Albee deals with the plight of the human race and the question of survival. The course that the European civilization has taken after the two World Wars is distressingly tragic. There seems to be no sign of belief in the renewal of human values. It is in this context Albee has taken upon himself as his main task to point out his perceptions with regard to what he feels about the conditions of life which prevail. The dramatist acknowledges his loyalty to society and human civilization and he expresses his duty in the following lines:

A playwright… has two obligations: first, to make some statement about the condition of “man”… and, second, to make some statement about the nature of the art form with which he is working. In both instances he must attempt change… The playwright must try to alter his society, [and he] …must try to alter the forms within which his precursors have had to work. (Box 9)

Albee says that the responsibilities of the artist are very great. The present society is controlled by science and technology. A very shallow view of life prevails without substantial meaning of life. Albee sees two dangers in the modern civilisation. Science and technology have mechanised mind and feeling. Man must escape from this
danger. Two political ideologies like Capitalism and Communism have lost their relevance in life. Therefore, the situations in society have become dismal. A qualified critic is necessary to comment on the decay of life and how it has affected society. Amidst this every artist has got a role to become a neutral adjudicator. He must see life as it really exists. The function of art, therefore, is immense.

**Box** and **Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung** can be treated as one play which has a sequential link with the other. In **Box** Albee builds up a dialectical debate between Feudalism, Capitalism, Imperialism and Communism and Republicanism. “The use of counterpoint by Albee” (Amacher 153) reminds one of “Aldous Huxley’s **Point Counterpoint** and **Brave New World**” (153). He shows a clash between one point of view and its counterpoint of view. The business of artist is to awaken the people to the reality of what is happening. Art has failed to do its function, according to Albee. C.W.E.Bigsby points out that Albee works on two fronts. The play, **Box** deals with “the decline of art,” (qtd. in Amacher 154) in its failure of function. The decline in art is connected by Albee with his awareness of “a civilisation blindly plunging towards extinction” (154). Albee clutches at the “illusion” (154) of modern civilisation which is “order, precision and competence” (154). These three scientific values can never act as “substitutes for simple humanity and honesty,” (154) according to Albee. The main objective of the dramatist is to project a deeper vision of “a sense of loss” (154).
Therefore, Albee talks about “the spiritual loss of direction” (Stenz 89). The artist sees life as a never ending process. But the scientist, according to Albee, looks upon life in the form of “system as conclusion” (89). The artist evaluates that the conclusion of the scientist will end in illusion. Albee moans that “the beauty of music...no longer takes you more to everything” (89). Albee feels that science has taken away the value of music. Consequently, the rhythm of life is lost. As a result it seems that “Box works rather like a musical fantasia” (McCarthy 40). Contrastedly, in this sense, artist is concerned with a vision of “the decline of the West” (40). Again Albee laments that science looks to a blind future unaware of “past civilised values” (40). Albee sees a correlation between his sense of “the decline of Western civilisation” (43) and his affirmations “of the role of art” (43).

Albee perceives two dangers in accordance with his dramatic intentions. There is fragmentation in society and human life and conversely there is fragmentation in human consciousness. Everything is in a state of chaos and decline. Life, instead of being nourished by good wellsprings, is very much controlled and influenced by distractions and diversions. The author has chosen four characters to represent the dramatic gallery. The entire dramatic gallery is arranged in the form of partita and sonata, which are musical terms arranged in order to indicate the tone of loss. The four order of music is to bemoan human loss. This idea of loss becomes central to the
play. The dramatist is at his height when he projects four characters and puts them in a state of disarray:

An actor who resembles Chairman Mao; a Long-Winded Lady, about sixty and of the upper middle class, who speaks only to the Minister, using him “as a sounding board”; the seventy-year-old Minister, who never speaks - only listens to this lady - only wears his clerical collar, smokes his pipe, stays in his deck chair, and is never aware of either the audience or the other two characters; and a shabby Old Woman, also aged seventy, who is aware of everybody but speaks only to the audience, reciting Will Carleton’s sentimental verses entitled “Over the Hill to the Poor-House”. (qtd. in Amacher 154)

The most significant point of attention is that Albee is experimenting in the form of a musical sonata and partita with the theme of disintegration which indicates the tone of tragic loss. These four characters are after all embodiments of four different attitudes to life. There seems to be no commonly held principle among them. They are not at war with one another but at the same time they are not at harmony with one another. Albee is deeply concerned with this lack of common grounds for communication in Box.

Human race, according to Albee, is not sensitive to the final values of life. Therefore, there seems to be only mechanical
preoccupations or concerns with life. The consequences of such conditions of life are that what perturb the mind of the dramatist. The four characters, after all, represent the four conditions of life. Each one limits the horizon of life by a conclusion of his or her own and as a result no sincere effort is made to grapple with the genuine predicament in life. What calls for attention is what prevails and it is not what is desired and required. The critic Amacher brings into focus the idea of the dramatist in the following lines. He sees a correlation between the decline of art and decline of life exactly like Albee:

Bigsby feels that this play deals not merely with the decline of art, although that is surely one part of it, but rather with “a civilization blindly plunging towards extinction” while clutching at illusions that “order, precision, and competence” are adequate substitutes for “simple humanity and honesty”. Art “hurts”, according to Bigsby, because it is “obsessed with despair” and with the “increasing difficulty of communication,” because, in short, it reflects the age we live in. (qtd. in Amacher 154)

Breakdown of communication among people is a great threat to the survival of human civilization. Each one holds a differential set of values which lie totally unrelated to what prevails with regard to different elements in society. The decline of values, loss of spiritual direction and the dangers of nuclear annihilation present the greatest
menace to the survival of human life. The individual is responsible for his own fate, because, the individual creates a choice of life. As the choice of life seems to be narrow, it limits the perception of man. This point is reinforced by the dramatist: “Considering the incapacity of the individual to resist forces beyond his control, one finds it hard to accept Bigsby’s nostrum that Albee “sees the individual as directly responsible for his own fate” (Amacher 159).

There are two conclusions about life and individual, one from Bigsby and the other from Albee. These two theories of life exist in a state of contradiction to each other. It is worthwhile to throw light on this controversy, because it gives a clue to the unravelling of the theme of the plays, Box and Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung. Bigsby is of the opinion that man creates his own fate and so he should own responsibility for it absolutely. The individual creates the choice of life. The consequences that the choice of life creates make the person tragic. Innocent human beings are their own gravediggers. One’s own thoughts create propulsion in man to place faith in some choice of life. The propulsion and the motivation for propulsion can proceed from the inner urges of the individual and also from the pressures of society. Therefore, the individual tragedy, according to Bigsby, is a making of his own. But Albee differs from this.
Albee represents another form of existentialism which states that the individual is caught in the nexus of the society. All the creativity and resourcefulness in the individual are suppressed. He is unable to reorganize his life in relation to an ordering principle of his own. The reason is that the forces which prevail in the society twist and warp the individual. The individual’s destiny is not in his own hands. It is in the hands of so many social sources which condition him. As a consequence, the helplessness of the individual is seen in his mechanised responses to life. Relating this idea of helplessness of the individual to the play, *Box* under discussion, it is evident that each character is very much determined by allied forces which completely make the individual incapacitated in thinking anew about anything.

Every character is found repeating what he or she has been saying. That is mainly because, the individual is thrown into a helpless condition in life which does not extricate him from the predicament. One can even call this state of affairs a kind of conditioned life in which there is no freedom of expression. The result is expressed in loss and lack of joy. Wherever one turns one hears the tragedy of life. Death and accident are no longer tragedies. Lack of meaningful concern with life can be described as the instance of greatest tragic death. Death is a relief. But this kind of death in life projects a prolonged sense of loss. It is worthwhile to examine the role of Mao Tse-tung in both *Box* and *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*. 
The play *Box* is a house of many divided voices. As the voices are divided, there seems to be no element of comprehensiveness about anything. *Box* must be taken as a symbolic image. The lack of unified dialogue about anything in life is what the *Box* hints at. The entire *Box* is in the form of a Jungian stream of consciousness. There is an unorganised outpouring of human emotion which is embodied in *Box*. All the devitalising elements of life are hinted at in the forms of several voices in *Box*: “Carpentry is among the arts going out… or crafts, if you’re of a non-classical disposition. There are others: other arts which have gone down to craft and which are going further… walls, brick walls, music…” (19).

Technology and science have destroyed the ancient human skills. All the ancient forms of life brimmed with vitality and life and so human crafts were not divorced from the pulses of life. The disappearance of ancient forms of life, according to the dramatist, results in the death of life and it signals the greatest tone of loss. There seems to be no force which can revive the ancient forms of life. The destructive forces are so rampant in the society that life nourishing elements have no scope for flourishing in whatever forms of life they exist without carrying any spiritual perspective according to the dramatist.

The dramatist mounts a frontal attack on certain features of modern civilisation which lack spiritual health and vitality: “And other
crafts have come up... if not to replace, then... occupy” (Box 20). These lines signify a reference to the advent of new crafts which have appeared and they almost destroy the old springs of life. Life comes to be emphasised only in external forms. The interior capacity of a man suffers a permanent death on account of the arrival of new crafts. A society cannot live for long in a vacuum without the support of tradition. After the disappearance of the old values, the society is in a state of total vacuum. The dramatist lays emphasis upon this predicament in such lines: “Nature abhors, among so many, so much else... amongst so much, us, itself, they say, vacuum” (20).

No society can pass through a state of total emptiness. The very nature hates such a vacuum and so the state of vacuity is filled up with something or other. But the situation has become worse. This is what the dramatist says and this is what he concludes with an indirect inference. There is a passage in Box which shocks all the readers into a new perspective about the new values and its consequences: “Seven hundred million babies dead in the time it takes, took, to knead the dough to make a proper loaf. Well, little wonder so many... went... cut off, said no instead of hanging on” (20).

Albee has in his mind the disastrous consequences that science has created. If the growth of science has taken place at an amazing speed, simultaneously the speed of destruction has gone at an accelerating pace. Albee has in his mind the actual incident in the
reference to seven hundred million babies dead in a second or two. The greatest peril that man can face lies in nuclear technology. The possibility of mutual co-existence is completely ruled out by the arrival of nuclear technology. The speed and the rate of destruction have gone so high that the promise of science to solve the problem of life has not been achieved. The scientific cult of progress has come under heavy criticism. There is more of external exploration in terms of science and technology and in the same way there is less of interior capacity and inwardness and so both attitudes are going in opposite direction. The idea of progress as propounded by science is very much ill-conceived, according to the dramatist. If nuclear technology is capable of killing seven hundred million babies in a second one can never claim importance for science and it can never pass in the name of progress. Albee is reminded of the inevitability of scientific progress in this line: “Inevitability. And progress is merely a direction, movement” (Box 21).

The idea of progress has not improved man’s mind. It has blown a wind which has extinguished all the wellsprings of life. Anyway, this scientific progress makes a movement towards some goal. But the problem is that the scientific utopia conceived by technologies is not built on lasting spiritual foundations. There is more of confusion and incoherence in the moral conditions of the society on account of the arrival of science and technology. Justification for scientific progress is very hard to be sustained. There is a kind of
moral musing on the decay of society in terms of corruption. Men have become greedy and their attention is only towards securing material goods of life through all illegitimate channels. Money, materialism, self-glorification, self-aggrandisement and short-cut methods to easy-victory have become the ruling forces. This passage is a reference to material and moral corruption: “If only they had told us! Clearly! When it was clear that we were not only corrupt - for there is nothing that is not, or little - but corrupt to the selfishness, to the corruption that we should die to keep it… go under rather than…” (Box 21-2).

Corruption shamelessly makes its entry when money comes to be worshipped as a god. The best thing that preserves purity of life lies beyond the hope of recovery. Scientific progress is called direction by the dramatist. It looks like an irony. It is indeed misdirection coupled with pitfalls in perception. The promise of science to put an end to the actual problems of life is a wild illusion. On the one hand, there is wastage of natural resources of life and on the other, there is loss of human life. Increasing decay and decreasing natural resources are certainly unnatural symptoms. Nuclear technology poses a great threat to the survival of the human race. It has already destroyed the harmony of the universe and life. In a cryptic manner Albee points out that the accelerating speed at which science makes progress is the same speed at which the same science makes progress in the art of killing people. Albee is concerned with the dangers of science and its
harmful impact upon human race. The simultaneous ideas of killing people and spilling milk are excellently brought out in a passage:

Or was it the milk? That may have been the moment: spilling and spilling and killing all those children to make a point. A penny or two, and a symbol at that, and I suppose the children were symbolic, too, though they died, and couldn’t stop. Once it starts-gets to a certain point-the momentum is too much. But spilling milk! (Box 22)

There are two references which are very crucial in this play. Starvation of children and spilling of milk are the two incidents which are antithetical or not identical with each other. Human race has lost its direction, because there is a society which can allow children to starve and permit spilling of milk. The dramatist employs a wonderful image to point out the nature of science and the consequence of inevitability embodying the direction it is obliged to take. The scientific momentum cannot be stopped. The unavoidability of danger is what is hinted at in the imagery of momentum. Albee perceives danger and disaster hidden in science and technology and the progress it promises. There is a reference to killing small children and simultaneously there is a reference to spilling milk and wasting it. Obviously, the conjunction of these two references reveals one fact that activities taking place in the world are not worthwhile. There is no
possibility to attend to the actual problem. Surprisingly, society presents a picture of disconnected fragments. Amidst these references comes a conclusion which is almost presenting a parallel to the Senecan philosophy of stoicism. The Christian Pope raises the problem of poverty and starvation. He makes a tantalising pronouncement: “The Pope warned us; he said so. There are no possessions, he said; so long as there are some with nothing we have no right to anything” (Box 22).

The dramatist hints at the Christian view on the idea of material property and possessions as embodied in the above passage. According to the advice of Pope one must practise a life of voluntary poverty. A self-imposed or a kind of voluntary poverty is the only solution for dealing with the problem of people having nothing. The idea that others have nothing and so we people have no right to have anything is, according to the dramatist, an act of poetic sentimentality. To melt into self-pity at the sight of people having nothing and thereby starving is really not an appreciable sentiment. But to say on that ground that we have no right to have anything because others have nothing is a kind of statement which looks, according to the tone of the dramatist, a debatable proposition. A careful perusal of the structure of this drama reveals that an answer to the question of the problem of poverty in the play **Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung**, and the solutions offered there are kept in a state of debate. This shows that the dramatist is taking pains in portraying varied problems and
diversified points of views prevailing in society in relation to the problems. But one thing is very clear that rich traces of life prevailed in the past and they all have vanished after the advent of science and technology. This idea is made clear in the beginning of the play Box when the dramatist makes a reference to the passing away of carpentry. In the same way he takes it upon himself, as his main task is to show that what is happening in the society is not healthy.

The entire direction of the human race is on the wrong path. Killing people and spilling milk are diseased symptoms of the wrong track in which civilisation is moving. The dramatist builds up a kind of crossword algebra in order to maintain the riddle and the puzzle in the play. When a reference to spilling the milk is made, there is a reply to it in a much unconnected form in the play itself. This shows that different people work at different levels:

It’s the little things, the small cracks. Oh, for every pound of milk they spill you can send a check to someone, but that does not unspill. That it can be done is the crack. And if you go back to a partita… ahhhhh, what when it makes you cry!? (Box 23)

This passage is taken as a kind of reply to the act of spilling milk. What the dramatist implies is that the act of spilling milk can be checked and resisted. But a statement with a double negative is presented in a more surprising way. Again, that line is quoted for the
sake of emphasis and clarity: “…but that not unspill” (Box 23). It is a standard saying in English that double negatives make an affirmative. A relative connotation directs towards spilling. Again, the purpose in making the statement in the form of a double negative is to demonstrate the fact that what goes on in the society is going on irresistibly without any check and control. A deep agony is felt by the dramatist in reviewing such a sorry state. But immediately after this line, the dramatist comes out with a statement having the tone and strength of a thunderbolt: “…When art begins to hurt… when art begins to hurt, it’s time to look around. Yes it is” (23). A comment on this line is made by Stenz:

The voice which is filled with sorrow, is talking about spiritual loss of direction, about “system as conclusion - the dice so big you can hardly throw them anymore,” a time when great beauty, the beauty of music - a partita - no longer “takes you more to everything” but becomes a reminder of “what we cannot have.” (89)

By the statement “art hurts” the dramatist means that his purpose is to shock the reader into a new perspective about what is taking place in the society. Shocking the reader into a new perspective is an equivalent to art wounding and hurting the feeling of the reader in order to make man realise the sorry and insensitive state in which he exists. The main vision of the dramatist is to aim at presenting the
actual picture of life and indicate the unhappiness in regard to the shape the society has taken. Moreover, the musical symbol “partita” is deliberately brought in to reflect the musical tone of threnody and elegy with reference to the sinister consequences of life is pointed out in the following lines:

Albee’s reference to the partita, however, concerns not the form itself but rather its loss—or perhaps, more generally, human-loss. “And if you go back to a partita… ahhhhhh, what when it makes you cry! Not from the beauty of it, but solely that you cry from loss… so precious… (qtd. in Amacher 154)

In a sense, some statements appear in the form of puzzle in the drama. But there are some statements which come near to an answer to the puzzle. One such statement is given below for analysis: “No longer just great beauty which takes you more to everything, but a reminder! And not of what can… but what has. Yes, when art hurts …” (Box 23). There is no harm in taking a risk in the matter of interpretation of this passage. It will be a meaningful risk in probing the mind of the dramatist. In a deeper perspective the passage presented above builds up a total contrast between a pre-industrial paradise and post-industrial hell. It is this projected contrast which becomes apparently evident in many of the statements quoted above. The word ‘reminder’ in the passage quoted above creates an opportunity for the
projected contrast. Rich possibilities of life are no longer prevailing, and what prevails is not a fulfilling one. Therefore, the task of art lies in hinting at the sense of loss. Immediately after this presentation of the picture of loss, there is a passage which happens to be a meditation on the theme of human tension and unsetlement:

The release of tension is the return to consonance; no matter how far travelled, one comes back, not circular, not to the starting point, but a … setting down again, and the beauty of art is order - not what is familiar, necessarily, but order… on its own terms. (Box 24)

This passage can be taken as the greatest comment on the modern condition of fragmentation in human consciousness. Very peculiarly for the problem rose in the passage the solution is provided very clearly in the same passage itself. One can say that this passage is the pinnacle in the entire drama. There is no need to read any other passage because all the problems of life are captured in a nutshell and answered in a logically convincing way. Every word and every sentence in the passage counts because they are very central to the predicament of human civilisation. Man is running after the material goods of life. This search for external goods of life is prompted by science and technology. This blind search for material affluence has made man insensitive to the nicer and finer things of life.
There are some critics who endorse the view of the dramatist who says that addiction to materialism is nothing but an expression of spiritual loss of direction. Tension comes from fragmentation in human consciousness. Human beings experience unsettlement on account of racing against time. Man’s ambition to achieve everything materially leads him to compress everything in a time-bound schedule. Time acts as a strain on man and his activities and search for material goods leave a greater strain on his mind. As a result, human consciousness is subjected to different kinds of pulls and pressures. A direct result of such condition is emotional unsettlement. Man’s consciousness is fragmented, because he is pulled by many pressures. And these pressures never keep him in a state of relaxation. On the other hand, he lives in a state of unstable equilibrium.

The dramatist gives consonance as an antidote to tension. The word consonance contains many meanings: rhythm, agreeability, order, consistency, identity in tone and sounds. In other words, consonance is nothing but concord. But the way involved in travelling to this centre of consonance is very long and very far. By this, the dramatist implies that the solution to the problem of tension is not a simple one. One must realise what one lives for and what he must do in order to make life sensible. The way to concord is really an arduous task. The dramatist takes care that the way to solution is not coming back circularly. It is a question of settling down. If one wants to settle
down, one must go for a drastic settlement of the problem he is facing. Man is unsettled emotionally; he must know how to settle down in a peaceful way. Therefore, the word ‘settling down’ acquires greater significance which is shown in the following lines which appear in a literary journal:

Throughout runs a theme of decline and loss - in art and craft (no one could make such a box now), in social responsibility (milk deliberately spilt when children are starving), and in understanding. Continually, Voice returns to the sense of direction in art and the pain it can cause by contrast with loss of direction in life.

(Contemporary Literary Criticism V.113 23)

The voice in the Box is the voice of protest. The scientific age, having introduced the apparently called order in the society, exists in a state of smug self-satisfaction. Albee feels that the so called order introduced by science is not order but it is a symptom of great moral and spiritual disorder: “…the voice protests chaos being called order; since art is essentially creative, the Voice also protests indiscriminate destruction” (Amacher 156). This theme of order and disorder is taken up in elaborate length in Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung.

Science has made man comfortable. But it has not made man a good human being. In this sense, man is in a state of loss. This sense of loss is looming large in the whole spectrum of human civilisation.
Loss of direction in human life and personal and social responsibility of art go together in the matter of making art and the artist sensitive to the condition of loss. General theme of the *Box* is almost like a poem on the tragedy of human loss. The feeling of loss is unendurable but the idea of order as understood by the dramatist seems to be unattainable. Albee undoubtedly speaks about it in glorious terms in an undoubted tone. The play *Box* is structurally disorganised in a deliberate way. Therefore, opposite viewpoints are suggested. It is all for the purpose of building up the dramatic tempo for dealing with the tragedy, and the malady which have befallen upon the human civilisation. The tragedy seems to be inescapable. The reason is that wrong forces and false directions have pervaded the entire arena of life.

Immediately after he talked about tension and return to consonance, the play presents the typical existentialist theme which regards individual variations as sacred. Existentialism sees the value of individual variations. Modern science constructed a methodology which aimed at unity, uniformity, consistency and conformity. These norms affected the conditions of life very injuriously. The initial attraction towards such norms as unity and conformity could not be misunderstood. The overwhelming impact of these norms created upon human life was so tremendous that any value opposed to these norms seemed to have no chance for survival. But the whole idea is presented in an abstract and symbolic way. Pictures and monuments
that reflect a mode of life which existed with variety, diversity and plurality is brought into reference here. It is a reference to an ancient mode of living which simultaneously generated different preoccupations of life. But all these modes of life existed without friction, because there was a healthy sense for life which was a unifying force of all the preoccupations in life: “So much... flies. A billion birds at once, black net skimming the ocean, or the Monarchs that time, that island, blown by the wind, but going straight... in a direction. Order!” (Box 24).

The passage can be divided into two sections. One section is a plea for movement and changing rhythm, while the other section is a plea for unchanging rhythm and immobility. The entire passage is after all a serious reflection on the gigantism and the mega-structure of nuclear technology which aimed at compressing everything into a state of unity. The word ‘monarch’ in the passage stands for authority and control and enforced discipline. But the black birds skimming the ocean may be taken as the picture of life filled with variety and richness of diversity. The gigantism of nuclear technology has harmed the basic rules of life by eliminating ideas of diversity and introducing in its place the idea of consolidation based on unity and uniformity.

The inner life of the mind is the subject of all great literature. The external condition of man and mind is the subject of all science. Science is at variance with art. Albee wants to state this conflict and
battle roughly in a symbolic passage of this kind. Science marches on the graveyard of art. Thus, the entire human life seems to be in a state of barrenness, which is comparable to the condition of a graveyard. The dramatist depends upon memory as a cure for the current ills of life. What has happened to human life as a consequence of science is disastrous. It is this perception which becomes a motivating force for the emergence and birth of art. What is prevailing is not right. What prevailed has disappeared. But there is a feeble memory which recollects what has disappeared although it can not be made alive once again. A discovery of what is prevailing as bad is felt on the basis of a mind which is immersed in rich memory. The dramatist talks about the value that has disappeared in these lines: “When the beauty of it reminds us of loss. Instead of the attainable. When it tells us what we cannot have” (Box 25).

Albee shows his utmost skill as an artist in this passage in foretelling the future remedy of the world. He says that it is impossible to go back in time and revive the same mode of life in the present age. Such an enterprise is not only an act of impossibility but it is an act of nullity. He says that the beauty of what prevailed in the ancient age must give the reader a clue to remind him of the loss and the spiritual emptiness: “Instead of the attainable. When it tells us what we cannot have” (Box 25). These lines indicate the futility of going back in time. It is impossible to put the clock back in time and travel along with it. One has to relive with a consciousness of what has been lost. The
dramatist compares this loss to the musical melody. For sometime it is heard. After sometime it remains in memory though a large part of it is unheard. It is this perception of Albee that has almost given him the status of prophet of the human civilisation. The words “art hurts” have become a poetic refrain. This means that the value of what has been lost is indicated by the repeated use of the poetic and the dramatic device namely, refrains. An atmosphere has been created for the purpose of setting up a kind of contrast and comparison between the ancient mode of life and the modern mechanical existence. The remedy for the civilisation does not come in a calculated or straightly organised manner. The problems are too many and the realisation of what these problems remain unfelt by people. In this context, Albee feels that some proposal has to be given for the improvement of human race: “It is not a matter of garden, or straight lines, or even... morality” (Box 26).

High sounding idealism and well-formulated solutions are not valid in the modern context. Albee keeps in mind the nuclear technology which has posed a threat to the survival of human race. A solution offered by science in improving the human race has worked havoc in the society. An awareness which contains a powerful understanding of what real life is is the only guiding force amidst these confusions. Albee says that it is difficult to come back (“it is only when you can’t come back,” [Box 26]) and go for a revival of life exactly along the historically linear line. The dramatist offers a symbolic
solution in the line (“when you get in some distant key;” [26]) in an appropriate method of recollecting and remembering the distant past.

The project for the human race as suggested by the dramatist is hidden in recollections of life lived in communion with nature. This idea is brought out through a powerful image: “What was it used to frighten me? Bell buoys and sea gulls; the sound of them, at night, in a fog, when I was very young” (Box 26). These lines signify the reference to a fertile memory of sea and the landscape and the birds flying. All these phenomena, Bell buoys, sea gulls and the sound of them are all symbols of good memory. They throw light on certain areas of life which have been ignored. Science has placed faith in the logical and material dimensions of life. But symbols like sea-gulls and bell buoys are aspects of memory which highlight the non-material dimensions of life: “Well, we can exist with anything; without. There’s little that we need to have to go on... evolving” (27). These lines powerfully portray the unworthwhile choices and options which men make in their total unawareness of their significance of life. They can live with anything and simultaneously they can dispense with anything because they lack the desire and will to evolve into perfection.

With all the shame and hypocrisy of the modern civilisation memory fails. So, it is not possible to know what we have not known. The concluding pages of the drama are in the form of a pastiche. Riddle, puzzle, irony and inability to attribute specific meaning to
anything are the specific features of the concluding line. But amidst the riddle there is still a possibility for capturing the vision of the dramatist: “Well, we give up something for something” (Box 28).

The line that we can exist with anything and without anything can be taken as parallel to the line, “we give up something for something” (28). These lines are too abstract. They are not without meaning. Something must be given up for the sake of something else. But the problem is that what is given up is important and what is accepted in its place is equally important. The concluding pages capture in a nutshell the entire symbolic theme of the drama:

When art hurts. That is what to remember.

(Two-second silence)

What to look for. Then the corruption…

(Three-second silence)

Then the corruption is complete.

… a black net... skimming.

Milk.

(Three-second silence)

…Milk.

(Five-second silence. Wistful)

Box. (Box 28-29)
Corruption is a reference to spiritual degradation. The hurting of art is an indication of the duty and vision of art in correcting this moral short-sightedness.

The line, “a blacknet...skimming” is a reflection on the consolidation of civilisation on the basis of norms of reason which systematizes the principles of unity and uniformity. The present history has met great disaster on account of this linear scientific view of civilisation. Milk is after all a reference to the attitude of wasting milk in the presence of starving children. The lines quoted above are disharmoniously organised deliberately for the purpose of showing the nature of the modern age and the difficulty of pointing out the solution. The drama closes with the sounds of bell buoys and sea gulls.

The play starts with reference to disappearance of carpentry and in the middle of the concluding page of the drama, there is a meaningful line, “Though mystifying nature. Nothing belongs” (Box 28). Human consciousness is in a state of fragmentation. Human life is exposed to the problem of alienation,-commercialism, mercantilism, industrialisation, mechanisation and systematisation. All these have taken away the sense of human belonging. Interrelatedness in human life is found missing. The victory over this phenomenon of degeneration can come through a memory of what we have not known as the dramatist puts it. The problem can be solved and the solution can be arrived at and the depth of crisis can be perceived only on the
basis of human memory. What has disappeared is something that is crucial. Nevertheless, it can be an achievable fact and the value of what has been lost can be perceived through memory in creative recollections. This seems to be the solution to the problem posed by the nuclear civilisation.

The two plays *Box* and *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* apparently look thematically connected. But deep investigation reveals that the two plays though seemingly identical have different preoccupations with regard to society and human life. The emphasis in *Box* is very largely upon the apprehensions and fears connected with the threat of nuclear holocaust. Naturally, the purpose of the dramatist is to highlight the modern nuclear character of the civilisation and point out how it has destroyed the ancient forms of life and the harmony of the universe. Over-systematisation is a characteristic feature of science and technology and hence it strikes at the very root of life which bristles with richness and variety. On the one hand the vast amount of destructive capacity which nuclear technology possesses and on the other hand, the vast amount of waste that the modern society makes in terms of spilling milk are, according to the dramatist, symptoms which reveal the deep sickness of the civilisation although it appears highly progressive. This is a very disastrous possibility which the so called progressive society displays.
The leading artistic programme of the dramatist is exposed in his agenda which states that art hurts because its business is to shock the reader about the spiritual loss to which he must wake up and to which he remains tragically insensitive. Very dramatically Albee says that it is time to look around and watch and perceive what is happening around. This theme of spiritual loss of direction is expanded in a different way in *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung*. In the sequential play, the dramatist is concerned with diversity and variety in terms of viewpoints. Chairman Mao Tse-tung is the titular hero of the play. Amidst different kinds of fragmented views of the society, the voice from the box seems to possess the character of an oracle.

Albee in *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung* is concerned with “the spiritually bankrupt” (Amacher 158) characters of “upper middle class” (158). Such people represent a civilisation “drifting toward extinction” (158). All the characters in the play are found drifting “in the social system” (158) which is superficial. Albee says that it is “a system that has wilfully blinded itself to the nature of reality” (qtd. in Amacher 158). The dramatist feels “the urgent need for some kind of spiritual renewal” (158). Albee sees in the modern society “disintegration of personal relationships” (158). This leads him to conclude that “the spiritual values that might provide for personal survival are also lost” (158).
The purpose of Albee in *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tsetung* is to show the character of Mao, “the vigorous direction and courage of the East” (Stenz 94). He has at the same time a simultaneous aim to indicate “the failure of nerve and the aimlessness of the West” (94). He hints at the defect of the “conventional thinking” (100) which runs through a mechanical routine and mechanised sensibility. In the breadth he acknowledged the fact that “false idealism” (100) leads to futile and spiritually shallow social endeavours. Therefore, he is forced to portray “a picture of American moral depravity” (97).

Albee believes that the characters are “characteristic attitudes” (McCarthy 41) in this play. C.W.E. Bigsby says that “man is educated to reality by leaving the world of illusion” (qtd. in Amacher 160). It is clear with Bigsby’s statement that “what is needed is a reassertion of humane values” (159). In the exploration of reality “Bigsby makes a good case for Freud’s influence on Albee” (qtd. in Amacher 160). What science leaves out, according to Bigsby, is “the frightening flux of reality” (160) which Albee takes into consideration in his art. In this play Albee is a surrealist in his search for the subconscious. In this regard Bigsby refers to the “technique of surrealists in their attempt to convey the workings of the unconscious mind” (161).

The play opens with a profound and ancient Chinese fable. The story is simple. But the implications are fraught with uncanny
consequences and overtones. It is a reference to a small conversation between the foolish old man and the wise old man. He who indulges in doing the impossible is dubbed by the world as a foolish man. He who indulges in building the most intelligent thing is classified by the society as a wise man. The ancient fable strikes at the very foundations of the standards of the society which designate one as foolish and the other as wise. The ancient fable reverts the normal norm of the society and it delights in telling a story which has a new connotation and meaning. A quotation is acknowledged below for the purpose of bringing a passage which illustrates two contrasting attitudes to life:

Another greybeard, known as the wise old man, saw them and said derisively, “How silly of you to do this! It is quite impossible for you few to dig up those two huge mountains. The foolish old man replied, “When I die, my sons will carry on; when they die there will be my grandsons, and then their sons and grandsons, and so on to infinity. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can’t we clear them away.” Having refuted the wise old man’s wrong view, he went on digging every day, unshaken in his conviction. *(Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 39-40)*
A prima facie level of understanding of this passage is that any accomplishment of work is based upon an attitude of mind. This passage shows the attitudinal differences. Later on, Albee refers to two specific terms which throw light on the nature of the task which is to be accomplished:

Today, two big mountains lie like a dead weight on the Chinese people. One is imperialism, the other is feudalism. The Chinese Communist Party has long made up its mind to dig them up. We must persevere and work unceasingly, and we, too, will touch God’s heart. Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people. If they stand up and dig together with us, why can’t these two mountains be cleared away?

(Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 40)

The metaphors can be employed in order to bring into focus the nature of the two radically opposed systems of society. Chinese are like lambs. But they have the potential and capacity to turn into lions and tigers. So long as Chinese remain like lambs, imperialism and feudalism will appear as two hounds. Lambs are no matches for hounds. This vulnerability of the Chinese makes them an easy prey to the hounds of imperialism and feudalism. So long as the Chinese people remain like the dormant lambs the intended task of opposing imperialism and feudalism would never be accomplished. But they
would not remain so forever. They are subjected to stresses and strains and ups and downs in life and so they always have an opportunity to rouse themselves from the deep slumber in which they are placed. Just as, the hope rested with the old foolish man that his future generations would achieve the goal of digging the whole mountain so also generations of effort with untiring and continued application would lead to the clearing away of the two mountains known as imperialism and feudalism. Again, there are two images which are hidden in these references in the fable. Good is kept under suppression and evil is marching on the forefront. Will this situation continue or will not the situation be reversed? These are the two questions put forth by the dramatist when he makes a reference to the ancient Chinese.

The major inspiration for the communist programme according to Mao comes from a deep innate necessity of human nature:

**CHAIRMAN MAO**

Apart from their other characteristics, the outstanding thing about China’s six hundred million people is that they are “poor and blank.” This may seem a bad thing, but in reality it is a good thing. Poverty gives rise to the desire for change, the desire for action and the desire for revolution. On a blank sheet of paper free from any mark, the freshest and most beautiful characters can be written;
the freshest and most beautiful pictures can be painted.

*(Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 42-43)*

Three implications are found in this passage. The description of Chinese people as “poor” and “blank” shows that they can be shaped easily in the desired direction. The second level is that so long as poverty exists it would leave a tone of dissatisfaction in them which would create a desire for some action. The third level is that as Chinese remaining blank and empty they can be powerfully reorganised for the purpose of a radical revolution. Albee is an existentialist who could never encourage herd mentality, block thinking and groupist attitudes. The passage quoted above is a reference to the programme of communism in inspiring people for the creation of a newly organised society. But the middle of the passage contains a grain of truth. The statement that poverty creates a desire for change cannot be fully denied. But communism points to the existence of poverty as a tragic phenomenon. Any existentialist would not be in disagreement with this statement of truth. But, the mathematical riders and corollaries which a Marxist and communist, frame in order to run a programme are fraught with different kinds of consequences.

Description of people as blank paper and shaping them and writing impressions upon them are activities which Albee as an existentialist would not approve of. There is no open mention of such
a statement but that seems to be the hidden agenda of the dramatist in this play. To identify a group of people with a set of attitudes is fully repugnant to the perception of any existentialist. A consolidated mass action is what is hinted at in these passages quoted.

Again, there are three dangers hidden in the concept of consolidated mass action. First, mass is the denial of the right of the individual to think independently about what he thinks. ‘Massification’ destroys the freedom of individuality or it takes away the concept of individual freedom. The word consolidation is unacceptable because in the play Box, it has been mentioned by the dramatist that life bristles with variety, diversity and richness. The idea of consolidated mass action destroys the ancient mode of life which inherently has encouraged spontaneously the rhythm of variety: “It is not a matter of garden, or straight lines, or even... morality...” (Box 26). This line is an open reference to a scientific programme of advancing everything along the line of collective transformation which takes the entire human race to a summit of unity and uniformity in eliminating all differences.

The scientific programme aims at unity and uniformity ignoring the ancient idea which was filled with many branches of diversity. In a sense, according to Albee, communist programme also aims at mass action and so, it becomes allegedly scientific. All variations must be removed and unity and uniformity must be introduced by force and
violence. This seems to be the plan of the communist programme. Whatever is introduced by violence has no natural existence. It would lead to unnatural bearings. A society cannot be created on the basis of force and violence. It cannot be sustained for long on the same basis.

The play is skilfully structured in order to show how people work in total deviation from the line of thinking introduced by the communist programme. One such example is the presence of Long-Winded Lady. She leads a life in which the philosophy of communist programme makes little appeal and it has no significance at all. Albee acknowledges the fact that the attitude of the Long-Winded Lady is very superficial. But Marxists say that the attitude of superficiality cannot coexist with the attitude of the communist programme. But what is amusing for the dramatist is that the attitude of superficiality and the attitude of sternness do not coexist. But they exist side by side. Existing side by side is different from co-existing with things. Co-existence on the basis of application by force is pointed out by the dramatist as an unnatural act. The presence of the Long-Winded Lady is not a threat to the existence of the society. But the deep purpose of the dramatist in projecting the Long-Winded Lady does not seem to go without any purpose. She lives in tune with the established norms of the society. This is not living but it is a kind of mechanical existence with no purpose and vitality. But very surprisingly, Albee puts a remarkable sentence in the mouth of the Long-Winded Lady which
throws light on the nature of any human action whether it is that of a communist or whether it is that of scientific reformer: “But, some slight sound, or… or the creation of one! The invention! What is that about consequence? Oh, you know! Everything has its consequence? Or, every action a reaction; something…” (Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 45).

In the casual conversational line uttered by a Long-Winded Lady there seems to be a profound sign of wisdom. Every action has a reaction. This statement implies that no action can go without any consequence. Therefore, a reaction is born as an inevitable sequence. This indirectly provides an answer to a communist programme aiming at the creation of society on the basis of consolidated mass action. When the dramatist uses the Long Winded Lady as a counterfoil to Chairman Mao Tse-Tung’s philosophy of action on the basis of violence, he does not spare her mercifully. On the other hand, he points out the defect in the mechanical vision of the life pattern. Albee is of the opinion that the Long Winded Lady is leading a life in accordance with long established family convention of the society. The basic hypothesis of the dramatist is that the Long Winded Lady does not lead a life for her own whereas she seems to be living for the convention of the society. Stenz digs deep into the motive of the dramatist in these lines: “What Albee presents in his oeuvre - whether he is dealing with family life, the church or society at large - there is material enough to jostle him out of conventional
thinking and false idealism…” (100). This passage may be taken as a comment on the Long-Winded Lady. Conformism is immersion of individualism in an impersonal principle. This is a life-destroying endeavour, according to the dramatist.

Amidst allegations and changes levelled against American imperialism, the passage in which the old woman describes herself as crazy or lazy is simultaneously placed. Craze is a kind of irrational bias and laziness is an attitude of inactivity. It may be a remote reference that imperialism is evil, and it looks very much crazy and far out of the mark. To say that American imperialism has limitations is different from saying that American imperialism is out and out evil. Therefore, the word crazy is used by the dramatist either consciously or unconsciously or either by reference or by remote implication that the Chinese adjudication about American imperialism can have the possibility of carrying an irrational bias. But the old woman leads her life in complete ignorance of what is taking place in the world of Mao Tse-tung. The Chinese are prejudiced as far as the American are concerned. Similarly, the old woman is biased as far as her family life is concerned. Slowly, the *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* gains a tremendous momentum when it expresses a very aggressive line of thinking:
CHAIRMAN MAO

If the U.S. monopoly capitalist groups persist in pushing their policies of aggression and war, the day is bound to come when they will be hanged by the people of the whole world. The same fate awaits the accomplices of the United States. *(Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 54)*

It is a scathing comment on America. It looks as though America has no justification for existence according to the spirit of the *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*. Any extreme statement is unacceptable. The American imperialism may have materialistic perspective in imposing domination over other countries for the purpose of commerce and trade. It looks as if that American imperialism is thriving on the misfortunes of the other nations. The dramatist is an American. There is a tremendous anti-American attitude coming from *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*. Albee balances this anti-American agenda and offsets it in another passage from the Long Winded Lady: “One doesn’t come out like that to carnage! Dead people and the wounded; glass all over and... confusion” *(Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 55)*. If the actual policy of chairman Mao Tse-tung is acknowledged as in the quotation cited above, the world will end in Carnegean destruction. There is another bewildering passage which leaves a mystifying
effect: “One… concludes things - and if those things and what is really there doesn’t … are not the same… well!… it would usually be better if it were so. The mind does that: it helps” (Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 55).

The interpretation of this passage is necessarily noted along the Jungian stream of consciousness. To say that the American imperialist must be hanged, because of their exploitative and destructive nature is different from concluding and saying that the American imperialist must become moderate and human. A conclusion in the movie is not an exact equivalent to the promotion of this same conclusion in life. In the same way, the conclusion of Chinese people about the American imperialism is a made up one and it is got up by the Chinese on the basis of their own mental projection. One can express one’s own reservations in making a pronouncement about the attitude of the American imperialism. Any implementation of the policy of Chairman Mao Tse-Tung would end in war and bloodshed. It is not a desirable consequence. Four passages are simultaneously placed for a comprehensive analysis:

LONG-WINDED LADY

You never know until it’s happened to you.
VOICE, FROM BOX

Many arts: all craft now... and going further.

CHAIRMAN MAO

Our enemies are all those in league with imperialism; our closest friends are the entire semi-proletariat and petty bourgeoisie. As for the vacillating middle bourgeoisie, their right wing may become our enemy and their left wing may become our friend.

...Well, if we control the unconscious, we're either mad, or... dull-witted. (Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 58-60)

These four passages apparently present an unorganised outpouring of human consciousness. On the surface, they look disconnected. But the facts are not so. Some point of connecting link can be seen. The line uttered by Long-Winded Lady, “You never know until it has happened to you” hits at all predetermined conclusions of human life. The scientific age posits the idea of progress keeping in mind an ultimate end. The scientific prophecy is that all imperfections will be removed and one day perfection will be established. All utopian speculations point to a vision and to an ultimate end. But the Long-Winded Lady remarks that human experience is prior and knowledge of it is posterior.
Chairman Mao Tse-Tung speaks of a polarisation on the basis of communist ideology. Friends of America will be enemies of China. Friends of China will be enemies of America. Enemies of America will be friends of China. Enemies of China will be the friends of America. This is an unrealistic grouping. It introduces a partition in the human race on the basis of ideology. A large part of human life is in the subconscious. Superficial part of human life is seen in the conscious. But generally, the followers of science and Marx may take into account conscious and ignore the subconscious which is more fundamental for human integration. The Long-Winded Lady refers to the act of controlling the emotions. What usually happens is that reason–oriented systems like science and communism dilute the subconscious and give prominence to the conscious and they tend to see everything in terms of identification with reason and association with outer part of consciousness. The great element of unpredictability lies hidden as far as the world of subconscious is concerned. Today modern anthropologists and psychologists, instead of speaking of controlling of sub-conscious, speak of coming to terms with the unconscious or negotiating with the unconscious on its own terms:

(A) VOICE, FROM THE BOX

Seven hundred million babies dead in half the time it takes, took, to knead the dough to make a proper loaf.
Well, little wonder so many… *(Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 62)*

**[B] CHAIRMAN MAO**

I have said that all the reputedly powerful reactionaries are merely paper tigers. The reason is that they are divorced from the people. Look was not Hitler a paper tiger?… *(Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 64)*

**[C] CHAIRMAN MAO**

However much the reactionaries try to hold back the wheel of history, sooner or later revolution will take place and will inevitability triumph. (67)

**[D] LONG-WINDED LADY**

Or cold. Neat; accurate; precise. In everything... (67)

**[E] LONG-WINDED LADY**

I mean, if all the rest is part of a... predetermination, or something that has already happened – in principle – well, under those conditions any chaos becomes order. Any chaos at all. (71)
All these passages are to be treated as monologues. Each passage is a construction or projection of human consciousness which operates in a peculiarly fragmented way. Each passage contains a conclusion which cannot be ignored. The passage ‘A’ where the voice from the box speaks is a reference to the capacity of science to kill seven hundred million babies in a second. Scientific inventions not only affect the conditions of life but they also destroy the valuable birth of serious thought about life. The victory of science converts human life into a graveyard. The threat of nuclear annihilation is the greatest threat.

The passage ‘B’ is a representation of a strong will to resist the enemy that is the so called paper tiger. Unfortunately, no distinction has been drawn in this passage between Germany and America. To club Germany with America is a sign of mistaken perception. Degeneration in human life is traceable to capitalism. Regeneration in human life is traceable to the rise of communism. Chairman Mao says that United States’ imperialism is an aggressive form of capitalism. Imperialism is power domination and capitalism is a resource organisation on the basis of the ownership of capital. When these two are joined they end in total dictatorship. German Nazism and American Imperialism are not the same. But for Mao, they are the same because they arise from the root called longing for power domination. Historically, social life has been controlled by a privileged group. This phenomenon has been described as Fascism. But the
problem is that communist ideology advocates the use of force and violence. It is in no way different from the other systems which are dubbed by the Marxists as reactionaries.

The passages ‘C’ and ‘D’ can be read together. Because there is a prophecy in passage C that a revolution will take place and it will put an end to everything. The Long-Winded Lady in the passage ‘D’ uses three words neat, accurate and emphasise. Whether the revolution will take place neatly, accurately and precisely is a question to be explored. In the passage ‘E’ there is a reflection on fatalism and predetermination. What is bound to take place will take place inevitably. The question whether the promised revolution will take place as a predicted predetermined end is what is being viewed speculatively. The communists’ predicted end is equivalent to a predetermined end. The value of any ideological enterprise is tested only in its practical and effectual possibilities. Theoretical prediction of an end as promised by the communist revolution is in no way different from the predetermined end which is postulated by any religion for that matter. The communist revolution is based upon a cause-effect interpretation. Poverty will create a revolution and it will introduce a new social order. This is the promise made by the communist. The promise given by the communists that a revolution would bring in a new social order is viewed with suspicion by the existentialist. The paper tiger is therefore a suspect. When the reference to paper tiger is made the voice from the box comes out with a powerful
pronouncement: “Apathy, I think” (Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 63).

A casual perusal of the play creates a strong impression that Box and Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung almost look like an anti-war propaganda. A hint is given from the voice out of the same play:

**CHAIRMAN MAO**

A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.

**VOICE, FROM BOX**

When art begins to hurt, it’s time to look around. Yes it is.

(Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 85-86)

There is a clear indication that the mission of art is to alter the perspective of the people when they commit serious errors in perception and judgement. Art is deeply concerned with the imbalance found in the society. Therefore, the dramatist is critically reviewing the programme of science and the programme of Mao. His business as an
The artist is to lay bare before the minds of the people that the programme of science suffers from the loss of direction. The programme of the communism is based upon a certain defect in the vision of life. To change the society by an act of violence is not practically a feasible thing. To introduce social justice in the name of revolution on the basis of violence is an arduous task. A war-free world is possible only when belief in violence is renounced. Defect in the vision of life and wrongly conceived plans damage human life much more seriously than bombs and bullets.

The idea of order has captured the attention of philosophy, science and art. But there are so many misconceptions which surround the question of order. Science and Marxism are very much inspired by the idea of order. There are different wave lengths and concepts when references to order are made. According to Chairman Mao, any contradiction is a negation of order. Therefore, establishment of order is dependent upon the removal of contradiction:

**CHAIRMAN MAO**

War is the highest form of struggle for resolving contradictions, when they have developed to a certain stage, between classes, nations, states, or political groups, and it has existed ever since the emergence of
private property and of classes. (Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 92)

Chairman Mao cites property as the highest form of contradiction. Two classes come into existence and they are known as propertied class and unpropertied class. The existence of private property therefore creates a war among classes. The class war can be abolished only when private property is abolished. So far, for Chairman Mao, order means removal of private property and abolition of class war. The way to secure this remedy is an act of violence. But order through violence becomes a great contradiction. Order is peace and violence is war. Perhaps, the question of establishing order on the basis of violence is what is viewed with suspicion. There is no direct discussion conducted by Albee about the validity of establishing order and peace on the basis of violence. Albee provides an indirect answer to this question by projecting a voice from the Box: “...and the beauty of art is order – not what is familiar, necessarily, but order... on its own terms” (93).

Albee deals with the question of order very allegorically. Because, he thinks that order is basically a kind of aesthetic concern. Any access to the realm of order is only possible to a tender mind. Order cannot be created by a simple scientific hypothesis. The value of any programme depends on the harmony it creates. But the communist programme promises to remove disharmony through another mode of disharmony. Although they are deeply concerned
with the question of disharmony their concern is less aesthetic and therefore less human. The remark of Amacher in interpreting the mind of the artist is cited here:

What does the voice in the Box represent? It seems to represent Albee’s aesthetic theory – that “the beauty of art is order.”

In the above paragraph the voice protests chaos being called order; since art is essentially creative, the voice also protests indiscriminate destruction. (156)

This critical remark reflects the inner mind of the artist whose interpretation of order is certainly not along the line of science or that of the programme of communism. According to the dramatist, order is a question of human value. And its growth is prompted and ensured by great creative artist. Order is, after all, an indication of an attitude or a kind of temperament which longs for resolving conflicts and discards. It is after all a craving of the inner heart in order to sustain life. Order is a life-sustaining plant which needs to be watered by tender elements. Moisture, sunlight and air are required for the growth of a plant. Similarly, order is symbolically imagined as a plant that needs to be fertilised by human moisture and tenderness and soft breathing sensations. Such an aesthetic concept of order is not favoured by the scientific and communist programme. Again, some passages are cited for strengthening the argument of the dramatist:
CHAIRMAN MAO

“War is the continuation of politics.” In this sense war is politics and war itself is a political action; since ancient times there has never been a war that did not have a political character. “War is the continuation of politics by other means.”

VOICE, FROM BOX

Something for something.

CHAIRMAN MAO

It can therefore be said that politics is war without bloodshed while war is politics with blood-shed.

VOICE, FROM BOX

When art hurts. That is what to remember. (Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 101-110)

War and bloodshed are certainly aberrations, according to a creative artist like Albee. To create a society on the basis of war and bloodshed is unaesthetic to think of.

There are many times where a particular line is repeated in the play. The line ‘give up something for something’ repeatedly reappears and it is almost a message of the dramatist. War and violence must be
given up. Injustice and imperfection can be tolerated. War and bloodshed must be given up for something which is nothing but peace. All ambitious plans and programmes can be given up. Life flourishes where there is human sympathy. Where there is no human sympathy life decays and disappears. Antipathy must be given up for the sake of sympathy. The play, in fact, presents a small debate on the question of what sustains life and what does not sustain life: "CHAIRMAN MAO: Revolutionary war is an antitoxin which not only eliminates the enemy’s poison but also purges us of our own filth" (Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung 94).

Antipathy is not an answer to antipathy. But Mao argues that antitoxin is an answer to another antitoxin. But in reality antipathy produces more antipathy. It is only sympathy which puts an end to antipathy. Albee says that art hurts and thereby makes society remember what they have forgotten. Great creative art has never advocated human antipathy. Even Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey speak of the horror of war and impress upon the human race the necessity to put an end to war. Albee concludes that violence and war are not ways and means of procuring peace.

The four characters in the play are nothing but allegorical representations of order. The Long Winded Lady conceives of order as conformity to family and social conventions. What has happened to her as a result of her husband’s death seems to be an absorbing
preoccupation, which according to the dramatist, takes away the character of her individuality. For her, order means to be in harmony with the existing prevailing social system. Her relationship with the daughter seems to be a delicate one. To cherish the memory of her dead husband and to live in a world of memory seems to be a part of life pattern. Her social theory is that endurance is an answer to all problems.

For the old woman order is embodied in a different way. To live with her own children for a prolonged time is what constitutes her major family preference. Her ballads only speak of the agony of human life. She is fond of her children, whereas, her children are not fond of her. This is the irony of the situation in which the old woman is placed. Her affection for her children remains unresponded by them. This cause only despair in her but not anger. It is only the sadness of life which keeps off going in her mental region. Therefore, her concept of order lies in emotional adherence to her children although they want to remain aloof from her. The Long-Winded Lady and the old woman are different voices echoing human frustrations. Albee’s pronouncement is very clear in the light of the existentialist hypothesis that their individuality is very much subsumed in their family preoccupations. They are deeply rooted in family human emotions like loyalty, gratitude and combined social responsibility which guard the tree of family. To subsist in this family tree with all frustration is, for them, order.
The dramatist excellently says that something must be given up for the sake of something else. This seems to be a powerful reply to the Marxist programme. What is to be given up in favour of something is what art aims at and which science and communism ignore. Albee says that any settlement of any human problem must be along human line. The communist way of solving the problem involves tension, conflict and upheaval. To reorganise the society by destroying the old order just because it is corrupt is not a worthwhile programme. Albee’s claim is that the beauty of art is order. Great art and creativity crave for human harmony. Art wounds and hurts human beings when this prayer for harmony is impeded by science and Marxist programmes.

It has been already pointed out that the play presents an anti-war propaganda. This seems to be the agenda of the dramatist. This agenda which is the anti-war propaganda is what invalidates the claims of both science and communism. There is one character who does not speak. The Minister’s silence is a deliberate play through which the dramatist shows the meaninglessness of communication. Silence of the minister, perhaps, looks like an answer to the excessive activity of science and Marxism. The minister establishes no communication with anyone. But science and communism establish communication at the expense of many valuable things in the society. Their communication ends in the greatest breakdown of communication. All great communications arise from sympathy and understanding. Very tender hearted souls alone are capable of
creating this sympathy. More of sympathy and less of antipathy is the creative call of the dramatist. Art promotes sympathy.

When Albee says that it is time to look around, he means that what is happening around is not happening in the most spiritually favourable and conducive way. Technological breakthrough and communist enthusiasm for order through violence and spiritual sickness present a chaotic picture. The business of art is to instil in the human race a passion for real order. The perception of the best and the most valuable in life is what art aims at. Spiritual ill-health of the society opens the eye of the creative artist and emboldens him to inspire the members of the society by awakening them to the spiritual loss of direction in which they are found and by also making them become familiar with what is enduring and valuable in life through art which makes an anti-war propaganda by popularising the value of peace and harmony.
The thesis entitled *Edward Albee’s Vision of New Moral and Spiritual Existentialism: An Assessment* highlights Edward Albee as an existentialist with a positive attitude to life. Existentialism is a revolt against the established values of life in the West. For more than 2,500 years, life, reality, man and society were seen in terms of religious and philosophical categories. Three kinds of existentialism came into existence before and after the two world wars. The first brand of existentialism creates a view of life which carries an agnostic orientation. Contrary to this school came into vogue atheistic existentialism. Theistic existentialism falls in between the agnostic existentialism and the atheist existentialism. Albee has not explicitly identified himself with any of these three groups. All these three groups are different representations of different attitudes of life. The three groups agree on one fundamental principle. They all call for a new attempt to review the real roots of life. Life previously lived serves as no model or example for ordering and organising the present life. These existentialists make an independent interpretation of life without any reliance upon metaphysical and theological foundations. In them, there is a closer attention to the actual facts of life. Concrete reality is much more important than the conceptual apparatus through which reality is studied. To see life face to face is the chief target of attention for them. Albee shares affinity with this concern for seeing life without
the screening influence of intermediary religious and metaphysical categories. Albee is not completely with the three groups who approach life with doubt and scepticism. Albee’s distinction comes from a profound understanding of life which moves towards a positive angle. The significance of Albee who has evolved a vision of life is explained in four chapters.

To lead a life in obedience to tradition makes a man like wooden furniture which is inert and without life. A lesson of this kind is drawn from the life of Peter in whom there is no movement and vitality of life. He is blessed with affluence and comfort and so he is satisfied with the mechanised forms of life. Mechanisation of mind and feeling is the greatest devitalising process, according to Albee. Struggle for survival cannot be taken as a kind of misfortune on the part of anyone. For a man like Jerry whose daily existence is under trial and threat, the past tradition does not come to his help. He lives and learns from his own living. Albee is convinced of the fact that some wisdom comes from facing the facts of life in the process of struggle for survival. Struggle is a process in life which endows a man with wisdom and maturity. Apparently, a man without a problem appears to be in greater poise than a man with a problem. Albee does not accept this traditional judgement of the society. Metaphysics and religion do not offer anything good to a person who is caught in the stream of life in agony and suffering and finds it desperate to reach the shore. For Albee, wisdom is not embodied in books but it is embodied in the act
of facing life frankly. One important potential which constitutes an important chunk in Albee’s vision of New Moral and Spiritual Existentialism is this candid acceptance of life.

Albee’s existentialism involves an affirmation of life. Life is meant to be lived. He keeps his focus on human concerns. Chapter one entitled *The Need for Human Concerns* has examined three important views of Albee. Tradition is a cage; society is a prison; man has become a machine. These three metaphors imply how life is reduced to nothing and nullity. Peter in the play, *The Zoo Story* is represented as an example of this phenomenon. Life is an expression of living activity and vitality. The dramatist applies this yardstick to measure the merit of traditional and conventional ethics of society embodied in Peter. It is very obvious that Peter does not come up to the expectations of the dramatist who believes that life means placing oneself in action and involving himself in a situation. All the comforts of life are showered on Peter. He exists but he does not radiate a kind of pulsating life. For the dramatist, the life of Peter forms a running commentary on the lifeless pattern of behaviour of an average man found in the European Christian society.

Shabby clothes are a mark of indecency and good clothes are sign of good culture. This time-honoured norm of the society is revised by Albee in order to make the character of Jerry relevant to the civilisation. Shabby dress is not identical with bad manners nor is
good dress identical with good behavioural pattern. These are all man-made norms, carrying no meaning at all. Albee preaches a lesson through Jerry that life places everyone in a peculiar predicament and he has to live and attain maturity on an individual basis of his own struggle in living. If Jerry hits at Peter it means that man has to be shaken out of the long established tradition which has made him irresponsible to the wellsprings of life. Jerry is a representative of a new point of view which goes against all established forms of thinking. Albee here evolves a new vision in which he sees evil as having some significance for shaping man’s mental and emotional make up. The episode of Jerry and Dog has a metaphysical connotation. The European philosophy involves a dualism between good and evil. But the existentialism of Albee dissolves the dualism between good and evil. The instance where the metaphysical opposition between good and evil is bridged is seen in the dog loving and wounding Jerry. In this context Albee uses the greatest phrase ‘teaching emotion’, which is a pointer towards the realm of moral and spiritual existentialism. A review of entire European civilisation is what is done in this critical phrase. Through Zoo Story one learns that tradition, convention and ethics have led life to a kind of stratification and ossification which in turn has taken away the vitality of life.

Albee’s concern in The Death of Bessie Smith is with the pitiable predicament of the black servant Orderly who is of the opinion that a black patient is either ill-treated or not treated well on the ground that
he happens to be a black. What is the fun of having a black patient in a white hospital is the question raised by the white Nurse. Albee says that the admission of a black patient in a white hospital is not fun but it should be viewed from a human point of view. Albee does not believe in racial discrimination. A situation is created by the dramatist wherein a black servant is systematically ill-treated. The feeling of the Orderly who is a victim of racial prejudice is also the feeling of the dramatist who has shown his profound sympathy towards him. Albee’s satire reaches its high watermark when he says that the White Mayor’s haemorrhoids are more important than the illness of the black patient. A dying black patient can be allowed to die. He need not be saved. This is the feeling of the Nurse. Albee feels that all human beings have the right to live irrespective of colour and class. What is found wanting in the situation is a sympathetic response to the illness of the black patient. The dramatist comes out with a bitter conclusion that nobody seems to change his mind. Nobody minds anybody. This is the trend of the world. Precisely because each one wants to stay in the same state without showing human consideration. Therefore, he says that each one will hug the race to which he belongs. Nobody is prepared to give up racial prejudice.

Albee’s interest in human concerns explains his inclination and preference for establishing passionate relationship with life. To denigrate and downgrade anyone on the basis of colour is an instance of human prejudice. Albee says that for the Nurse, the White Mayor is
more important than the black servant Orderly. Albee is of the opinion that there is no fixed nature in a man which makes one the highborn and the other low born. These are the distinctions created by the mind and the society and not by nature itself. Actually, the behaviour of the Mayor and the Nurse do not go hand in hand with their rank and place in the society. A great man is one who shows the nobility of mind. When the Mayor resents the entry of the black servant orderly in his room, it is a sign of some kind of sickness in his temperament which does not permit him to look at a person of black complexion with love. The dramatist is more concerned with the twist in the mind of Mayor than with anything else. A complete absence of human dimension together with a focus on this want of human element is Albee’s primary concern. When he projects such scenes of white ill-treating the black Albee’s sole purpose is to highlight this ‘absence of human dimension.’ So, the need for human concerns becomes another important ingredient in Albee’s vision of new moral and spiritual existentialism. A great man is great in spirit and not in rank and social position. When the dramatist says that nobody bothers about anybody it is nothing but an indirect admission that there is no concern for human life.

Every play of Albee is arranged in the form of a dialectical debate on the riddle and mystery of life. All existentialists are anti-metaphysical. Albee is not an exception to this. He comes out with a complaint that to exalt metaphysics at the cost of life and experience
is a mistake in perception. In *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* he launches into a new interpretation of life and reality. The second chapter *Illusion as Reality* is an attempt at showing Albee’s revolutionary approach to life. Usually, illusion is dismissed by philosophers as having no basis in substantial reality. Therefore, it is wrong to cling to illusion and ignore the actuality of life. This voice of a philosopher is reflected in George who stands in opposition to Martha’s fiction of myth-making for whom imagination is an important avenue for drawing pleasure and joy from life. Man is so afraid of facing the facts of life that he sometimes creates an imaginary world in which the fearful consequence of life is completely diluted by his own fancy. Albee says that the horrid reality of the world hangs upon everyone heavily. To lessen the burden and the load of reality, recourse to illusion is suggested as a palliative measure.

George and Martha represent two forms of reality. George represents the actual real while Martha embodies the imaginary real. The dramatist shows sympathy indirectly towards Martha who imagines herself in having a son. No son is born to Martha and George. This is the truth. George hits at the myth-making instinct of Martha. His act of demythologising is nothing but an attempt at rationalising the real. Albee is very scared of any routine rational interpretation of life. Albee is convinced that the power of reason is inadequate to deal with the charm of life. Martha’s attempt is allowed wherein she imagines having a real son. According to Albee, there are
three kinds of reality. Nick as a scientist represents the future real. George as a historian represents the past and the present real. Martha represents the illusory real. Albee’s purpose seems to go in the direction of invalidating the views of Nick and George. Nick is dismissed on the ground that there is a deep uncertainty about his future scientific vision of life. George is disapproved because the real as it exists either in the past or in the present is least inspiring. Past is dead. Future is unknown. Present is horrid. Amidst these circumstances the safe course of action lies in exploring a middle zone of reality which lies between the present real and the future real. The illusory real according to Albee need not be equated with philosophers’ unreal. He comes to the conclusion that illusory real is a form of reality which has a right to exist in its own sphere. Man experiences living death in the absence of illusory real. Illusions are some forms of imaginary realities which keep life going on with gusto and vitality.

According to Albee, running away from the facts of life is not at all a virtue. Having made this statement he makes a number of qualifications in order to solve the problem of burden which exists in the responsibility of family life. While he maintains the view that facing life is more important than running away from it, he simultaneously suggests another view as an alternative and not as an opposite. There are occasions which arise when man is compelled by his mental habits to entertain illusions in order to reduce the horror of life. A
certain amount of running away from the actual facts of life becomes a matter of exigency. Actual family life is a tiresome process. Everyone is scared of facing it. Martha’s fondness for having an imaginary son looks more real and pleasant than having an actual son. The family burden in having an actual son is avoided in the imaginary realm of having a fictional son. Escape from life is an act of cowardice. Entry into life is an expression of wisdom. This is the voice of tradition. Albee reverses this norm of tradition for a different purpose. He says that human mind longs for fiction and myths and their value cannot be totally denied in accordance with the norms of tradition. There is a
difference between Albee insisting on facing life and the traditionalist insisting on the same.

To see life with the help of tradition is not seeing life at all, according to the dramatist. To see life is to see it independently. It is in this respect, he has equated the life of Peter in *The Zoo Story* with immobility and passivity. Martha’s fear of the traditional concept of family life involving responsibility is presented by the dramatist only for a different kind of estimate. An activity of begetting a child and nurturing it appears tasteless to an existentialist. At the same time to remain without a family and child is equally insipid. Albee suggests a middle course between having a child and avoiding having it. The mid region is the region of twilight of reality envisioned by Albee. The dramatist passes the judgement in favour of illusion as reality. When the reality of world around hangs heavily upon a person, there is
nothing wrong in lessening the boredom by recourse to the world of make-believe, myth and illusion. Albee lays emphasis upon the fact that mind longs for taking liberty with certain facts of life. This insatiable instinct of the mind leads it to the discovery of the illusory real as an abiding source of pleasure.

The third Chapter *Nature versus Nurture* examines Albee’s moral and spiritual existentialism in terms of death as an important ingredient of life. To Albee life matters; correspondingly, therefore, death seriously matters. This is the attitude of the revolutionary existentialist. To a tradition-bound person, life does not matter and so death also does not matter. Such men live falsely and respond to death wrongly. Incapacity for responding to the full significance of life ends in incapacity for responding to the true significance of death. This is illustrated in the life of three characters, Son, Daughter and Wife in the play, *All Over*. Only when a man lives a fulfilling life, he truly perceives the value of life. There is a Dying Man. Nobody talks about the Dying Man. Everybody talks about his or her problem. There is no preoccupation with life but there is a morbid and sentimental preoccupation with their own subjective states of mind. To be appreciative of death requires simultaneously to be appreciative of life according to Albee. What is taking place in their mind is more important than what is taking place outside. This is a typical case of estrangement from external reality. There is, therefore, a peculiar form of alienation seen in the scene of the Dying Man. The Dying Man
though dying is alive. The living people though living are dead, because there is no response to the agony of the man in his deathbed. So, the play All Over stands for healthy appreciation of life and death.

The idea of Albee is always to focus on the actual issues. He approaches life and reality with a great deal of critical perception. Consequently, he is unconventional in his attitude to life. For Albee, to be unconventional is not to be unethical. The true demands of life carry no relation to the actual happenings and events. It is the duty of a man to evince a profound concern with the dying man. In the play All Over, the major character who is the dying man is shown in his deathbed. Neither the doctor and the son nor the Wife and others show any evidence of actual concern for the dying man. The reason is that each one is preoccupied with his or her own ideas. They don’t live but they have ideas about living. It is this attitude of man which is handled in a satirical way by the dramatist. The Mistress loves the Dying Man while the legitimately married Wife has no concern whatsoever with the husband who is a dying man. Her Son and Daughter express their disapproval of the illicit relation between the dying father and the Mistress. They have imbibed an idea of ethics which does not permit them to see any worthwhile meaning in the relation between the Mistress and the Dying father. Their minds are conditioned by tradition and convention and they are not free to look at life without the spectacle of ethics and morality. Why should anyone
wear a spectacle and look at life is a question raised by the dramatist. There is a joy in looking at life nakedly and freely. By an order of ethics the Wife and the Dying Man must be united with each other. But there is no harmonious union in their minds between the two. Surprisingly, there is a wonderful union in mind and outlook in Mistress and the Dying Man. But by the yardsticks of any ethics, such a relationship is adjudged to be false. But the dramatist comes out with a reply that the illegal relationship appears true in spirit while the legal relationship has become insipid.

In the ideological war going on between a man of contemplation and a man of action, Albee takes sides with the latter in the play, Seascape. Contemplation leads to a life of passivity. Albee discourages such a life of inertia. Nancy’s preference for a life of adventure and activity constitutes the essence of life. Charlie’s choice of retirement and withdrawal from life amounts to negation. One’s life is evidently present only in action orientation. So, Albee’s vision of life includes activity as a very important life affirming principle.

Albee’s major preoccupation in the play Seascape is to examine two questions of life. There is a war going on between a life of contemplation and a life of action. Albee’s existentialism is always life-oriented. Contemplation, rest and relaxation lead to a life of passivity and immobility. There is, therefore, a danger hidden in the life of reflection without any relation to life orientation. Nancy and
Charlie are two symbolic characters who, in turn, represent the principles of activity and rest. Nancy’s vigorous disapproval of Charlie’s preference for a life of calmness represents an action-oriented attitude of mind. Albee somehow generates a principle that mobility is life and immobility is death. The dramatist has passed a judgement on an important aspect of life, where he equates life with action and non-life with inaction. To amplify the significance of the mystery of life, he makes a meaningful digression into the story of Leslie and Sarah. The dramatist takes sides with Nancy as he tends to acknowledge his belief that activity is accepted as an axiom of life as it is a life-affirming principle.

The encounter between Nancy and Charlie and Leslie and Sarah is symbolically an encounter between consciousness and unconsciousness or between reason and instinct. According to Albee, rationality is one dimension in which man operates. In that rational dimension, man’s relation to life is not fulfilling. The irrational dimension is one not opposed to the rational. It is a deeper dimension of reality which reason is not able to comprehend and so it is called irrational. Nancy’s willingness to delve into the underworld of Sarah is an act which shows her interest in instinct and subconscious region allegorically. Charlie is satisfied with the land and the upper world of reason wherein he wants to settle himself into a life of rest. Charlie is not aware of the fact that the underworld of instinct is full of unknown
manifestations of life. It is in this region of sub consciousness, a life of charm and variety is seen.

Life unfolds itself on one level as far as the rational dimension is concerned. But the same life manifests itself on several unpredictable levels as they keep on flowing in different streams. In this respect, Albee favours the theory of evolution which opens the scope for unfolding of life on different levels. At the same time, according to him, any religious theory of creation brings life to an end without any movement. It is this fact which enables him to appreciate Nancy who shows her option for a life of adventure and mystery. Though the theory of evolution draws a line of demarcation between animal kingdom and human kingdom, Nancy’s interest in knowing the animal underworld denotes the fact that animal kingdom is not inferior to human world. Albee approves of the subhuman animal world. But he does not denigrate it just because it is a downgrade level in evolution. The dramatist takes care not to make a distinction between the animal underworld and human upper world. Albee wants to suggest that instinct is an avenue to potential form of knowledge. Reason underestimates instinct as it obeys no logic. It is precisely here, that Albee lodges a protest and provides a safeguard for the value of instinct which introduces one to a deeper world of consciousness.

The fourth chapter *Artist as an Adjudicator* explores the age-old debate between Art and Science from Albee’s perspective.
Albee’s use of the phrase “Art wounds” is crucial. The purpose of art is to correct the taste of the people by disturbing, alarming and awakening them to a new perspective. Seven million babies are killed and a huge quantity of milk is spilled and wasted. These two instances describe the direction in which science and society are moving. Science and technology do not keep pace with the inward spiritual progress of man. Science, instead of becoming a helper, has become the greatest destroyer of life. Actually, the four characters, the actor resembling Mao, the Long Winded Lady, the Minister and an old woman are projections of four aspects of life. They actually find their significance in the play, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*. 

There was a view that ill-conceived notions about life are the greatest danger. This view is even now valid. But much more valuable than this view is the danger science poses to the world. On the one hand, survival of life is important and on the other hand, a correct way of thinking is equally important. But Albee sees a correlation between the two views. Art has to rectify the taste of man and its mission is to correct the direction of science. Destruction of life and wastage of milk carry overtones of great satire. People starve but milk is spilled profusely. Society has everything but money and affluence are put to wrong use by society. This is largely on account of lack of perspective and loss of direction, according to Albee. Therefore, Albee concludes that all values of life must be placed in the right perspective.
The play **Box** is a plea for anti-war propaganda. This indirectly means that the dramatist is presenting the biggest project for life and its survival. All talks about life gain value only when life survives. When life passes away, there is no chance for discussion of anything. Albee sees in science the danger of life-destroying possibilities. He projects this fear in **Box**. Killing seven million babies is as brutal as wasting milk and spilling it. The dramatist is concerned with vanishing of the past life. Science and nuclear technology have introduced maximum sophisticated gadgets so that living is reduced to some kind of computerized automation. The fear of universal nuclear holocaust engenders in him a feeling for resisting a kind of war-oriented and life-destroying science and nuclear technology.

**Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung** is written as a sequel to the play **Box**. The play starts with an ancient Chinese fable of digging the mountain with the help of a spade. The wise man describes this act as one of folly. But, the foolish man doggedly persists in saying that one day the mountains will be removed by someone. Allegorically, Chairman Mao stands for the man who digs the mountain which represents imperialism and capitalism. Albee tries to be fair in dealing with the programme of Chairman Mao. He sees an affinity in terms of outlook and methodology between the programme of science and the ideology of communism. Albee as an existentialist disapproves of the concept of science which aims at unity and uniformity by killing the wellsprings of life.
The programme of communism aims at uniting all the poor people and fighting against imperialism. Life resides in individuality and richness of variety. Albee subscribes himself to this principle as an existentialist. Science aims at collective social transformation. The campaign of communism is to gather all the poor people and set them against the rich. Everyone in such a programme develops an attitude of camp following. Science also encourages the same tendency which reduces man to a mechanical unit in the society. Both science and communism move to achieve their goal through collective consolidation. Albee is of the opinion that life manifests itself in variety and diversity. Therefore, he sees the danger hidden in the methodology of collective consolidation which strikes at the very richness of life. Chairman Mao calls Hitler a paper tiger. But Albee takes pains to prove that Imperialism, Fascism and Nazism are not the same and they must be distinguished from one another. The dramatist works out a new solution and says that a new social order cannot be based on the philosophy of organized violence. He also reaffirms his view that something must be given up for the sake of some valuable thing. The dramatist preaches a new lesson that violence can be given up for the purpose of embracing love.

The three characters, the Long Winded Lady, the Old Woman and the Minister remain in their unsatisfactorily settled order of life without being disturbed by what Mao says. This is the supreme expression of irony achieved by the dramatist in the form of an
allegory. The Lady’s love of the daughter and the old woman’s fondness for children and Minister’s meaningful silence are instances created by the dramatist to prove how a large section of the world goes on unconcerned with the programme of communist ideology. The purpose of the dramatist is not to belittle the significance of Mao and his programme but to highlight the view that society contains different kinds of people with different preoccupations and so a common programme of social campaign loses its validity and its efficacy.

Albee’s combined comment on the mode of science and communism is noteworthy. The ancient view of life bristled with variety and multiplicity. Science and communism threaten to take away the richness of diversity by introducing the principle of unity and uniformity. All existentialism encourages a kind of life brimming with diversity and variety. A society of uniformity as envisioned by science and communism on the basis of collective consolidation of everything is certainly an ill-conceived attitude to life according to Albee. Revision of the methodology of science and communism is required as their principle no longer fertilizes the wellsprings of life. Albee’s new vision of moral and spiritual existentialism represents an integrated view of life. His plea for the survival of life is evident in his perception of the danger to life which comes through nuclear science.
United States’ Imperialism is bad. Communism is good. This is the judgement passed by Chairman Mao Tse-Tung. Albee explores ways and means to find out whether these two verdicts are based upon justifiable arguments. He may even agree in a round about way that United States’ Imperialism may be good. But he does not go for a kind of unquestioning acceptance of Chairman Mao’s conclusion that all communism is praise worthy. Albee is very deeply concerned with certain human attitudes and their efficacy in this chapter. The friends of America are the enemies of China and correspondingly, the friends of China are enemies of America. These are two pairs of contrasting attitudes outlined by Albee in the play. He concludes after a very patient investigation to find out whether there is any truth in such attitudes of inveterate opposition.

Attitudes of hostility are so rigid that they can never turn into attitudes of love. One has to really appreciate Albee for making a statement similar to this sentiment. Science indirectly leads to war. Communism endorses the philosophy of violence. Human justice can never be secured through war and violence. Especially, the philosophy of communism which advocates violence as a remedy for securing social justice is on the wrong track of life according to Albee. No view of life is worthwhile, if there is no life saving principle. Philosophy of communism does not propagate life saving principle and so Albee views it with great deal of reservations. A new social order can be based only on love and sympathy. Use of violence can
never act as a creative principle in the reordering of life. A mere look at social and political dimension of man without attention to his interior life is an act which leads to a devitalizing process of life.

Science and communism treat men as mechanical units, while Albee’s existentialism treats men as living individuals. This is the dividing line between Albee and science and communism. It is this fact which explains his open attack on science and his meaningful examination of the efficacy of the philosophy of communism. The values of life evaporate both in science and communism. The reason for this is that their main focus is upon the external forms of life and not upon interior dimensions of human consciousness. This is the greatest defect in the vision of life as envisaged by both science and communism. Albee’s interest in the vitality of life becomes a yardstick in measuring the merit of science and communism. These judgments passed on science and communism has eternally enduring significance.

It is life that matters to Albee. It is man who matters to Albee. But for science and communism life and man do not matter. Their methodologies matter more seriously than man and life. Putting the principle first and placing man next to the principle is reversing the significance of life according to Albee. Albee’s slogan is to place man first and principle next. It is this act of reversal which has brought about a twist in perceptions of science and communism. There is a
mistake in the very concept of science and communism which is seriously pointed out by Albee. The conceptual error lies in the method of collective consolidation which both science and communism aim at for the creation of an ideal social order.

There is immense scope for further investigation and study of Edward Albee’s works with the works of Stephen Gill, an Indo-Canadian writer. Stephen Gill’s major work *Immigrant* is what brings in close to the plays of Edward Albee. Their social vision makes a reference to a common denominator. Interest in life abounds both the writers. Stephen Gill and Edward Albee are very great existentialists. Above all, these two writers explore the need for human courtesy in order to enhance the rich significance of life. Albee and Gill look at life nakedly in order to feel reality face-to-face. In this respect, there are deep grounds for comparison between the works of two writers. Problems like alienation, rootlessness and displacement are issues which become identical for comparison between the two writers. Along these lines further research can be made.

Edward Albee can be compared to writers who speak for individual freedom. For example, the voice of Emerson is a voice for human dignity. In this respect, Albee becomes identical with the pursuit of Emerson who says that the individual is a world by himself.

The literature that deals with the theme of Diaspora is also an idea which comes near to the ‘zoo’ idea of Albee. In Diaspora,
individual freedom is related with great respect. Correspondingly, Albee’s plea for the specific individuality of Jerry is a point to be noted. Cultural displacement is a major idea which comes very close to the dramas of Albee. While Peter represents placement in society, Jerry stands for displacement in society. It is in this way that Albee’s idea of cultural displacement is applicable to the study of Diaspora. Moreover, the ideas of romanticism are also certain overtones found in Albee. Freshness of life, deep respect for human dignity and compassion for all are themes found in Albee which share affinity with the theme of romanticism.

Edward Albee develops a new vision of life in which his interest in existentialism is a prime mover. At the same time, he does not dismiss tradition thoughtlessly without any critical thinking. He only adds arguments to prove the point that tradition has degenerated with want of respect for human dimensions in life. In this respect, Albee wants to give a spiritual foundation to his concept of existentialism in a life-like manner. But his spirituality is nothing but an expectation or a call for being human. Later on he observes that science and communism have led to dangerous consequences. Therefore, they have come under severe scrutiny in the hands of Albee. Whatever promotes the quality of life is what is expected by Albee. This is the chief criterion by which he assesses the impact of science and communism on the society.