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First chapter of the thesis ‘Indian English Drama: An Introduction’ offers an ample background of the history and development of Indian English drama in the light of tradition and modernity. This chapter traces the origin and the growth of the Indian theatre from Natyashastra (the oldest text of dramaturgy in India) via pre-independence era to post-independence era till the advent of Nissim Ezekiel as a playwright. This
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chapter also bears a sub-section ‘Shaping of Nissim Ezekiel as a Playwright’ to facilitate the readers to place Nissim Ezekiel as a modern playwright who emerges as a precursor of Indian traditional values through the treatment of various themes that fall very close to life and experience in contemporary Indian milieu. Ezekiel’s selection of theme, art of characterization, choice of western theatrical devices, deliberate expression of post-colonial diction and a blend of urban and rural Indian settings enables one to view his plays from a wider global perspective.

Second chapter ‘Nalini: A Critique of Indian Traditional and Modern Perspectives’ attempts to explore this blend of tradition and modernity at the levels of theme, characterization, dialogue, plot, action, settings, devices and impact. The present chapter analyses the image of modern Indian women in the middle class urban Indian society. Inconsequential and unauthentic existence of the modern man finds expression through the male characters Raj and Bharat. The characters Nalini, Bharat and Raj are modern and advanced yet they experience a sense of rootlessness. Nalini, the central figure, is depicted as considerably modern and emancipated woman with her self-realization to respond to situations in her own way. By the end of the play she emerges as a strong woman by
not fitting into the formula of male characters. Thus the play displays a fine hybridization of traditional and modern themes, characters, theatrical devices and techniques.

The themes of unhappy marriage and the contrast between native and foreign psyche have been taken up for analysis and examination in the third chapter of the thesis, ‘The Sleepwalkers: An Indo-American Farce and Marriage Poem’: A Fusion of the Eastern and Western Post-modernist Theatrical Techniques. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to observe how Ezekiel strikes a balance between the conventional and the contemporary elements. This chapter analyzes the married life of a harmonious couple, Mala and Naresh, and how extramarital affair ruins the prospects of a happy married life. Ezekiel, thus, portrays a very realistic picture of the present day society.

Similarly the other play dealt within this chapter, ‘The Sleepwalkers’ satirizes the nature of Indians who always praise and accept superiority of the Americans. The American couple is shown as guests in interaction with the Indians while, guest trying to promote their magazine. A comparative study of the Indian and American lifestyle, beliefs, diction, culture and value system is portrayed with a blend of Western theatrical
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modes of opera with an excessive use of sound, light, music and masks
effect.

Chapter four of the present work entitled, ‘Song of Deprivation: Comic
Morality for the Non-existing Underground Theatre in India’ attempts to
picturize the modern young lovers: He and She. They are unnamed
characters in the play. The entire play is in the form of telephonic
conversation. This chapter throws light on the concepts of urbanization,
excessive modernization and technological means and examines how
these gadgets affect the quality of life of the modern man. The focus of
the chapter is to project the concept of new woman through the
character of She. The action lacks rapidity and pace that is why different
background sound effects of transistor, teleprinter and bell are used to
substitute the physical action on the stage.

The fifth chapter entitled ‘Don’t Call it Suicide: An Application of the
Absurd Theatre Form to Indian Theatre’ registers an effort to showcase
the tragic phenomena on the stage i.e. suicide. The play reveals the
pathetic plight of the family of Mr. Nanda and deals with such themes as
alienation, modernity, condition of women, human predicament,
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violence, insecurity and fear. The chapter is analyzed in the light of the psychoanalytical theory and feminist perspective. At the level of characterization it examines how women suffer at the hands of a male-dominated society. They are treated like slaves. Men too fall a victim to this system that affect their lives and force them to commit suicide. This chapter also displays a blend of conventional and contemporary patterns through dialogues, language and theatrical modes.

The last chapter concludes with a humble attempt at justification of the study. There is a skillful and perfect use of ironical fantasy in almost all of his plays. Some important themes that he takes up are related to the city life, politics, loneliness, love, sexuality and similar human situation. The relevant body of this study includes ‘Indian English Drama: An Introduction’, ‘Nalini: A Critique of Indian Traditional and Modern Perspectives’, ‘The Sleepwalkers: An Indo-American Farce and Marriage Poem: A Fusion of the Eastern and Western Post-modernist Theatrical Techniques’, ‘Song of Deprivation: Comic Morality for the Non-existing Underground Theatre in India’, ‘Don’t Call it Suicide: An Application of the Absurd Theatre Form to Indian Theatre’. The present study seeks to encompass the analyses of five major select published plays of Nissim Ezekiel in the light of the thrust area. The modern theatre substantially
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aims to express existential hollowness through stage experiments. Indian English drama attains glory, validity and vitality through consistent attempts of playwright like Nissim Ezekiel who supplement their western insights and combine them with Indian vision to relocate the identity of Indian English theatre.

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