Conclusion

The 1960s saw the emergence of a new Black theatre which was angrier and more rebellious than its predecessors with Baraka as its strongest supporter and advocate. His plays, *Dutchman* (1964) and *The Slave* (1964) depicted Whites' exploitation of Blacks, and as a revolutionary force, Baraka wrote for Black separatism. He inspired Ed Bullins seeking to create a strong "Black aesthetic" in American theatre. Though he was influenced by Baraka, Bullins' writings differ from Baraka's writings. Baraka's view is "to force change" but Bullins' view is "not to force change." Bullins along with Malcolm X (1926-1965) worked in Black Arts Repertory Theatre School (BARTS) in Harlem which later became the Black House. Actually, Malcolm X is an adopted name of Malcolm Little. In 1952, he officially changed his name to Malcolm X to signify his "rootlessness" in a racist society. Malcolm X, an U.S. Black nationalist leader, in his speech "Educate Our People in the Science of Politics" (1965) had told, "If someone puts his hand on you, send him to the cemetery." Though Bullins had been friendly with Black writers like Baraka and Malcolm X whose writings embrace the militant attitude, his works were entirely different even from the beginning. Almost all the writers who have been dealing with Black literature are employed in presenting the effects and the impacts of the suppression of Blacks and the oppression by the Whites. The writings that dealt with those issues encouraged the Black people and animated their anti-white attitudes. But from the beginning of his writings, Bullins has not been engaged in inducing the feelings of the Black sufferers against the Whites which makes one raise a question regarding his view.
Further, Bullins realised that only closed circles of Blacks read fiction and poetry. As all poetry used devices such as "metaphor" and "simile" which may confuse rather than "make it plain," Bullins turned to write plays to reach more Blacks. When the other contemporary black writers of his period were employed in writing plays that deal with slavery portraying their pathetic life and picturing the various ways for Blacks to oppose Whites' authority and force, and how to overcome the countermeasures against their revolt, Bullins' approach was different. He was concerned with the life of the oppressed blacks. Rather than concentrating to make the Blacks go against Whites, Bullins thought of portraying the actual life of Blacks which did not suit the environment in the White society. As W.E.B. Du Bois describes,

the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, – a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, […] One ever feels his two-ness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, […] in one dark body. whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Du Bois 6-9).

Bullins thought that the American world would not yield black people a true self-consciousness. So he started portraying in his writings the negative part of blacks’ life trying to make the Blacks to experience and become aware of themselves to assert their rightful place in the white society to overcome the feeling of the “two-
ness” and to ever feel the “one-ness” that they are Blacks. Many others thought that Bullins was against his own people and that is why he had been dealing with the negative aspects of Blacks’ life. LeRoi Jones, in his poetic essay entitled The Revolutionary Theatre, outlines the “iconology” of the theatre movement:

All their faces turned into the lights and you work on them black nigger magic, and cleanse them at having seen the ugliness. And if the beautiful see themselves, they will love themselves (quoted in Neal 279).

Bullins who has used the above quotation as an epigraph in his first collection, Five Plays by Ed Bullins, without bothering about the criticism of others continued to portray in his writings the actual life of Blacks. Bullins also satirises the Blacks who fully accept White values because of which they are forced into a “misshapen form” twisted out the true meaning of their lives. As Larry Neal writes:

The motive behind the Black aesthetic is the destruction of the white thing, the destruction of white ideas, and [the destruction of] white ways of looking at the world (274),

Bullins also refuses to accommodate the Blacks’ vision to White sensibilities. Bullins’ motive is to kill the “whitey,” in the sense “the white thing” from Black people’s mind. Destruction of “the white thing” implies “no whiteness in ideas,” “no whiteness in looking at the world” but to have only “blackness” in the minds of Blacks. He tries to portray a “new black consciousness” bringing the concept of “one-ness” in the minds of Blacks.
Larry Neal says, "there are in fact and in spirit two Americas – one black, one white" (273). Not only did the Blacks suffer from "two-ness," any black person in America who has aspired to rise to the status of a poet, or dramatist, or novelist found himself faced automatically with a complex mass of facts (the mental characteristic that begins with race) which he could not avoid. James Weldon Johnson too says that the problem confronting the black playwrights is that of the double audience. He writes,

The moment a Negro writer picks up his pen, [...] he is immediately called upon to solve, consciously or unconsciously, this problem of the double audience. To whom shall he address himself, to his own Black group or to white America? (Bigsby 208).

Black playwrights too often suffer from the disasters of racial discrimination. But Bullins would not have faced the problem of "two-ness" because from the very beginning of his literary career, he was not influenced by the white complex. The words by Clay (a black character in LeRoi Jones’s Dutchman) “let me be who I feel like being” stresses the view of Bullins of how the attitude and outlook of the blacks should be.

Bullins’ plays are chronicles of the losers, the weak and the sick. Like a gadfly, [Bullins annoys and criticizes his own Black people in order to make them do well] he moves into the scores and causes them to smart. He hits us [Blacks] with a mirror that shows us the ugly, hoping that the image will lead into patterns of change. [...] That’s how fights start, and Ed Bullins is, after all, an old street-fighter (Evans 18).
Like this, Bullins’ plays are a narration or description of events which have the resemblance of “chronicles.” In Bullins’ writings, his willingness to investigate the ambiguity of Blacks’ life, to study the unsteadiness of the minds of Blacks by close examination and systematic inquiry, and to discover the facts of the deviations of Blacks from the normal standard of living are outwardly apparent – as plain as the nose on the face. “Seeing plainly and correctly is his [Bullins’] great skill” and so his reports on African American life “will constitute a major historical record of black society” (Jackson 298).

Generally, the function and purpose of the Black writer lay in uncovering the reality, in exposing to view the Blacks’ existence, in discovering their humanity as distinct and independent existence. Likewise, Bullins tends to see high moral standards in presenting his writings as it is. On the responsibilities of a writer, Bullins makes a point that a writer, has a responsibility to himself. [...] he must first be able to master himself, [...] if he’s living true to himself, and doing what’s true to himself, then the people around him, his co-workers, his group, his nation, will benefit [...] the work he’s doing [...] unless a person can help himself he can’t help anyone else (O’Brien 109).

He also feels that the Black playwrights have been writing with “conviction, passion, truth, with a sense of duty, with a forward vision of tomorrow” for themselves and for the African Americans. Bullins writes, “Honesty is what the writer should be after.” He adds that the Black playwrights have a sense of building not only the black theatre but also the Black nation and the Black future. For Bullins, the
hindrances that abstract the freedom of black writers are those which suppress the feelings. His dramatic focus is on the “exploration of inner forces” that restricts African Americans from realizing their freedom and potentiality, giving no way to compassion and embarrassment. Bullins deals with the black folks, their pain, joy, anguish, terror, extreme fear and love. As Clayton Riley says, “Thieves. Outlaws. The only heroes a thoroughly corrupt society [...] can logically produce” (314).

Bullins assumes that racist America has deformed the aspects of the Black experience and consciousness and has not managed to construct a society in which human longings are fulfilled. In such an American society, dominated by White people, Bullins tries to make the Blacks aware of their life of absurdities, and shows how American realities can sustain crucial human desires, the need for love, security and freedom.

The “knowledge of his people, his audience, and an unerring understanding of what will and will not work on a stage that directs Bullins’ craft” (Evans 17). The main parts of his writings have been the desperation, profanity, and blasphemy of the Black Americans. Bullins’ works deal with the essentials for the existence of Blacks’ life, the process of making the Blacks know the feelings, opinions, and ideas of black life for their future. He feels that if they can become conscious of their illusion, they will be in a position to free themselves. He tries to “cleanse them at having seen their ugliness.” He speaks directly, through his plays, to the African Americans about their “desire for self-determination” and to have presence of mind to control their own fates and “nationhood.” His plays awaken Black people to make them understand the meaning of their lives. Only with this, “cleansing” one can maintain control over his
life. This idea seems to have enabled Bullins to educate the African Americans, in order to win their place and attain peace in the White America.

Bullins presents the different and various situations in Black people’s lives through his plays *In the Wine Time*, *In New England Winter* and *Goin’ a Buffalo*. In the play *ITWT*, which examines the scarcity of options to the black urban poor, he brings to view the life of a young sixteen-year-old black boy, Ray, whose aspiration is to join the navy. He is a dependent of his mother’s sister, Lou, and her husband, Cliff. For his desire to join the navy, there are two things to be fulfilled, one is, he has to attain the age of sixteen, and the other is, he has to be helped monetarily to join the navy and one has to sign the papers for his navy admission. Naturally, he would attain the age of sixteen, but for signing the papers for joining the navy, he should have a blood relation, but his mother’s husband is only a step-father so he has a problem in it. His aunt, his mother’s sister, could sign the papers but she is not interested in sending him to the navy because her husband’s service in the navy was not satisfactory. During his service, he involved in various illegal activities that made him spend years in brigs which were the places of confinement for those who indulged in illegal activities in the navy. So Ray’s aspiration to go to the navy would only become a dream. Though a black boy aspires to join the navy, there are certain criteria to be fulfilled which cannot be done by Ray, because he is a dependent. Also, he cannot be monetarily helped because the head of the family, Cliff, has no permanent job or a regular income. So he cannot help Ray in his future plan. His aunt Lou could help him, but she is not interested because of the experience she has gained by her husband, Cliff. She considers navy would only make Ray to have a life of
problems and would make him worse. In Cliff's case, he fails to concentrate in finding a job for him. He simply spends his life time in drinking and playing cards. Rather than seeking a job, he involved in inducing Ray to join the navy by tempting him revealing his experiences he had in the navy like the contact with the girls of different countries, enjoyment through liquor et cetera. Also, there is one important reason for Cliff encouraging Ray to go to the navy. Instead of striving in life to gain means, Cliff feels that the place where he has been living, which is a Black ghetto, has confined him. Bullins, as an innovation, has introduced a character in this play, which is named as "unattainable woman" by a critic Darwin T. Turner in Black Drama in America (1971). This woman comes in view only to Ray. This woman could be viewed symbolizing three things. She stands as an image of the future possibility for Ray, as a fantasy woman who distracts Ray's dreams of attaining manhood, and as the chances and opportunities in Ray's life. As an answer to Ray's dreams, she says Ray should leave the ghetto to realise his future. As he is confined to the place, he does not know about the others way of living. Only if he experiences the life of other people (who are not confined in ghettos), he will be able to discover a way of finding a new life. Only if he leaves the ghetto he would feel fresh and start the search for the future which would provide him good opportunities in life. A young Black who is in his age, that is, sixteen years would ultimately fall in the fantasy of a woman if he comes across such situations of seeing daily a figure of a girl who is pretty enough. This fantasy would be a hindrance to the Black in achieving his goal. Through Cliff, Bullins tries to advise the young African Americans to avoid falling into many fantasies. Other than these dimensions there is one more to be defined
about the “unattainable woman” is, that she is a figure of future possibility to young African Americans. As a figure of future possibility, she comes in view to Ray many times in the play. If Ray is the one who could utilize the opportunity properly, then he could attain the dream of joining the navy. If he loses the opportunity that knocks the threshold of Ray, then he has to suffer thereby missing the future. So one should be aware of the situation around them and should be consciously dealing with the situation to realise their dreams. In addition to these, through the character Lou, Bullins presents the attitude of Black women’s hard work without depending on their men. Lou works hard in the laundry whereas Cliff is insulting her for working in the laundry. He finds reason for his hating to be a laundry worker that it would just offer a “low-income.” He says in one situation, he does not like to have a child because he has to nurture the child which would be a burden to him. He dreams to get more money, but he fails to remember that without hard work one cannot get money. Bullins portrays the attitude of Black men expecting their women to earn for their family through the characters Cliff and Lou, the Black husband and wife. Bullins lashes out here at the Black men’s lethargy and indifferences through Cliff. He makes fun of Lou for working in a laundry but still expects her to work for his income. He depends on that income.

The play ITWT presents a sixteen-year-old Ray who has been destroyed and affected emotionally very much with painful choice between two things, that is, between a passionate feeling for a fantasy “unattainable woman” and the temptation to enlist himself in the navy. Cliff, who himself feels that he is trapped in life’s hardships because of no standard earning perspectives and his weakness for women
wants to escape from life’s miseries advises Ray and tries to persuade him to stop
being involved in sexual fantasies. Cliff recommends Ray to get away from the black
ghetto and join the navy, thus escaping from Philadelphia, one of the most ethnically
mixed of US cities, having a majority Black population, many of whom are
descendants of the thousands who migrated after the Civil War, the place where Cliff
feels “entombed.” The play ends with a sudden experience of violence as Cliff
murders a neighbourhood hoodlum, Red, who had involved himself in an
“undesirable act” of providing urine “as a toast to his new love” in a wine bottle to
Ray to drink. Cliff is taken to custody by the cops and Lou keeps Ray with her, not
allowing him to go to navy making him the protector of her family. “He’s all I got
left, Cliff ... He’s all the family I got left” (181), Lou says. As the central character,
Cliff says it is a choice between a “world of dreams and lies and fairy tales into a
jungle or a desert” (139) and hence, in this play, the escape remains a dream.
Ultimately, in the play, Bullins succeeds in expressing his message that the wishes of
the Blacks often remain an unfulfilled dream due to the various problems that they
weave around themselves.

At the end of the play, Cliff who does not plan for his living and who takes
much care for Ray’s future has been arrested by the cops for he has killed Red who is
a bourgeois whose “abnormal behaviour” of providing urine to Ray brings the end to
his life. Bullins’ idea of “bourgeois as opposed to black ghetto” is presented in this
play through the character Red. When Cliff is arrested, Lou who has been scolding
her husband for his failure in earning feels sad and cries, “don’t leave us alone, Cliff.”
Because of Red, Ray’s dream of joining the navy, Cliff and Lou’s dream of staying
together and to live a happy life, all future possibilities of happy living remain a dream.

While *In the Wine Time* presents a world of unfulfilled dreams and aspirations, the play *In New England Winter* presents the expectations of the Blacks in building around themselves a happy family. Their desire is to have children and to live happily with their family. The play also presents black men's planning for illegal activities for money to grow rich in the world. Further, the problems the black half-brothers (Cliff and Steve) face in their life, and the various life's situations which deal with the ugly parts of blacks' life also are shown up for criticism in this play.

Through portraying these issues, Bullins tries to make the African Americans become aware of their sordid life. In this play also, as in *ITWT*, Bullins deals with the Black men's laziness for earning. It is worthy to note here that in general there is a tendency among the men to shy away from problems, be indifferent to their families, and careless to earn more. Cliff and Steve left their women stranded without money when they left for prison. After spending years in prison, Cliff and his half-brother Steve are planning to rob a bank through which they could get enough money and then meet their women. Rather than trying to seek a job which would provide them a permanent source of income, they plan for a robbery. Even after spending a few years in prison, they try to do things which would make them go to the same prison. In the robbery plot, they never succeed, because of the tendency of African Americans to betray others, their own Black people, that is, their own brothers. In the play, when Cliff was in prison, Steve had taken Cliff's wife and had fathered a baby through her in the absence of Cliff. Bullins through the relationships between the half-brothers
has portrayed the ugly part of Black's life. The brother had violated life's ideology.
In his brother's absence, one should be helpful to the brother's family rather than
turning his brother's wife towards him. Bullins considers this as a practice that should
be avoided. He also condemns such kind of attitudes of Blacks would only harm their
existence. It is here that one can bring the Indian family as a model. The brother's
wife in the Indian family is always looked upon as a "mother." The half-brothers are
only her sons. Such a relationship (of the mother) is looked upon as sacred. But in
the African American world, it is disgusting. This is what Bullins has held up for
scorn. Through out the play, Bullins tries to expose to African Americans that they
should shun all kinds of illegal activities and should concentrate in seeking for good
jobs which would provide them a permanent income. The lesson that Bullins would
like to put forth is that the Blacks should shun all inhibitions and strive hard to get
jobs and work hard.

In the play, INEW, through the character Crook, Bullins portrays the sexual
ugliness of the ghetto world. Crook tries to possess Steve's woman (Steve has Cliff's
wife, and Crook has Steve's woman) when Steve was arrested for desertion from
navy. As Liz has much love for Steve, she becomes mad after his arrest and utilizing
this situation Crook goes for Liz. One should not use the pathetic situation of others
for his own favour and here Bullins portrays the Black people's selfish tendency in
betraying their own community. As the plays ITWT and INEW are the dramas
which fall under the projected "Twentieth Century Cycle" of plays, they both deal
with the same idea of Black men being lazy, trying easy methods to reach a
prosperous goal, exploiting their women in helpless situation. Like Ray, in the play
ITWT, who becomes attached to a fantasy with the "unattainable woman" without any good reason, in this play INEW, Steve is emotionally dependent on a woman, Liz, who has been suffering from severe mental illness from the time Steve left her lonely and went to prison.

While INEW presents Bullins' dreams for a fine family for the Blacks, the play Goin' a Buffalo deals with the African Americans search for a better place in search of "greener pastures." Bullins seeks to define that the place where they have been living only has provided them the means for a life – living and partly living. Forgetting this idea, the Black people plan to leave the place without knowing how far the new place would provide them the opportunities for a better life. Rather than trying to transform the place, in which they at present live, through their hard work and planning for their future, they just plan to change the place of living which is not advisable. As in the play INEW, this play also deals with the issue of the betrayal among brothers. In this play, in order to show his gratitude as a gratice to Art, Curt allows him to live with his family. The same gratitude has made Curt suffer in his life. Curt's blind belief in his friend, Art, makes both of them face so many unwanted happenings in their life. The "irrational faith" on others will lead to disastrous end, is well portrayed by Bullins.

When Curt was engaged in dope selling, because of having a soft corner and love on Pandora, Art informed the cops making Curt arrested. When Pandora was weeping on knowing the arrest of her husband, Art without any hesitation and sadness was getting ready to move to Buffalo along with Pandora, the wife of his friend who helped him after his return from jail. In this situation, Pandora was making Art know
about Curt’s attitude of helping the needy when in danger. Though Curt has thought of helping Art, he has betrayed his friend Curt. At the end of the play, Curt’s plan of going to Buffalo for living a better life with his wife remains a dream because of Art, the betrayer of Black community. Bullins at this juncture highlights the fact that the Blacks choose deliberately the “low-income” or “low-jobs,” because they were too lazy to go in for arduous tasks, but they want to become rich through easy ways and means like thieving, murder and evil ways taking pride in wrong acts. But the dramatist through a highly artistic portrayal of his characters delivers the message that Blacks can do very hard work and prosper in life.

Almost in all these three plays, Bullins has dealt with the Black people’s life and their survival and has portrayed the Black people’s crookedness, ways of betraying others, not working hard to earn for their family, simply indulging in illegal activities, expecting their women to earn for their family and always living in a dream of attaining everything without effort leading a life full of imagination. Through these ideas, Bullins has established a new consciousness making the African Americans aware of their responsibilities leading them to learn to live a meaningful life in a world of hardships.

In Bullins’ view, the African Americans trying to live in an imaginary world and betraying their own community are the two dangers of life. The act of betraying one another, among their own community, that is, between brothers is a great danger. The Blacks showing a lack of loyalty within themselves is not worthy of trust and confidence. The false idea, false belief, false impression and false appearance of Blacks make them liable to injuries. In addition to the betrayal, Blacks who live in an
illusionary world of dreams planning for an escape from life's hardships is another great danger. The African Americans, who have the fear of facing the life's hardships, in order to escape from it, plan to change the place for better living. They forget that the place, from which they plan to move now, had been providing the needs for their life and played a part as "greener pastures." Due to their geographical rootlessness, they are wanderers in the oppressive land moving toward an imaginary universe, which becomes illusionary. Bullins has devoted his life to the struggle of "manumission" insisting on the African Americans getting rid of these absurdities thereby freeing Black Americans from these two dangers. These obstacles obstruct, or block the upliftment of the Blacks. The betrayal of community is possible only because of the Blacks' tendency to hold on tightly to the illusion. They are emotional dependents of the false impression. It is of this behaviour like betraying themselves, especially secretly, that causes destruction to themselves. The downfall of Bullins' characters, in most of his plays, occurs because their loyalty to others is misplaced. Bullins' message here is very convincing. If a man is not capable of getting along with his own brethren and he stoops to betray his own kin how can he progress and work as a team to live in prosperity and happiness like the White people.

The next concept in life that Bullins picks up for argument is the theme of marriage. The basic idea in marriage is in any society is for the couple to live together in harmony for a long time. In the plays ITWT, INEW and GAB this concept is taken for analysis but in the end Bullins presents the whole edifice as collapsing. In these plays, the concept of marriage seems to be a temporary contact of sexual association between two people. Curt, in GAB, has the idea of starting a
business in Buffalo as a future possibility and living a better life together with his wife, Pandora. But Art and the American cops made them be-apart. Also in the play ITWT, the killing of Red and Cliff's going to prison stop Cliff and Lou being combined. Cliff loses Lou because there is no way for him to control the events surrounding his life. Likewise, in the play INEW, Cliff has no particular woman, and Lou has no man with whom she has a lasted romantic relationship at least for some time. Their affairs did not develop into lasting relationships. From these kinds of relationships, it can be said that it provides them with a feeling of sadness making the characters lose interest among themselves in their lives. They are disgusted rather than enjoying a strong emotional “bond” between the husband and wife. Normally, according to a healthy society, the man and woman should be united in a healthy bond of love. Hence, it is very interesting to note that an African American like Bullins endorses the united husband and wife relationships criticising and holding up to have an aversion to the disgusting temporary relationships between the Black man and woman.

Drawn from his experiences in the Black ghetto, Bullins' plays ITWT, INEW and GAB were more ambitious undertakings than those of the other plays, in the sense, these works are “capable of transcending the brutal aspects of the Blacks.” In addition, the art of discovering and testing the truths of life seem to be the merit of these plays. In these plays, the mind allows one to do things, either good or bad, without restrictions. Other than this, the mind of the characters allows them to go wherever one wants to, in order to escape from the compressed life due to various reasons. Bullins feels, through the process of reasoning and from the general
principles and moral values of human nature, a compensation for the faults of the characters can be worked out if the character follows the good values that may be relevant to his/her good self (the good side of one's character). Here it is valuable to indicate that man is a combination of both good and evil. He has the outer evil self and the good inner self. Though the characters, in these three plays, live in the environment of illegal drugs and wine, jail and cops, knives and fights and death, the portrayal of the situations of their courage, strength, the sexual potentiality of Black men, the long search for one's inner self, all these strongly influence these plays.

In Bullins' plays, almost every character has ideals and hopes. Likewise, his central characters plan for a move from the place where they at present live. They just think of it in the hope that the alternative place would provide better opportunities and more chances to excel in life. But almost their expectations end in vain. Their hopes simply make them face the worst. By reason of their hopes always being destroyed, they try to "locate themselves in familial ties and community relationships" rather than in particular places, in the hope that these ties and relationships would provide a bond — "a nexus for identity." However, the relationships portrayed in Bullins' plays frequently disperse, terminate, confuse and get confused bringing disorder in the plays. Bullins tries to make the Blacks feel those situations in order to create awareness among the Blacks. It seems, Bullins has the belief that only the harmonious relationships could provide the real foundation in the life of the Blacks.

Though Bullins' plays dramatise the ugliness of the black ghetto people, they also drive the characters to heroic efforts and noble qualities. In the play, ITWT,
Cliff goes to prison providing a chance to Ray joining the navy. In INEW, Bummie, though fiendish, has the strong quality of being true to his friend. Bummie’s attempt to make known to Cliff about Steve’s betrayal of fathering a child to Cliff’s wife ends up unpleasantly costing Bummie’s life. In COM, Big Girl, though a lesbian, dominates over Clara, nurtures her mentally retarded sister with patience and looks after her ailing alcoholic aunt. Big Girl hides her emotions in order to maintain a “togetherness” in a form of a familial set up, though all the other characters in the play come from different families, except her sister. Besides portraying the noble and sacrificing qualities of Black Americans, these plays are prevalent with bad Black whoes like Pandora of the magnificent box (Goin a Buffalo); [who has sexual relation with her husband’s friend], wine-drinkin’ nigguhs like Ray (In the Wine Time); bulldaggers like Clara’s Ole Man; or brilliant finance-company-rip-off-plannin’ nigguhs like Steve (In New England Winter) (Smitherman 8).

In these plays, Bullins was presenting the street niggers in all their glories making the Black Americans feel their distinguishing qualities which only would bring in themselves a feeling of togetherness. Characterising himself as a “street nigger,” (Sanders 178) Bullins’ task is to derive values of the fundamental concreteness of street life bringing out black self-awareness.

In addition to the portrayal of Blacks’ characteristics: noble as well as ignoble; decent as well as devoid of decency, in Bullins’ plays one could find also a group of interracial characters. As a writer for the black masses, Bullins transcends racial limitations. “His characters don’t have to involve themselves in racial conflict to
justify their behavior – racism surrounds the black community; it is a forever-present force," in Bullins' view. Further, Bullins attempts to heighten the black community’s awareness of its potentialities. The political impotency demands a stress on sexual potency. Black men have sex potency but “sadomasochistic sex” (Bigsby 252) which is a derivation of “evanescent” (vanish like vapour) pleasure from the infliction of pain on others. In Bullins’ play INEW, for example, Crook’s planning to have sex with Liz has been portrayed by Bullins in a way that it suits the infliction of pain.

Bullins’ characters act out a series of love scenes which is transferred to a lower level, even into a violent sexuality. Sealed by an act of violence, sex is a moment of contact in Bullins’ plays. The sharing of sexual feelings becomes simple possession and physical dominance.

Apart from violent sexuality, the black men commit themselves emotionally in violence. They necessitate violence as compensation for the losses in their lives. The social insignificance for them creates a determination to establish a local reputation through violence. The ready likeness to attack or quarrel among themselves or with others promotes the idea that they tend to attract the attention of others. In their life, the dominance of black men is refused on a public level. Therefore, they simply show dominance among their own family members and among the community. So it is a “defensive response” to the negative value placed upon them. In the play INEW, Oscar is a person who had cut fourteen boys. He gives justification to this kind of life as a life of fame, “celebrity” and “esteem.” But, it is a state of feeling that they are completely worthless. They cannot be respected to be human. Thus, Bullins describes the blacks’ life is marked by baseness. He firmly
defies the "unbecoming and improper" surroundings of blacks as unworthy of regard. He deals fearlessly with their lives which is full of disorder that is covered in grime due to the accumulated dirtiness. As the idiom goes "wash your mouth out with soap," Bullins opposes in a "hostile" way the breach of peace, the breaking of law, breaking of the ties of friendship, the black man's conduct, behaviour and manner. He also seems to hate the African Americans for their using of "blasphemous" language and "cussing swearwords" which reflects their lack of moral and ethical standard. By his creative ability, Bullins has curiously given a shape to black people’s life which is not previously exposed by his contemporary writers. He presents an “alternative world” making Black Americans feel that they must get rid of their “sordid” reality.

From Bullins' portrayal of blacks' life, one can understand the black American culture fully. With his astonishing power of keen observation, Bullins has recorded every aspect of black American culture. He presents the African Americans who find delight in “harmful pleasures” and immoral behaviour. He seems to feel that they must make themselves free from the “non-physical” sources that are apparently sensitive. They must get themselves relieved wholly from the burdens of the “psychic hang-ups” because these “psychic hang-ups” would confine the blacks as if in a prison. Bullins “hits the blacks with a mirror,” which exposes their absurdities, ugliness and frustration in the present world hoping that his “imaginary alternative world” will lead the blacks into a pattern of change. Bullins seems to have the belief that personal failure, foibles and follies in one's character and behaviour must be exposed for healing and reawakening – the spiritual part of a person. Rather than simply identifying the maladies, disorders and infirmities which are present in
the lives of African Americans, Bullins leads the black people for remedy and cure.
Bullins concentrates upon the black culture of the African Americans through which
their true personalities are exposed. For the purpose of transforming the life of
Blacks, he begins the process of reconstruction celebrating the blacks’ spirit, power
and endurance. Through the black culture, Bullins tries to transform African
Americans as a thoroughly honest people in the white dominated nation. Bullins feels
that the blacks themselves are the instruments of change. They seldom get rid of these
because “they work within a slave mentality” living in a world in which the act of
“being defeated” is pervasive. Black culture is viewed as the world of Bullins’
literary preoccupation which is a new Black consciousness. Being in the oppressive
land and trying to present a different real “black-face” is the new black consciousness
of Bullins.

Further, Bullins has concentrated on the physical strength, energy, and on the
savageness of black society. Bullins is concerned with some “suicidal practices” that
trouble the “specific community,” which includes whores, pimps, hustlers, dope
sellers, winos, junkies and petty crooks that render the African Americans “impotent”
thereby preventing them from reaching the goal of attaining a real better life. For
example, the African Americans “mouthe” vulgar words and exercise homosexual,
which is “sickness equal to baby-rape” (Cleaver 102). It is a “racial death wish” and
“revolutionary suicide.” It is morally horrible and evil, capable of harming people in
a playful way with a life full of fear and worries, which is a shameful and disgraceful
conduct. It is an “illegal dishonest behaviour,” lawless action and harmful to the
interest of other people. It is a thing that causes a strong feeling of hatred and an "unconscious desire for one's own death."

Further, in Bullins' present world almost every character has dreams, which are always "ironised by fantasies" that cannot be easily achieved. The world Bullins creates on stage is about the world of "individuals deprived of transcendence." The lives Bullins places on stage have been out of their usual focus for they are "tarnished" by drinks, drugs, unhappiness, guilt, violence, and damaged by sexual betrayal. Other than these, the realities of slavery and the pressure of the ghetto life degrade the Black women turning them into whores. They are tempted on seeing the values of White society giving them a lower and less important rank to a secondary position. But the life of Blacks of the present world, which Bullins portrays in his plays through the characters, is not reserved for the African Americans concerned. But he feels that it is a standard prevailing pattern for African Americans, especially the social behaviour, it is typical of Blacks. It is socially derived that the black ghetto life is losing the core ideology of life's best things. Only the struggles to overcome such kind of sordid realities continue even when it is unlikely to succeed against these absurdities. The Black world accepts without protest, offering no opposition to its own destruction. Hence, the world of Blacks is covered with dirt. Bullins confronts the sordid life of Blacks thereby trying to establish a world, which is entirely different from the present material world of Blacks. In this world, he expresses the possibilities of transforming the life of Blacks.

Bullins, through his writings, advises the African Americans to be like a "marksman" who is a person skilful at hitting the target. They should involve in the
act of trying to do something with an effort to achieve and attain a desired state of full development in their life to have perfect shape. Bullins in his play, ITWT, through the portrayal of the character, Cliff, has given a shape to the endeavour of African Americans. Cliff says to Ray many times, “It’s your world.” When Lou asks to Cliff, “Where is your pride? A big strong man like ...,” Cliff says:

> There’s a big rich world out there ... I’m goin’ a get me part of it or not at all. [...] I’m goin’ ta get me part of that world or stare your God in the eye and scream why. I am not a beast ... an animal to be used for the plows of the world. But if I am then I’ll act like one, I’ll be one and turn this fucken world of dreams and lies and fairy tales into a jungle or a desert. And I don’t give much of a happy fuck which. There’s a world out there, woman. Just beyond that lamppost ... just across “The Avenue” and it’ll be mine and Ray’s (138-39).

Through these lines, Bullins portrays the “intraracial” problems that happen within the African American community exposing the socio-economic barriers which are the stumbling blocks that keep them away from getting their “shot at the world.”

**Beyond these, Bullins celebrates the Blacks’ spirit of potentiality to withstand the damage and harm that is wrought on them. He listens “for an answer from the Blacks’ hidden heart” of disagreement and conflict. In confronting the evidence of African Americans evincing enjoyment of harmful pleasures and immoral behaviour, Bullins begins the process of reconstruction, questioning why the Black individuals are deprived of transcendence. Bullins presents the blacks as people who look for an order, a meaning to their lives, though they are offered a state of not having the**
benefits that most people of America have or enjoy. Blacks’ needs could never be satisfied, in Bullins’ view, by political protest showing violent resistance to authority or by dwelling in a house in a white suburb. The White world does not offer or even consider Blacks for the benefit that most people have in America. Through the portrayal of the characteristics elements and habits, whether good or bad, of Blacks in his plays, Bullins tries to transform the space the Blacks inhabit. Within the miserable, depressing, bare world and environment, which is not hopeful and not encouraging, beauty seems to exist in Bullins’ plays. Beneath the constant broken events of their experience, who seek elsewhere for meaning, there is a state of pleasing combination of agreement in feelings, interests and opinions among Blacks, as a message in Bullins’ plays. It is a harmony generated by each towards the other by need of mutual understanding, affection and support.

In addition to exposing the black culture, the issues Bullins takes up often are particular to the Black experience. In an interview with Marvin X, Bullins says:

We don’t want to have a higher form of white art in black-face. We are working towards something entirely different and new that encompasses the soul and spirit of Black people. [...] We are attempting to take all the things that are positive in us, our music, our very strong religious expression, our own life-style and incorporate them into our art on a collective basis. Our aim is not only to become better artists, individually and collectively, but to create a uniform positive art. [...] It will be totally Black! (xii).
Thus, Bullins' work is distinctive and different from the rest of the Black American writers. His plays "mark the maturity of the black theater" (Sanders 18) as well as the African Americans. He writes for blacks, but his genius as a writer "transcends racial limitations." So his works may be regarded as "classics" in the black theatre.

As Bullins has presented the black culture and black experience in his plays, he also has presented black characters who have no permanent place to live. In most of his plays, Bullins presents characters who are driven away from home. Without a permanent place in the society, they are burdened physically and emotionally in a small space. However, they manage to make out a living in a very small space in the large social world. His plays seek to teach African Americans the necessity to understand fully the space they inhabit. He advises his people to refigure this space energetically by employing counter energy through their power ideologies.

Concerning the particular activity of the characters, the exact area of land is the apartment in the plays ITWT, INEW and GAB. In Bullins' plays, "the specific territory may be an apartment, small, clean, and sharply hued in Goin' a Buffalo; neat but improverished in Clara's Ole Man; rented rooms for a day or two in In New England Winter" (Tener 534). On the other hand, Bullins has used "a small side [Derby] street of a large northern American industrial city" in ITWT. In the play, ASCH, which deals with familial relationships, Bullins has not used any house or a room or an apartment or even a street but just a bare stage. This shows the reader, Bullins' concern over the issue of rootlessness or no permanent place for African Americans. Only in the play COM, which deals with lesbian relationships, Bullins
pictures a slum kitchen. In addition to the homosexuality, the play deals with the
domestic place, a slum kitchen. It differs from the other select plays because it takes
place in a domestic slum kitchen bringing the setting of the street into the kitchen.

Except ASCH, all the plays selected for analysis are situated in an American space
and time. For example, in the intoxication of wine during "summer" in Derby Street
in Philadelphia as in ITWT, in the fantasy of a New England "winter" in INEW, a
gathering of friends in West Adams Street of Los Angeles to plan a move to Buffalo
in GAB and a "slum kitchen" in Philadelphia ghetto in COM. These are the places
and occasions for Bullins to examine the behaviour and living habits of Blacks in
America.

Though Bullins has not portrayed a permanent space, he has presented his
aspiration for a "hauntingly beautiful landscape" exclusively for African Americans.
As "geography describes the perimeters" of many other writers' description of
landscape, it also describes the perimeters of Bullins' imaginative landscape. It is a
part of the black area "trapped" within the American landscape. As like the saying
goes "once you dream, the dreams become thoughts and thoughts become words
committing oneself to action," Bullins dreams a "never-never land" which is an
imaginary place where everything is wonderful. Perhaps, "it is his desire [...] to
build a land of his own [...] The desire is hope. [...] and is part of the black compass
trapped within the white American landscape. It is much of what is left for the
hungered artist according to the Bullins' vision" (Tener 544).

Many other Black playwrights describe the perimeters in their work
describing a landscape through which they try to present their views. Likewise,
Bullins continually tries to explore and makes an effort to become familiar with the places. He has created an extended black landscape in his works. A wanderer himself, he sets his plays all over the United States in places like California, Pennsylvania, North Dakota, Florida, eastern shore of Maryland et cetera. Thus, he extends his black imaginative territory from coast to coast. As Tener says,

The elements of the social compass in Bullins’ vision are the conceptual spatial environment, the nature of order within that space, and the operative fictive values. In one sense the spatial environment of the plays swings across the country from California in [...] Goin’ a Buffalo [...] and then moves down to Philadelphia in Clara’s Ole Man and “A Son, Come Home.” At other times it is a nameless metropolitan city as in [...] In New England Winter, and In the Wine Time (533).

Although his characters are often positioned in those places, they seem deep-rooted nowhere. This rootlessness brings to one’s mind that it is an “impermanent holding.” Beginning from the historical experience, “in spite of their long holding, the land where the African Americans have been inhabited is never really their own.” In Bullins’ work, he landscape is constituted with the tendency of portraying Black American’s life. He aspires for a beautiful landscape, which would remain in the thoughts of blacks making strong impression. It is a desire of hope to build a land of his “own” for his black people. Bullins seems to believe that a land, exclusively for African Americans would exist only when they try to change themselves getting rid of the absurdities in their lives. Despite the difficulties which the black people
experience in their lives, they should shun their bad habits in life to achieve success. To acquire the means for life and to nourish oneself, one should have good habits and character. If this were adopted then there would exist a land exclusively for Blacks in America, as Bullins wishes. Thereby they could transform the space they inhabit through their “characteristic ways of speaking,” their “soul music,” “perspectives,” their way of regarding facts, their relative importance, their appearance, language, outlook, expectation, their chance of success, foresight into the future, and through their mental vision which extend far into the past or future on the world. Thus, the African Americans could extend a Black territory through the habits and characteristics of their own.

Apart from educating his people, Bullins has made many contributions to the Black American theatre. He has devised a structure for portraying the life of the Black ghetto people, who are in the state of not having the benefits like adequate food, shelter, money, education, health, etc. as the other citizens of America have. He has created plays that took place in time (action lasting not more than one day) and place (action in not more than two places) and all his characters are “low-income working-class” black urban people. He popularised themes that all the “white Americans are not enemies to Black Americans,” which was not found in most of his contemporaries’ plays. His plays ignore the fact that all whites are enemies to Black Americans. Bullins’ themes are concerned with the black people’s needs like safety, economic security, familial values and ways for self-improvement. The other contribution is that his experience has helped to change the Blacks’ attitude “kill-whites” to “kill-whitey.” He urges the Black people not to submit themselves to the
White men and the white culture, but to “kill him in the mind.” Bullins seems to feel that it is the “clear sense of possession of Black identity.” He published the plays of the contemporary young Black writers making them to write not against the Whites but to kill the “whitey” in The Drama Review (1968), Black Theatre Magazine, New Plays from the Black Theatre (1969) and The New Lafayette Theatre Presents (1974).

Other than these contributions, Bullins’ theatrical contributions are more in number. Bullins’ plays bear the characteristics of many of the theatre groups and techniques. According to the Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud, “consciousness” is the state of being aware of oneself and one’s surroundings, without hindrance from sleep, illness or drugs. This “introspective self-awareness” is not purely of observable external events, but also of one’s own feelings, beliefs and mental events. In fact, it is the state of being conscious. If “consciousness” is the idea by which one knows one’s own existence, “self-conscious” is defined as the conscious of one’s actions, behaviour, situation etc., especially as observed by others. Bullins in order to make his own Black people become aware of their own life style in comparison to the other people in the world, especially white Americans, he has been dealing in his works with the theme of creating “self-awareness” and “self-consciousness” among the Black Americans which would render a reason for changing themselves from the way of their unpleasant behaviour and habits. Though Bullins has been adopting other narrative techniques in his works that deal with creating self-awareness among the African Americans, he has also used the “stream of consciousness” technique. Through this technique, Bullins presents directly the uninterrupted flow of a
character's thoughts and feelings, without strictly attached to the conventional devices of dialogue and description. Like the novelists Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and William Faulkner, Bullins has used the same technique to present the flow of thoughts and feelings of his characters. Bullins has used this as a technique for expressing the unspoken thoughts and emotions of his characters, through which he has brought to light the inner feelings of African Americans.

For Bullins, the street people are the product of the urban cities in America. They create and animate black culture revealing the dynamic qualities of the black experience. Belonging to an ethnic minority group, Bullins retains the customs, language and social views of that minority in his works. His work is thus preoccupied with creating an “ethnic” theatre. Bullins' "eclecticism" typifies the different sorts of trends and styles in artistic theory. He uses motifs and elements from various periods and geographical areas. His "naturalism" contains, however, "a dimension of menace, the imminence of events heavy with deadly probabilities."

Bullins focuses on the sensitively observed specifics of the black experience, concentrating on "telling it like it is," rather than on "telling it like it will be or should be" (Andrews 179).

Like Andrews, Richard Schechner in his White on Black also praises Bullins' skill of writing,

Too often "white media" present black ideas as filtered through white consciousness. Frequently this leads to misunderstanding and resentment. "Telling it like it is" is a particularly difficult task – if "it" isn't happening to you (25).
Bullins found that naturalism was an effective tool. His naturalism is charged with Black sensibility that seeks to celebrate and express the unique styles of Black life, rhythms, images and idioms of Black Americans. Bullins’ approach to drama comes from a sincere conviction that Black theatre should first speak to the common Black man, in whom Bullins finds authentic inspiration. Bullins’ primary aim is to depict life as it is lived.

In his career, Bullins has been very anxious to record honestly his sense of the Blackness. He has often been accused of presenting the negative images of his people in his plays. This is the honesty of his “realistic” style. He represents the facts as they really are and deals with it practically. As Bullins is true to himself, through his characters he brings out the negative side of the black life style. His realistic style makes it impossible to keep the ugliness of the blacks’ life in obscurity. Bullins’ honest portrayal of his people’s life has brought out the darkness and the hidden ugliness of the blacks, to light.

Bullins’ “theatre of confrontation” forced to look at Blacks themselves, bringing them face to face with the “hostile acts of unfriendliness” even among themselves, the angry and harsh attitudes of Blacks. Bullins forces the audience to look at the “specific black community,” which is a menace because they are junkies, hustlers, pimps, crooks, etc.

Like Baraka, he has also produced “consciousness-raising” plays, which deal with educating the African Americans about the need for Black violence. In these, the aspect of the Black movement is “surfaced,” in which a Black who murders somebody especially for money or for political reasons is identified as the enemy of
the African Americans, among his own community. Thus, his approach to the Black theatre adds many more contributions to it. As Clayton Riley observes, "Theatre will play a role, if it is Black enough, in shaping the consciousness of black people" (328), Bullins' black theatre has been black enough in the real sense of the word and it definitely works hard to shape the destiny of the blacks.

While the plays, *In the Wine Time, In New England Winter and Goin' a Buffalo*, deal with the social, physical and emotional environment of the poor urban blacks, their search for love and their lifestyles are reviewed and commented upon the other two plays "*A Son, Come Home*" and *Clara's Ole Man* (COM) that deal with the Black people within a domestic set up. It appears as if Bullins is trying to work out his own views about black women in the play, COM. In this play, Bullins deals with the black intellectual and the importance of black women with the black culture. This play is specially noteworthy for it deals with the several issues specifically involving black women, essentially the aspect of lesbianism, and the struggle for power in black woman's life. Bullins writes about black women in power, without power, and with equal power as black men. The theme of COM seems to stress differences between power in black women and how they relate to one another, as opposed to a simple categorization of black women as "spiritual sources or sexual icons." Like Jones and Neal, Bullins deals with the theme of female sexuality as "a threat to the development of the black intellectual." The idea of the female sexuality and revolutionary seems to be a main problem for the black male, like Jack in COM, throughout the play.

It is a play about sexuality, intellectual analysis and domestic space. This
gives Bullins the opportunity to deal with the issues of the Black home and Black female sexuality. This play shows Bullins' awareness that Black women are a primary force that should be explored in greater depth. The theme of the play seems to stress on the differences between power in Black women and how they relate to one another. It appears as if Bullins is trying to work out his own view about Black women in his writing this play. In this play, Bullins deals with the theme of female sexuality as a threat to the development of the Black intellectual. Besides dealing with the Black women's power, their sexual relationships and effects on their life, Bullins in the play, ASCH, has portrayed the relationship between a Black mother and a son, through which he tries to create awareness among the African Americans to develop a healthy relationship between the mother and son. To the Indian reader it is quite surprising to see how the mother and son in ASCH behave so affectionate yet detached, so concerned yet indifferent, so anxious yet confident. India abounds in portrayals of love and affection between mother and son and also deals with the "umbilical" connection between the mother and child.

The need for creating a successful family in America has never been felt so much as from the start of the twentieth century. The twentieth century is a time of changes which affect the foundations of the social setting. The success of a family is a joint endeavour by both parents. They need new skills of child-raising because their own childhood periods are more authoritarian (they place obedience to authority above personal liberty) and are no longer suitable or effective in this age of change and complexity. Now a days consultation among the family members is suggested as the most desirable one for discussion and decision which Bullins wishes to portray in
his writings in a different view that the members of a family are to be aware of their self and become conscious of the effects due to lack of consultation.

Though children generally inherit the physical features and temperament of their parents, they also have a personality of their own. Parents ought to help them in improving their personality. Knowledge, the vision of optimism, and spirituality make one learn to think and act in his own way. It is important that parents realise this fact. Prayer, meditation, laughter, humour, all these should find a place in the family. A spiritual approach also is recommended for solving problems through values like love, affection, and definite physical contact makes human beings happy.

A family to be successful, both parents and children are to be so bonded together through experience. This may be somewhat rare in the American scene and very rare especially in Black American families. There are various reasons for this. Perhaps, lack of self-awareness for a harmonious familial set-up in America is a problem precisely because it is not considered a problem by Americans. Instead, many Americans seem to feel that the problems in the families restrict personal freedom and individuality too much.

Family life involves personal sacrifice for the good of the family, and this personal sacrifice runs against deeply-rooted American values of individualism. Individualism is a conduct or feeling centred in one’s self or ego. It is a personal peculiarity. In other words, it is an attitude or tendency in which each individual works for his/her own ends. This means, individualism is an independent action as opposed to cooperation. Rather than sacrificing, they end-up the families to be broken losing relationships and innocence. The same may be said of Black families
in America. Many sociologists say individualism is a special, distinctive and dominant aspect of American culture.

The French politician, sociologist and historian Alexis de Tocqueville who was the author of the first analytical study of the strengths and weaknesses of US society, *Democracy in America 1835*, pointed out that Walt Whitman, the spokesperson and poet of nineteenth century America glorifies "rugged individualism," that is, the American tendency to pursue personal dreams at any cost. Today, a personal dream may be a unified family, though not so during his time. The American constitution grants all citizens of America "the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of human happiness." Inherent in democratic thinking is individualism. Individualism constructs walls such that, even when individuals do interact, they often do not provide real emotional support or closeness. David Riesman, a US sociologist, rightly calls America the land of the "lonely crowd." Americans may interact often, but each remains isolated without having concern over other people's expectations or developing cohesiveness and conformity within a society. In this way, individualism may bring the values of families down by destroying the emotional support inherent in them.

African Americans have a unique way of expressing the grief and "woes" of lost relationships and lost innocence. They seem to express their grief and problems in song, story and drama. As Paul D. Greene, an anthropologist says, they have a "musical bent, or way of thinking." Shelley's lines "The sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought" really proves this. To prove this the Blacks have their own music called the 'blues'. The blues is a genre of music focussed on lost relationships,
values lost in the familial set-up, lost lovers, and family members. Originally African American music originated in the work songs and Negro spirituals of the rural American South in the late 19th century, which are melancholy lyrics that relate tales of woe or unhappy love. Perhaps Black Americans are one-step ahead of the rest of the American society that they accept that lost relationship in the family is a problem.

The family dynamics in African American households are unique because of the usual dominant role of the mother. So, African American families take-in the spirit of "individualism" from the general American society. They combine this individualism with their own tradition of assertive women, and the result is unique African American problems. Also, many other factors like American individualism, poor job prospects etc. contribute to the "lost relationships" in African American families. As the "blues" sings about the disloyal wife or about a woman who leaves her husband if he loses a job, black men lose their jobs and hence the economic conditions get worse and the family relationships get destroyed. Next to "blues," perhaps, also the Black theatre grew out of a need to express the problems that arise due to the lost relationships in families. The theatre of Richard Wright (1908-1960), Eugene Gladstone O'Neill (1888-1953) and Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965) bear witness to this in portraying the psychological tensions and problems that are prevalent in the family system.

Since the origin of the society, socialisation played its part in the evolution of the family. Socialisation is a process by which an individual is introduced to the society. It is a process by which individuals are taught to live, think and behave in society. In socialisation, the family plays a very significant part. For some time, in
Russia it was felt that children should be brought up under a public control system instead of a family. This experiment had to be given up because it was felt that the family plays an important role in the socialisation of a child. It is the family, which directs and controls a child throughout his life. The family gives him norms of social life, and expression to his personality. The process of socialisation is carried on either by the authoritarians or equalitarians. By authoritarians, we mean the people who pick up the habits of those who have authority over them, for example the influence of parents, teachers and elders, as in "A Son, Come Home." By equalitarians, we mean the people are socialised under the influence of those who are equal to him, such as friends, playmates, etc. as in Clara's Ole Man. But in the process of socialisation, equalitarians play more important roles as compared to authoritarians. Socialisation enables a person to leave behind isolation and begin to live a group life. In this way, a socialised person will devote time only to constructive purposes.

In his plays, Bullins exemplifies "his delicate explorations of the vicissitudes of ordinary black life." The depiction of his "people who struggle for their freedom but bind themselves to old places and sustain old wounds rather than finally transform their lives" (Sanders 203) is subtle in Bullins' plays. The play, ASCH, relates the history of a Black family through an encounter between mother (Bernice) and son (Michael). After an absence of nine years, Michael has come to visit his mother, who has become a "religious fanatic and lives in a tyrannical church-run home." Their conversation evokes painful memories in both. Each joyous moment in their encounter turns out to be sorrowful to an expression of fear, disappointment or
difficulty. Michael's father (Andy) "mitigates" the joy. The reason for the lack of harmony in the house of Michael is that his mother had not been a wedded mother and he, a legitimate son. His father had been economically so backward that he could not marry his mother and give her a proper home. He was just an irresponsible hoodlum, who had refused to give his mother security and him a name. In the play, the mother says, "You never gave him no name ... his name is Brown [...] The same as mine ... and my sister's ... and my daddy ... You never gave him nothin[gl]" (205). As like the mother said, the father never provided anything to the family. Another failure of harmony in the family had existed when Will entered the mother's life. For a second time in the family, there is a failure in the family unity when Michael disapproves of Will's presence and drives him out. Michael rejected Will because he felt Will displaced him from his mother's affections. So, again the family edifice is not able to be built. But the outline of the "nuclear family" is there because, each break in the family is expressed through pain and loss between the mother and the son.

If in ASCH, the family is inoperative due to the father, in COM it is not a full one. It is ruled by one Black woman, Big Girl. It provides a bitter comment on the structure often used to describe the black family organisation: here it is "matriarchy." It "recites a litany of failures in nurturing." Big Girl controls the action throughout the play. Several times, feeling uncomfortable, Jack attempts to leave the place, but each time Big Girl detains him, using Clara "as bait for her own cat-and-mouse game, whose objective is to oust Jack from her domain forever."
The “sexual innuendo” establishes the contrast between Big Girl and Clara. Big Girl credits herself with Clara’s entire education. Big Girl claims, at that time when she found Clara, the girl had never had a drink and knew nothing of “personal hygiene.” Almost all the characters in the play have “refused to mature.” Clara’s first encounter with heterosexuality proved so destructive that she had to retreat for more mothering with the big-breasted woman who also acts as father, and as lover. Her similarity to Baby Girl, who is permanently arrested in childhood, intensifies this sense of Clara. As her name implies, Big Girl has not fully matured either. She has managed to deal with the world, but at a high cost. Yet, the environment Big Girl has provided is not without nurturing power. She manages to feed and house an ailing alcoholic aunt keeping her supplied with gin and to take care of Baby Girl and Clara. Furthermore, the whole neighbourhood comes to her when in trouble, as the abrupt entering of Stoogie, Bama, and Hoss indicates. Besides, Jack’s presence in the house suggests that under Big Girl’s nurturing, Clara has gathered enough strength to desire contact with a man again – a man different from those of her previous attempts, an innocent like her. Clara needs to go beyond Big Girl’s care – a mother figure, to return to the outside world and particularly men.

Big Girl operates as “a principle of potential order” in the world of COM. Her household consists of women who “do not know” men – women are therefore innocent in a special sense and this innocence defies Jack’s ordinary innocence and ordinary expectations. Just as Big Girl’s household excludes Jack, the lesbian world excludes men completely. Michael’s father in ASCH fails in his initial responsibility
to acknowledge and care for his child; here in COM, the woman succeeds in being both mother and father, and the "man becomes superfluous."

Family is a very old institution. Some sociologists feel that the original family was headed by the mother (matriarchal) while others feel that such a family was headed by the father (patriarchal). Whether it was matriarchal or patriarchal it existed in the remote past. The family has been defined by MacIver as "a group defined by sex-relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for procreation and upbringing of children." Ogburn says, "Family is more or less a durable association of husband and wife with children or of a man and a woman alone." Thus, a family is the association of a husband and a wife with or without children. For a family it is essential that the male and female should have a mating relationship. Head of the family is supposed to meet the needs of its members, where members of family live together under one roof. In the family, the head is supposed to have economic resources to meet economic needs of its members. A family also needs some house to live permanently in and to have a settled life.

The American thinkers of the present seem to feel that the family is weakening and as is the case in Black family. They feel that marriage has become only friendship. As it is found in Hutchinson Educational Encyclopedia 1999, in England:

Marriage has been on the decline during the early 1990s. In 1992, 46,000 couples were married; during 1992-95 the number of weddings fell by one third. In 1993, there were 299,197 marriages and a record 165,000 divorces.
Like the same, bonds of marriage are now frequently out of order and the number of divorce cases are increasing in America. The women who were dependent on men in the past are becoming economically self-sufficient and the cases of divorce are increasing. The children remain away from the family; therefore, love and affection, which they used to get from their parents, have weakened. Due to social, economical and political causes, today the family is faced with the problem of adjustment between the parents and children, and husband and wife.

Many marriages often result in failure after some period of romance. As Thomas Love Peacock, an English satirical novelist and poet in his work Melincourt says,

*Marriage may often be a stormy lake, but celibacy [the state of being unmarried or abstention from sexual intercourse] is almost always a muddy horsepond.*

One should not shun the responsibilities that arise from the marriage. The failure of marriage implies that there is a clear absence of social norms. These social standards and customs, generally, used to bring strength to the family. At the same time, there are many socio-economic forces, which bring instability in the family. Love and affection that spontaneously develops in a family is disappearing in a big way in the present. The people in American villages migrate to cities and from cites to other bigger ones, without much hesitation. This has weakened the bonds of love. By nature, no one depends on the other economically, with the result that need and necessity of family is not felt much today.

Further, in the American family as well as in African American family there is
instability, and many socio-economic factors play an important role. It is really a
type of problem to bring stability to and reconstruct it. The women today in America are not
accepting themselves as subordinate to men but demand status of equality in the
family and in all walks of life. The concept of superiority and dominance of man is
disappearing from the family. Both the boys and girls wish to be free in the selection
of their life partners. They are not prepared or well-informed to pay respect to their
parents though they preferred to be loved ones.

Furthermore, marriage in America is not considered as a sacred arrangement
but only a friendship, with the religious outlook gradually disappearing. The family
is now democratic and free for decisions, in the sense that it is self-governed and self-
rulled by the individuals of a family and the head of the family now cannot simply
impose his will. Undoubtedly, the family in America is becoming more unstable. To
check this is the problem now and some of the suggestions offered in this regard are:
(i) Parental input should shape marriage decisions. (ii) Family should be run on
democratic principles but at the same time, no fundamental changes should be
brought in. (iii) Collective interests of the family should be considered supreme. (iv)
The feelings of each and every individual member of the family should not be hurt.
(v) Needless vexation, irritation and nuisance should be avoided. (vi) The affairs
should be discussed in a frank manner among the family members. (vii) The most
important thing is that the members of the family should be made to realise the hard
realities of life and should realise the necessity of facing them. (viii) Elders in the
family should be an example to others and set themselves as "ideals" and they should
not behave or act in a manner which could bring instability to the family.
American thinkers make us believe that the future of the family is very dark and they also feel that gradually the family concept will disappear and all its functions and responsibilities will be taken over by other agencies. But the future of African American families is very sound because it is involved in performing all the essential functions. The family is still accepted as one important institution for satisfying the sex needs. It is very well clear that the family in America is still needed to prepare children to face the hard realities of life. It is essential to impress upon the mind of a person about the feelings and habits that are needed for making a sound society and family. Without a family concept and spirit, the children of today will not become good adult citizens of tomorrow.

In India, even today the family is one of the important social institutions known to humankind. A family is not considered as a friendship or a bond that could be broken down at any time. On the other hand, it is considered as something religious and sacred. It is believed that God is the uniting force and any break will mean displeasure to God, in addition to social condemnation. It is this attitude and approach, which is maintaining considerable stability in the Indian family system. Cases of divorce are very few in the country as compared with Western countries where marriage is considered as friendship alone.

As in the past, in India, the family has been performing very many important functions. It has a deep socialising influence. It helps in building the character and personality of its members. It contributes to the health of the society. It is the responsibility of the family to provide minimum basic needs, including food, clothing and shelter for its members. Family is supposed to extend all love and sympathy to
its members. The young must be extended protection and care by the family until a
time when they are in a position to face the society. The family is required to provide
a good shelter to its members, so that they can pass their time comfortably and
peacefully. It checks all anti-social activities of its members and ensures well-
established and respected social customs. A family is required to ensure that all its
members are well educated. It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that all its
members possess good health and that none of them is weak.

Today much change is taking place in the functions of the family.
Educational functions have been taken over by schools, which are looked after and
managed by the state or public or private agencies. Thus many duties and
responsibilities which the family had taken upon itself in the past have now been
taken over by the organisations and charities of society. Due to technological and
scientific advancements, many functions of the family like cooking, washing,
cleaning, etc. have been taken over by the machines, and the family is now not
needed for these reasons.

The families now also seem to face the problem of maintaining sexual
harmony due to demanding life styles. In the modern family the parents are
unsuccessful for sexuality due to a life full of activities and they fail to give due
affection to their children when they return home completely exhausted after working
in the office throughout the day. The parents do not find sufficient time to administer
the family affairs. The women have become economically self-sufficient and do not
care for the family and do not depend on others for their maintenance. Religion has
been separated from marriage and replaced by "materialism" in terms of money, thus there is no fear of God.

Socially, people have now started believing that the family should be of a very small size. Joint family is a very old institution. In the past, it was common in Greece, Rome, Egypt and India. The basic need of the people to work together for meeting their basic and minimum needs is responsible for the origin of the joint family system. In this system, the head of the family is given maximum authority. The property belongs to the family as a whole. The head is considered as trustee of the property. All the members of the family earn according to their capacity, the income is gathered together and spent according to the needs.

Moreover, in an agricultural country like India, human-resource becomes easily available only in a joint family system. This system promotes social values of co-operation and adjustment. Everybody is required to do some work which is allotted to him by the head of the family. It is based on the division of labour, and it gives confidence that in times of difficulties he is not at all alone, and feels sure on his backing from his whole family. The whole system is economical. One "hearth" serves much. Many houses are not needed. Leisure is possible in this system. In the joint family system there is always someone to look after the young boys and girls even if their own parents are engaged somewhere else. They are required to obey the elders. All learn to live together in a spirit of adjustment and lead disciplined life, obeying the commands of the elders. Today in Indian villages, the joint family system is still considered a matter of pleasure and pride. Most of the educated people of India are under the influence of Western education and civilisation, and they feel
the joint family system should disappear from India also. It would be wrong to measure a trend from what is happening in the cities, because India lives not in towns and cities, but in the villages.

Marriage is yet another universal institution that regularises human sexual relationships. It may be defined as a socially approved sexual-alliance where children also have social recognition and approval. Stern says, “marriage is a term of social relationship, of husband and wife and of plural mates, also used for ceremony of uniting maternal parents.” The most popular form of marriage is “monogamy.” It is the practice of having one partner for life. It is in this form of marriage that maximum love, affection, care and sympathy develop. The sense of unity and oneness develops between husband and wife, and the women get maximum care and close union. Monogamous marriages are successful and the family is a stable one. The children are well looked after and the living standard is good. Once a marriage takes place, it is to be difficult to be dissolved. So, selection of mates should be properly cared for because only happy couples can help happy societies to increase good citizens of tomorrow.

The basis of marriage varies considerably in different societies. In many societies, particularly in the West, marriage is considered more as a friendship rather than a religious bond. In India, marriage that is arranged by the parents is called “arranged marriage.” But in the West, boys and girls are allowed to marry the partner, whom they love, and such marriage is called just “marriage” or “romantic love” but in India, it is called as “love marriage.” In the West the boy and the girl are allowed to mix socially with each other before marriage and are allowed to
understand each other's views and the marriage that takes place is “probationary marriage.” Marriage is now being considered a friendship bond in America. Even “common-law marriages,” that is, cohabitation as man and wife without a legal ceremony, are recognized for inheritance purposes, for example, in Scotland and some states of the USA. Woman has now been given a right to divorce her husband, which is increasing gradually in all societies, particularly in Western societies. Lastly another important factor, which is responsible for separation or divorce, is religion. In some societies religion permits separation but not divorce.

In most European countries and in the USA civil registration of marriage, as well as a religious ceremony, is “obligatory.” As Ogburn says, “some religions permit separation but not divorce, for binding a second marriage. Other churches deplore the breaking up of marriage ties but can do it under a variety of circumstances. The stability of marriage is often affected by sensitiveness of the individual to the opinion of the church.” In America, separation and divorce have gone very high and that has brought instability in the family. It has also caused considerable anxiety. This situation has arisen because in most of the Western Countries, communities have become highly urbanised, literacy is spreading, countries have industrially developed and the laws for disintegration and divorce are considerably flexible. Other legal changes have made divorce easier. Property laws lead to the equal division of material goods between the partners on split-up. The cases of divorce in India do take place in the urban communities, yet they have no social approval, and they are very few. A wife could leave her husband under certain circumstances, but it would create instability in the family. Now the women in India
are getting their due respect in the family and are getting a position of equality. It is preferred that one husband should have only one wife, because it is felt that only then there can be harmonious living and development in the family. With monogamy alone love and affection in the family develops, and quarrels are reduced to the minimum.

It is interesting to add here in conclusion that, whether Indian or American or Australian or European, man's thinking is alike and he has the same ideas, thoughts and feelings. Just as the Indian, the American as well as the Black American also recognises and wishes for harmony in a family. Though cultures differ, values and relationships are the same. The mother can only be a mother wherever she is and a son, only a son. Bullins strikes a universal note here when he portrays the relationship of a mother and son, a sister and sister, a husband and wife, and a dominant matron warding off problems that seem to come to her ward, like Anita Desai, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandeya and Jhabwala. Bullins through his writings makes his people - Black Americans - become aware of their selves to establish good families of harmonious relationships. In fact, it is pleasant and satisfying to observe that Bullins through his dramatic presentations has been able to turn the blacks' attention to the "lights," working on them the ideas and themes and structures of Black life as if through magic, where he challenges them to see the "ugly," identify and imagine the "beautiful" (the positive) and calls them to love themselves, the "Black selves" who are capable of living a good, healthy and happy life if they only wish to.