INTRODUCTION

It is an open secret that the Black American writers celebrated the grandeur of literary achievement only in the 1960s. They successfully heralded it as the "Second Black Renaissance". It was the time only when they emerged as committed and effective writers. They could not only shake the entire literary scenario of America but also achieve a remarkable position in the literature of the world considerably. They formed their own ideals of writing for the revival of the prolonged morbid, broken, pathless and servile Black community. And for this, they initiated another spiritual and sisterly movement called The Black Arts Movement as an important part of the so-called Black Power Movement.

The Black Arts Movement of the 1960s is the exclusive outcome of the Second Black Renaissance. Under this Movement, many Black American Writers like Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), Ed Bullins, Larry Neal, Ron Milner, Ron Karenga, James Baldwin etc. displayed their multifaceted literary genius in their respective ways. Being committed writers, they took their writings as remedies to bring about a reformation in the thoughts, actions, and social position of the unconscious Black people. They not only rejected the traditional idea of slavery and white dominance, but also stood as racially, culturally and artistically conscious writers. They became leftists and revolutionary too. They dealt with various practical, social, psychological, racial, cultural, political and other vital problems of the middle class as well as slum dwelling Black People.

In fact, in the hands of Amiri Baraka, Ed Bullins and Larry Neal, the allrounders of literature, the messages of the Black Arts Movement are most remarkably communicated. More specifically, the plays written by them as an
outcome of this Movement creates an indelible mark in Black American literature. They give us very brilliant materials of both form and content of drama in general, and the reality of Black life, Black art and culture, vitality of Black community in particular. All the three have categorically chalked out the plan of making the all-round revival of the Black people in the white dominated America. Besides, they have tried to make Black people up to date, dynamic and conscious of their Afro-American identity by arousing their social, racial, cultural and artistic consciousness.

The present thesis has been designed to give a clear and systematic idea about the different aspects of the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s with special reference to three major playwrights of the period, Amiri Baraka, Ed Bullins and Larry Neal. For this purpose, the thesis has been divided into six chapters. In the first chapter, an attempt has been made to provide a brief history and development of African-American Literature, from 1920s to 1970s with special reference to African-American drama. In the second chapter, exclusive and intensive discussion has been made on the Black Arts Movement and its aesthetics. For this purpose, the key ideas have been taken from the seminal essays like “Black Art”, “The Black Arts Movement” and the book *The Black Aesthetic* by three pioneers of the Movement, Amiri Baraka, Larry Neal and Addison Gayle respectively.

In the third chapter, attempts have been made to trace out the contribution of Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) as a playwright to the Black Arts Movement. In addition to an in-depth analysis of Baraka’s achievement as a writer, the chapter also examines how his plays express the aesthetics of the
Black Arts Movement. In this connection most of his plays of 60s and 70s have been evaluated to establish Baraka as a playwright of Black revolution and Black consciousness.

Similarly, in chapter IV some important plays of Ed Bullins have been critically analysed in the light of the aesthetics of the Black Arts Movement in order to parties Bullins as a playwright of Black experience. In chapter V, attempts have been made to projects Larry Neal as a pioneer of the Black Arts Movement and a playwright of Black destiny by critically analysing his two plays along with his remarkable essay, "The Black Arts Movement." Chapter VI presents the final summing up by considering all these playwrights to be milestones in the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s.

While critical attention has been paid to Amiri Baraka and Ed Bullins as revolutionary Black Playwrights, due scholarly and critical attention has not been paid by anybody to Larry Neal as a Playwright under the Black Arts Movement. Even in the case of Baraka and Bullins the detailed systematic study of the growth of their political and artistic ideas in relation to the Black Arts Movement have not been taken into consideration. Hence this study aims at an in-depth exploration of the plays of these playwrights in order to project them as the brilliant and committed artists in propagating the ideologies of the Black Arts Movement. Specifically, these three playwrights have been chosen because they are undoubtedly the forerunners of the movement. The plays of them can only provide concrete ideas about the aesthetics of the Black Arts Movement. Although several of the writers are there, these three have chosen because but for them, the idea of the Black Arts Movement is totally meaningless. All the
three have contributed a lot to the Black Arts Movement both theoretically and practically. Since content and form go together and every true work of art is characterized by their organic unity, a study of technique is also inevitable. Sincere and critical attempts have been made to reveal both the aspects present in the plays of the three playwrights. When focus has been made on their ideological examination, particularly, due attention has been paid to dramatic techniques and innovations wherever the plays warranted such discussion.

When both Amiri Baraka and Ed Bullins have written a number of plays, Neal has written only two. Still then these two plays give us much more valuable ideas about the ideologies of the Black Arts Movement.

For purposes of documentation, The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Sixth Edition has been followed. American spellings have been retained in quoted matters.