The third chapter deals with the next set of three later plays of Asif Currimbhoy: *An Experiment with Truth* (1969), *Darjeeling Tea?* (1971), and *Om Mane Padme Hum* (1972). The plays are theatrically and technically analyzed.

*An Experiment with Truth* moves around Mahatma Gandhiji, the father of nation. The play is published exactly after twenty-four years of his assassination by Nathuram Godsey. The main theme of the play focuses on Gandhi’s faith in satyagrah, truth and non-violence. The political play also reveals inner conflict of Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba’s yearning for her two children to possess property to get good earning in life. Mahatma Gandhiji has accepted the fact that every man has some faults; no one is perfect. Asif Currimbhoy also dramatizes the personality of Gandhi in the same light. Hence Gandhi is shown as a man and a Mahatma.

The play opens with three shots ring in the darkness which is a dream-like situation where Gandhiji’s assassination is attempted and simultaneously there is the recollection of the Salt March. There is a collective evil force, malignant and do some harm to the life of Mahatma Gandhiji. The back flash technique shows that this is not the first attempt
to kill him but several attempts were made earlier. Gandhiji never stopped his satyagraha which aims at Hindu-Muslim unity and to stop violence caused by the partition of India, the times of 1947-48.

Someone throws a hand – bomb but it misses the mark. An old illiterate woman caught hold of the assailant, Madanlal and the police catches him. Sardar Vallabhai Patel, the minister for security is worries about life of Gandhi. He orders police protection to be doubled, but Gandhi believes that his life and death are in the hands of God, when He wants to take his back life He will do it, hence there is no need to be worried about his life.

Madanlal, an unhappy fanatic Hindu R.S.S volunteer is a misguided youth, who is encouraged to kill Gandhi. They called Gandhi as Muslim-lover. Gandhi is unable to understand the feelings of some fanatic Hindus. He loves all; hence, he wants him to be called as “Christian-lover”\(^1\) and “Buddhist lover” (p.12) too. Patel insists on that Gandhi would take time to understand R.S.S and will love R.S.S also. Patel interrogates Madanlal, all Hindus and Muslims are extremists; hence it has to be balanced. He remains blind to R.S.S activities within limits. When it comes to the security of Gandhi he would not tolerate. He makes Madanlal to starve as this is the method of Gandhi to search love and hate and this is an experiment . . . with truth.
Sardar Vallabhai Patel is a true patriot of the nation. He believes that strict rule of the country can bring peace and order in the country. He has faith in R.S.S, it would do well to the country as the volunteers of R.S.S are patriot Hindus but they are misguided youth. Both the Hindus and the Muslims are extremists. Hence the strict rules and harsh violence are needed to bring peace. His conversation with Madanlal is worth quoting. “Like me (catching hold of his hair and twisting cruelly). Listen, you ghug, I’ve held this country together through merciless enforcement of law and order. Yes, merciless . . . we’re in enough trouble as it is without you going around assassinating Mahatma. . . (benignly). Now, there are extremists Hindus and extremist Muslims” (p.14). Gandhi has faith in Patel and his arrangement of security. Gandhi appreciates Patel as he has struggled a lot to give proper shape to the party and politics of this nation.

Gandhi believes in the high values of human life. He has greater faith in God. His philosophy is taken from Isa Upanishad “The whole world is the garment of God. Renounce it then, and receive it back as a gift of God” (p. 14). Hence, he is not afraid of death. Gandhi is not worried whether he would die of fasting or assassination, but methods would surely have effect on views of people. Patel and Sheean force him to stop fasting as he is becoming weak day by day. Gandhiji is a strong follower of satyagraha and does experiment in truth. For him, Truth is God and absolute. Means and end is equally important. Fasting teaches a great
lesson to human being and he has great aim to achieve through fasting as he says: -

“What is the hunger of the stomach compared to the bleeding of the heart? I fast as much for myself, my own penitence, as I do for you, your own salvation . . . that millions should die slain by our own hands, brutal, mass, insane, killing, when our quest in life was one of peace and non-violence . . . when I strove for freedom of our soul. There can be no freedom without brotherhood between Hindus and Muslims, without unity with Sikhs and Christians” (p.10). Fasting will bring change in the heart of people because they cannot tolerate the suffering of loved one for their welfare. The fasting is to achieve love, co-operation, co-existence and fraternity of the Hindu and the Muslims. Gandhi, in spite of, being a great leader of the nation, is also a common man. He accepts that every human being commits some mistakes. He shares his faith in God with Sheean as:

"Sheean, You’ve come for darshan such as my devotees. . . (Sheean smiles slightly) only remember that I am sometimes troubled by the same doubts as yourself, and if I have trod further the paths of God, those of selfless action, those of renunciation, it is because I believe in Him totally”. (p.16)

The attempts of assassination and Gandhi's fasting take place in parallel. Sheean is much worried of increased weakness of Gandhiji due to fasting, meanwhile Patel is worried of assassination attempts. Gandhi is
not worried of anything because he knows that God will have the final hand. "Nothing can happen to me other than the great release from life. Our bodies are captives to the divine spirit." (p.16)

One of the great movements of the nation is the Salt March, a historic event. The British laid tax on salt, a very essential requirement of every home and God has given vast ocean for this purpose. Hence as Gandhi agrees, there should not be tax on salt. Gandhi knows that the British Government’s Salt tax is a wrong step, so he opposes it through salt march. Asif Currimbhoy excellently probes into the psychology of Gandhiji. In his ashram he takes active participation in community chores - like he takes vassal to water plants, examines vegetables, examines a crying child and writes something on a child's slate. Meanwhile, Gandhiji is very conscious of Satyagrah. He has sent a letter to the British Viceroy expressing intension of the Salt march. There are seventy-eight Satyagrahis to follow him. It aims at breaking a foreign tax law. Everyone has freedom to use salt and the salt march starts at dawn. Gandhi has plan of covering the 241 miles in three weeks. All are free to join the March and the tax -law will be broken “when we reach the shores of Dandi, I shall pick up some salt on the beach and break the law of the land. This nation will follow my example everywhere” . . . (p.20)

Non-violence is a peaceful method of resisting or fighting against injustice. One should prefer violence to cowardice. The Satyagraha is an
experiment to get justice. Gandhiji accepts violence and non-violence but prefers non-violence, he justifies it by quoting Gita as he says “The Gita, which speaks of battle, becomes a justified mental conflict. . . Ahimsa means even more. I am, basing the Salt March, on non-violence. . .” (p.21) He expects there would be a violence but Satyagrahis must show their stronger will of peace. Inspiring word of Gandhi show his strong character. All the seventy- eight Satyagrahis would turn the tide of a mighty empire of the British. In spite of Gandhi’s weak body, he challenges the biggest empire of the world. Gandhi gives the strongest weapon of Satyagraha to the freedom fighters, the ways of non-co-operation, non-violence should be followed by Satyagrahis and freedom can be conquered by the enormous struggle with these weapons. This cannot be called as a physical cowardice.

Gandhi penetrates his past experience of physical courage, fear and moral courage. He recalled his African experience of violence, a white man tried to catch him to beat him black and blue but he was not caught. He went through a fear of physical violence. Then there was plan of African and Chinese in Jail, and also a sexual assault on Gandhi. Gandhi felt shame and cowardice, prayed to God for his rescue. These experiences and feelings show that Gandhi was a common and had common experience of fear, cowardice and violence. These experiences show the inhuman treatment of the British to a black man. They never treated black as human
being but behaved in a brutal way. But the ill treatment fills the feelings of reaction against the white men and the empire. Gandhi was successful to overcome such insults with the strong will power.

Asif Currimbhoy presents sexual desires of Gandhi. He felt physical pleasure is also an experiment. He has imposed celibacy on himself and Kasturba. Gandhiji has been constantly making experiments to win over common instincts of common man. Gandhi is attached with the touch. Gopal massages the legs of Gandhi. This touch takes him to the past where Gandhi’s father was at the verge of death and needs his son’s presence. A touch of his father aroused physical pleasure in him and goes to Kasturba, though she is pregnant he forces himself on her; then he hears the news of his father’s death. In Ashram, when Manu a girl helps him to get up, the touch aroused again the sexual pleasure in him. He wants to know whether Manu also has same sensation. Manu cannot understand Gandhi’s words. He made girls and boys to bath together in Africa. He has a vision or an experiment whether it is possible to achieve oneself consciousness, desireless, voluntary and truthful and without deliberate repression. Gandhi failed in his experiment with celibacy. After the death of Kasturba, he is disturbed. His restlessness is explained as:

“After almost forty years of practicing Brahmacharya and abstinence. I was shaken to find my weakness still there . . . prayers and fasts. That was the condition of mind. I had achieved through many years of yogic
chastity. I mad others practice it too . . . in the earlier stages with Satyagrah’s who should practice Brahmacharya . . . until I had the dream!” (p.59)

The blooming Manu becomes near and dear to Gandhi; her physical charm and her touch disturbs his celibacy. Her touch encourages his sensuous pleasures in him. Manu understands him and finally both had physical relation resulting in the failure of Gandhi’s experiment of controlling the sexual desires. K. A. Agrawal writes it as - “some critics do not agree with this presentation of Asif Currimbhoy. But Faubion Bowers says that Asif Currimbhoy in this drama has presented the reality of Gandhi. It is one of the most electrifying scenes ever written in his play An Experiment with Truth. The dramatist has also presented a naked sexual biography of this great man, which may create some pains to his followers. They may oppose it. They may be correct but Asif Currimbhoy has no purpose to defame Gandhi. He simply wants to say that Gandhi was a great soul of India. He never tried to hide anything without caring for the consequences. After all he was making some experiment with truth. 2

Untouchability in another major theme. Gandhiji called untouchable as Harijan children of God. Hence they should not be treated in an ill manner. Kasturba has prejudiced mind with them. She feels presence of Gopal, (untouchable) uneasy, rich class people neglect the untouchables. Gopal represents this group. Gandhi has sympathy and affection for these
neglected people. Hence, he asked untouchable to bring a glass of milk for him and Kasturba stares at him.

Asif Currimbhoy presents several moral and spiritual conflicts in the play. The major conflict is between Gandhi and the British, the non-violent fight against salt tax imposed by the British government. The seventy-eight Satyagrahis start the Dandi march and they have to control their mind not to be violent against any pressure of the British. There is another conflict between Kasturba and Gandhi. They have different views towards life. Kasturba is a common Indian woman who yearns for common life of her children. If her children study, then they might get a job to lead a common life but Gandhi opposes it as they should not be working as clerk in British Government. Kasturba is disappointed with Gandhi when he forces her to give all her ornaments, brought from Africa. Gandhi accepts renunciation as a major crux of his life. Hence, he renounces everything and believes that all people of India are his family and expects the same from Kasturba. The dramatist presents different layers of inner conflicts in the mind of Gandhiji. Bayappa Reddy put in a quote worthy lines-

“What Currimbhoy purports to do, then is to “balance” the achievement and fallibility of Gandhi. What, in other words, the dramatist seeks to convey in the play is that we should not deify our leaders without recognizing the fact that everybody is human”.
There is another layer of conflict of thoughts among Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Savarkar and Ali. There are the several attempts of assassination. Hence he is worried to give full-fledged security to Gandhi. Savarkar believes that Gandhi is the champion of Muslims. In India the Hindus are leading an unsafe life in a hostile environment of the British and Muslims, He say: - “Anything that contributes to Hindu revivalism. It is the measure of our survival . . . in a hostile environment of the British and Muslims. The bulk of Hindus are too soft, too passive . . . if it falls on us, the R.S.S., to remold national format with past Hindu glory . . . bring about a revolution from within, throw out all vestiges of the two successive invaders through force . . .”\(p. 29\)

Savarkar's view is that the nation is a Hindu nation. He knows the tricks of Gandhi. He uses fasting against the British and now his fasting is to pressurize the Indians to love the Muslims. Hence, Savarkar does not want Gandhi to die of fasting. It would mean martyrdom and achieve the objective of Hindu-Muslim unity. Savarkar focuses on the issue where Gandhi would insist the Congress government to “pay old assets worth 550 million rupees to Pakistan, later Pakistan will use this money for aggression in Kashmir. It’s political suicide” \(p.31\). Patel realizes this upcoming danger in the future.

Ali, a representative of Muslims, forces Patel to do something to stop fasting of Gandhi which aims at fraternization between the Hindus
and Muslims. He says that “It is difficult for a Muslim to love anyone . . . other than a Muslim” (p.33). Asif Currimbhoy gives a clear picture of intention of Patel and Savarkar to assassin Gandhi and intention of Ali is to save Gandhi. Both care for their own religion and people belonging to their religion. The Muslims have political and economic convenience to stay on in India. Patel opines that the death of Gandhi is more profitable to India than his living. In spite of all these differences Gandhi has a great aim of unity or brotherhood between the Hindus and Muslims and this would be accepted by all without any violence and hatred. The experiment with truth for him is difficult to be realized, because people are going very far from truth and non-violence.

The second scene is important one because it shows that the Satyagrah started and all satyagrahis are lead by Gandhi, are moving very fast from one village to the another one singing songs of glory. All wonder how Gandhi could cover 20 miles a day even at the age of sixty. While marching for Dandhi, Gandhi recalls the philosophy which he believes from Gita as – “Realise that pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, are one and the same; then go into battle . . . poise your mind in tranquility . . . your business is with action alone; not the fruits or results of action . . . Aspirants can find enlightenment though different paths; for the active it is the path of selfless action” . . . (p.39)
As the Satyagrahis move from village to another, the headmen of the village make request to join it. Now the strength of the march reaches from seventy-eight to ten thousand. Gandhi has only one condition that the march should be a peaceful, the Satyagrahis should show their strength by remaining peaceful and patient to the violence of the police.

The most impressive action in the play is encounter of the police with the Satyagrahis. There are strong Satyagrahis who are ready to face the police with force but they resist themselves for the sake of Gandhi’s words. The conversation is worth quoting: -

First: Don’t you understand; we’re going to be dubbed to death!
Second: Yes
First: And we’re not supposed to resist it?
Second: Yes
First: (exasperated) but why? Why?
Second: It’s like any belief . . . any kind of faith, I suppose. No explanation is possible . . . or necessary. (In yet another part of the crowd)
One: The Satyagrah believes in ahimsa. It’s like a duty ordained, our karma. This is the time to prove it . . .
Other: (to himself) How long can you beat a lathi before the arm gets tried . . .?
One: (continues, each one to himself, but party aware of what the other is saying) . . . become a karma, yoga, like the Mahatma. Our salvation lies in this action . . .

Other: . . . there will be rows, upon rows of Satygrahi’s advancing before the police lathis . . .

One: . . . Selfless action, without caring for the fruits of labor . . . (p. 52)

Gandhi is happy that Sathygrahis did not resist the police, the Sathygrahis come rows after rows, got beatings on head. They bleed and fall but have not raised their hands against the police lathi charge. Gandhi realizes that the earlier attempts of Sathyagrah failed. This Salt March is highly successful and Gandhi shares their views as he wants to impress on the nature of man. The survival is not violence and men are not beasts.

There are four approaches to look at the Satyagrah and Dandi March. Gandhi has greater approach of breaking the British law of tax on salt. Any layman of India can use salt without paying tax on it. To achieve this aim, he has taken the path of Satyagrah, fasting and non-violence. Hence he needs the unity of the Hindus, the Muslims, the untouchables and the Christians, and starts the fasting for unity. The second approach is of Savarkar, he looks at Gandhi’s fast which would mean the unity of the Hindu and Muslim, which is difficult to be brought into reality. His death out of fasting means Gandhi’s martyrdom which makes layman to accept the unity, later it would also force the Congress to pay 550 million assets to
Pakistan which would be used by the Muslims to snatch the Kashmir region. Ali as the representative of the Muslims has his own approach and opposition towards fasting of Gandhi because he knows that a Muslim cannot love any other person except a Muslim. The Muslims are living in India for their own political and economic convenience.

Ambedkar does not want unity as the untouchable identify themselves with Ambedkar. Ambedkar does not want praise. He wants every untouchable to enter the temple without fear everywhere in India and the untouchable can drink water from any well and they should not be treated as downtrodden and untouchables. There are 50 million untouchables, that means 50 million electorates. Hence, they want a separate electorate to strengthen themselves. The death of Gandhi through fasting will make all untouchable that Gandhi died for unity of untouchables with the Hindu and the Muslims. This would again weaken them. The approach of Savarkar, Ali and Ambedkar is to assassinate Gandhi. Patel turns to prisoner Madanlal to encourage him that his effort of assassination of Gandhi was correct.

Asif Currimbhoy is excellent in theatrical craftsman. He focuses on various elements of Mahatma Gandhi’s life within three acts and three sets. Bayappa Reddy puts it as – “Currimbhoy chooses a three act play, adopting the stream of consciousness technique, perhaps for the first time in the history of Indian drama in English”.

121
The back flash technique is impressive and unique. Wherein Sheean recalls his experiences with Mahatma Gandhi from the Salt March to the freedom struggle. Gandhi recollects the sick condition of Kasturba on death bed. She is worried about her son, who are not worthy of anything and she dies in grief. Kasturba has compromised and adjusted herself throughout her life. She is a traditional wife accepting her husband’s conditions and way of life. She says to Gandhi that her life is spend in waiting for Gandhi to return home.

The death of Gandhi is presented through the sounds of shots by a Hindu and Gandhi uttering words of "He Ram, He Ram" and dies. Sheean narrates this to the audience and he says: “I have journeyed far and wide since that fateful evening of life . . . through darkness and fear, courage and light, in this our mortal plight . . . never will I forget, and always do I remember, this man who led me, his kindly light.” (p.66)

There are three acts, in the act I, first scene Gandhi starts his fasting unto death to bring unity among the Hindus, the Muslim and the Christian and to stop violence, that is caused by the partition of India. Patel is worried of Gandhi’s life as there are attempts of killing him. The main conflict of Gandhi and Kasturba is in this scene. Kasturba, a traditional Indian woman believes in possession of wealth but Gandhi believes in renunciation of all.
The act II, second scene is the main set of the play, as it deals with the Salt March. The seventy-eight satyagrahis with Gandhiji move from village to village. This number increases to thousands. The non-violent satyagraha against salt tax is a successful, the satyagrahis tolerated the brutal attack of the police. Gandhi propagates that love and non violence can bring change in society. The inner conflict of Gandhi’s sexual desire for Manu reveals failure of a great man before his instincts.

The act II, third scene of the play forms the epilogue. In this set Gandhi looks more tired. The three wise men – a Hindu, a Muslim and an untouchable ask Gandhi to stop fasting. But Gandhi does not agree, he wanted pledge from all that there would not be violence and they have to love each other leading to fraternity. Patel is very much anxious of Gandhi’s life. This set is significant because two actions are presented simultaneously with shadow screen symbolizing end of the Salt March. Gandhi leaves house for prayer ground where Gandhi was shot by a fanatic Hindu and he dies on spot saying "He Ram, He Ram". And the play ends with the shock of the assassination.

There are three sets, in the first set there is a description of Ashram. The other sets of jail and mud-hut emerge. The second set includes the Salt March takes place in front of the stage. There is use of props in this set. The third set includes prison. The action takes place in one corner of the stage. The prison is presented through lights and shadows. There are several
props like spinning machine, charaka wheel and a glass of milk which is 
used to break fasting.

The language is lucid and simple. It is understandable to Indian 
audience. There are Hindi words like mahatma, satyagrah, ahimsa, lathi, 
dandi and so on. These words give the touch of native atmosphere.

The characters are the expression of the ideologies. The character of 
Gandhi is representing the satyagrah, non violence, unity and truth. 
Kasturba is attached with material goods. she is a common woman with 
mundane desires. Patel and Savarkar are political leaders. Patel works for 
the peace and order in the nation and he is concerned with the safety of the 
Hindus. Madanlal is a misguided youth, a revolutionary; attempts to 
assassin Gandhi. Ali is a representative of Muslims. Ambedkar is worried 
of the welfare of the untouchables and demands for separate electorate for 
them. The characters like Savarkar, Ali and Ambedkar are worried of their 
own sects of people but Gandhi is worried of the unity of all these and 
starts fasting unto death to bring unity among all people in the nation.

The play *An Experiment with Truth* has theatrical vitality because the 
dramatist uses flashbacks, shadow cutout and music technique to give 
unforgettable impression of the play to audience. As Mr. Meserve says-
"Asif Currimbhoy is very systematic in using stage-the front portion of the 
stage is used for the Salt March, same stage is used for Ashram and on the
other side of the stage is Patel interrogating the prisoner. These three activities take place on the stage without disturbing other scene and giving clear meaning to the audience, through music and shadow screen the dramatist has given more information and movement description, which enable him to complete play within three acts. Through these device dramatist has control over the audience and he gives scope for a highly complex theatrical event in which the dramatist’s twin forces of dialogue and action fuses on stage to entertain and instinct an audience.\textsuperscript{15}

It is assessed that the dramatist presents the personal and private life of the great personality Mahatma Gandhi. The whole nation is moved with the fast unto death for unity of all religion. One of the significant national event of the Salt March is artistically brought on the stage. Asif Currimbhoy skillfully presents the different outlook of the three persons representing three sects namely the Hindus, Muslims and the untouchable. The milieu of the period is depicted through thought process of the characters. The title of the play is apt because Gandhi makes his life as an experiment with instincts, unity of the nation, principle of Satyagraha and non violence in the Salt March. Gandhi is happy that the Salt March is highly successful. The assassination of Gandhi is presented through the dialogues of Sheean. One of the attractive feature is the philosophic and spiritual glimpses of Gandhi.
Darjeeling Tea? (1971)

Darjeeling Tea? (1971) is Asif Currimbhoy's outcome of tours in the tea gardens during his visit to Darjeeling in 1970, moves around the character Mac who is an English man from Scotland to look after tea estate as a planter. The complete name of Mac is Macniel Jennie his wife and Didi is his illegitimate daughter. The play presents the picture of the planter's life with its nostalgic memories of the good old days, its fears of competition from new rival planters.

The scene of the play is near Darjeeling Hills where most delicately flavored tea in the world is grown. There are two acts and four sets in the play. The first, there is the planter's club focus on social life of the planter’s families. The second, the living room of the garden, manager’s bungalow. The third, a small wooden shack on stilts, cute, almost like a dolls house appear in the gardens. The fourth setting is a shadow screen in the rear suggesting miles and miles of tea gardens. The planter’s complete life is presented through these four sets.

In the planter’s club, Big Mac and Big Hugh, the two expatriate garden managers discuss how the olden days of the British rule were good. They toiled a lot to build these tea-bushes by cutting the Jungles, they were the sahebs in the eyes of workers but the situation has turned violent due to the increased interference of the directors and local people,
planters are facing evil days. Jennie, wife of Mac and Sally wife of Hugh discuss their happy proud old days, how the condition has changed. Jennie says-

"Remember the parties at this club, Sally? It was like a big Christmas tree. . . and now I think of home. . . and the awful loneliness here. . . in the midst of these incredibly beautiful hills."

Hugh is equally critical of the present situation he says-

"Look Mac, we are between the devil and the deep sea. These carpet-bagging proprietors on the one side and those slit eyed knife-happy labours on the other" (p.12)

Marwari and young man discuss the changing scenario. The planters are following the old method of selling tea through Managing Agency houses and Brokers and planters used to get their price. They a cent-percent monopolistic control. But now they cannot continue the same, because the situation is in favour of the native business men (Sethji or Marwari). There is new breed replacing the white sahibs. The Managing Agency recruiting the local people who studied abroad and they are prototype.

Bhupendra (Bunty) is a typical product of Indo-Anglian British Public School, "a Brown Sahib", "more British than the British" (p.14). He is no caricature but he is very real, full of vitality and individualistic.
Enthusiastically, Bunty says about Darjeeling tea. "the very best chai in the world. Two leaves and a bud. Ah, what adventure. Look out. See through the window, the blue of the hills, the sudden sunshine breaking through the clouds. It gives me a thrill" (p.15). Mac takes Bunty round the tea gardens and explains to him that the planter's life is very tough. Bunty encourages Jennie to arrange a drama on the Annual Darjeeling Do. She is happy to guide all to enact a play. The drama was a great success. On the Annual Darjeeling Do, the Chairman of the tea association stresses the need for maintaining the traditions of honesty, good quality and integrity in business dealings. He explains the restlessness of labours and how to handle them with caution.

"There's a swing of the pendulum. . . in the affairs of men and fortune. We're at the extreme end now; it's this: labor's explosive this moment. Let us admit frankly that we. . . er. . . er. . . used them to advantage in the past. But their reaction now is quite, quite unreasonable. Don't underestimate them, and be carried away by old sentimentality. They are capable of violence, sudden and terrifying. . ." (p.31)

There are romantic love stories in the play - Bunty and Didi fall in love, she reciprocates his love and tells him that she intends to become a planter. The meeting of Didi and Bunty is picturesquely presented in the play. Bunty comes to the bungalow of Mac and nobody is present at the home so he goes to the chair of Mac and sits and smokes just like Mac.
Didi comes from school and drops her bag, believing that Mac is sited on the chair goes and kisses him. Bunty thought Mss. Macneil kissed and Didi thought that she kissed Mr. Machil. Bunty and Didi are shocked for the misunderstanding. She hits him on cheek and he pretends as if he got great pain in tooth. Didi is described as- "a Nepalese looking girl of about nineteen, pretty, well-dressed, with an overnight bag in hand, which she quietly puts on the floor. (p.37) Bunty tells Didi, his lady love, that he is a planter, full-blooded and hot-blooded and that she will have to contend with him. Didi reveals her desire to be a planter and "roam those hills, breathe the air… put flowers in my hair . . ."(p.39). The play is a typical romantic comedy of Currimbhoy. Mac loves a hill woman, Didi is their daughter. Hill woman died at childbirth nineteen years ago and Mac is unable to forget her. Mac recollects his beloved as "(whispering) Remember . . . Thapa . . . we brought her here. . . you and I . . . She . . . she wanted to be buried here . . . her spirit . . . takes flight . . . to the kanchejenga." (p.43)

There is strained relation between Mac and Jennie. Mac returns from Scotland with his wife Jennie who is considered to be the queen of the plantations. Jennie and Sally were "slim pretty brides of twenty, marrying the oh so-romantic outdoor planters . . . the long sea voyage to this for away place" (p.13). She is unable to accept the reality that her husband Mac is not loyal to her and had relation with hill woman nineteen years ago.
Since nineteen years, Jennie has been psychologically tortured. She does not tolerate the very presence of Didi and asks Mac to leave India immediately, she says:

"Been hurting myself for nineteen years, Mac. Anybody would think I'd be insensitive by now. But no. It keeps growing and growing (looks at him) . . . like her . . . (beseechingly) like her . . . you understand, don’t you Mac. Oh say that you do leave, my dear. Anywhere . . . anywhere, it need not be England or Scotland. Away from here, that's all I want away . . . from . . . her . . . her" (p.42). She becomes very critical of Didi's mother. But she is sympathetic with Mac as his health is deteriorating due to drink of country brew. She asks Bunty to look at the drunken Mac who is trying to forget his association with Didi's mother. She loves Mac a lot and her heart is open for him anywhere and any times and leaves India with tears.

Currimbhoy presents social and moral conflicts which draw attention of critics like J. Meserve and T. Meserve who rightly observe, "Darjeeling Tea? dramatizes a serious conflict between levels of society". There is conflict between planters and local labors Mac in worried about the growing problem of labors. Bunty rushes and informs that labors have become violent and coming with lethal weapons.

There is a new political movement with violence and revolution and it is growing in Naxalbari. Mac thought that he would be able to solve
this problem. Hence, he goes with Thapa to negotiate with labors. Bunty calls police, they are able to return their homes safely. Mac is at danger, he may be assassinated at any moment, but he has faith in Thapa, a Gurkha, who is loyal to him, nobody can touch him until Thapa guards him. Despair and gloom descend on the planters. There is conflict between labours and management as the workers are unhappy with the wages, so they try to kill the planters and even set fire to the doll's house. Finally, Brown Sahib (Bunty) becomes the manager of the tea garden. There is conflict between Jennie and Mac. Jennie doesn't tolerate Mac association with Didi and her mother. Hence she leaves and goes to her native place. There is another conflict between Didi and Mac. She is unhappy that her father has not revealed anything to her about her mother.

Irony and satire are extensively used in the play. It's very ironic that Darjeeling Tea is grown but not served in its place. Marwari is called "The white Marwari, because he is relatively enlightened, there is flattery ... with a truth of insult in it" (p.16). The British came to India worked hard--cut off the forest and expanded the tea garden and increased tea business but never accepted India as their home. Three generations of the white worked in India but retired and settled in England. Huge, Sally and Jennie have their own reasons to go back to England and start a new business to settle their retired life. It's ironic that Jennie calls Bunty "a wog" and
Bunty calls Jennie "Madam". He tells that "Strange, isn't it, you come to my country and call me a wog. I go to yours, and call you madam." (p.22)

Asif Currimbhoy uses the device of satire to reveal the hidden meanings of the play. The drunkenness, the imitation of the Brown Sahib and lavishness of the expatriate planters is satirically presented in the play. Bunty, the Brown Sahib, is presented as "a typical product of the Indo-Anglican British Public school . . . " (p14). He simply imitates the ways of the white planters because he studied abroad. The white planters spend money lavishly to incur heavy losses. Jennie, the wife of Mac, remarks how half of the salary of the planters goes on booze thereby suggesting the lavishness of the white planters.

Asif Currimbhoy, the dramatist is known for innovative theatrical techniques in his plays. The scene shows the Himalayan range strengthens the play by exposing the lives of the hill people. This must be projected on the screen to show the gigantic eruption of nature. The playwright uses slides and shots to present Himalayan mountains and imagination of hill people worship as deity manifestation of Lord Krishna. Mac goes there to offer prayer to his beloved hill woman who died nineteen years ago after giving birth to his daughter. Regarding theatrical technique, Bayappa Reddy says-
"The pantomime of Bunty the music and dance on the Annual Darjeeling do, the shadow screen in Darjeeling suggesting miles and miles of tea gardens are some of the techniques which Currimbhoy employs to create singleness of effect on the audience. The sudden shift of scenes the appearance of the chorus the use of shadow cutouts, the scenes showing the majestic beauty of the rolling hills are the devices which appear in the play and which assert and maintain control over the audience".8

The language of the play in the play is lucid and easy to understand. To impress the audience and to give India language flavor, Currimbhoy uses some Hindi words in the play- Marwari, Sethji, Pucca, Brown Sahib etc. These Hindi words appeal to joy and mirth the feeling of the audience. The use of spoken language suits the theme and characters. By using everyday speech playwright has given a natural touch to the play.

There is proper beginning middle and an end. There are two acts in the play. In Act I, all characters are introduced except Didi. There is continuous switch over scenes between the planter's house, the club and tea estate in this act, and there are quick transitions through lights. In the first Act Jennie and Bunty troop present a comedy in Darjeeling do. Another important character Didi, illegitimate daughter of Mac Didi and Bunty come close to each other in the Act II scene I. The play ends with Act II scene II and this act may be called as climax of the play because Jennie pours out her inner grief to Mac and leave to England. Jennie says: -
"Last night . . . when you went up with Didi . . . it was too much for me. It was . . . as though . . . you had gone with her mother . . . in front of my very eyes . . . (Mac closes his eyes) I was . . . if you remember . . . overwrought. And what tipped me over was not only that you saw in Didi her mother . . . but that you really wanted it so in rejection of me . . . (Mac's head remains bent) I called . . . Bunty over. A total outsider to witness my pain. And when . . . I took your act as being one of infidelity . . . a lifetime's frustration rushed back . . . and I made a play for the young boy Mac looks up at her incredulously "(p.51).

Mac faces the problem of labors, Bunty handled the situation with the help of police. Mac is satisfied that Bunty and Didi come close to each other in Doll's house and dies. Bunty takes the place of Mac as a young planter.

There is a lot of joy, mirth and laughter in the play. On the Annual Darjeeling do, Jennie and Bunty enact a play, the songs are sung, the parties are given and everybody is found in cheerful mood. For few minutes, the English people are able to forget their gloom and bitterness. The feeling of gloom is expressed by the Chairman of the Tea Association on the Annual Darjeeling do. Merserve observes- "Darjeeling Tea? is described as comedy, and the action surrounding the play within the play certainly has its light moments. But rather than comedy of manners the play dramatizes a serious conflict between levels of society. There is pathos
and sentiment, a heavy ending and an inescapable villain in the background throughout".9

There are elements of post colonialism in the relationship between Bunty and Mac. Bunty is the outcome of the west education. He changed his name from Bhupendra to Bunty, who comes to take the place of Mac, a planter. There is similarity in Prospero - Caliban relation with Mac - Bunty. Caliban a native of island becomes the slave of Prospero, a foreigner. Later Caliban becomes the owner of the island. The same scenario is presented in the play. Mac, a foreigner, is a planter and his place is taken by Bunty, a native. Caliban loves Miranda, a daughter of Prospero, in this play too Bunty loves Didi, a daughter of Mac. The dialogues depict post-colonialism as:"The white Marwari, because he is relatively enlightened, there is flattery ... with a truth of insult in it" (p.16). Jennie calls Bunty "a wog" and Bunty calls Jennie "Madam". He tells that "Strange, isn't it, you come to my country and call me a wog. I go to yours, and call you madam." (p.22).

To conclude, the play Darjeeling Tea? moves around the lack of values among the British planters. This play also focuses on the changing values in the society, indigenous and expatriate, the lack of values leads to strained relation. The inner agony, the guilt, dissatisfaction and loneliness of Mac leads to strained relation with his wife. The play has proper beginning middle and happy end with vision that Bunty, an indigenous
planter and Didi, daughter of Mac would be the life partners. The change in the scenario that foreign planters move to their native and Indian planters take the place of expatriate planters. K. R. Srinivas Iyenger put it as: - "Darjeeling Tea? is on the face of it an advertisement catchword. Yet, as the drama slowly unfolds, one sees in Didi (the daughter of the white planters Big Mac, and the hill woman) the symbol of the romance and flavour of Darjeeling Tea? and in her brief history the passage from the old to the new dispensation; from Big Mac the white father to Bunty brown lover, from the old pioneers to the new inheritors."

Om Mane Padme Hum! (1972)

The play Om Mane Padme Hum! is a historical play. Its successfully presents Chinese invasion on Tibet and flight of Dalai Laman to India due to political reasons. The play opens in the prayer room of the monastery in the Potala at Lhasa where boy Rimpoche and other monks sing the Budhist hymn “Om Mane Padme Hum” means “Hail to the Budha in the hearts, Hail to Man’s over self”. This teaches that the spirit is immortal and reincarnate, this is the reality. There is beautiful description of religious atmosphere in the monastery. There are prayer wheels and flags, statue of Budha, pictures of Dalai Lama, gods, smells of incense droppings of birds etc., Moreover there is the sound of OM in the whole monastery. This gives the identity of an isolated Tibetan Monastery.

The play gives succinct account of the Chinese invasion, occupation of Tibet, cultural revolution in Tibet and dramatizes the conflict in the
mind of the Dalai Lama. The followers of Dalai Lama are worried of security of their spiritual leader. The three abbots – Drpung, Saka and Ganden urge Dalai Lama to escape to India because the Chinese military outnumber the Tibetans and they are moving towards Tibet with superior weapons. Dalai Lama is reluctant to leave his native place. The dialogues between the Dalai Lama and his devotee are worth quoting:

Dalai Lama: Om Mane Padma Hum! Why? Why should I leave? they'll kill me? So I shall leave this body. There'll be a 14th .... And 15th Dalai Lama (the senior most abbot steps forward) Abbot: "Your people will die trying to save you(The Dalai Lama doesn’t reply) "

All the followers of Dalai Lama force him to leave to India as the situation has turned violent. He does not care for his death. The Chinese soldier may kill his body but not his soul for him the limitations of the human body has no value. His devotees unite together to save their leader because Lamaism survives with him and he must flee. " He is a living Buddha" (p.18). Finally, Dalai Lama decides to leave the country for the welfare of his people on 17th March, 1959 he makes his flight from Tibet.

K.A. Agarwal rightly observes the play as – “It is the play on the religion of Lamasim. In 1950 the Dalai Lama, the Chief Guru of the Followers of Lamasim, left Tibet secretly for some political reason. In the play, Asif Currimbhoy has presented the Dalai Lama as a child and as a man, as a spiritual leader. He always cares for the Orders of God and not
of human beings. But even then he thinks that he should keep himself safe from the tyrant rulers of China, only then he can do some service to his followers.”

The two religious leaders – Lukhangwa and Losang Tashi discusses the past experience of Tibet, how India and United Nation turned them down and not extended any help to Tibet. The Chinese atheism failed over the last eight years of expansionism. The Chinese have introduced “democratic reforms” – there are more schools, roads and hospitals and thought reform centers. The Chinese want Tibet to be changed to communism but the Tibetans have faith and belief in Lamaism. The Chinese military with superior weapons have come in Tibet and they outnumber the loyal rebels. They can physically capture Tibet but spiritually cannot change them; they have given lot of reforms but spiritually they are ‘dry’; hence, they cannot remain in Tibet for long time.

The arrival of the Chinese military on the outskirts of Lhasa in Tibet takes the play into a different direction. The chief political representative General Chang Chin Wu makes it clear that the aim of their invasion is not to harm Dalai Lama but to bring a cultural revolution: “I too might respect the person of the Dalai Lama” (p.21) The Chinese military try to change Tibet through a class conflict, breaking their strong religious ties and their faith in the Dalai Lama. The Khamba tribes are ready to fight against the Chinese. Even the monks took lethal weapons to save Dalai Lama. But
the “Milling crowds” (p. 22) are not equivalent to Chinese, they can capture the Tibet city within 48 hours. The General has a greater aim of cultural reformation stay and integrate and not to occupy. The General observes that there are two groups of people in Tibet one is red hats and the other yellow hats and he plans for a class conflict and to break their strong religious ties.

The General Chin Hu – Jan knows that the Tibetans are very deeply rooted in their culture. There is no possibility of imposing Chinese culture upon them. They can win over them physically but not spiritually. No cultural revolution is possible through military threat. Moreover, there is Sino – Tibet agreement. Chin Hu-Jan reminds all the Chinese officials about the agreement as “Sino-Tibet agreement in 1951 promising to respect their cultural freedom… and the preparatory committee in 1953 promising to respect their autonomy…” (p17-18)

The Chinese military violates this agreement; hence, the natives of Tibet are aggressive but they are physically weak to face the military of the Chinese power. The military can capture the city within 48 hours. The General Chang Chin Wu is a kind hearted person who feels sympathy for Tibetans. He does not want to harm the natives.

Rimpoche narrates the history of Lamaism to the General. Lamas who wore red hats permitted to marry and drink become notorious for
their lavish living, then came the reformation in the fourteenth century the
Geluta sect who wore yellow hats is the eighth century old religion.
Tantric teacher from India believes in divine energy female (Shakti) from
revived Buddhism in Tibet by adapting it with Bon, the earliest of form of
worship, the nature worship, the divination, exorcising devils, animal
sacrifices, so Lamaism began. The General got an idea of class conflict
prevailing in the religion itself. This can be used for the Chinese cultural
revolution. The General has greater ambition of making Tibet as a place of
experiment for cultural revolution. Ngabo Jigme realizes this and says: "In
years to come there will be a new Tibet I would have thought Peking
would need people like me here." (p.20)

The escape of Dalai Lama to Himalayan mountain is a tedious and
tiresome journey but he does not care for any hazardous journey as he has
courage to face all the obstacles. It is planned that all the family members,
ministers, aristocracy should break up into small groups and meet beyond
the city at Nethang. They collected whatever wealth and treasure and pile
them on yaks and mules. The Dalai Lama changes himself as a common
soldier, takes gun unfamiliarly, removes his glasses and wears a balaklav,
a fur cap and he is accompanied by two to four guards. One of the
messenger informs him that they have to pass 17000 foot from this place.
Then Khamba tribe’s men continue the journey of three hundred miles
through mountain, rivers, valley sand snow – covered passes. This
journey will take 15 days and they start their trek to India. They have to be very careful as Chinese camps and guards are stationed. They negotiated it under cover of the sandstorm, dreading every moment of discovery.

Asif Currimbhoy demonstrates fine dramatic sense of the theatre in treating themes based on public events. This play is a pictorial representation of living history. Bayappa Reddy presents his views in a quote worthy lines as: “the chief merit of Om Mane PadmeHum! is that a recent historical event is viewed in a much wider context involving something more than the Lama’s or Tibet’s fortunes. This is made possible because Currimbhoy interweaves a public event with the private to create exciting drama which asks moral questions about the humanity. The moral question Currimbhoy raises in the play is expressed at the end when the Dalai Lama escapes from the Chinese threat … The temporal conflict between Tibet and China is thus elevated to a metaphysical level.”

There are some aspects of mystery in the play, Dalai Lama is eager to know how he became the 13th Dalai Lama. One of the Abbots narrates the story of the oracle to find the new Dalai Lama. A great star – shaped fungus suddenly appeared on the eastern side of the shrine all looked to the omens. In 1935, the Wood Hog year the Regent went to sacred lake of Lhamoi Latso to see the vision of the future. In his meditation, he sees few pictures that new Dalai Lama is available near a monastery with roof of jade green and gold and a house with turquoise tiles and he should be
familiar with three letters Ah, Ka and Ma. Some dignitaries are sent to all parts of Tibet to search for the place of these pictures. They found a house with turquoise near the green and golden roofs of monastery of Mum bum in eastern Tibet they found a boy of two years old and observed familiarity of boy with identical walking stick, small drum and meaning of three letters. They also observed the sign of moles on his body that tiger skin spots, conch shells. They become confident that this boy is the reborn one of New Dalai Lama, i.e., the thirteenth Dalai Lama.

The General Chang Chin Wu is very intelligent and a sensitive political representative. He knows well that to win the heart of Tibetan is not easy. There was a meeting between Dalai Lama and the General. Dalai Lama and Lukhangwa insist on keeping Tibet as an autonomous region still it is a country. But Tan Kuan San tries to convince them that clause 2 clarifies that local government of portraits of Mao Tse – Tung and Chu – En – Lai through the streets and squares of Lhasa. A few thousand Chinese troops enter in massive numbers upon small capital of monks and traders. The troops created disciplined tents and it is strictly observed to maintain discipline and not to have any relation with Tibet woman. The Chinese knows that they can win over Tibet physically but not spiritually, hence their victory would be incomplete.

The General is of the opinion that be replacing ‘Rimpoche’ to the place of Dalai Lama people will not be against Chinese men. The General
has a fancy to create a duplicate Potala. Hence, he calls a skilled tent maker to create duplicate monastery just like Dalai Lama’s prayer room. He finds a person very resemblance to Dalai Lama name of the boy is ‘Rimpoch’ means ‘The Reincarnate Lama’. The General instructs Rimpoch that he should gain the reincarnate spirit and teach him all the experience of penance, studies and the long and hard years of apprentice in the monastery, Tantrism, animistic rituals, merger into Lamaism, omens, superstitions, oracles and astrologers etc. Rimpoch agrees to the General but fails to gain the greater knowledge of spirituality. He goes to a cave, where he could meditate for three years. The General makes all the arrangement of food and guards, but Rimpoch returns as a fragile body without any spiritual knowledge. Thus, the General and Rimpoch fail to gain the ultimate knowledge of spirituality finally the Dalai Lama remains as ultimate ‘Spiritual Guru’ of the Tibet, the Lamaism bond holds all Tibetans together.

Dali Lama faces the examination of metaphysics, where he has to discourse with elderly Lamas the Abbot of Mey college of Sera monastery and Abbots of Shar and Jang college of Gaden monastery. Losang Tashi, an elderly religious man appreciates the splendid works of religious guru, the Dalai Lama and suggests him to take greater responsibility and to face the greater threat of the Chinese.
With the arrival of Chinese military, the Tibetan has to undergo great changes in their routine work. The Chinese officers force the monk to cultivate the land. There is no mercy for monks. They have to plough and earn their livelihood as the conversation between soldier and monk reveal the matter as:

Soldier (with gun): (no nonsense about him) get down your knees and work. Don’t look so surprised; pass him your spade never seen a man work?

A Cultivator: Never seen a monk cultivate.

Soldier: Well, you 'll be seeing a lot more of it. If they can kneel and pray, they can kneel and plough.

(Calling out to a monk who’s having difficulty) Get on with it, you there . . . unless you want my boot to help you . . . (laugh out loudly),

A monk: Sir, he’s old. Not used to it

Soldier: Used to praying, is he? Used to eating isn’t he? well, from now on he 'll have to work to eat.

Monk: There are some who only pray and some who only cultivate.

Soldier:Why? Ever asked the cultivator why he should work while you pray?Ever asked the cultivator why the monastery should own the land while he toils? From now on the land belongs to the tiller to the communes who will make their own decision about sharing. And my advice to you is
to work too and build a new nation ... by this way come close to your own God. (p. 43-44)

There are two incidents to show that the Chinese try to bring change in tradition and democratic reforms. There is great gap between the landlord and poor people, the tyranny of the land lord in capitalist way made poor to take shelter in Chinese Army. The Chinese officer asks the landlord to apologies and accept the fact that all are equal in democratic state. The communist views are implemented by asking monk to plough in the land, the tiller will be the owner of the land hence monk also has to work in the land to eat food, by work one can go close to the God.

The Tibetans express their opposition at inauguration of the Preparatory Committee for the autonomous region of Tibet as this committee includes only five members of Tibet and rest of forty-four members are from China. But the Chinese vice – Chairman becomes angry and clarifies that this committee would take full regard to the Tibetan feelings and the proof is that Dalai Lama is the Chairman. The Tibetan consider it as a dead committee and finally the meeting is adjourned. There are confrontation and resistance against the Chinese military but their effort is futile. The mother of Dalai Lama is worried to see the situation in Tibet. She feels sad that the aristocrats and monks are humiliated and destroyed. The Chinese Military creates revolt in Tibet but Dalai Lama believes in non violence, which is the main principle of
Buddhism. Hence he cannot take any step to curb the Chinese in a violent way, his mother is worried that Dalai Lama may become the victim of cultural and democratic reformation of Tibet.

The dramatist Asif Currimbhoy skillfully presents unique faith of Tibetan in funeral ceremony, a woman died of plague is mutilated into small pieces and thrown as food to birds and vultures later bones are made as powder for some utilization. The General is bewildered to the superstitions of the people. At the time of death of the woman, several servants, soothsayers pray, and perform rites and rituals, the oracles and mediums propitiating nature take place, they believe in oracles. The General believes that only the doctors can cure the disease not oracles or superstitions.

Asif Currimbhoy uses strange glimpse of two women to give the base of Tibet and China culture. The General looks at a picture of a woman and same is presented to the audience. Woman is dressed with aristocratic look of Tibet and wore rich ornaments, a box ornament in her neck. She pampers a child and later becomes nude a beautiful woman of Tibet. Another picture has a beautiful aristocratic woman dressed in the China of old finest clothes. She kisses the child who resembles the General. After the child leaves, she became nude and a huge hairy monkey comes along with human face and she unites with him; the face of the man in the picture is his father. In this two dream sequence, there is a shattering
contrast between the above two women – the delicate refined woman in
clothes and the lusty female ogress (frightening person) coupling with the
beast watching this scene, the boy is horrified.

There are economic crises, all brood for good harvest, and strong
financial condition. The Khamba tribal believe in hard work, rich harvest
and start the small factories in country. There are two groups of people in
Tibet, one group favor the Chinese control, because they are improving
economic condition of Tibet. The other group oppose the Chinese rule, as
they make Tibet as a colony and Tibetans will become slaves. The Tibetans
want the right on their own lands and their property. The discussion
between Chin Hao – Jan and Nagabo Jigme shows that they want a rapid
development in the country. Best education should be given to the Tibet
children and several steps should be taken to strengthen the finance. War
and violence are economic hindrance to the country. The Chino – Tibet
agreement of 1951 laid stress on education. Proper education and
development is possible only when Tibetans assist in liberating Tibet. But
the monks are against communism. They are devoted to the Dalai Lama
and they want to achieve the highest salvation by embracing the religious
preaching of their religious Guru. One should attain the physical, spiritual
and intellectual purity to achieve the salvation.

The Chinese general does not believe in rigid and outdated and
deep-rooted rituals of Tibet. Therefore, he believes that there should be
cultural revolution and democratic reforms. Chin Hao - Jan supports General, but he suggests that the traditional culture of Tibet should be continued, as it is sensitive issue to ignite the wrath of the Tibetan, and revolt may take place. Both of them agree that the belief, rites and rituals of Tibet should be honored. The people of Tibet believe in Buddhism, if this land is converted into Chinese religion which is based on communism, naturally there would be some change in the land which is not acceptable. The General is empathetic with the Tibetan; he wants to free them with the fear of being colonized. They would be free to follow their tradition under the rule of Chinese government.

The strong faith of the Tibetan is proved at Lhasa, in 1959, March for the Molem festival. "Crowds upon crowds, shaggy Khamba warriors with lean ferocious dogs, armed to the teeth, thousands of monks from the 3 main monasteries and elsewhere, peasants, soldiers. The dance starts; it is magnificent, grotesque with masks and light measured movements, to the beat of the drum and rasp of the long horns, incantations to the devil and the reincarnate, the folk lore and the fairy tales to true and real in their own perspective, dominated by good and evil, worship of nature and animals, all in the dance, unchanged over the centuries, to reflect the mood and image of Tibet which no invader has been able to change." (p. 61-62)

This ritual remains unchanged for centuries. Even the presence of Chinese army has not made any difference. This celebration seems to be a
revolt against the Chinese. Hence Tan Kuan San orders to crush this revolt and orders to attack the palace. But the General stops him as the people are defenseless, but the General is proved to be a great failure to bring cultural reformation in a peaceful way. The Dalai Lama escapes safely with the help of Khamba tribes through the Himalayan mountains to India. Tan Kuan San orders to destroy the Potala and all monasteries. The battle ends after 48 hours, there is death destruction and smoke around and the General cries in hysteric as

General: (Holding on to the body and crying) Rimpoche ... Rimpoche ...

Oh would that your spirit were to fly within me...

and give it life . . .

Rimpoche . . . Rimpoche . . .

Where are my shangrilas gone . . .

in those lofty mountains beyond . . .

Rimpoche . . .

why was my life a failure . . .

when I tried so hard to understand . . .

Rimpoche . . .

I held my duty sacred . . .

as my love for you . . . (p. 67) Dalai Lama calls this explodes as Genocide. The genocide of the civilization and says – “In any human conflict, the
ultimate interests of the combatants are the same the interests they fight for only ephemeral” (p.67)

The interesting elements of the play *Om Mane Padma Hum!* is the juxtaposition of opposite and layers of conflict. There is opposition of Buddhism and communism, the past and the present and violence and non-violence. The main purpose of Chinese invasion is to transform Tibet from Buddhism to communism. There are attempts and effort of cultural reformation through military threat. The Chinese soldiers use violent methods to bend the Tibet monks to plough in the fields. The mother of Dalai Lama asks him to take violent ways to stop the humiliating salutation of the monks and aristocrats. But the Dalai Lama strongly opposes as Buddhism preaches the non-violence. The element of conflict is present in the play from the beginning till the end. The three abbots ask the Dalai Lama to escape to India as the situation is violent, but he refuses as the death means murder to body and not to soul then the mother ask Dalai Lama to renounce as he is deified. But the Lama urges her to renounce him as he is reborn. He doesn’t want to be a child in her comforting arms. Then there is conflict between the General Chin Wu, the chief political representative and Tan Kuan San, the former for a cultural revolution in Tibet and the latter for military confrontation.

The play has two acts and in act I, scene I all the characters are introduced, the monastery is beautifully described. The Dalai Lama’s
reluctance to flee to India is discussed in detail through dialogues between the Lama and the three Abbots and his mother, this scene also includes the Chinese military camp on the out skirt of Lhasa.

Act I, Scene II describes the flight of the Lama from Lhasa to Himalayan mountains with the help of Khampa tribes under cover of the sandstorm. In this scene the discovery of two-year-old boy as reborn 13 Dalai Lama is presented through flash back technique. The intension of cultural reformation of the General and military action of Tan Kuan San is discussed. The meeting between the Lama and the General is arranged, finally the Chinese troops slowly enter into Lhasa. The General Chang Chin Wu makes arrangement for duplicate monastery and duplicate Dalai Lama i.e., Rimpoche who resembles the Lama. The Act II, Scene I introduces a new technique of six photos who goes back to the Lama’s examination of metaphysics proves him as a great genius of religious and philosophical learning. The Lama is appreciated by the religious Prime Minister Losang Tashi and suggests him to work and find a way to get out of the prevailing worst situation. Many important incidents take place in this scene.

The General broods over the construction of the Great Wall of China. His great ambition of cultural reformation and communism is slowly implemented. The Chinese troops force the monks to cultivate in the land. The aristocratic landlord is forced to apologize to a lay man, who was humiliated. The origin of Lamaism is explained in detail. The meeting
of Chinese Tibet Buddhist Association, dream sequence of two women, death of a woman in plague and Rimpoche meditation in cave take place in this scene. Act II, scene II gives proper conclusion to the play, Jan Kuan San order to attack Potala, the consequence is death and destruction in Lhasa and the Dalai Lama safely crosses the border of India with heavy heart. There is proper beginning, middle and end in the play.

The language of the play is lucid and simple. The dialogues are crispy and easy to understand the intension of characters. The Hindi word like ferenghi and local word Balaklava, a cap is used; names of characters in the play are Tibetan and Chinese names.

Prof. Bayappa Reddy has expressed critical view of the play as:- “The play, however, considerably refers it's too much reliance on sheer auditory and visual effects the use of cymbals, long horns wheels and flags statues of Budha, pictures of the Dalai Lama, gods and demons, portraits of Mao and Chou En-Lai which are paraded through the streets and stretched of Lhasa what is more, fancy and imagination are stretched too long as of Tibetan history are run into so series of tableaus which often both stagger and bewilder”. 14

The play Om Mane Padme Hum! proves that Asif Currimbhoy as a skilled writer of theatrical plays. The political theme and public events are successfully treated in the play. The true historical events of Tibet is dealt successfully with the help of the dialogues of the Dalai Lama, Monks, the
Chinese chief general and other generals. The proper mixture of past and present, dream sequence, juxtaposition of opposite and the element of conflict have been critically dealt, which enrich the value of drama.
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4. Ibid. p. 93.


7. Merseve, op. cit., p. VIII.


