CHAPTER-V
CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis of socio-political consciousness in Currimbhoy's different plays clearly establishes the variety, versatility and universality of his dramatic art. His plays are necessarily "emotional reaction" (Baratham 39) to what he feels and sees around him. The various contemporary events and situations trigger his dramatic imagination which ultimately finds expression in his powerful dramatic corpus. He covers a wide range of themes from history and politics, society and religion, art and metaphysics. His strong social and political consciousness is reflected in his plays which deals with the various ills plaguing India such as hunger, starvation, unemployment, violence, political corruption, loss of social and moral values, and fakery in life and art both. Currimbhoy's plays are, in fact, the "agonised expression of his social conscience" (Iyengar 23). Bengal Trilogy deals with various cataclysmic events of Bengal during the sixties and seventies. Whereas Inquilab explores various dimensions of Naxalite violence that rocked Bengal in the sixties, The Refugee presents the pathetic condition of the Bangladesh refugees and Sonar Bangla deals with various events leading to the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation. The playwright exposes the morally decadent world of the modern young generation in The Doldrummers, the duplicity, hollowness and hypocrisy of Art academies in Thorns on a Canvas and the immorality, corruption and chicanery in the political world in The Dissident M.L.A. The Miracle Seed presents a realistic picture of the painful ravages caused by the drought in Maharashtra in 1972 and The Hungry Ones explores the meaning of hunger in its different manifestations. Whereas Darjeeling Tea? bemoans the decline of moral values in post-Independence India, Goa presents the fascinating and arresting account of social, political and religious ethos of Goa in the backdrop of its liberation from Portuguese occupation and its subsequent incorporation in the Indian Union. His plays deal not only with wide-ranging thematic concerns but are also peopled with different kinds of characters. If there are university professors, intellectuals and students, there are also artists and politicians, zamindars and farmers, revolutionaries and refugees, rickshaw-
pullers and beggars, wastrels and waifs, lovers and sexual maniacs in his plays. The action of his plays moves from universities to fields, from cities to villages, from university classrooms to the Naxalite ideologues’ training sessions, from the corridors of power to the streets infested with beggars. Iyengar rightly observes that “variety and versatility” are the “distinguishing marks of Currimbhoy as a dramatist” (9). This is evident not only in his themes and characters but also in the form of his plays. The easy assurance with which Currimbhoy handles the variety of plays is evidenced in “one-act plays like The Doldrums, 3-act plays like Inquilab and 4-act plays like Sonar Bangla” (Iyengar 8).

Though Currimbhoy draws heavily on topical events for his dramatic material, yet he succeeds in imparting universal touch and appeal to his plays. Yassin is not only a refugee from Bangladesh, he represents the dilemma of being a refugee from any country -- be it Rwanda, Uganda, Sri Lanka or Pakistan. Similarly, Ahmad in Inquilab is not an individual; he represents all Naxalites from all corners of the world. Similarly, Naxal violence that ripped apart Bengal during 60’s or 70’s can not be categorised as a cataclysmic event of only that state -- it could as well be of Andhra Pradesh or of Jharkhand. The Naxalite Movement of Bengal could be a thing of past but the question of validity of resorting to the cult of violence remains as valid in today’s world as it was during the sixties or seventies. Thus, the universal appeal of Currimbhoy’s plays transfers the topical events into enduring works of art.

The study also brings into sharp focus the playwright’s vision of life and art. Currimbhoy cannot remain a silent spectator to the miseries and sufferings of man. His plays are the expressions of “his agonising compassion for the condition of man” (Meserve and Meserve 30) in today’s world of stifling environment. Through his plays, he has “something to say, something he must say, a message to deliver, a vision to fulfil” (Meserve and Meserve 30). His plays are, in fact, the desperate cry for love and compassion, faith and understanding in a world ripped apart by senseless violence of all types—physical, emotional or verbal. All his plays are strong testimonies of his humanistic vision. It is very significant to note that the ending of his plays always promises a hopeful and optimistic tomorrow. However threatening the clouds of despair and despondency may be, there is always the hope of a radiant rainbow over
the horizon, however distant it may be. When the family is preparing to leave the village for the city refugee camps in *The Miracle Seed*, Savitri brings an armful of finest hybrid stalks. Her stammering is gone and she is able to speak complete sentences. One may criticize Currimbhoy for the "fairy tale ending" but his play suggests that everyone should dream even in most adverse circumstances because that is life "that’s hoping. And everyone must hope’" (Iyengar 14). In *The Refugee*, Yassin leads completely a life of detachment and aloofness even in the midst of atmosphere of violence, misery and sufferings of his countrymen but he decides to join Mukti Fauj to fight for the liberation of his country towards the end. His decision to involve himself in the liberation struggle affirms the playwright’s strong faith and hope in mankind. In *Inquilab*, Amar realizes the futility of violence and he begins to feel that Gandhian philosophy of non-violence is the best approach to address the issues of social inequality and injustice. Asif Currimbhoy’s answer to violence and desperation lies in his strong affirmation of love and compassion as is evidenced by Mita’s selfless service of the refugees in *The Refugee* and the deep bonding of selfless and passionate love of Razia and Ramesh for each other in *The Hungry Ones* or Hussain’s love for Sumita in *Sonar Bangla*.

Integrity, honesty and, authenticity are the cornerstones of Currimbhoy’s vision of life and art both. Great and abiding works of art embody these values as is revealed in *Thorns on a Canvas* in his strong denunciation of fakery in the realm of art. An artist must not sacrifice authenticity of experience and character even for the sake of medals and official recognition. For him, there is no substitute to direct confrontation with and exposure to real and lived experiences of life which, in turn, become the soul of a great work of art. An artist has to learn to live an authentic life by realising the significance of pain and suffering, despair and sorrow in his life to empathise and sympathise with the sufferings of mankind at large. At the same time, Asif fully reveals his strong aversion to fakery and egocentricity both in life and works of an artist exemplified by his treatment of the character of phoney artist, bukay. Currimbhoy’s acidic satire is also directed at state-sponsored Art academies which have become the centres of nepotism, favouritism and corruption in promoting Art and artists.
Asif Currimbhoy laments and bemoans the fall and devaluation of moral values in the Indian society which always prided itself on its moral and spiritual heritage. All the human ideals by which Indian society has flourished are now fast disappearing in post-independence Indian society. Crass commercialism and materialism are eating into the sap of vitality of the Indian society like cancerous virus. This decay is more visible in the world of young generation which no longer derives its vitality and strength from the moral values of Gandhi, Tagore or Vivekanand. The depiction of the moral world of the youth of today speaks volumes about his disgust, disillusionment and disappointment which find eloquent expression in *Inquilab*, *The Dissident M.L.A.* and *The Hungry Ones*. Rejecting Gandhian philosophy of resistance through non-violence and *Satyagraha*, the young and gullible students adopt and resort to the philosophy of violence to redress their grievances negating the values of love, faith and understanding practised for ages by the Indian society. The young generation finds the meaning of life by imitating the ways and ‘values’ of the Beat generation of America which believes in nihilism, cynicism, experimentation with drugs and degenerate sex. The way the students of Calcutta stupidly equate the two Americans of the Beat generation with great Indian saints and patriots illustrates their nihilism and cynicism in *The Hungry Ones*. In the mindless aping of the Western culture, the young generation of post-Independence India is fast becoming immoral and devoid of any sustaining or life-giving value or principle.

It is no wonder then that the purposeless, disillusioned and directionless youth of today become easy and soft targets of exploitation and manoeuvre by the unscrupulous elements like the hot-headed Naxalites or immoral politicians. Currimbhoy’s strongest denunciation is reserved for the wily and immoral politicians for whom there is no sanctity of any value, scruple or institution. Currimbhoy holds them responsible for all the ills and evils of the Indian society. The only thing they are concerned with is the promotion of their self-interest. They are glibly oblivious of poverty, hunger, unemployment, corruption or social inequity. Whether it be a local politician like Devdas or the big-wheeler from the centre in *Inquilab* or an M.L.A. like Manu in *The Dissident M.L.A.*, none of them is simply bothered about the malaise of the Indian society. All the politicians barring a few are presented as repulsive and
contemptible creatures. They are shown to be immoral, lechers, schemers, hypocrites and superstitious. *Sonar Bangla* depicts the gruesome face of the dangerous designs of the politicians to perpetuate their narrow and selfish ends whereas *Inquilab* satirically exposes the vote-bank politics of the Indian politicians. *The Dissident M.L.A.* is an acidic satire on the unscrupulous politics of the elected representatives of the people who live ostentatiously and lavishly at the cost of public exchequer. Politicians like Manu do not hesitate to use their own members of family for furthering their agenda of self-promotion. Politicians like Kantibhai who practice the principled politics based on Gandhian philosophy have become irrelevant in the world of corrupt and selfish politicians.

The death and decay of moral fibre of the modern society is also evident in the objectification and commodification of women as sex objects. Their physical exploitation and oppression is starkly brought out by Currimbhoy in his various plays. Miranda and Rita are forced to work as prostitutes in *Goa* and *Doldrummers* and Bangladeshi women are subjected to rape, the most violent and disgusting act of violence against women. Not only this they are also subjected to verbal violence also as is the case with Rita and Liza in *Doldrummers* and Manu’s wife in *The Dissident M.L.A*. Manu’s sexual exploitation of his destitute maid-servant exhibits the victim-victimiser and coloniser-colonised syndrome. Currimbhoy also holds the view that women can be as strong and courageous as men in the patriarchal order of the society. Asif Currimbhoy presents some of his women characters as more powerful than the male characters with a “different perspective from the usual characterisation of women” (Aayalakkandy 130). Meserves rightly observe that though Currimbhoy’s “primary characters are generally men, but there is a strength and power in his women that is inescapable” (34). Though Miranda in *Goa* is a prostitute yet she dominates not only the male characters but also the entire action of the play. Rita displays her assertive self when she decides to give birth to the ‘illegitimate’ baby in *The Doldrummers*. She also controls the action of the play as do the women characters in *Darjeeling Tea*? . Suprea and Prof. Datta’s wife are able, to some extent, to illumine the depressing and malevolent atmosphere of *Inquilab* with their optimism and hope. Savitri in *The Miracle Seed* and Sumita in *Sonar Bangla* are
rare examples of fortitude and courage in a male-dominated world. Razia is the angel of peace and love in the riot-torn Calcutta in *The Hungry Ones*. So is Mita who dispenses hope in the hopeless and dark world of *The Refugees*.

Asif Currimbhoy's greatest contribution to the Indian drama is that he has succeeded in exploiting a large number of dramatic techniques to write actable plays and his ability to bridge the gap between the readers and the audience has won him the title of the "playwright of international stature" (Bowers 4). His characters, situations and dialogues evidence the dramatic richness of his plays. The use of symbols, his ability to evoke visual and auditory images combined with various other theatrical devices such as stage directions, songs, pantomime, dance, cut-outs, parallel scenes, irony and satire succeed in creating dramatic impact of lasting impact. Theme and technique fit in so well with each other in his plays and therein lies the singular achievement of Asif Currimbhoy.

Though Asif Currimbhoy uses his plays to impart his vision, yet it can certainly be said with certainty that he is more of a dramatist than a moralist, propagandist or philosopher. He presents his ideas and imparts his vision by implication and indirection. He presents a realistic, not idealistic, account of events he chooses to write about. His is an honest and non-partisan treatment of events, situations and characters.
WORKS CITED


