah and His prescriptions for living. An *Iman*’s work is to help the unbelievers and to follow what is given in *The Quran*:

Tell them:

“O people of the Book,

Let us come to an agreement on that which is common between us,

That we worship no one but God,

And make none His peer,

And that none of us take any others for lord apart from God.”

If they turn away you will tell them;

“Bear witness that we submit to Him” (3:64).

Like the other major religions of the world, Islam too preaches a righteous living. Righteousness is a commitment to acting in accordance with the will of Allah. Specifically, it means living one’s life with a sense of justice, equality and fairness. It encompasses a generosity of spirit and deeds, reaching out to those in need, maintaining one’s inner strength to stand firm against the powers of evil and carefully fulfilling one’s duty each day. It is obedience to the Law of Islam. But as man gets contaminated with the evil ways of the world, he fails. Failure to be obedient to Allah contaminates his body and mind and, as a result, he needs purification. *Rak’at* or cleansing ritual precedes prayer. These preparations, known as *wudu*, are obligatory if water is available. It is believed that Allah only hears the prayers if only one is physically clean:

O believers, when you stand up for the service of prayer

Wash your faces and hands up to elbows,

and also wipe your heads

and wash your feet up to the ankles.

If you are in a state of pollution,

Then bathe and purify yourself well.

But in case you are ill or are travelling,

Or have satisfied the call of nature,
or have slept with a woman,
and you cannot find water,
then take wholesome dust and pass it over your face and your hands,
for God does not wish to impose any hardships on you.
He wishes to purify you,
And grace you with His favours in full
So that you may be grateful (5:6).

The God of Islam understands His creatures' physical nature. He disciplines His children through fasting, as it is instructed in their scripture. "O believers, fasting is enjoined on you as it was on those before you, so that you might become righteous" (2:183). Fasting is performed by Muslims in obedience to Allah and it helps them learn the practices of discipline and self-restraint. It also clears the mind and the body and, readies it for an open and receptive communication with Allah through prayer and meditation.

The body of Islamic law, as a whole, is known as *Shariá*, which means path. According to Islam, this is a divinely appointed path explicitly laid out for humanity to follow in order to attain salvation. It has two primary sources, *The Quran* and *The Sunna*. *The Sunna* is significant for the spirituality of Islam because it teaches Muslims about how Muhammad acted during his life. It also addresses the ways of life, dealing with friends, family and government. In order to live in integrity with the law, it is necessary to understand the five categories of acts. They are Obligatory acts, Prohibited acts, Recommended acts, Undesirable acts and Permissible acts. The *Quran* states: "Do not strut about the land with insolence: Surely you cannot cleave the earth, nor attain the height of mountains in stature. All these are evil and odious to you Lord" (17:37-38).

Islam strongly recommends a community life and the sense of solidarity, shared by Muslims, is highly valued. They view themselves as a community (*umma*) who share their belief in Allah; they value their spiritual kinship and their own individual freedom. Any attempt, therefore, by anybody to sabotage this close tie causes a great stir. Muslims cannot tolerate any individual or group or community endeavoring to break down their community spirit.

Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) has the ultimate benefit of receiving forgiveness for one's sins. The actual events of Hajj heighten a person's consciousness of God and create a sense of spiritual fulfillment. Muhammad had promised that those who perform the Hajj will return from it as a newly born baby implying a freedom from sin. The pilgrimage to Mecca, to visit the *Ka'aba*, is a life time goal of every Muslim. It is one of the five pillars or requirements of the faith. The journey is taken as purification.

4.5. Concluding Observation

The major religions of the world, that had been discussed, pose great concern for the ethical behavior of man. Spiritual life, though, is the prime goal of all religions, it is the life and action of man that will determine the destiny. Hindu belief of Brahman as the One Ultimate Reality echoes Buddhist's belief in the One and only Truth which Buddha teaches. Both Christianity and Islam take God as one and the savior of the world. The latter two traditions take sin as the barrier that stands between God and man. Heaven is assured to those who believe in God, obey his commands and live the life according to the law of the religion. The former two, on the other hand, takes the Ultimate Truth as the God. Realization of the Self is the realization of the Ultimate One. This realization will finally reward a person

with *Moksa* or Nirvana or Liberation which will end the predicament of man caused by *Samsara*.

In all the four religions, the major point of concern is human beings and the earthly existence. Hinduism and Buddhism take ignorance as the stumbling block towards actual progress in life. It is the desire which fetters man from moving further in the realization of truth. Christianity and Islam take physical weakness of man in yielding to the temptation of sin as the greatest barrier which denies man of all necessary peace and joy of life.

All the religions, in discussion, have taken desire and freedom as real aspects which bring negative experiences in life. Attachment to the physical pleasures causes much of human strife and misunderstanding and, it brings conflict in human society. These are the major concerns in relation to the existential problems faced by man, however spiritually based life is.

5. Human Predicament and Asif Currimbhoy

Currimbhoy has considered human predicament as a “survival” struggle (*IQ* 81). There is a tendency for everyone to strive in life, a prodigious strive contemplating the “philosophical realization of self-consciousness” (Solomon 238). It is not for a realization that leads to Nietzsche and Sartre’s nihilism, exclaiming that traditional values no longer exist today because God and tradition have been executed by man (Nietzsche 1954, 95). On the contrary, the playwright’s endeavouring dream is that there is an objective individual struggle in life which is battered with existential issues of meaning, purpose and value of life. Therefore, he has desired that in any action “the means has to be as important as the end, must be ethical” (*AEWT* 15).

Ethical issue looms large in Currimbhoy’s world and in this world, there is no absolute truth in life but only subjective truth, which is echoed by Soren Kierkegaard that pursuers of meaning, purpose and value in life endeavour

with subjective truth which Solomon holds it as “a psychological truth” (Solomon 75). The dramatist believes in the reality of this subjective and chaotic world of man, enmeshed in struggles. It is chaotic because every individual finds himself in the cocoon of his world, struggling to carve out his position in society or striving to reach his destiny. Through this arduous journey of life, part of our “essential life” “dies everyday” (*MLA* 36).

The dramatist’s view of life comprehensively encompasses social, political and religious affairs of man. He has dealt with this life through psychological, rational and spiritual speculations. Human life is not a fantasy but a concrete reality, which is streaked with existential problems and dilemmas. These difficulties cross every person’s life and renders man to be in a predicament or the other. This great existential problem of human predicament, which is found in the select plays of Currimbhoy, will be discussed under various sub-topics.

5.1. Predicament of living in an Imaginary World

The potential in man, for higher dreams, leads him to strive hard in life. Holding hostage to this potentialities and embarking on uncertainties calls for a serious and faithful introspection. Currimbhoy’s worldview anchors on flinging of the selfish self and transcending the tangible physical world. Rising above the cocoon of self-centeredness will unfetter the wrong vision of life. Human life, shrouded in uncertainties, will see the light of certainty only when the cocoon of selfishness bursts because one “can’t change the fortune to suit (your) one’s needs” (*MLA* 15).

Manubhai is “locked in the death struggle” (36) due to his refusal to look into his conscience (39). There is a conspicuous stubborn attitude in him to use “violence...as a means to an end” (*Ibid*). He willfully takes recourse to violence and corrupt means. Therefore, his ‘will’ becomes greater than his

destiny (37). Nolan Pliny and Jacobson have opined that “man develops and matures his potentialities only as he expresses himself objectively; yet, on the other hand, potentialities for new growth emerge only as he releases his preoccupation with powers already matured” (Pliny 245). Manubhai’s preoccupation is his will and this has led him to humiliate the Vice Chancellor and Minister for Social Welfare (*MLA* 14). Therefore, neither the astrologer nor his mentor can reason with him convincingly and rectify his selfish and evil motive. His innate human potential is in fetters and, therefore, he cannot transcend his selfish ego (54). As a result, he is utterly lost and alienated from the sources of his emerging good.

Jennie, like Manubhai, is lost in the ideal world of her own but, unlike Manubhai, she gets back to the past and longs for the irretrievable. Currimbhoy has dealt with this theory of impossible possibilities to bring home the idea of unproductive life. Jennie has unproductively spent her energy by constantly going back to the past; not to derive something good out of it but only to brood over the lost past. Her possible action of romantically getting lost in the past memories also contains a sheer impossible task of concretely getting into the past physically. She has uttered, “I know I shouldn’t but I keep dreaming of the old times” (*DT* 11). This shows that she is attached to her past glorious days and detests the present, which offers her old age and waning beauty. She feels rootless and she is just a-been-to. Her continuous brooding over the lost times has been consuming her vigour, which is needed for the present life. She said, “...And now I think of home...and the awful loneliness here...in the midst of these incredibly beautiful hills” (*Ibid*). She is locked between the past and the future; the past grips her tightly and the future has no promises for her in India. Therefore, the dramatist depicts clearly that Jennie’s psychological predicament has made

her to live a fruitless life and this has eaten up the essential grace and cheerfulness needed to enliven her present life.

The playwright has shown that the desire for continuing to live in a pleasurable youthful life has created a psychologically difficult situation for Jennie. She is defiant and annoyed at her advancing age and waning beauty. She told Sally, “Oh, my dear, who does not regret loss of youth...even if one were really queen” (14). The dramatist has hammered on the theory of flow of time to show that no living creature can escape the advancement of age. Participating in the flow of time is the great leveler for all human beings. Sally and Jennie have exposed their minds and hearts in the following dialogue:

Sally: Oh, the mad things we did, Jen. Remember when we first came here? Slim, pretty brides of twenty, marrying the, oh, so-romantic outdoor planter...the long sea voyage to this far-away place.

Jennie: (*Musing*) Yes, we were queens in these plantations. The white *memsahibs* of the fearful planters who held absolute authority. (*Voice hardening to reality*) Twenty years later it all seems a sham, Sally.

Sally: You...you don't regret it, do you, Jen?

Jennie: (*A bitter smile*) Regret? Oh, my dear, who does not regret loss of youth...even if one were really queen. And the men there Sally, ours the very best he-men in the world, somehow seem pathetically out-dated today. And us, Sally, we sit and wait, drying up inside, getting older, unable to face this horrible loneliness any further...

Sally: (*Reproachfully*) Jen, sometimes I just don't understand you?
(13-14).

Life is inevitably moving forward but Jennie rebels against this flow of time because she cannot halt herself from advancing in age. She is inundated in the thought of her glorious youthful days and, therefore, at an advanced age, everything seems to be worthless for her. Even the very best he-men in the world she has married seems pathetically out-dated now. The inescapable old age and the loss of youth have caused an irreconcilable regret in her. Longing for the glorious past and getting lost into it mentally by neglecting the present has sabotaged Jennie. Therefore, the dramatist believes that refusal to accept the reality of life will make a person sit and wait, drying up inside, getting older and unable to face the painful loneliness any further.

The author believes that feeling nostalgic about the past and ignoring the present makes life miserable. Jennie has “suffered from that nostalgia” (25). She has ignored the most essential aspect of living a fruitful and happy life; “facing the now – one that only needs to be revitalized” (Ibid). She feels “somewhat different” and “cut off from the other women” (22) by self-pitying and taking refuge in her own self. She becomes a loner even while living amongst other people. When she asked her husband, “Is there something wrong with me, with me, Mac?” (Ibid), like many questions, the answer is contained in the question itself. Her predicament has sucked her day and night like a leech sucking the essential part of life through the blood. Even the play within the play could not pull her out from her predicament. The play “by itself means nothing...but as a trigger, a release, a memory, a promise...” (22). It has the essential vitamins to re-invigorate and make her rethink about the meaning, purpose and value of her life and, thereby, propel her to envisage the preciousness of an advancing age. Nevertheless, she has failed to imbibe

the precious value of the play because she is inebriated in her fanciful world. As a result, it only served as a momentary promise of a lightening joy that did not stay long. Therefore, she has always attempted an escape from her painful world because she is tightly gripped with the fear of “what will happen when it’s all over” (26). This has made her life “more restless than ever” (Ibid). Her life is fettered in despondency and, therefore, she feels alienated even in the presence of her husband and companions.

Currimbhoy has presented a more severe case of nostalgia through the character of Joseph in *This Alien...Native Land*. Joseph broods over the past failure but does nothing to convalesce from this mistake. The conversation between Joseph and his daughter speaks volumes about the regret and inner pain of Joseph:

Joseph: Jerusalem. Oh, Sarah, Sarah, Jerusalem. I wonder if we made a wrong decision of not going there, child. You were a child then, clinging on to me...See how this city has grown. I...I can’t cope with it... (*His rocking become a little more agitated*)

Sarah: (*Taking back his pipe, replacing his burnt-out tobacco*) Jerusalem would have grown too. Remember...it was a long time ago...

Joseph: But not like here...Here it’s dirty and filthy and...and...ingrown. There it’s the wide spaces...and a new life... (*TANL 12-13*).

The playwright has used the rocking chair to symbolically indicate the inner functioning of Joseph. His lost past and failure are expressed in his agitated rocking of the chair. He feels the ill effects of taking the wrong decision of not going to Jerusalem and staying back in India. This regret has

kept him bound to the rocking chair without being able to courageously resolve the mistake and decisively moving forward. As a result, he has being drained out of his essential manly vigour to carry on with his life. This is well exposed in his own words when he said, “while I weary underneath...ageing...with a feeble heart” (14). Joseph never dared to commission himself for a fruitful and evolutionary future. The dramatist has conveyed his vision of life, through this, that those who do not have dreams and missions in life are doomed to fail and suffer.

5.2. The Predicament of Pull and Push factor in Man

The dramatist believes that alienation and fear make a person to be eternally in the whirlpool of wanting and fearing the same thing. Eva Pierrakos has observed that “Man’s greatest struggle and greatest conflict is his desire to overcome isolation and loneliness while, at the same time, fearing relationship and close, intimate contact with another being” (Pierrakos <<http://www.awakeningtruth.org>>). In *An Experiment with Truth*, the author has presented an ideal person who desired sensual relationships, yet feared the temptation of falling into such relationships. Gandhiji feels lonely after the death of his wife, yet fears an intimate relationship with other persons to fill the vacuum. He said, “Though I always...and yet never...walked alone, the loneliness I felt after Ba’s death never left me...” (AEWT 57). He has yielded to the temptation of his sensuous weakness several times but he has always struggled with the consequential fear. “After almost forty years of practicing *brahmacharya* and abstinence, I was shaken to find my weakness still there” (58), “...of my succumbing to the desire I thought no longer existed in my being” (59). There is a simultaneous pulling and pushing forces in him. The dramatist has cognized the struggle that is so fierce in man and presents that

both desire and fear are, often, equally strong that man either surrenders to the more palatable thing and sacrifice the other or stays locked up in the lock jam.

The human predicament of desire for and fear of closeness is likened by Currimbhoy to Issac Newton's third rule which states that "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction" (Cannon <<http://www.mindbodygreen.com>>). In human relation, when the dichotomy of desire and fear rules a person simultaneously, the push and pull factors will be strong enough to out-crush each other and there will be a tug of war. Senhora fears closeness with the "coloured people" (*GOA* 37) and she even abhors them, considering them as "dirty" (*Ibid*) but, at the same time, she initiates closeness of relation with Krishna, an Indian (63-64). In the face of desiring sensuous pleasure, she has played the role of an initiator and Krishna, an Indian, becomes a meek prey to her sensuousness. She is an opportunist and befriends Krishna to gratify her sexual appetite (59-60). So, when she desires something, she, at the same time, fears close relationship with the same object and her predicament is present in this respect. Her disturbances, disharmonies and sufferings can be brought down to this simple common denominator. Pierrakos has commented on this type of predicament saying, "man's destructiveness and his insistence on holding on to it not only represents the barriers which keep him separated, but at the same time, serves to maintain the barriers" (Pierrakos <<http://www.awakeningtruth.org>>).

The barrier stands as the demarcating line between the push and pull factors. Both sides are equally strong; simultaneously pulling and pushing in the opposite directions. Senhora Miranda has desired an Indian's flesh but, at the same time, fears to degrade her assumed White dignity by constructing a close and intimate relation with Indians. The following dialogue has explicitly disclosed her artificiality and meanness:

Senhora : Why don't you ask me...who my father was?

Alphonso: You've already told me...he was Portuguese.

Senhora :Ah!...But it's evident that I'm lying somewhere. That girl's either got the blood of her father...in which case my father was not Portuguese. (*ALPHONSO is silent*) Why are you silent, Alphonso? Wouldn't you like to know where I'm lying? Either my child's a bastard...or I am.

Alphonso: (*Quietly*) I told you before...it makes no difference to me.

Senhora :Ah! But it does to me. Can you imagine my feelings, Alphonso? Now you know why I don't like coloured people. They make me feel dirty (*GOA 36-37*).

The playwright does not feign in presenting the people and their true nature. Senhora Miranda lives in the superficial world of her own. She desires the attributes of the White race and demands respect from her surroundings. Despite her parents been a cross-breed, belonging to different races - an Indian and a Portuguese - she assumes the White race and abhors Indians. At one moment, she hated Indians because they are coloured, but at her lustful moments, she clings on to them to gratify her sexual urges. Her opportunist and licentious nature is denuded when she caresses Krishna (49-50) and sleeps with him (71) and, even collaborates with him in raping her daughter. This meanness in her reflects the baser nature of man which bows down to temptations, the enticements that please the desire and palate of a person the most.

5.3. Predicament of Temptation

Life, for Currimbhoy, is survival in the midst of trials and tribulations; it is a rose with thorns that pricks and bleeds (*TOC 12 and 62*). He feels that it is

a tragedy for human beings to trudge through the rough road of life and fails to handle it. There is life in dead and dead in life, which is found in *Monsoon*. For the author, man is caught in the web of this predicament of an unpleasant and trying situation, from where extrication is difficult.

In “*Darjeeling Tea?*”, Currimbhoy presents a woman who could not accept the bastard daughter of her husband and intolerably goes through the ordeal of feeling jealous of it and at the same time continues to live with her infidel husband. BigMac’s compassion and love for Didi, his bastard daughter, has made Jennie even more envious. At one point, she was tempted to transfer her passion to Bunty, an Indian who stays with them. The following dialogue is revelatory:

Jennie: Bunty, are you or are you not...interested in being a planter?

Bunty: (*Heroically*) I am.

Jennie: Well then, start with the planter’s wife.

Bunty: Oh, I say...

Jennie: Not the same as a coolie woman, I admit, but then I suppose
I am rather different compared to you.

Bunty: I should hope so.

Jennie: Opposites attract.

Bunty: So they say.

Jennie: Why don’t you...discover?

Bunty: (*Trumpeting*) Mclouds ahead! (*She kisses him. He is stunned, serious, she is too; long moment of silence, both do nothing, the half-bantering joke’s all gone, so also is her nervousness and hysteria*)

Jennie: (*Quietly*) We did a beautiful final act, didn't we, Bunty?

Bunty: (*Looks back, equally soberly*) We certainly did.

Jennie: (*Controlling herself*) Goodnight, Bunty. (*Bunty goes to the door, hesitates, turns around*)

Bunty: (*Softly*) Jennie...

Jennie: (*Breaking out, unable to control herself any further*) GO, BUNTY, PLEASE...LEAVE ME ALONE (*Bunty leaves, Jennie hurts out shamefully in tears closing her face with her handkerchief*) (GOA 48).

It is crystal clear that, in the moment of Jennie's great grief and jealousy for her husband's transference of his compassion and concentration on Didi, she desires the passion of Bunty. But on waking up to her true self, she retards from him and weeps in shame about her unfaithfulness. The dramatist has shown, through the character of Jennie, that jealousy and sexual urges gone sour in married life negatively impacts a person. He is acutely alive to the redeeming possibilities in man and this is shown in Jennie's act of retarding from Bunty, weeping in shame. Though Jennie feels shattered due to her husband's infidelity, she wakes up to the befalling temptation before yielding to it and this is the kind of redeeming factor that Currimbhoy trusts.

The dramatist believes that temptation plays the role of a cupid when a person is shuttled between self-control and desire. Gandhiji has faltered and yielded to the tempting physical pleasures several times, in spite of his herculean effort in trying to contain it. His predicament lay deeply embedded in this empirical sensuousness. Husserl's phenomenological philosophy of a priori senses takes the upper hand when it comes to the taste of pleasure. Gandhiji has said, "After almost forty years of practicing *brahmacharya* and

abstinence, I was shaken to find my weakness still there...of my succumbing to the desire I thought no longer existed in my being” (*AEWT* 58-59).

The playwright depicts that sensuous desires stand as a stumbling block for a person of straw on the path to chiseling and mastering the senses. This problem gets further aggravated by feelings and emotions which cannot be exterminated from men and this makes the situation harder to handle. Human beings who are with a better control over them can deal with temptations boldly and decisively. On the contrary, the one with a weak mastery over them will, perhaps, fall to the temptation submissively and placidly.

Gandhiji is conscious of his weakness but he still finds hard to contain it. Therefore, he said, “That is why ...my experiments...towards a form of desirelessness became necessary...” (44). Nevertheless, he fails and fall into the temptation of sexual pleasures and, in his assiduous attempt to contain the temptation of the flesh, he has discovered that his weak flesh has succumbed to it.

The word ‘perfection’ is philosophically debatable because perfect means unsullied and without blemish. Attainment of it is, therefore, humanly discouraging, almost an impossible human affair. However, striving towards perfection is a plausible endeavour. Existential discourses have stood on this proposition to deal with human predicament. In *An experiment with Truth*, the dramatist has dealt with an ideal protagonist who has faced the daily reproaches of his affairs like Sisyphus of Albert Camus. Gandhiji’s strive towards perfection is a conscious effort and he has even taken a “vow” to fight against his imperfection (23).

The author has deciphered from the laborious endeavour of Gandhiji and depicts that by being aware of the desire, strength and weakness, a person needs to channelize them in the proper direction. As a culturally designed

human being, morally acceptable behavior ought to be at the helm of man's activities. This is the reason why the playwright has considered the inhuman treatment of humanity, in *The Refugee*, as "bestiality" (RF 18). Therefore, his contention in the moral society is "to have a bit of moral rectitude" (MLA 27) in all our actions.

Currimbhoy has scanned human weakness of different kinds and presents that desire for sex is one of the strongest urges in man and, paradoxically, falling into the trap of this allurements is one of the weakest points in man. The physical pleasure of sex, and the emotions involve with it, easily tempts man. Manubhai, a lecher and infidel, yields easily to the temptation of an adulterous sex. The following episode is open and clear about his behavior:

Manu: ...(*Goes up and gingerly pats her enormous buttock*) Looks substantial...and...real, all right...wonder, she will respond to the pinch (*Pinches*).

Sonal: Oow!

Manu: (*Eyes growing big*) Real right. Sorry, Sonal *bhen*...er...sorry.
Sonal.

Sonal: (*Coquettishly*) Is that how you like to start? By pinching?

Manu: (*Leering*) There are all kinds. All kinds.

Sonal: How do you like it?

Manu: I'd like you to go back to wiping the way you were.

Sonal: So?

Manu: So (*Sonal shrug her shoulders and gets back to wiping with here raised buttocks in front of his eyes. Manu tiptoes quietly*

to the candle, thuds his palm to squash it, and approaches her stealthily in the darkness. No more sights; only sounds left: suggestive, provocative) (29-30).

The above episode has vividly exposed that Manubhai and Sonal have befittingly complimented each other in their lustful approaches. Manubhai has provocatively tickled the feelings of Sonal and has reaped the best fruit of the opportunity, in the absence of his wife. This denigrating nature of a married man is further laid bare, in an uglier manner, in the following:

Manu: Before you go I'd like you to know something... (*She looks*)

Sonal, my dear, you were the loveliest, highest-assed woman I ever had and I shall miss you.

Sonal: Thank you

Manu: How about a quickie before you go? I'll give it to you from the front this time (52).

There is a complete sense of irresponsible and guiltless behaviour in Manubhai as a politician and married man. The author exposes his astuteness in reading the mind and heart of a lecherous person through the depiction of his character's personality as it is conveyed in the above dialogue. The language used is original and the emotional involvement is genuine. Manubhai has acted as his instincts prompts him and, therefore, there was no inhibition in his invitation of Sonal for another quickie. The dramatist's genius is denuded through the tactful handling of such characters in this play and Sonal has befittingly fitted into the plot to enhance the fullest exhibition of Manubhai's predicament.

Currimbhoy has taken a deeper plunge into the conscience of man for unearthing the predicament of temptation, through the character of Joe, in *The*

Doldrummers. He has pictured that a sympathizer can easily endear, befriend and win the trust of the receiver of sympathy. It is also seen that both, the giver and receiver of sympathy, have an easy transference of emotional trust on each other and this provides the platform for the sympathizer to provoke, incite and persuade the sympathized person. The dramatist has also presented that if emotional attachment grows between two persons of opposite sex in such situations, it is likely that they will surrender to each other physically as well.

He has proved this notion through the characters of Joe and Rita. In the play, Rita is passionately in love with Tony, Joe sympathizes Rita when Tony has gone after Liza at the magnetism of her bountiful gifts and, he gradually grows closer, both emotionally and physically, to Rita out of sympathy. This affinity has facilitated Joe's opportunity for yielding to the temptation and has impregnated his friend's girlfriend, Rita. Finally, guilt and shame have bogged him down because he has failed to get reconciled with his misdeed and this has dragged him to commit suicide by drowning himself in the sea. Hence, the dramatist has brought forth the message that betraying the trust of a person is hard to get reconciled and be absolved.

The playwright believes that temptation preys on the weaker section more than on those areas which are within the consciously tight grip of a person. Befittingly, he has pictured human physical pleasure as the most prone area to yield to temptations. Lust of the flesh easily gets tickled and it can respond to lustful stimuli without much effort. Currimbhoy has taken this weakness in man to explicate the power of temptation and brings home his message that enticements work most effectively on those things that are most palatable to a person.

5.4. Predicament of Action and Inaction

For Currimbhoy, “life is action” (*RF* 29) and not to indulge in action will, therefore, equate oneself to abiotic things. Action or inaction is the gateway to experiencing human predicament and this is the dilemma. Besides, action or inaction entails the necessity of making choices in life. But if Nietzsche’s philosophy of making choices, where man is condemned to choose, is the principle moral guide, then human society will be caught in a chaos because there can be no condemnation or rebuke regarding human behavior and action, however mean and destructive the choice may be. Besides, morality will have no implication in life because the choice that a person makes is his/her rightful execution.

The dramatist downplays Sartre’s notion of such irredeemable choice because his philosophy of life has clearly shown that universally acceptable and constructively beneficial choices are upheld by him. The statement of Prof. Mosin, “Yassin must find out for himself that there is no getting away from it” (*RF* 31), does not mean that there are no other possible choices available for Yassin. The author’s intention is to convey that Yassin must choose the action that has the greatest benefit for himself and for the greater good of his community. Therefore, we can clearly behold that the playwright’s philosophy of choice is existentially universal and it accounts the consequential outcome which is inherent in it.

The consequence of an action, for a positive impact of the future, is the kind of universally desired choice preferred by the dramatist. Besides, his conception of choice also lies in the exigency of the situation in which a person is placed. Yassin has found himself in the predicament of his academic intellect and the stultifying reality of human tragedy. His intellect has attempted to make a choice of running away from the suffering humanity but

the extreme tragedy of refugees follows him, for he himself is a refugee (34). Therefore, he has to choose an action that has the greater positive impact and sacrifice the other.

Currimbhoy's world view lies in the maximum goodness of humanity and this is reflected in Yassin's decision. Yassin has finally decided to delve into the work-force for the cause of his fellow suffering refugees (45). This is the collective benefit or good of Jeremy Bentham's philosophy for "the greatest good of the greatest number of people" ("An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation" <<http://librivox.org>>).

The playwright has shown that a person becomes idle when the lock-jam in his life is not resolved. A lackadaisical person is prone to brood over the problems and failures of life. He has presented that such persons lack resoluteness and the required courage to face the reality of life. Joseph, in *This Alien...Native Land*, sits on his rocking chair and expresses his inner turbulence by rocking the chair. He only broods over the lost past that cannot be brought back concretely to the present:

Joseph: ...Well, my dear, I wasn't young. Oh, I was younger then, but I wasn't young. I...I was almost middle-aged, or at least felt that way. Leave and go where? Start all over again. The Promised Land? It was the unknown land...to me. Those dark areas...of fear. I'd rather be watching...the ocean from here...I thought...true, it's a small opening...but it's there, there where I can see it. How was I to know...it would all be blotted out...by these enormous buildings of steel and stone...while I weary underneath...ageing...with a feeble heart.

Sarah: (*Feeling choked, touching*) Hush...father, hush.

Joseph: (*Trace of fear and self-pity in his eyes*) No, it won't quieten within me now, Sarah dear. I can't stop it.

The feelings that Persian poet described so well... "Those past regrets... and future fears"... unending... unending... unending.

(*He drops the words now, gently but clearly*) Had I taken you there, you'd be a married woman by now...

(*The reaction is electric. Her hand drops she becomes cold, and tense*)

Why, what's wrong, my dear? Anything I said?

Sarah: N...No. Nothing new, that is (13-14).

Joseph is painfully locked up in his regret and fear for the unknown but does nothing to exonerate himself from this predicament. Like Jennie, in "*Darjeeling Tea?*", he also has suffered the gradual waning of his youthful vigour by rocking on the chair. Sarah's words, 'nothing new,' are a clear indication of their daily experience of regret and sorrow. This shows that exoneration from it is a farfetched idea because there are no signs of Joseph's resoluteness and courage to challenge the foreboding doom and act manly.

The playwright has presented that regret acts as a stumbling block towards a progressive life because this makes a person's mind cloudy and inert. Joseph broods over the bygone misgivings but does nothing to overcome this sense of loss. He dares not even have the courage to unfetter himself from this bondage and continues to complacently sit on the heap of his problems. Besides, his feeling of loss and regret has become chronic that it won't quieten down; he cannot even stop it. This is further conveyed in the following dialogue:

Joseph: Well, there's something...barbarous about this environment. People different from us. Like natives.

Sarah: (*Brittle laugh*) Really, father. (*Looking around at the old pictures, portraits, old values*) You've often talked about the old family...your own and others...settled over the generations here...

Joseph: True, but they were all Jews, like us. Where are they now? Emigrated. All of them. And those that didn't...came to a natural end. Now where would you today... (14).

His failure to take decision at the right moment has seriously impacted him and disastrously shuttered the future joy of his daughter by failing to marry her off at her prime age. His sense of inertness has also influenced the entire family to go through depression and indirection. Besides, his failure, as a father, is reflected in David's constant changing of his job (10), Sarah's failure to get married in her prime, Jacob's wife invading into their Jewish identity with her Indian identity and Rachel's oedipal relation with David.

The dramatist has made a lucid collage of human beings who fear to act due to trepidation for one thing or the other in life. Apart from fear of acting due to the past experiences and lack of courage, the author has also dramatized, in *The Dissident MLA*, those people who step back from acting due to fear of tarnishing their public image. This group of people utilizes others to act on their behalf. Currimbhoj tactically employs an invisible voice-like style to powerfully execute the action of a non-visible man. This is cogently seen in the scene of the *gherao*, where two simultaneous actions take place:

ACTION OF MANUBHAI**ACTION OF STUDENTS****GHERAOING V.C.**

Close, close, get close to
him.

*They close in on him, chanting,
shouting slogans.*

Jostle him a bit. Scream
into his ear.

*They push him around without
actually manhandling him.*

DON'T PLAY FOOTSIE

WITH

They play it slightly rougher.

HIM: GET HIM! GIVE HIM

FEAR!

That's right.

Get him into the sun. Make
him stand there...hours

Action in burning sun.

and hours and hours...

Let him feel the suffocation

of life: to be denied and

deprived, as you are...

*(Manubhai clutching his own
throat)*

Make him feel the whiplash
of your anger and fury.

*They follow out his orders,
Whipping themselves into a
frenzy, hypnotized by his passion.*

...

You let him go and I'll skin

Full sound and fury.

You alive. Keep it up. He's

Giving in. He's giving in.

(screaming victoriously)

Robustness, victory, cheers.

THERE! HE'S WET HIS
PANTS!
HE'S PISED IN HIS PANTS!
Let him go now...let go
Now. He's finished... (*MLA* 13-17).

Through the public humiliation of the Vice Chancellor, the playwright has depicted the invisible presence of the action of Manubhai. He does not act physically but makes the students act in his place. He, himself, has told his son that "...it's always better to work...behind the lines...so to speak" (11). Therefore, it is obviously clear that politicians, like Manubhai, astutely work to save their image. The above dramatic scene also presents a clear picture of Manubhai's instigating ability to garner the public support. In actuality, it lays bare his diabolic intent because he fears to act and makes somebody else act on his behalf by master minding the plan and making them scapegoats. This clearly pictures his indomitable selfishness like a wild beast in the forest that cares for its own welfare and safety. God or a superior power is absent in his life and, therefore, power and authority means everything to him. As a result, fear of tarnishing his public image and the same political party continuing to relinquish majority in the legislative assembly have made him individualistic and live in a godless world.

5.5. Human Predicament in a Godless World

The playwright believes that men utilize their might and strength to downplay each other in a world free from the controlling power of God. Therefore, Nietzsche's philosophy of "God is dead" (Pojmon 2003: 117) powerfully hallows this godless world. The offshoot of this godless philosophy entails a new ethic: the ethic of power over others. The meaning, purpose and value of life, in the absence of the Being, are founded on human

power, when there is no comforting foundation on this Being. The scintillating dialogue between Bhutto and Mujib, in the prison confinement of Mujib, after the bloody war between Pakistan and Bangladesh is revelatory:

Bhutto: It wasn't my fault, Mujib. We're both politicians. We would have found a way out...a way to compromise. But Yahya was blind; he could only see black and white. For a politician there is nothing greater than power.

Mujib: (*Quietly*) I'm not a politician any more, Bhutto.

Bhutto: (*Laughing cynically*) Oh...I see. A statesman? A martyr? The blood of martyrs has made you great, has it? But only dead martyrs survive. Living ones don't. People get disillusioned soon. Only the politician learns to survive (*SB* 104).

The above dialogue brings to light about the notion that politicians diplomatically survive the heat of crisis, but not without power. The statement 'there is nothing greater than power' entails that politicians are power mongers and, therefore, it can be concluded that power is religion for them. They are caught in the struggle for the things that enhances the feeling of power, the will to power and the power itself in them. As a result, their morality is also guided by power. Guthrie has said that "Once God is removed from being the foundation for moral value, human purpose and meaning of life, we are left with a Hobbesian portrait of mankind that makes it poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Guthrie <<http://sguthrie.net>>). Mujib, in *Sonar Bangla*, stands diametrically opposite to Bhutto. He is a politician, as a freedom fighter for Bangladesh, but he has ceased to be the person who was mad after victory like Bhutto. His cool composure has contrasted Bhutto's fiery spirit. Therefore, they are at loggerhead with each other in their intention

and aspiration. Bhutto is hungry for political power and victory and, therefore, solution to his predicament is to acquire power and take control of others.

Pakistanis, though Islam by religion, take power as their a priori principle to suppress Bangladeshis, erstwhile East Pakistan. Pushing out refugees inhumanly and blatantly massacring the people, acquiring greater power and taking control of Bangladesh are antecedent to Muslim brotherhood. This is the prima facie proof of their deficiency in religious ethics. The following strategic plan of Pakistani officials, somewhere in East Bengal, has revealed all about this:

1st : Do you think we'll catch them napping?

3rd : Why not?

1st: Surely they'd be expecting it. Their provocations are probably intended to invite attack.

2nd : They outnumber us two to one.

3rd : One Pakistan *jawan* can outfight ten Indians.

1st : No doubt. But remember we'll have two enemies here in the East. The Indian Army and the Bengali people.

3rd : Ah! We can handle both. Tikka did a thorough job of the Bengalis. Too bad he's being replaced by Niazi.

2nd : He'll follow the same policy, I'm sure.

3rd : Yes. Push more refugees out. It'll equalize the two populations in East and West. Who knows – we may end up with a majority! (SB 81).

If Indian army comes in total conflict with the Pakistanis, then the predicament of Pakistan becomes weightier because they will have two

enemies. Politically well tuned, Pakistani army has made a strategic road map to suppress Bangladeshi uprising. Therefore, Bangladeshi Muslims have being looked at as subservient to their designs. As a result, there is a rivalry between power politics and religious humility. In the search for power, God has being conveniently nudged aside and He has been made a mockery.

Currimbhoy has depicted that the meek and the humble bear the brunt of the heat of angry atmosphere, catapulted by rival groups or individuals who roar about looking for the opportunity to mow the adversary. In such an atmosphere, the notion of respect for objects of worship becomes a pie in the sky. More seriously still, the God or objects of worship of the adversary becomes a laughing stock or a mockery. The following brief scene in *Sonar Bangla* justifies the above point:

Jawan: Where's is your husband?

Sunita: I don't know.

Jawan: When is he coming back?

Sunita: I don't know.

Jawan: (*grinning cruelly*) Is he coming back? (*Sunita is silent*) You're Hindu, aren't you? (*He sees the image with vermillion garlands and burning wicks in earthen pots; with sudden and total fury he takes the butt of his rifle and smashes the image; both women recoil with fear*). That's what I think of your god...or gods. (*Under his breath*). Infidels! (*Prowls around the house, still looking for something*) (36).

The dramatist has pictured the darker side of religious rivalry between Hindus and Muslims and, has subtly brought forth the message that human

power seekers take God as a God of convenience. Killing the Hindus in Bangladesh and looting their property for enhancing the status of middle class Muslims is ridiculously a dehumanizing act in the civilized world of modern era. But, through this means, power enhancement has been sought by human power mongers. Ultimately, therefore, happiness is contained in defeat and victory for them.

The dramatist has reflected, through some of his plays, that people imbued with the mundane affairs live within the confine of their own instincts and impulses. He has astutely penetrated into the being of those who uphold physical desires, in life, and exposes the pandemonium that goes on in them. In *The Doldrums*, he has enacted the morose life of young teenagers who are imbued with illicit sex and alcohol. They have not “worked for a year of Sundays” (DD 16) and indulge in the pleasure of lust of the flesh and, give a damn to spirituality and socially acceptable moral code of conduct. The following dialogue reflects the degraded morality of these young teenagers:

Joe: I’ll sell the presents, and with the money you can buy whatever Tony likes.

Rita: (*Cynical now*) It would be simpler to receive cash, wouldn’t it? And it would be simpler to procure strangers, wouldn’t it? But no. We must play the game according to the rules. It has to be a friend and it has to be presents. Whom are we fooling, Joe? Certainly not me or you. Do you think Tony will swallow it?

Joe: Tony won’t object.

Rita: Then he won’t love me. You can’t love someone you don’t respect.

Joe: (*Angrily*) Love! Respect! Love! Respect! What does it mean? I get sick hearing people talk about it all the time. And what does love have to do with respect anyway? They're the very opposite. You think of the word love like something from a fairy book, patented and germ-free. Like it had to have respectability. Well, it's not. It's love that the whore dispenses around the street corner, and it's the most respectable that pay its price.

Rita: Joe, from hating you I'm beginning to hate myself (40-41).

Rita and Joe have complemented each other well in a world of loose moral behaviour. Rita does not care about selling her flesh and sleeping with strangers to earn money without detouring from playing the game according to the rules of friend and presents. She has even heightened the ironical sense of love and respect when she utters that she cannot love someone she does not respect. The meaning of love and respect is rather obscure for her because if she genuinely and verily loves Tony, she could have kept herself aloof from strangers and avoid sleeping with them. Her behavior has shown that she is only infatuated with and attached to Tony. Therefore, love and respect have no meaning for her like Joe. Imbued with physical pleasures alone, there is lack of moral ethics for this lot of people because physical pleasure and satisfaction is everything for them. As a result, they encounter a powerful sense of emptiness and are held hostage in this vacuum. Spirituality or God has no place because lust of the flesh is the alpha and omega of their search for meaning, purpose and value of life. Hence, the dramatist has lucidly depicted that these lusty young teenagers have constantly felt a kind of incomplete and sense of emptiness through their journey of life.

The playwright believes that these teenagers, in the contemporary era, have spent their vigour and energy in the lust for physical pleasures. Passion has kept their lives going and, actual love and respect have no meaning for them. Therefore, Joe's denouncement of the basic foundation of good morality, i.e., love and respect, has explicated the inner emptiness and anarchical world of these teenagers. Rita's words have clearly reflected the morose world of the aimless teenagers: "We each live only for ourselves...and self-sacrifice has no meaning except to satisfy one's own vanity" (61).

The dramatist has depicted the bungled world of young teenagers to show the regressive evolution of human mind. Youngsters, in the modern era, look for an outlet and freedom to express themselves, as their age demands. Currimbhoy has gone into their minds and hearts, denuded the things that interest them most and has shown the war that goes on within them.

5.6. Disputed Dilemma in War

The author has moved further from internal wars, wars that go on within a person to external wars, wars that go on between different societies. He believes that the predicament of human societies indulging in war is phenomenological. Human beings who are caught in the heat of war find hard to extricate themselves from shedding blood and avenging the hurts. When Pakistani troops have resorted to an intelligent tactic of disguising themselves by wearing civilian clothes (*SB* 10), Bangladesh is put on a shaky position. Still worse, "plain loads of West Pakistan troops being dropped into the battle field" (10) has pre-empted a violent clash and this has brought forth the idea of victory and defeat. This logic of disguise and quantity for the expectation of victory, though, is held hostage because to counter an over ground armed forces of Pakistan, an underground Mukti Fauj, with Naxalite tactic, is on a vigil to give a blow with an equal or greater force and a sudden blow (34-35).

The dramatist has circumspectly viewed that Pakistan's predicament lies in their ego-centricity and pre-meditated fear. She is caught in the crisis of power conflict with Bangladesh, the then two geographically separated states but within the same union.

Pakistanis are haunted by the fear for numerical differences and this has made them to evade the actual problem. Psychological problem of identity crises lay deeply embedded at the core of their being and, therefore, painfully they put out the opposing forces with an equal or more measure of their internal pangs. This opposing force came out in the form of "Islamisation" and trying to "re-educate" the Bangladeshis "along proper Islamic lines..." (45). This is a betrayal; self betrayal and betrayal for the Bangladeshi Muslims and, this has opened the floodgate for a greater crisis.

The dramatist's deep concern for conflicting societies is the violent clash that ensues from this conflict. Existential problem of the meaning of life and existence takes its toll when such feuds take place resentfully. It is a pathetic struggle of man to search for the meaning of life by trying to acquire power and authority. The author does not subscribe to this theory and this is evidently seen in his aversion for war and power conflict, as it is conveyed in the following words: "no war makes sense. But love does" (78).

In the liberation war of Bangladesh, both the parties were dumped into the crisis of the opposition and the opposed, the oppressor and the oppressed. Pakistan and Bangladesh are both the opposition and the opposed. The former has opposed the latter's move for self-determination and the latter has also opposed the hegemonic rule of the former over them. In the like manner, both parties have detested the superiority of one over the other and endeavoured tooth and nail to oppress that. Their predicament has stemmed from this conflict of opposing interests. There is absurdity in this fight because both the

parties are caught in the dilemma of power and authority. It has only made sense from the Bangladesh's point of view, at least during the war period, because victory or defeat is going to ultimately end the war.

Currimbhoy, as a philosopher, is bothered with the absurdity of war. The struggle for superiority, through war, is absurd in the sense of abject moral conscience. Millions of people were sent out as refugees during war (43), apart from colossal loss of lives and destruction of the economy (55). Life for those engaging in war is nothing but to search for victory. Nevertheless, war does not necessarily entail victory; there is also defeat and destruction. In the physical sense, there is the destruction of life and material things like economy as well as natural resources that can either be regenerated or permanently stay destroyed. As a matter of fact, there is absurdity and purposelessness of war. The author has believed that even if lost resources can be regenerated or rebuilt, it is going to be a strenuous and long term effort (101).

5.7. Refugees and their Harrowing Situation

The playwright believes that the heat of severe political conflict sends out serious waves of uncertainty and obscurity in life and, continuity of life in such a situation is purgatorial. He has rationalized the glaring situation of people uprooted physically, alienated psychologically and bereft emotionally. The only certainty in the lives of these uprooted people, who the author has considered in *The Refugee* and *Sonar Bangla*, is suffering and the impending death. P. Bayapa Reddy has opined that Currimbhoy is concentrating on "the predicament of humanity caught in the political restlessness, moral mooring and psychological alienation" (Reddy 44). The dramatist has perspicaciously explored the plight of refugees in a morally deficit society who are enveloped with hunger for power and authority.

The author feels that politics of oppression ignites a tenacious dissension in the oppressed people. Assessing his discernment of the political world, we can cogently perceive his depth and comprehensive approach to society and its problems. It is found that desire for power and authority has corrupted the entire political spectrum. When Pakistan has guiltlessly resorted to war tactic of violently oppressing the antagonistic forces, their own predicament has glared at them. Their deeds and intention have made them to experience more fear and suspicion. This crisis has mounted because of the opposition that has poured in from all quarters of East Pakistan supported by India. Therefore, they are caught between the devil and the deep, which is found in the discussion among the senior officers of Pakistan Army in East Bengal:

3rd : We can handle them.

1st : Not when they're supported by the Indian army.

2nd : Yes, that's serious.

3rd : Why don't they come out and fight? Nibbling on us all the time...

1st : That's what they want us to do. Attack them...

3rd : Not a bad idea.

2nd : Hold on. We're at a disadvantage here. We could be cut off in the East, if the Indian Army comes in total conflict... (SB 81).

The perceivable fear of the Pakistani officers reveals that hurdles on their way are formidably not easy to out crush. They are consciously aware of India's stance though they want to retain their power over Bangladesh despite a steep opposition from their adversary. Their predicament has ensued from this act of the political aggrandizement. This crisis of political conflict has

created a greater and graver catastrophe of flushing out many Bangladeshis as refugees.

Currimbhoy pictures the universal grim reality of refugees and their situation to discern the plight and volition of being a refugee. “It’s a grinding, tearing reality” (28) that this uprooted lot exists and go through immeasurable sufferings. They carry with them a heavy load of uncertainties as they are flushed out of their native land into an alien land. “This mass of displaced persons” (*RF* 28) faces the existence and meaning of life absurd.

Victims of political conflict are forced out into the no man’s land against their choice. It is not Nietzsche’s philosophy of ‘choice’ that they choose to be refugees but is the deliberate choice of the mindless Pakistanis that has made them to be so. The Pakistanis have played with the lives of these innocent civilians for their political benefit; sending out refugees to India to equalize the two populations of East and West Pakistan (*SB* 81), so that they can gain political mileage, on the one hand, and to weaken the position of India, on the other, by filling up the empty spaces to be looked after (*RF* 20) by them. Therefore, it would be irrational to condemn these victims of political conflict, in the light of Nietzsche’s philosophy, where man has no choice but to choose. When we analyze the philosophy of Currimbhoy, in the light of Robert Solomon’s philosophy, it may mean that refugees find themselves in this predicament. Robert Solomon has said, “According to many existentialists, every act and every attitude must be considered a choice. Yet the existential attitude itself is apparently not chosen. They find themselves in it” (Solomon 240).

It is cognizable from this predicament that refugees have been pushed out to escape the heat of political conflict between East and West Pakistan. Yassin has uttered, “most of us were busy...scrambling for safety” (*RF* 13).

Therefore, it is clear, from the point of view of escape, that they have chosen this route to safety and for the continuance of life; not the choice of being a refugee.

Refugees' predicament is not metaphysical but is concretely physical and real. "The refugees exist the same way. They're alive and oh, only too real" (29). Edmund Husserl's philosophy of phenomenology is, therefore, applicably justified in the refugees' situation because their trying situation is one that can be seen, heard and felt. Their harrowing situation is concretely mundane and they live and suffer tangibly, which Emmanuel Kant has called it the "Phenomenal world" (Guthrie <<http://sguthrie.net>>). Experiencing physical alienation and psychological anxiety with a bleak future, "food and shelter" (*SB* 51) have occupied the core of their being.

Currimbhoy's philosophy on human survivability is that of strife and struggle. Refugee crisis has stemmed from restlessness in the political world and this, easier said than done situation, is given birth out of moral turpitude. The dramatist has dealt with the bleak future of this homeless and landless lot to depict that their survival depends on providence. He calls them a "passage of bird" (*RF* 42) and likening them to the migratory birds, whose life depends on the providence of nature. This is the predicament of refugees. They are "human beings reduced to inhuman existence, robbed of dignity and essential life" (18). They are emotionally torn, psychologically traumatized and completely drained of energy, due to physical strain and hunger. Humanity fettered in this predicament has no better description than "Pathetic helpless creatures" (35).

The author believes that the horrible state of refugees is situational; a state of affairs that affects a large section of people and the repercussion of which is serious and painful. The severity of political crisis has created the

fate of refugees unimaginable and their destiny depressing. The playwright has penetrated into the mind and heart of these refugees and has authentically presented their feelings. Following words have powerfully reflected their actual condition: they are “concerned only for food and safety, and shelter, stories of repression and terror, wanting only time to get back their breath from the horrible tragedy” (35-36). Pushed out into an alien land, their tragedy has suffocated them. Returning to their homeland is unfeasible and, at the same time, staying in an alien land is equally unpleasant. Therefore, they are caught between the devil and the deep sea.

5.8. Dilemma in the world of Slaves and Peasants

The playwright believes that humanity been caught in the web of cruel servitude and peasantry finds life miserably oppressive and repressive. *Inquilab* deals with the predicament of slaves and peasants in the hands of landlords and politicians. Peasants’ life is made more complex and tragic because of the closely knitted alliance between the selfish landlords and egotistic politicians. This alliance has made the predicament of peasants more horrendous. Innocent people are hoodwinked by the greedy landlords and shrewd politicians to work for them, in the guise of charity (*IQ* 31). Through this, they are kept hushed by the landlords to make them continue their life as slaves, in order to better the landlords’ capital. This has curtailed the basic human right to freedom and self-determination for the poor peasants.

Currimbhoy feels that the tight spot of oppression and repression can be exterminated only by force. He has put forth the tactic of naxal revolt, in his *Inquilab*, as an eye opener, though it is deemed as dastardly and socially unacceptable. Ahmed, “...the Naxal leader, escapes into the Mizo Hills only to return as the Guru” (14) and inspires the peasants, by exposing them to the thoughts of great men on equality and revolution. Ahmed’s crucial objective

is to take revenge on those who are responsible for the cruel slavery of peasants. His plan has being strengthened by an equally masculine and explosive young man, Shaomik, who is called “the Village Messiah” (36). He is incredulous and refuses to be tempted by Jain’s persuasive words. He has even declined to yield to the lure of Devdas’ money (34) and encourages the peasants in the land grab movement (43). He has also passionately cried out to his fellow peasants, “Constitutional change did us no good. We waited...and waited. Until hope died and the new life withered. Cruelty...is inevitable” (61).

The dramatist believes that cruel slavery of peasants is “only the root cause of revolt...” (81). There is “the harsh inevitability about it, the struggle for birth, for survival” (Ibid) to realize the seemingly “unrealizable” (Ibidem). This struggle has catapulted the Naxalites to take recourse to evil means as an end (25) and “taking law into their [our] own hands” (50). Desperation has smudged the minds of peasants from seeing the evil means they have chosen to liberate themselves from the cruel hands of their oppressors. The dramatist has cut back on that slavery and peasantry will inevitably generate rooms for garnering the sufferings and inner hurts which will one day explode and, explosion of the repressed pains and sufferings will inexorably take a violent tone, however bad it is.

The author believes that peasant revolution is forceful and against any law and order. Peasants can neither confide on the politicians nor on the landlords. Therefore, there is an utter absence of trust between them. Shaomik, the Naxalite leader, tells Devdas, “As long as you work together with landlord Jain, there can be no meeting in our ways” (35). He has detested the offer of politicians’ reformatory theory of face value betterment of peasants’ life. So, he refuses to accede with Devdas’ ambassadorial offer:

“You want more wages, better conditions of work, I’ll give them to you” (36). These offers are only a cosmetic appeasement and, therefore, he has refused to accept it because he perceives that this subtle diplomacy does not mean the emancipation of peasants from servitude but only the continuance of peasants taking anchorage in their present state. As a result, his discretion has opted only for owning the land, which is conveyed in the following words, “I want land of my own” (36).

The playwright is deeply affected by the horrible plight of peasants, who are on the horns of dilemma. This affectation is divulged in the outburst of his peasant characters. Shoamik tells his wife, “How we work, what we do...A dog...you want me to be a dog the rest of my life. Or like those animals ploughing those fields...I’m a man” (29). Being a man, he wants his basic right to be a man and not live like the animals. He wants liberation from bondage, “liberation through revolt” (28). Calling themselves as “revisionist” fighting for “Proletarian Internationalism” (12), peasants want their own law to prevail; “Not the landlord’s and not the Government” (27). They feel “Parliamentary democracy is not an effective weapon for socialist revolution: an armed struggle is inevitable” (25).

Currimbhoy’s humanitarian approach to the predicament of peasants does not eschew his belief in the possibility of the outbreak of violence in such a situation. Their plight has induced them to be credulous to whatever may appeal to their better instinct of being exonerated from bondage and slavery to the landlords. Naxal movement, the end product of misery and oppression, has magnetized them together. When Ahmed, a Naxal leader, has appealed to them for their help, they have unanimously yielded to his revolutionary ideology in great excitement. He has told them that “revolutionary theory without revolutionary practice means nothing” (Ibid).

Revolutionary practice, therefore, cannot be divorced from violence and this has landed them up in a fix. Their miserable situation, as slaves to Zamindars and puppets in the hands of politicians, has made them to shrug off the impending outcome of violence. They have toiled for Zamindars and made their children even “toil harder” for them (26). So, they have all toiled “for the damned, bloody, greedy Zamindars! Who never worked a day in his life! Who sucks your blood like a leech, grovels in food and luxury: what gives him the right to own, and you to suffer” (Ibid). Toiling for Zamindars for generations has shown that their status has never improved and they remained poor.

The dramatist believes that poverty and hunger among peasants have given birth to revolutionary vision and this down-trodden people have refused to be intimidated by landlords and politicians. Amar has told his father, “Look around, father, open your eyes: the poverty, the terrible poverty. People dying of hunger, father...Look at the gap between rich and poor. It’s growing, father, dangerously...and unfairly” (13). The basic right that is denied to peasants has made them to strive beyond the cause of their tangible physical degradation. Being a peasant is worse enough to suffer the lack of freedom and self-determination but denying “self-respect” (30) has removed the essential human essence in them. This is their worse predicament. Therefore, Shaomik has told his wife that “the hunger that consumes me is not food” (Ibid). He wants his dignity and self-respect as a being amongst other beings and to achieve this objective, he wants “power” (73). This is the reason why he has said, “There’s much more to life than a small plot of land” (93).

Peasants want to live a normal life without being trampled upon by their landlords. They want to be freed from this bondage and determine their own existence. But joining the revolutionary force for the cause of liberation involves risks and getting involved in it will either make them “become

landlords” or even “land up in jail” (42) at this juncture. This speculation between the two innocent “peasants sitting on their haunches” (Ibid) discloses the wave of thought that is circulating among the greater number of peasants.

Currimbhoy has presented this dilemma of peasants to heighten their difficult situation. They feel that if they “do join, they’re (we’re) brothers...united” and if they “don’t join, they’re (we’re) outcastes...victimized’ (Ibidem). But they take advantage of the loophole in the state’s political spectrum: “politicians and police are afraid [that] any action against us will upset their votes” (Ibidem). Soamik’s men “don’t talk; they kill” (43). Therefore, landlords and politicians are gripped with fear for Naxalites because if they do not choose to support the Naxalite revolution, they face the wrath of Shaomik.

The dramatist spurns the sociological utopianism of Marx. Marxist-socialism rises above the empirical perception of cosmetic appeasement of individuals in society. Writing of the Judeo-Christian tradition, Manuels had argued that “Utopia is a paradisiacal, other worldly belief of Judeo-Christian religion with the Hellenic myth of an ideal city on earth” (Manuels 15). Marxist-socialist’s utopian vision shares with this utopia, a longing for totality and perfection. Naxalites have leaned on the Marxist-socialism and embarked on forceful revolution for accomplishing their plan of bringing about change in society by “taking law and order into our own hands...because this is the only law that produces results” (50). Therefore, through the anarchic theory of violence, they want “land to the landless. Collective farming. Community holdings. A distribution of surplus land to be done immediately” (18). They want “Each man an equal share” (99). This utopian vision is a pie in the sky because there can be no perfect equality for all individual human beings. Marxist-socialism fathoms an earthly paradise through violent and chaotic

means. Currimbhoy's anti-utopian and anti-Marxism ideology perceptibly shows that imposition of reform through coercion is uncalled for without taking into account that "society...such as we live in, must follow certain norms...of law and order" (80).

The dilemma of the oppressed peasants has seldom found any lasting reprieve. Albeit getting imprisoned for being revolutionary and feeling that they may not stay "long in jail if we're fighting for a just and moral issue" (43), discontentment in them is not expurgated. This mood of discontentment has been heightened by the eloquence of extremist leaders, which is found in the following statement: "When leadership is in the hands of...of extremists...it may not stop with the land grab" (Ibid). The innocent peasants, themselves, feel panicky as to "where to stop?" (Ibidem). Therefore, there is an implicitly discernible fact that there is "an inner group that seems to control and guide" (44) the violent revolutionary action. As a result, the voiceless majority of peasants are "caught between the devil and deep" (43).

5.9. Tight Spot of Politicians

Currimbhoy normally hits the nucleus of human dilemma with precision. The constricted life of egoistic people is peremptorily juxtaposed with violent adversarial forces to expose human society in higgledy-piggledy due to conflict of interests. He has ungrudgingly placed the egotistic politicians and landlords in a crisis as their comeuppance, but this does not mean that it is the absolute poetic justice the author provides for them.

Devdas, the politician, is between a rock and a hard place in a Naxal infested society. He is caught between his career and the people of his state. If he chooses to enforce strict law and order, he faces the test of a public supporting vote and even if he chooses to support the landlord, he still bumps into the acid test of losing the peasants or the Naxalites' support. As a

politician, he “stood for constitutional change” (*IQ* 33), but the Naxalites stand “for revolutionary overthrow” (*Ibid*) of the present social and political systems. Besides, he lands up in the burning bush if he delegates the “police to soft-pedal” (*Ibidem*) on the revolutionary leaders or “trouble-shooter” (*Ibidem*). Therefore, his predicament suffocates him.

The playwright judiciously scans the political spectrum and depicts that politicians frequently get heated with tension and fear of being estranged. Jain, the landlord, has the innocent peasants by his side in terms of vote-bank and, therefore, Devdas cannot afford to snip the friendship with him. The following dialogue reveals the dilemma of Devdas:

Jain : Come now. Now-a-days neither the peasants, nor the landlords, are ignorant. Each of us...are important voters, qualitatively and quantitatively... (*Devdas looks at him attentively*) Peasants form large votes. I buy them or most of them, or most of them. Until I have a trouble-shooter. And then it's for you to keep him quiet.

Devdas: How?

Jain : You have your own ways, I'm sure. (*Careful*) Inter-party conflict is not a new thing ... (*Devdas is sweating*) ... that's how you came into power. You stood for constitutional change, the other for revolutionary overthrow. Not only of me; of you too! (*Devdas quiet, watching*) Why are you telling the police to soft-pedal them? Are you afraid of losing your peasant votes? You're under-estimating me ... (*Ibidem*).

As a politician, with his party in “the present Government,” he is “responsible for law and order” (32). Therefore, he is destined to

estrangement if he chooses to “placate” (Ibid) and support the peasant leaders. On the flip side, he gets estranged from the peasants if he “works together with landlord Jain” (35). Therefore, he is between a hawk and buzzard as there is no convergence and mollification in his choices. Jain and the peasants are precious to him, in terms of vote, but the law enforcing personnel cannot be displeased as well. So, the author conveys, through this lock jam, that iniquitous attitude and tactic will receive its just comeuppance.

The author has satirized the corrupt politicians through a hedonist, Manubhai, in *The Dissident MLA*. He has shown that during the hay days, politicians are ostentatious in their attitude and powerful in their command. These politicians commission themselves to override others and play the game of hide and seek. Manubhai is a lecher and adulterer in his private life. Sonal, his maidservant has fallen into his sensuous trap but this has laid bare his insecure psychology. He dares not openly protest against his own party in power or rationally reason with his wife. Bogged down with these fears and tension, Sonal has served as a catalyst to release his emotion. Besides, hedonistically humiliating the Vice Chancellor and Minister for Social Welfare, with the help of students, has given him a temporal cathartic relief. These seemingly triumphant moments befalls him tragically because truth ultimately prevails.

The playwright believes that corruption or evil can never be buried under the carpet forever. Manubhai’s predicament has ensued from the corrupted and evil means he has employed. As a politician, he ought to be loyal to his party, which is in power but he has earnestly wished and worked for the downfall of the ruling government. He is a dissident MLA and been a dissident his crisis is, therefore, weightier because he can turn to neither side of the political parties. The root cause of his becoming a dissident is obscure,

so it has been omitted from detail discussion and emphasis is laid on his career as a politician and its impact on his life. Politicians live on the edge because “for a politician there is nothing greater than power” (104). Were there no vested interest in power and authority, politics would not have been a hotly contested field, which is reflected in the following words. The author has gleefully satirized the politicians by saying that “there’s little altruism in politics” (38). Therefore, politics can do more harm than good if it centres its focus on acquiring power alone.

5.10. Cultural and Traditional Identity at Stake

Currimbhoy’s shrewd intellect always hits the bull’s eye of every incident that he picks up to dramatize and presents the most staid issues that concern human society. Amidst the spiraling problems faced by Tibetans, he has singled out the flight of the Dalai Lama, in “*Om Mane Padme Hum*”, to accentuate on the indigenous identity that is at stake. A very forceful language has been employed to indicate this: “The genocide of a civilization” (*OMPH* 66).

The dramatist has seen the dilemma of Tibet from the framework of a Theo-political issue. Tibet’s predicament has ensued from the threat of a mightier power, China. The traditional identity that is at stake, at once calls for a vigorous antagonism, triggering Tibetans to revolt and all who came to the “*molem* festival...now revolting against the Chinese occupation...concerned for their (your) safety” (14). There is no room for diplomacy in this disputed crisis because the Chinese’s attempt to stamp out Lamaism and supplant it with their “godless communism” (15) has severely incensed Tibetans. The life and safety of their great spiritual leader, Dalai Lama, for the continuance of their religion is politically threatened. His life is the life of Lamaism because “Lamaism survives with” him (*Ibid*); but the

playwright has cognized that his death may not absolutely entail the death of its traditional and cultural history. Even if the Dalai Lama has been killed, “there’ll be a 14th...and 15th Dalai Lama” (13).

Tibet’s situation of humanity been caught in the heat of confusion and threat occupies the centre stage of the dramatist’s concern in his dealing of human predicament in this play. He has picked up this particular event not for a historical interest but to philosophically bring about the predicament of humanity been stuck in the mess of conflicting interests. He has circumspectly cognized that the unique ethnic and religious identity that is facing the effacement is paramount to the murder of civilization in the post-modern era.

5.11. Population Growth and its Long Range Carrying Capacity

Currimbhoy has speculatively dealt with the serious issue of the continuance of human existence on the earth through his delineation of population explosion. Unprecedented growth of population is causing an extremely difficult situation for a standardized human beings’ existence on the earth. Refugees marching on in an “unending stream of tragic tableaux” (*SB* 42) and the overwhelming number, mentioned by Ray, do not only necessarily mean the naked reality of the sheer number. The dramatist’s concern here is the predicament of population growth and standard of living of the human species that is growing beyond the long-range carrying capacity of the earth.

The author has rationalized the paradox of growth and depletion in humanity’s life. As the population grows, consumption also grows and, simultaneously, depletion of earth’s resources takes place. The dramatist has befittingly juxtaposed this issue with the problem of drought. The seeds do not catch the rain to sprout because the incessant utilization of the top soil, in the cultivable land, had depleted the fertility of it. So, rain cannot be expected soon because there are no green leaves to bring down the rain. As a result,

“Two seasons. Two years, and there’s no rain...” (*TMS* 9). The natural cause of draught is harsh and this has severely scourged Ram’s family. So he speaks out in exasperation: “(*To himself*) Turned the soil over and over again ... (*Goes over to the wooden furrow, clutches it familiarly, and hard*) ... dry and dying, the seed not catching the rain ... (*Clutching tighter the hoe*)” (9). The playwright has subtly hinted at Nature’s reaction to her overexploitation by humanity and human population that is growing beyond the carrying capacity of Nature.

Currimbhoy has intelligently and symbolically employed the refugees’ overpopulation to hammer out the idea of human predicament. George Grace had opined that “the predicament is made more serious by the fact that there is little reason to hope that either the population or per-capita rate of consumption can be reduced” (Grace <<http://www2.hawaii.edu>>). With more number of refugees increased everyday in the camps, more food is demanded. “More of every human need, like food, medicine...” (*SB* 57) are required to cater to the needs of hungry refugees. Increasing number of refugees is indicative of a more serious human predicament because there is an obvious perceivable fact that there is little reason to hope that, if not refugees, population can be kept from continuing to grow for as far as we can see into the future.

The playwright believes that the standard of living depends on the size of population and availability of resources. Ecological environmentalists and existentialists dwell on the ecological balance of population and per capita rate of production and consumption for the survivability of human beings on the earth. The author has delved into this problem through his dealings on the overcrowded and ever increasing number of refugees. He has dealt with this basic predicament of human beings, in a candid manner, where humanitarian

workers strive to charitably see to the welfare of refugees. Refugees “dying like flies” (*RF* 34) and its endless number flocking into the India’s side of Bengal has raised serious issues of population explosion and economic exhaustion. Existentialists have held that humanity’s predicament in an ever growing population is the exhaustion of natural resources. Shandon L. Guthrie has said that “the predicament is made more severe by the fact that there is little reason to hope that either the population or per capita rate of consumption can be reduced. It is made more serious still by the fact that human population will continue to increase” (Guthrie <<http://sguthrie.net>>).

The author has brought forth the notion of medical facilities and medical personnel to hammer on the universal idea that amidst bloodshed and enmity there are angels amongst devils. Elizabeth has dedicated her life for the cause of saving the ailing refugees who are crowding the nursing home: “They work, throughout the night along with the hospital staff, admitting more refugees for the sick, trying to get a moment’s respite from the grief around whenever they can, until the early hours of dawn (*SB* 63). This shows that the dramatist is passionate about saving lives and protecting people against diseases. It is through this charitable approach to life that the notion of low mortality rate is subtly referred. Expansion of population size is inherent in such humanitarian care. The message of population explosion is conveyed indirectly through the “unending stream of tragic tableaux” (42) that is crowding up a particular area. Population explosion, by definition, means a rapid growth of population in a particular area and the playwright has subtly referred to this universal problem.

The author is a social realist and, therefore, he has seriously pondered on the threatening upsurge of population explosion. Through the episode of the refugees being pushed out into the India’s side of Bengal from Bangladesh

who are occupying the empty spaces, he has touched upon the serious issue of economic crisis. When India becomes economically weak due to over population, the ability of the country to rise up globally will be slackened. Besides, resource consumption and spatial occupation by the refugees have further fanned the flames of downward trend in the economic and agricultural development because refugees have started occupying the free spaces, fields and gardens (*RF* 19-20).

Currimbhoy does not believe in the providential resources of the earth when he dwells on the issue of survival problem of human beings. Society itself will be infested with “bugs” (*THO* 35). Therefore, Charles Darwin’s doctrine of “survival of the fittest” (Diniejko <<http://www.victorianweb.org>>) will determine the fate of human beings. Society will reach a stage when “there is the harsh inevitability about it, the struggle for birth, for survival, where one has to kill to live again” (*IQ* 81). In such a situation, human beings will be caught in the crisis of “violence meeting with violence” (36) and the catastrophe of human bestiality will sway the world’s population.

The playwright has felt that nature will take its own course of action to see that population gets controlled. Sickness and natural disasters, like drought, will take its toll to preserve nature from being over exploited. This is how the difficult situation of humanity, dealing with the means and wants of survival, will meet with another difficulty of nature reacting to her over exploitation; her reaction will be harsh. “Two seasons. Two years and there’s no rain...” (*TMS* 9) and though “turning the soil over and over again” “the seeds (will) not catching the rain...” (9).

5.12. Human Predicament in a World of Poverty and Hunger

The author has judiciously explored the universal human tragedy of poverty and hunger; tragedies that will not only liquidate but also cut short the

lives of people. In the midst of graciously looking at this misfortune, he has echoed the existential problem of life and death. He brings about this perplexing situation of poverty and hunger through the harrowing state of beggars to depict their dilemma situation, despite the abundance of earth's resources. Commonly encountered situation but less seriously pondered questions of 'why are they beggars?' and 'who made them beggars?' have been ignited by the author to picture their pathetic state of affairs; a tear-jerking situation to behold that they continue to die out of hunger in the midst of our earth's rich resources, which is of course getting depleted due to an ever rising population.

The dramatist has cognized that poverty is not a fancy and hunger that goes along with it is not a mystery as the two beatnik poets feel in *The Hungry Ones*. He has satirized the rationalists, through the two Americans, who only search for reasons behind human suffering and fail to comprehend its physical reality. He assesses the superficial nature of man and criticizes that rationalism cannot exhaust all the empirical problems of man. People dying of hunger, beggars crowding the charity homes for a meal a day, paupers getting gaunt, specter thin and dying are the alarm bells calling for a greater speculation. The author has pierced into the core of this predicament and shows that there is still a long way to go before poverty and hunger is alleviated, which is found in the words of Al:

So I learnt all there was to the control of mind and matter. I learnt something that was essentially yours, and no one has yet shown me what more there is to learn...until, until, something happened yesterday, calling out to me like you do now, making me understand, but still far, far away. It has still to be proved to me. This contrast and friendship. This need and rebuke.

I...will...still...break...their...reserve...their secrecy...if only to prove my superiority (*THO* 34-35).

The phrases 'but still far, far away' and 'still to be proved to me' show that poverty and hunger still remains a mystery for Al. Besides, the author's greater concern is to convey that reason alone can never solve this human tragedy. Sam and Al have set out to understand the mystery behind poverty and hunger in Bengal but their rationalism has landed them up in a more complex situation because their search was confounded with their hunt for superiority over Indians. As a result, they could not break the reserve and secrecy of poverty and hunger and, finally leaves for their homeland with an understanding that they cannot understand the secret behind India's beggars. Therefore, by universalizing the Bengal's famine, the dramatist has shown that nature's disaster will cause great human tragedy, forcing people to beg and die of poverty and hunger.

Amidst the predicament of growing population, there is a dilemma in the anatomical functioning of human body that Currimbhoy has presented. Hunger for food and desire for gratification of sexual urges that are naturally embedded in the very system of every human being are undeniable facts. Epicureans or *Charvakas* seek for physical pleasures and this is the ultimate end of all their affairs. The dramatist does not go so far as to be materialistic, like *Charvakas*, forgetting the metaphysical element of humans. The desire itself is non-physical but the object of desire is physical. This is an individual predicament that the dramatist has accentuated when he has dealt with hunger and desire.

5.13. Diaspora and the Predicament

Currimbhoy has made a candid admission about moral obligations that encumber some people from living a humane life. Failure to fulfil the moral

obligations can hinder the progress and peaceful co-existence of people, either due to fear of taking a decision or lacking courage to confront the wrongs. In *This Alien...Native Land* we find the predicament of Joseph's family, a minority Jewish family in India. They are on the horns of a dilemma of preserving their own Jewish identity. A native girl, Tara, gets married into their family and invades them culturally (*TANL* 61). Joseph could not courageously decide the future of his family because the past continues to haunt him and the future has created fear in him (35). He has failed to marry off his daughter, Sarah, in time (21) and, therefore, she has gone with a married Muslim man (22). David could not get a stable job because of his pride (10) and attachment to his mother which are morally and directly destroying him and indirectly devastating his family. They feel alienated in India and, therefore, they live in a compartmentalized closet of their home, regretting the loss of time. This crisis has kept the family unhappy and unable to find meaning in their lives. Currimbhoy has presented the dilemma of this Jewish family to show that complacency and lack of courage have made them fail in locating themselves as natives in India. He has also depicted that their recluse and cloistered life have veiled them from absorbing the culture and tradition of the natives.

5.14. Untouchable Predicament

Currimbhoy has moved from the predicament of Diasporas to the predicament of a different sort in untouchables. Untouchables, whom Gandhiji considered *Harijan* or children of God, are the menial workers and considered unclean servants and, therefore bonded to servitude. There is "a divine right to freedom" (*AEWT* 19) for every living being. The dramatist's percept of divine right is neither theistic nor atheistic but a general basic right that every human being possesses innately. The 'right' he referred with the adjectival 'divine' is

a metaphysical concept but it gets materialized in a physical form. Therefore, untouchables have occupied the epicentre of his concern, when he dwells on the menace of social segregation, which is morally disturbing.

Life, for untouchables, is being an untouchable. Removed and ostracized from the main stream Hindu social activities, untouchables are disabled and paralyzed of their basic rights as humans. Spiritually, politically and socially lamed, they long for a release: "I want to love: I want the right to enter any temple I choose, the right to drink water from any well I want" (48). Within Hindu society, they are considered unclean; "Even the shadow contaminates" (43). For a Hindu untouchable, liberation from this hellish condition is as tough as to remain an untouchable, who is always "being thrown out and made to feel like a cur or leper..." (48).

The author does not fake and mince with words in his dealings on such downtrodden people. Beggars, refugees or untouchables are allowed to walk in full flesh and blood, experiencing and expressing their real pain, sorrow and suffering. He has realistically handled their tragic encounter of emotional bereavement, psychological emptiness and physical alienation. Of all the downtrodden groups of people, the playwright has presented the life and experience of an untouchable, who live between a rock and a hard place, as the most painful and tragic because of their daily experience of physical exclusion and psychological trauma from the common crowd.

The dramatist has a firm faith in man and his struggles and, so, he has never, for a moment, artificially exonerated his characters from their weaknesses and failures. This has made his characters all the more realistic and authentically impressive. The situations and environments in which they live and have their being are lively, bona fide and suitable. Therefore, the characters crowding his microcosm are real human beings, embodying live

human characters and expressing genuine human feelings and emotions. As a result, the kind of conflict they experience and the predicament they encounter are the everyday experiences of humankind.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Asif Currimbhoy has broken the bearer of playwrights fettered with the idealistic and philosophic inebriation in the plays. He has freed himself from the hangover of the Indian classical plays and the western drama. He has even detoured from the path of earlier Indian English dramatists like those of Rabindranath Tagore, Sri. Aurobindo and T.P. Kailasam, who were engrossed with lyrical, allegorical and symbolic presentations in their plays. These astutely social conscious Indian English playwrights have brought freshness and excitement into the budding Indian English dramatic scene, with their plays centering on the subjects like slum life, untouchability, widow remarriage, evil of dowry, exploitation of the poor by the capitalistic factory owners and conventional morality. Dramatists like A.S.P. Ayyar, Harindranath Chattopadhaya, Fyzee Rahmen and Lobo Prabhu have significantly elevated the reputation and trademark of Indian drama in English to a certain height. Despite a few of the plays, by these playwrights, have realistic situations, convincing theatrical viability was absent. The long neglected field of Indian English drama, therefore, still could not stand upright.

Quantitative abundance of Indian English drama so far has not proved itself viable in stage production. An exception to theatre came with the coming of Currimbhoy into the scene of Indian English drama. He has lighted the torch of modern Indian English drama in theatre that keeps on burning until today. Therefore, he has been rightly hailed as India's first authentic voice in theatre. All his plays are first and foremost meant for the stage. As a dramatist of theatre, he is emerging more and more prominent as a playwright

of international stature in theatre and his success and appeal is not a mean achievement in the arena of Indian English theatre. With almost all his plays theatrically powerful, interesting situations are brilliantly contrived by him, creating apposite atmosphere with coherently sustained actions, realistically animated characters and sinewy dialogues. He has boldly and successfully experimented, without any reticence and inhibition, on a variety of theatrical techniques, thereby making the plays efficaciouslyactable.

Currimbhoy is empowered with a keen eye and a shrewd mind to penetrate into anything in the contemporary Indian society. As a prolific playwright, no situation or incident seem meaningless to him. He takes unusual themes from contemporary Indian society and weaves them into plays of artistic excellence. Peter Nazareth has rightly observed: “Asif Currimbhoy interweaves the event of the public with the private to create exciting drama which asks moral questions about humanity in the cataclysmic period of decolonization” (Nazareth 18).

He is truly a dramatist of the public event. Giving artistic touch of excellence to the public events like the assassination of the Mahatma Gandhi, invasion and accession of Goa from Portuguese by India, the flight of Dalai Lama, the visit of beatniks to India, drought in Maharashtra, famine in Bengal and consequences of poverty and hunger, Bangladesh uprising, streaming of refugees to India, the political situation in Gujarat and Kathakali dance of Kerala, his plays are richly embellished with theatrical effects. The plays are, therefore, stage worthy because he has creatively employed monologues, choruses, chants of communication, loud speakers, radios, projections, slide shows, shadow cut-outs, pantomime, puppets and special musical effects. In all this, he does not only make a record of the events but also passes “commentaries, consciously or otherwise” (*Commentary* 39) on them.

It is the thought that compels him to write but he is essentially a dramatist rather than a philosopher. At the helm of his priority in weaving a specific play is the stage and he emphasizes the actions within scenes. Rather than always utilizing verbal power of language for the creation of images, the playwright accentuates on the scenes and actions on stage. This provides visual images to stimulate the minds, the ears and the eyes of his audience. Evidently, then action plays the key role in his artistry. He has revealed it, even subtly at times, his vision through actions. As it is uttered by Mita in the *Refugee* that “Life for me means action” (29), existence of life essentially requires activity and for the artistic drama to have full life on stage, action is indispensable.

Currimbhoy’s inevitable reliance on action for his artistry, however, is not in terms of action on a clearly developed plot because he seldom relies upon a strictly linear plot. His strong suit is his dramatic scene which he ebulliently presents with a mesmerizing variety of theatrical experiments. Perhaps a bare listing of the theatrical experimentations, the playwright has practiced, cannot do justice to his great talent. Stretched to the enormous limit of his ever productive mind, the physical action of his plays prop up his thought in a manner dexterously orchestrated with other dramatic elements of diction, music and spectacle.

Consciously clear about the contemporary trend of dramatists’ road to progress and modern expectation in theatre, the dramatist has never lost sight of the middle person called the director between him and his audience. He has held the director firmly into his grip and the same faithfully interprets his works; giving this director a range of opportunity but never allowing it to reel out of his hold as some modern theatres tend to let it happen, leading to anarchy by making the director rise above the dramatist. In Currimbhoy’s

works, it is thought that dominates and, therefore, control of the play never escapes from the power of his hand. In that sense he is a genius and it is hard to surpass him by other Indian English dramatist in the modern period.

Justly, then, his plays may be considered theatre par excellence. He picks up certain situations in the history and everyday events and weaves it into theatrical plays. Most of his plays dwell on varied social themes. He is a social realist and he accepts the heterogeneity of society. The heterogeneous nature of society is taken to be culturally and traditionally inborn by the author. This diversity is the cause of certain conflicts between different societies: class conflict, caste conflict, political conflict, inter-religious conflict, ethnic conflict, communal conflict and the like. The playwright has given an uncommon touch to these so much used to common conflicts. His concepts and ideas are integrated with the central concern of exploring certain human situations and predicaments.

Societies that are constantly in confrontation with each other are not merely due to cultural and ethological differences. The dramatist has presented that modern hunger for supremacy in all fields of knowledge, economy and mere human power is menacingly displacing the actual human need of peaceful co-existence. In his profoundly emotional plays of Bengal, he has taken a firm stance that society could be more serene were it not for inhuman suppression. *Sonar Bangla*, which is an enactment of the emergence of the nation of Bangladesh after the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971 and of the problem of refugees, is inextricably linked with *The Refugee*. In its dealing of the refugees, the playwright has ingeniously brought home the difference between the refugees of 1947 in the character of Sen Gupta, who has established himself as a middle class citizen, and the refugees of 1971 who are unwanted and constantly scoffed at. Yassin, the Bangladeshi refugee of 1971

and who is depicted as the prime refugee of the play, is representative of all the refugees in the world. Currimbhoy has explored the eternal struggle of humanity against suppression and the ultimate triumph of humanism over brutality in these plays. This struggle of humanity against inhumanity continues even today in its painful trend and is bleakly showing any sign of getting it abated. *Inquilab* or Revolution is no less a painful play than the former two of the dramatist with regard to humanity being squeezed by the beastly side of human nature. Prof. Dutta and Ramesh are human beings with conscience while Ahmed, a hardcore naxalite, is a contrast to the former two and represents the harsh reality of inhuman nature, who is hungry only for brutality and violence.

The playwright's scathing attack on the crudity of the baser nature of man is candidly unequivocal. The affluence of the playwright as a social realist is that he has never taken the particular person, society or event as an end to itself and for itself. Every individual thing is applicably universal in nature. The socio-political event of the Bangladesh uprising (*Sonar Bangladesh* and *Refugee*) and the accession of Goa by India from Portuguese (*Goa*) have a general application to the modern day states and countries that suffer from the effects of political hegemony. The author has refused to water down the repercussion of infiltration of one country over the other by extending its superior wings on the weaker. He believes that the horror and terror of social conflict, exploding into war, results into immediate but temporal emotional devastation and this is more dangerous because the reactions are seldom accompanied with logical wisdom. Sentiments take the controlling power over reason in such situations. The other result, catapulted by such a conflict, is deeply psychological and long lasting. The inner hurts do

not only damage trust and relationship but it stretches its effect to the vast limits of human memory.

The playwright believes that old wounds are easy to renew. The past refuses to die down, the present is actively alive to those hurts of the past and the future will vitally be fed by the former two. I would rather confidently derive the logical conclusion from Currimbhoy's theory of inter-related causes of conflict that with the past and the present hurts refusing to be watered down the future will face a more complex and subtle discord. Indo-Pak diplomatic relation is still sitting on the edge, where sensitivity on both sides is hyperactive. Equally on the same footing is the Sino – India political relation that is ever sensitive. The very fact of sporadic cross border infiltration and violence as well as cagey diplomatic dialogues that go on until today prove the author's trenchant intellect that has seen ahead of his time.

The author believes that conflict of this type is hard to die down. The conflicting parties refuse to be bogged down by each other as they are socially conscious about their own dignified and proud social status. India and Pakistan as well as India and China are under the political friction of a fiercely ignitable nature. Currimbhoy takes this hangover of the historical conflict that continues to linger on until today, to show that social conflict ensuing out of communalism has a bitter repercussion. The indelible rift is smeared on the minds of every generation of the conflicting societies. Indians cannot take a flight from the painful partition memories as much as Pakistanis cannot. This memory is perennially smudged with distrust and animosity. Therefore, eruption of diplomatic verbal war and border cross fire are intermittent.

The dramatist is passionate about life unlike Charles Darwin's observation on human existence. He is not a person who finds hard to call

man fortunate, which is negatively ascribed to him by Faubion Bowers. Perhaps it is clear that people crowding the microcosm of his plays are not so fortunate; people in his plays trudge through so much of trials and tribulations. The realistic situation of mundane life he has presented is, no doubt, grim but liberation from the intensive heat of life does take place to some of his characters, as we find in real life. Goa has gone through the foreign dominance but was liberated from its clutches. Bangladesh (Earlier East Pakistan) was under a hegemonic rule of Pakistan (Earlier West Pakistan) that is akin to colonial rule in terms of geographical locations of the two countries, but was finally exonerated and got its independence.

The essential component of society is human beings. The author takes this component as basic to the holding of society. The type of human beings that make up a society will determine the social situation of that society. Currimbhoy's passionate and optimistic approach to human life, however painful, is seen in his presentation of different types of characters. Ramesh (*Inquilab*) has seemingly showed a lineal growth but ultimately has a vertically upward growth with a realization that his father was right in choosing free will and self expression. Sumita (*Sonar Bangla*) has decided to be independent, which is depicted towards the end of the play. Ram's family (*The Miracle Seed*) ultimately smiles with a hope of survival and finds consolation with a believe that the war with Nature is not never-ending; a bit of trust in Nature rather than cursing it will ultimately bring about survivability of humans by depending on it. Rita's decision to let the foetus, in her womb (*The Doldrums*), see the light of day and Sumita's hope to find her daughter alive (*Sonar Bangla*), are the author's optimistic approach to life. Moreover, Sonal's exit from the clutches of a lecher, Manubhai, in *The Dissident MLA* and Janet's bidding goodbye to a male prostitute, Keshav (*The*

Tourist Mecca), however painful in sacrificing a pleasurable life, have shown the dramatist's belief in a better life beyond physical pleasures. Sonal's refusal for a last invitation of a quickie and Janet's objection to Keshav's gift plainly depict that good things, though, must come to an end while better and best things wait in every individual's life. Therefore, human will and wisdom prevail over petty mundane temptations.

Currimbhoy has presented through his plays that in all forms of social conflict there are victims. He has asserted that innocent people are the most susceptible victims to severe social conflicts. In a political conflict, hunger for power play the spoil-sports because "for a politician there is nothing greater than power" (*SB* 104). In Naxalite revolution "there is the harsh inevitability about it, the struggle for birth, for survival, where one has to kill to live again" (*IQ* 81). In the fight for justice, innocent civilians get "caught between the devil and the deep" (*AEWT* 64). The playwright is not pessimistic but is realistic. Without mincing with words, he has treated human tragedy, in this post-modern era, as the "genocide of human civilization" (*OMPH* 66). A general perception of his philosophy of life foreshadows a forward march for human civilization but a deeper discernment shows that this civilization is both forward and backward strides.

Trudging through the road of human civilization, man experiences the corresponding thuds of the internal and external worlds. The author has considered the whole man in his life's sojourn; the life that wrestles with the day to day affairs. He has presented man with his frustrations, tensions, anxieties, anguish, fears and alienations. When man wrestles with external things, there is an inevitability of a certain degree of emotional or mental struggle. This inner conflict has been superbly dealt with by Currimbhoy to expose the war that goes on within a person.

The dramatist's characters are fully alive to whatever is happening around them, in them and react to the forces around them in ways that their instincts and impulses receive the stimuli. The harsher the external forces, the inner reactions are equally harsh. The author has comprehensively envisaged a human person's inner life. Psychologically penetrating, he has vividly pictured that the inner turbulence becomes externally visible; the inner self gets exposed through facial expression, physical movement or immobility of the physical body. For the playwright, these expositions are made when a person is either asleep or awake.

Natural disasters render the victims insecure. Currimbhoy takes draught as an indicator towards an impending anxiety and hunger. Natural forces of draught relentlessly hit hard on Ram's family that the family's patience gets drained out. Hopelessness begins to tumble them down due to hunger and the looming fear for a painful death eats up the essential vitals of their lives. The playwright has speculated on the natural disaster with its confounding power over man to tactically envisage man's unrelenting determination in fighting against the natural forces of nature. He has presented man's worthless effort in pushing against the fury of nature. Through this, he has shown man's intrinsic endowment in fighting against any abnormalities in life. Ram's family, in *The Miracle Seed*, has hoped against hope over the miracle seed of Mita and beggars clamoured for food during Ramadan in *The Hungry Ones* but what comes next is a question of further futility for them. The author has presented the stifling behaviour of Nature to show that despite the best efforts of man, nature can never be defeated.

Man defeats himself by being an escapist. The playwright has unearthed man's detachment and moral withdrawal from a world of simmering realities. Man's tendency to evade painful realities of life fuels the inner self with a

greater intensity. Faking the true self and escaping from the painful side of life endangers the inner world of man. The dramatist has portrayed that continual denial of the reality of suffering, sorrow and pain of life makes a person to be in constant war with himself or herself. Ultimately, the faking self plummets and exposes the true self or in most cases it defeats the true self. This latter outcome makes a person mentally unstable.

Currimbhoy believes that psycho-somatic interlocking is a non-deniable fact in a person's life. He has perspicaciously unscrambled the detrimental counteraction between the physical body and the mind. He has refurbished the clinical psychologists' view that greater the intensity of psychological heat, the immune system of the physical body will be more fragile. The higher the degree of stress and strain, the grip on the physical body will be stronger. This will hold the physical body hostage and render it to be highly susceptible to physical illnesses.

The dramatist has conscientiously noted that excessive mental tension, fear or insecurity can make a person mentally deranged. Manubhai in *The Dissident MLA* has gone through a maddening experience of fever and fear of darkness, followed by seeing the ghost of his son. Tuan Andrew, in *Monsoon*, on the other hand, has become a victim of his terrible fear of the black magic and the inefficacy of his anthropomorphic experimentation of an immaculate conception by equating himself with the God of his belief. Ultimately, he becomes a serial offender of lustful sin, serial murderer and mentally disturbed. Through this journey of serial offences, he was once struck with high fever and got bed-ridden for a long period of time. Big Mac in "*The Darjeeling Tea?*" is another character who could not pull through his mental pressure easefully. Towards the close of his manhood, he was attacked with fever and even started speaking in delirium before dying. In all this and more,

the dramatist has proved his belief that a person's psychological functioning has an inevitable impact on the physical body.

The playwright has optimistically orchestrated, in some of his plays, that no human being is immune to the psychological heat on the physical body. Even learned men and psychologists can fall a prey to the intensive mental pressure. Joe, a Ph. D scholar, could not get the better of his fear, shame and guilt. Therefore, he commits suicide by drowning himself. Prema, the psychologist and Mentor of a mental asylum, was overwhelmed and gets pulled away rather than drawing her client towards her better self. Her incontrollable mental desire has taken her physical being coup d'état in the fierce battle with her inner self. She becomes a murderer and lunatic. The author has self assuredly synthesized, through this, that in times of severe tension and distress, education, knowledge and wisdom become servile to the pressure of the psyche.

Currimbhoy has psychoanalytically depicted that unconscious physical actions of a person can be a direct response of the state of mind. Physical actions, like body movements and verbal words, exude corresponding to what goes on inside of a person. Manubhai, in *The Dissident MLA*, raises one of his hands occasionally swatting in-front of his face while snoring on the couch. Big Mac, on the other hand, speaks in delirium calling the names of his mistress and wife. Joseph swings on his rocking chair constantly and violently at times indicating the heat of his mind.

The dramatist believes that it is psychologically defective and obstructive to be inordinately attached to anything in life. He has admitted amiably, through his gentle characters in some of the plays, that defiantly glued to a place or human being will make a person stagnant. Such behaviours will also cause abnormality and weirdness in a person's life. Therefore, there

is a need of change in life through open mindedness without being abjectly parochial. Some Jewish families in *This Alien . . . Native Land* and Hugh as well as his friends in “*The Darjeeling Tea?*” have left the places that they were attached to for a long period of time, the places that had bred and nurtured them and were more than happy to seek for a new place of stay rather than sticking on to the old place, persons and things. On the other hand, BigMac, Manubhai, Bhima, Prema and Tuan Andrew are attached to their desires, despite the dissuasion of their associates. Therefore, they have gone through a nightmare of the effects such attachments have incurred towards the close of the plays. This shows that the author believes in the harsher realities of life and further depicts that change is not always pleasant. This is an adequate reason to prove that human life needs a change and transitions are a boon and not a bane to every individual.

The playwright swoops deep into the conscience of man and exposes the tightly gripped opposition of human mind to change. Inner conflict is not just being in two minds but being in a new situation where the old attitudes and habits are at war with and hinder the need for change. Expunging the old habit or attitude or even social position and replenishing it with the new entrant perhaps endorses sacrifice. This sacrifice is painful because one is already attuned to the old system. The dramatist has presented this psychological state of man to depict the weakness in adapting to new things. He penetrates into the deepest crevices of human mind and unearths the effects of change that invites the mind to be “locked in the death struggle” (MLA 15). This induces pain because it involves sacrifice.

The author firmly believes that acute inner turbulence cannot remain quiescent all through the life. Like the larva of a volcano, it will push its way out and get exposed even in silence. The dramatist has even made silence

speak louder than words on some occasions to show the intensity of internal conflict. Sam's anger, in *The Hungry Ones*, is seen in his coolly ferocious face with his hands clutching and un-clutching. The playwright has used the same technique to expose the extreme anxiety in Ram in *The Miracle Seed*. In times of the need for violent action, Joe, in *The Doldrummers*, becomes immobile. Currimbhoy has utilized this artistry to bring home the notion that extreme anger and confusion can fetter a person to become numb to the things around and stay immobile.

The author has unreservedly explored carnal pleasures to depict the igniting effect it brings on human beings' life. He has dramatized this pleasurable physical experience of man to explicate human weakness. Lustful temptation is used by him to depict how quickly human mind reacts to this stimulus. The mind reacts and the physical body responds. He has purportedly exploited sex to bring home the idea of the controlling power it has on man.

He has presented without any shilly-shallying that lustful addiction can impinge human dignity and position. It can also enervate determination and impede success in life. He shows that this temptation can easily endear a person and to yield to sexual allurements is easily feasible. Ill canalized sexual urges or urges of man that are left unfulfilled and unsatisfied will keep a person's inner being ill at ease. The dramatist goes on to depict that sexual perversion can easily prey on the weak minds. Therefore, though the mind is willing to combat the evil enticement, the weak flesh can effortlessly yield to the sexual cajolery. This makes the author hit the bull's eye of his belief that sexual perversion can leave the affected person internally ill at ease and even malign the dignity of a person.

Currimbhoy believes that excessive indulgence in selfish motives loots the inner tranquility of man. He has shown that the volcanic heat that goes on inside of men ravenously pillages emotional peace and serenity. He has also put forth that addiction to self-indulgence makes a person glum and provides the way for amiability as well as cheerfulness to melt away from a person by and by. This will render a person to appear haggard and careworn. Finally, the affected person will feel alienated or become eccentric. He has presented that egoism and dissatisfaction grow inseparably together and has pictured his perspective on self-indulgence mainly through his major characters like Tuan Andrew in *Monsoon*, Bhima and Prema in *The Dumb Dancer*, Manubhai in *The Dissident MLA* and BigMac in “*The Darjeeling Tea!*” The playwright has suggested through his psychoanalytical dealings on the mental state of these major characters that excessive self-indulgence will render a person mentally disoriented.

Curimbhoy has satirized a section of modern Indian youths and showed, in *The Doldrums*, that lack of courage, vigour and conviction has made them live superfluous lives and suffer only skin deep knowledge of the ways of the world. He has dramatized that aimlessness and purposelessness in their lives have crushed them between the traditional Indian culture and western oriented life style. Depression has pulled them to indulge in alcoholism and illicit sex. Love and respect are outmoded moral principles and passion and lust are highly palatable for them. The dramatist has rationalized that this is a spineless group of public who floats on the surface of life and attempts hard to suppress the painful realities of their lives. They have no opinion of their own to better their lives. The vacuum in them has pushed the little vigour alive in them to indulge in the lust of the flesh.

The dramatist believes that man suffers many false causal connections in life. He has shown that human beings have an inclination to look for the cause behind every event. Superstition stems from the errors in identifying the cause of these events. He, then, goes on to show that wanting more control or certainty in life is the driving force behind most superstitions. Tuan Andrew is insecure because of his ignorance and fear of the unpredictable. Therefore, he suffers an obsessive compulsion disorder. He superstitiously fears the black magic of Monsoon's grandmother. As a result, he commits one grievous mistake after the other.

The playwright has rationalized that desire to control every aspect of our lives lands us up in the war zone of our inner self. Even when we do not have control over a particular situation, we want to still have control over that. So, in those situations where we feel we are losing control, we tend to believe that something supernatural or magical can rescue us. Tuan Andrew had killed Monsoon's grandmother and committed the evil of sexual perversions, on virgin girls, one after the other to unfetter his fear of the curse of black magic. Manubhai, too, took recourse to consulting an astrologist time and again with the desire that his fortune be predicted exactly according to his wishes. Failure to meet the desired ends, he becomes more obsessively indulged in guiltless evil acts.

The author has also presented the other group of superstitious believers who remain complacent about its effects. This group of people has a tendency to curse the effects of false causal connections. The dramatist brings home the notion, through this, that this type of irrational causal beliefs adversely impact human life. He has substantiated this point by presenting the speech defect of Savitri in *The Miracle Seed*. Malti, Savitri's mother, has linked the stammering of Savitri to the time of her birth. She takes her daughter's speech

defect as the Nature's curse because she was conceived during a drought. Therefore, this shows that the playwright does not deny the presence of superstitious beliefs even in the 21st century and satirizes the irrational causal beliefs that some people still nurture. He has also synthesized that superstitions are largely due to ignorance and fear of the unpredictable or unknown. Therefore, it is clearly perceivable that superstition takes its root from the human mind.

Love and relationship in Currimbhoy's plays are psychologically deeper and more complex than it appears to be. He has explored infidelity with dexterity and shows that jealousy in relationships is largely due to infidelity and extra-marital affairs. Women tend to be more jealous of the spouse's emotional infidelity, and men tend to be more jealous of the mate's sexual infidelity. As it is found in some of his plays, Jenny is deeply distraught and in turmoil when her husband, Big Mac, receives a daughter through a tea garden worker. Rita feels insecure and devastated when her boyfriend, Tony, starts accepting gifts from other girls. On the other hand, we find Tuan Andrew constantly fearing about anybody touching his wife, Monsoon, after he has indulged in an extra-marital sex with Noroo, a virgin girl. It is also obliquely suggested that Tony feels jealous of Rita's acts of indulging in sex with the fat man and the overloaded emotion in him has made him immobile. More subtly, it is seen in the uprooted Jewish family that Joseph, though has perceived his wife's oedipal relationship with his son, could only sit on his rocking chair and silently suffer the pang of such despicable infidelity of his wife rather than confronting it courageously.

The playwright believes that guilt feeling is generally experienced by every human being, though in different degrees. Guilt conscience serves as warning signs that actions from where this feeling comes to pass are socially

and morally improper or unacceptable. He has also shown that the resulting aversive emotional state that emanates from guilt, due to infidelity, is because the deed is an objectionable transgression. It is apparent that perhaps men are prone to experience more guilt over sexual rather than emotional infidelity, given the importance they place on it in their relationships. It rises into their conscious level that their sexual loyalty is as important to their mates as it is so to them, and consequently, feel more guilty after performing an act of sexual infidelity. This conclusion is conspicuously seen in the plays which are predominant with the theme of love and relationship. Big Mac lives a torturous life after begetting Didi by a tea garden worker. Manubhai's experience of fear after his lustful approaches to Sonal, his tyrannical dealings with his wife, the passivity after his sexual infidelity and his unusual calmness at the approach of his wife are the indications of his guilt conscience that has made him go through roller-coaster of emotions. Tony's love for gifts does not eschew his guilt of over-riding Rita and going with Elizabeth. Joe could not bear his own guilt of transgressing on his friend's lover and impregnating her and, so, he commits suicide by drowning himself.

The dramatist penetrates into the inner being of women and depicts that women find hard to give a blind eye to the importance they place on emotional loyalty and, hence, it causes them most guilt. Shanti tells her husband, "Women's pain...and women's pleasure...goes deeper" (*MLA* 31). The author has portrayed that women are acutely sensitive to a partner's emotional infidelity. Rita has been "selling her pound of flesh neatly cellophane" (*DD* 54) to keep Tony under her tight grip, so that he may not fall into other girl's charm. Jenny could not tolerate her husband allocating his resources and protection to other women and his bastard daughter. Lady Topin could not bear Keshav, a male prostitute and a tourist guide, sharing his

emotion and feeling with her daughter, Janet. The playwright believes and has shown that women normally thrust their dependence and need of protection on men. Besides, they are sensitive to the emotional infidelity of their partner and hence, finds hard to swallow their partner's act of sharing the intimacy with another woman.

In presenting these authentic emotions and feelings of men and women, the author has not lost the sight of those who live merely for the lust of the flesh. Senhora Miranda shares her flesh with both Alphonso and Krishna. She even corroborates with Krishna in making him rape her daughter, Rose. Lady Topin goes on changing her husband guiltlessly. Keshav remorselessly sleeps with Lady Topin and her daughter. Daisy is a prostitute and she wants Noroo, a virgin teenager, to become like her. So, she makes Tuan Andrew to baptize her to initiate her into the profession of prostitution. Currimbhoy has permeated into the deepest abyss of these characters' psyche and sifts out that frustration, depression and lack of fulfilment in life have made them indulge in such repulsive and demeaning actions.

The dramatist's worldview shows that everything is not hunky dory and the human world he presents is replete with existential predicaments. Locked in the physical world, man is engrossed with mundane affairs. Quest for meaning, purpose and value of life occupy the centre stage of man's strenuous effort. In this search, man gets entrapped in one or the other predicament. Besides, subjective perception of situations and things and, excessive pre-occupation with the mundane struggle for life has made human life abrasively illusive.

The playwright has cognized that living in an idealistic world makes a person get "locked in the death struggle" (*MLA* 36) with the concrete realities of life. Such a person endeavors to "change the fortune to suit" (15) his

purpose. In extreme desperation, there is a tendency for this person to take recourse to violent means. The author has also scrutinized this issue deeper and presents that an inflexible will of man can destructively befall a person. He has shown this in *The Dissident MLA* that Manubhai sinks in life because his will to employ violent means to fulfil his purpose has blinded him from seeing his unpleasant destiny.

The author has further scanned the life of people and dexterously portrays that living in an ideal world tends to drag life into the irrational horizon. Such people get trapped in the ideological past by ignoring the concrete present and commissioned future. There is a tendency for this lot to encounter regrets in life. Encased in the past, present life gets enmeshed in a crisis. The author has censured that this group of people has the tendency to rebel against the inevitable forward flow of time. They regretfully brood over the bygone days that can never be concretely relived. A revelatory statement is pronounced by Jennie: “While I sit and wait, drying up inside, getting older, unable to face this horrible loneliness any further” (*DT* 14). This idealistic people feel rootless and alienated, having precipitated their vigour in trying to reach the unreachable past physically. And the dramatist has pronounced his perception about productive life, to rectify such disoriented lives, in the following statement: “facing the now – one that only needs to be revitalized” (*DT* 25).

Currimbhoy has shown that some people dwell on the already bypassed happier times of the past by been weary of the present and fears to tread into the unknown future. He has also adroitly juxtaposed an idealistic person with a timid person to sedulously prove his psychological perception of the simultaneous flow of fear and desire in human mind. He has brought forth this notion in terms of human relationship and temptation. There is a predominant

factor in man that drives him hither thither; a strong desire and vigorous struggle to overcome isolation and loneliness but at the same time fearing close and intimate relationship with another being. The protagonist in *An Experiment With Truth* has retrospectively uttered, “After almost forty years of practicing *brahmacharya* and abstinence, I was shaken to find my weakness still there...of my succumbing to the desire I thought no longer existed in my being” (AEWT 58-59). This utterance has powerfully exposed man’s dual urges. The playwright has amplified this theory of pull and push factor in man through Senhora Miranda in *Goa*, who has simultaneously desired and feared the same object. She has tempestuously desired sexual gratification from a black Indian but at the same time fears and abhors the same object for its colour and race.

The dramatist has dovetailed the element of self consciousness with the idea of temptation to depict the controlling power of the latter in man. He has tactically picked up the weakest point in man to press upon his stance on the power of temptation on man. A more self-conscious person will have a greater control over temptations. Jennie is conscious of her jealousy over her husband’s emotional and sexual infidelity. As a result, at the point of yielding to the sexual temptation with Bunty, she recoils and retards from him by becoming aware of the temptation. Gandhiji, on the other hand, is consistent in his effort to contain the sexual temptation or lust of the flesh, yet he has failed occasionally at his unguarded moments. The dramatist has revealed, through this protagonist, that human beings have got the tendency to fall a prey to temptations, despite conducting our lives resolutely. He has also exposed that temptation normally preys on the weakness of a person and further disclosed that a weak and selfish person easily bows to the pressure of temptations. Manubhai is a sadist and self-centred man who take delight in

tormenting and humiliating others. This weakness has sucked the essential goodness in him. As a result, he is rude to his wife and misguides his son. Seducing other women is too tempting for him despite been a married man, with a living wife. So, he has seduced Sonal, his maidservant, while his wife works outside the house, without any guilt conscience. Currimbhoy has tactically picked up the weakest point in man to press upon his stance on the power of temptation on man.

The choice of man is supreme in life to move forward progressively. The playwright has emphasized this principle of life in his plays. The difficult situation that a person encounters in life is choosing to act or not to act in a particular situation. He has candidly presented that actions determine the destiny of a person. This is revealed in Mita's utterance in *The Refugee*: "Life for me means action. Leave it alone, and you commit wrong" (RF 29). By this, the dramatist does not mean that all actions are justifiably acceptable and right. His contention is that there must be "a bit of moral rectitude" (MLA 27) in all our actions. He is a moralist in this context but most of all he is a realist.

Like Yassin, in *The Refugee*, and Joseph in, *This Alien...Native Land*, every person comes across the dilemma of choice in life; whether to act or not to act. There are also times when people fear to act and make others their legs and hands. The author has disdainfully criticized the likes of Manubhai in *The Dissident MLA*, who chose to let others perform evil deeds on his behalf through a pressure tactic. His diabolic design is to save his face from being publicly maligned as a politician.

Through this theory of choice, Currimbhoy has shown that no single individual is exempted from action. This is lucidly revealed in the words of Prof. Mosin: "Yassin must find out for himself that there is no getting away from it" (RF 31). The rationale behind this is that choice is a rightful

execution of man and the consequential outcome is inherent in the choice. The author has also revealed, through the characters of Yassin, Manubhai and Joseph that sacrifices are involved in every chosen action and concludes that the right choice of action positively impacts a life while wrong choice of action invites suffering and refusal to choose to act in time leads to regret and depression.

The playwright believes that humanity caught in the web of cruel servitude and peasantry find life miserably oppressed and repressed. He has drawn an adroit conclusion that gradual downward regression is the destiny of peasants. He has presented that their basic human right for freedom and self-determination is severely curtailed. Besides, hunger and poverty cannot be divorced from their lives. Being a peasant is worse enough to suffer the lack of freedom and self-determination but denying self respect has removed the essential human essence in them. Therefore, when the prolonged suppressed feelings and emotions in the peasants have finally found an outlet, the eruption effuses out in the form of a revolution. The dramatist has cognized that desperation will blur the minds of the peasants from seeing the evil means they choose to liberate themselves from the cruel hands of the oppressors. As a result, they dare take the law in their hands. The dramatist, therefore, has synthesized that explosion of the repressed feelings and sufferings will inevitably take a violent tone. At the same time, he has presented that imposition of reform through coercion without taking into account certain norms of law and order of society is irrational and disastrous.

Communal clashes are prone due to parochialism. Currimbhoy has stood on this proposition to hammer out the notion of conflict of interest. He has put forth that every community preserves its traditional identity and holds it with great pride. As a matter of fact, any external force of aggression to

exterminate this traditional identity is antagonistically opposed. *Om Mane Padme Hum* depicts that the Chinese' attempt to stamp out Lamaism of Tibet and supplant it with their "godless communism" (*OMPH* 15) has received a vigorous resistance from Tibetans. The author has circumspectly cognized that the unique ethnic and religious identity that is facing the effacement is paramount to the murder of civilization in the post modern era.

The dramatist has cogently discussed the issue of the predicament of population growth and standard of living of the human species that is growing beyond the long-range carrying capacity of the earth. This issue is vividly pictured, in *The Refugee*, in the episode of the endless flow of West Pakistani, now Bangladesh, refugees to the side of West Bengal in India. The "unending stream of tragic tableaux" (*SB* 42) and the sheer number of refugees, mentioned by Ray (54), arriving to a particular area are indicative of the population index in relation to the space availability. This huge mass of people coming to an already human inhabited area has raised serious concerns. As a result, human predicament is made more grievous by the fact that there is little reason to hope that either the population or per-capita rate of consumption can be reduced. Added to this loaded problem is the sheer expectation of the degradation of the economy. More severe still is that there is little reason to believe that the earth's resources will increase. Therefore, the dramatist has construed the continual human survivability in the following statement: "there is the harsh inevitability about it, the struggle for birth, for survival, where one has to kill to live again' (*IQ* 81). He has also portrayed in *The Miracle Seed* that Nature cannot converse with man but reacts to her exploitation by man. He presents this issue in a lighter vein through Ram who turns the soil over and over again but rain does not come for two years (*TMS* 9). Hunger and death is, therefore, imminent. Through this, the playwright

justifies his point that over population can be contained either through Darwinian Theory of survival of the fittest or the Nature's course of action.

Currimbhoy has brought forth the perplexing situation of poverty and hunger to depict the harrowing state of beggars. The stark reality of human life presented by the dramatist is that hunger and poverty always go together. Universalizing the Bengal's famine, he has shown that natural disaster will cause great tragedy, and force people to beg and die of hunger and poverty. Through the eyes of the two American beatnik poets, in *The Hungry Ones*, the author has pictured that people dying of hunger, beggars crowding the charity homes and this poor beggars getting gaunt, specter thin and dying a miserable death are not a mystery. He has revealed that poverty and hunger will force people to rob and loot other's property.

The playwright has portrayed that people in Diaspora generally experience emptiness and a sense of loss due to the effect of rootless feeling. Fear or failure of taking decisions at an appropriate time aggravates their problem. In *This Alien...Native Land*, we find a Jewish family that is been crushed with the problem of locating themselves. They are in the predicament of preserving their identity as a Jew. Tara, an Indian, gets married into their family and invades them with her Hindu culture. This family feels alienated and, therefore, lives in a compartmentalized home. The author has surmised that the major cause of this family's sense of loss is due to fear and recluse mentality.

The dramatist picks up the sensitive issue of untouchables and likens them to animals to show their degraded dignity and disability in Hindu society. Through his protagonist, in *An Experiment with Truth*, he has voiced his stance that untouchables are human beings like any other beings. Gandhiji tells his wife, "Ba...Ba...his hands are the same as mine. Why did I have to

force you to submit always...” and added, “he is our guest, Ba! No different from anyone else” (*AEWT* 43). The playwright has given a different treatment to the cause of untouchables by considering them equal to any other human beings because they too have the heart to love, desire to enter any temple they choose and thirst to drink water from the well they choose. His chief untouchable is not submissive but vocal.

The author has deftly employed a few dramatic techniques in dramatizing the social conflict, inner conflict and human predicament. He has used sex in his plays not simply to exploit the emotions of the audience but to hammer out his point. *Goa* has pictured hatred, ill-will, bigotry and violence as forces of separating Indians and Portuguese and, these are symbolized by strong sex. Rose, the beautiful girl symbolizing Goa, is raped by Krishna, the symbol of Indian militancy. The author has managed to concretize, in terms of a powerfully charged human metaphor, the larger implications of the military occupation. Sex is also used by him to state his points, like the fallibility of man, however great or low, in *An Experiment with Truth*, unusual passions devoid of any sense of responsibility in *The Dissident MLA* and *The Tourist Mecca* and, the destructive control that man’s passions assert in *The Doldrums*, *This Alien...Native Land* and *The Dumb Dancer*.

Currimbhoy also has used the technique of parallel and contrasts to present his themes. *The Doldrums* powerfully stands tall with the conglomeration of characters displaying similar attitudes and depicts how the modern youth are in doldrums. In *Inquilab*, the author has contrasted the constitutionalists with the Naxalites. A turning over is shown through the character of Amar, who initially was a staunch Naxalite supporter but later changes his stance and opts for the rule of constitution because he feels that democracy, not revolution, should help people. *The Miracle Seed* enacts a

contrast between country people with townsmen and presents that the miracle seed offers some rays of hope and back-up for the coming generations.

The dramatist also employs the device of irony to press his point on certain social behaviours. For instance, “*Darjeeling Tea?*” is fraught with irony; the tea which is held high as the most famous one in the whole world is not served at all in Darjeeling. *The Tourist Mecca* ironically deals with the tourists flooding to Agra with the expectation of learning something new every year. We learn from Lady Toppin that, though Agra has become a place of pilgrimage, she herself comes to this place to indulge in extra-tourist activities whenever she visits the place. “*Om*” is another powerful ironical play which has shown that the Guru, who takes great pride in his knowledge of the religion, does not receive salvation but the Black man without any depth of knowledge attains it.

The author does not only endeavour to present men and things as he sees them but also offers them an artistic assessment. He has taken an utmost care to present his thought by implication, indirection and innuendo rather than by direct statement. His priority and objective is to provoke thought rather than to persuade his audience to adopt a specific plan of action. It is highly plausible and greatly impressive that by presenting any aspect of life, he wants to import into them some of the enthusiasm he has for life.

Inquilab has an apparent depiction of the misunderstanding between a professor and his students but the undercurrent is enforced with the message that the naxal shortcut is not the solution to evil and hatred of the world. On the contrary, the answer to this is the generosity of understanding and love. *The Refugee* does not merely display the pathetic state of the masses of people and they are not simply an uprooted crowd but they are human individuals and each of them is unique like any other human person. In *Sonar Bangla*, the

author has enacted a war theme but the inner framework concerns itself with causal connections of the past, present and future. The old wounds are easy to renew, the present is affected by the past and the future is largely dependent on the present. These political situations are sensitive but diplomatic relations, between different countries, are far more sensitive. Besides, conflicts built on ethnicity and communalism is hypersensitive.

Goa has a peculiar message to convey. Though the rape of a Goan girl by an Indian boy occupies the nucleus of the story, the playwright has made it abundantly clear that though India takes over Goa from the Portuguese, no one wins the war in view of the acute suffering and disintegration that has set in among Goans. The playwright's feat in enacting such common situations with uncommon messages is highly plausible. The underlying idea in *The Hungry Ones* is that even in an environment of loot and violence, the inextricable needs of man, like love and hunger, always stand at the fore of his affairs.

Currimbhoy's plays are, no doubt, replete with messages but this is not the sole reason to believe that his plays are merely the vehicles for transporting his thoughts. They are works of art and he has never lost sight that he is more a dramatist than a moralist or a philosopher. His plays are primarily meant for the stage and they express his resourceful sense of the theatre and his dexterity as a dramatist. The plays are framed by integrating his concepts and ideas with the sole concern of exploring actual human experiences at certain points of time. Therefore, his plays have proved that he has radiantly succeeded in portraying an image of the time more than any contemporary Indian dramatists in English.

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