PREFACE
During the 1960s, when the Black Revolutionary Nationalism was at its height, the "revolutionaries" evolved into Black artists who used the Western theatre form as a medium to effect the most profound changes in Black people in America. This is a process termed as "altering consciousness." In the evolutionary struggle of creative practice, in the development of what is known as Black theatre, a revitalizing of the form aesthetically and literally was sought to be done by attacking the intellectual and ideological premises of western civilization. Black theatre was envisaged as a revolutionary instrument of change. As a supplement to manifestos of the Black artistic, aesthetic, and cultural revolution, there was a distinguished body of plays by Imamu Baraka, Marvin X, Ben Caldwell, Ron Milner, Jimmie Garrett, Sonia Sanchez who have made some impact on Black radical aesthetics and brought about innovations in the Black theatrical form. There were also emerging theatrical groups carrying germinally the idea of Black consciousness and the New Lafayette Theatre was one such. Black dramatists have realized that instead of merely simulating the theatrical models of Greece and the West, they had better go back to non-western sources of reference in Africa and exploit these prototypic sources through Black stylish, symbolic modes. Thus a profound heritage began to be tapped. Having initially worked with Eldridge Cleaver, Marvin X, Imamu
Baraka, and Sonia Sanchez in a project called "Black House" and having entered the New Lafayette Theatre with inspiration from Robert Macbeth, Ed Bullins recognized the social function of the Black theatre as immensely important for creating conditions for planting, nurturing, and spreading the seeds of change. Working from these premises, he visualized the Black theatre as a "citadel of evolving consciousness," and as a visible force in the arts and the cultural life of Black America. Writing largely for the New Lafayette Theatre, and American Place Theatre, Ed Bullins confines his themes predominantly to Blackness and its revolutionary aspects. He has worked to build one of the finest Black community institutions meant for recreating the Black spirit and African identity and dedicated to the survival of Black people. Art thus for Ed Bullins has a purpose: to create a new reality or to recreate the lost reality through a process of awakening consciousness. The experience that he presents in his plays is that of a Black man seen by Black eyes and felt by Black consciousness.

Since it is difficult to refer to all the plays of Ed Bullins in a brief study of this kind, an attempt has been made to touch upon only some of the works of Ed Bullins in order to illustrate his concept of the theatre, dramatic mode, and thematic content. Further, the scope of the study is restricted by the fact that the material relevant for the study was not easily available. I am, however, deeply indebted to the American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad, where, by and large, part of the material relevant for the study could be accessed.
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