**Conclusion**

This research work deals with anti-war and pro-war views of 20th century playwrights from various cultures and ideologies. The anti-war playwrights condemn war as an inhumane act and emphasise that war is a game played by the capitalists and the politicians to achieve their goals. The playwrights who advocate this view look at war from various angles and perspectives – such as Marxism, socialism, and humanism. Whatever their cultures and ideologies, they condemn war as an atrocious act against mankind. Through their writings, they attempt to draw the attention of their audiences to the huge impact of war on all facets – political, social, economic and moral. This work also deals with the pro-war view of some writers who look at war as essential and progressive to change the society for the better. Their justification of war is based on ideological and religious grounds such as socialism, Hinduism and Jihad as presented in the last chapter.

The first angle through which the anti-war playwrights look at war is based on the Marxist ideology. This ideology does not hold an absolute position on war and judges the war by the circumstance surrounding it. The playwrights who advocate this ideology are Brecht, O’Casey, Arden and Miller, though they differ in their views. Generally speaking, these Marxist writers believe that the modern war is a game of business and capitalism. Therefore, every one of them attempts to expose the evil of capitalism which is responsible for war, violence and exploitation of the working class in their society.

Brecht, to begin with, is a devout Marxist who attacks capitalism as a system which generates war. He looks at the modern war from a Marxist point of view. In *Mother Courage*, Brecht restates Marx’s observations on the nature of capitalism and stresses that the modern war is a profit to the big people and a loss to common people. Brecht believes that people deserve war if they subscribe to the system which generates it, namely capitalism. According to him, war and capitalism are inseparable and interdependent. Carl Von Clausewitz’s famous quote, “war is the continuation of politics by other means” becomes “war is the continuation of business by other means” in Brecht’s *Mother Courage*. To illustrate this, Brecht makes use of the ‘Thirty Years War’ because it was believed to be unleashed by capitalists. Using the epic theatre which was initiated by Erwin Piscator, Brecht engages his spectators intellectually with evils of war and capitalism so that they can look at it objectively.
without empathy with the characters. He believes that people in general are ‘cysts’ in this exploitative system. He affirms that if people remain passive, then the system of war generated by capitalism will continue. Brecht, like Soyinka, wants people to be ‘active cysts’ and not to be ‘cysts that irritate’ – the Old Man ideology in Madmen – in order to put an end to the system which leads to war and violence and ultimately victimises the common man. Brecht stresses that the modern war can be eliminated if people react positively against capitalism. In Mother Courage, Brecht contradicts the view which states that war is an irresistible phenomenon and affirms that it is created by man who keeps its wheels going. The play ends with a note that war will continue for centuries explains Brecht’s message about the relationship between the continuity of the war and the passivity of the people.

O’Casey’s different socialist views towards war can be traced in The Plough and the Stars and Oak Leaves and Lavender. In fact, he has two attitudes towards war – anti-war and pro-war and both of these stances are based on his socialist ideology. To begin with his anti-war attitude presented in The Plough, O’Casey did not appreciate the politics of Easter Rising leaders against the British colonisation. He felt that the Rising did not serve the socialist cause of the Irish people which the leaders pretended to defend. His main concern was that socialism should be established first in the society and then other things would be taken care of. He opposed the nationalists’ cause for independence because he saw that the condition of the human lives was deteriorating in Ireland which should be taken into consideration at the first place. What cause did the people have if they were sick and starving to death? This was his main concern. He felt that the Easter leaders were concerned with their political goals rather than the goals of the working class. He also thought that the timing of the Rising was not right which led to further suffering and miseries among the slum dwellers. His criticism of the Irish nationalists is evident in the reproduction of Pearse’s patriotic speeches about the Irish Nationalism. He mocked them through his socialist character, the Covey. He contrasted the speeches and the patriotism of the Easter leaders with the image of Ireland under fire and smoke at the end of the play when two British soldiers were singing and drinking tea beside the dead bodies in one of the flats they broke into.

Arden’s anti-colonial stance in Serjeant Musgrave’s Dance is also based on socialist and leftist principles. It has been said that colonialism is an advanced form of
capitalism which exploits the nations in their homelands. Like O’Casey, Arden is also concerned with the condition of the working class who were exploited by the British Empire. In this play, Arden attempts to expose the politics of the Empire during its colonial wars. The Empire exploited its own nation to maintain and safeguard its colonial grip of its colonies overseas. The demonstrations of the coalminers and the imposed orders of the Empire officials – the Mayor, the Constable and the Parson – demonstrate the terrible living conditions of the working class in Britain during its colonial wars. The coalminers were working to meet their own living condition. They were threatened to be dismissed if they did not work for low wages. In Musgrave, Arden is also concerned with a universal issue that has gained contemporary resonance in the international situation. The atrocities committed by soldiers in foreign lands take place repeatedly in our modern era. He served for sometime in the Army and he must have felt the miserable situations the soldiers confront with the natives in the British colonies. The Soldier Who Became an Actor (1966), which he wrote with his wife, is also about a soldier who deserts the army. Arden wants to confront the Empire’s violence with another act of violence on the stage. In the introduction of the play, he points out that pacifism is a very hard doctrine and if he is hit he easily hits back (7). So for him it is natural if people hit back because of the violence exercised on them. Hannah Arendt remarks that there are different factors that result in violence and these are not necessary political (Arendt 63). Arden also presents different forms of violence. The political violence is represented through Musgrave’s mission and the social one is represented through the coalminers’ demonstration. He, like Arendt, believes “no one reacts with rage to an incurable disease (Arendt 63)”. Through Musgrave, Arden wants England to realise its responsibility on the vain death of its soldiers and to bring home the atrocities of the colonial forces to the colonial nation. Like Julius Caesar, Musgrave uses an important setting – the market-place – to address the issues confronting the society. With the same eloquence of Brutus and Antonio, Musgrave and his men dominate the audience in the market-place with their speech and demonstration. Arden uses the market-place to expose the politics within and without the British Empire

Miller’s view of capitalism in relation to war is different from Brecht’s. Brecht looks at capitalism as a system of domination that exploits and enslaves people to the advantage of a group of capitalists. Miller looks at capitalism as a system of
competition which leads to the loss of human values and to the loss of responsibility and commitment to the outer world. Competition for Miller, as Abbotson points out, creates negative values which may lead to success, but at too heavy a price (31). In *All My Sons*, Miller is concerned with the situations created by the evil forces in the world – capitalism, commercialism, industrialism and their common product, war. These evil forces have become a part of the existence of the modern man’s life. And their authority, power and force can never be challenged and they determine the people and push them to their desired goals which are synonymous with cash-nexus, death of man’s spirit and personal relationships. Miller is flabbergasted not at their evil presence in the world but at what man has made of man under their evil influence. Miller confirms through Chris that America, a capitalistic society, is a real zoo where animal principle and instinct work. No humanity worth the name is there and there is no community. Chris’s father who represents the spirit of capitalism has caused the death of 25 pilots. This sense of irresponsibility which leads to chaos in society takes place when the distinction between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ is made. Keller made a distinction between his ‘self’ and the ‘other’. He felt that others must not stand in his way of material success. This distinction between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ is also referred to by Bharati in his prefatory note to *Andha Yug* (17). He remarks that when the distinction between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ is made, war, violence and loss of human values will surface. The circumstances created by war really have let loose an insurrection, an anarchy in the state of man, in the personal life of each character in *All My Sons*, in the familial relationship of each character, in his social relationships, and in his relationship with established institutions of marriage and family. The war with one blow is ready to finish all these things.

The second angle through which the playwrights condemn war is based on humanist principles. Our modern age, the Blind Age as described by Bharati in *Andha Yug*, has become devoid of fellow-feelings and respect for the sacred life of human beings. War has dehumanised man and debased the society and it is man who is responsible for the chaotic state he causes to himself and to the universe. The humanist view of war can be traced, for example, in Bharati’s *Andha Yug* and Soyinka’s *Madmen and Specialists*. These two playwrights look at war as a predicament which runs contrary to human values. These two writers explicitly present the miserable condition of people in times of war.
Soyinka, a strong Marxist writer and a human rights activist, was deeply sad about the situation of Nigeria during the civil war. The atmosphere in Madmen explicitly manifests the horrible condition which took place in the Nigerian society as a result of the political system which led to war and violence. The Old Man is Soyinka during 1967-70. Like the Old Man, Soyinka was imprisoned and tortured for his attempt to bring peace between the two sides. Madmen is full of concrete and visual reminders of the war casualties. Crippled, paralysed, and former blind soldiers fill the stage to confront the audience with the aftermath of war. Intelligence, the most dehumanising tool of the authoritarian regime, is also present in the play through Dr Bero and his father. In the aftermath of the war, Dr Bero placed his father in solitary confinement to put an end to the last shadow of humanity in him. Through this spectacle, Soyinka wants the audience to reflect on war and its aftermath and to put an end to it and to the system which generates it. It is ‘the cap of a human being’ he wears which made him a relentless writer attacking the dehumanising power of politics. In the Republic of ‘As’ – an ambiguous symbol the Old Man uses to refer to different forces – the tyrannical leaders are held responsible for all types of corruptions that swept the Nigerian society. It is this question of leadership and oppression which Soyinka along with other African writers Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Chinua Achebe attack and attempt to rectify in their writings.

Bharati is also concerned with the ‘modern’ human condition in the times of war. The global impact of the Second World War followed by the carnage of the Partition of the Indian Subcontinent must have had a deep impact on him. His main concern was the future of the humanity as a whole. He wanted the audience to draw a lesson from their past (the Mahabharata) and from the present (the Partition) and save the future. The mendicant in Andha Yug calls upon someone who can be the saviour of the future. The past and the present are already over and there is no use to feel sorry for what has gone. It is the future which has to be taken care of and to do the outmost to safeguard it from the Blindness of the modern age as Bharati envisages. He wants people to save the earth from becoming a wasteland as a result of war and violence. As a humanist, Bharati is worried about the fate of the mankind in the future which has come under the threat of the nuclear weapons from all corners.

Writers responded to the atomic bombs thrown on Hiroshima and to the advent of the nuclear age differently – Shaw responded by saying that it is “an end of
our civilization and its massed populations” (Carpenter 53), O’Casey said that “the whole world is frightened and suspicious” (Carpenter 74). Al-Hakim as well desired for a world without nuclear weapons in *The World Is A Comedy*. Bharati’s response to the new age – the blind age – was different. He accepted the past and the present situation but he was concerned with the future that awaits mankind. His view is that if man does not save his future, he will continue to live in a blind age.

Some playwrights justify war and believe that war is necessary to establish peace and drive away evil from their society. In the twentieth century, this pro-war stance is informed by some ideologies such as socialism and Jihad as discussed in the last chapter. The advocates of the pro-war stance are O’Casey and Bakatheer. As presented in *The Plough*, O’Casey was anti-war and this attitude is based on his socialist concerns with the Irish people. In *Oak Leaves*, he becomes pro-war and this attitude is, again, based on his socialist concern with the people in the Soviet Union and England. His international socialism becomes stronger in *Oak Leaves* and is extended to include other peoples in other parts of the world. He urges England and the Soviet Union to stand together against the aggression of the Nazi Germany in the Second World War. His justification of war falls under the paradigm of the just war tradition which permits war to drive away aggression and evil from one’s society.

O’Casey’s ideology is the same but his attitudes differ according to the circumstances that surround the war. He does not have an absolute stance towards war and that his attitude is governed by the nature of war. He supports war when he feels it is for the cause of the people and opposes it when it is against the cause and the interest of the people. His socialist voices in *Oak Leaves* are prominent and do not hesitate or fear to express their support for war to defend the cause of the people in England and the Soviet Union against Germany. To support his just war he informs his audience that the world famous spiritual leaders such as Mohammed (pbuh), Christ and Confucius would not object to the war against Germany.

Bakatheer’s *Ikhnaton wa Nefertiti* centres on the idea of Jihad in Islam. The central character, Ikhnaton, is a monotheist who calls people to discard polytheism and embrace the new religion. In spreading his new religion, he is assisted by his army leader, Muhib who insists on using the sword to destroy the idols and fight the priests and pagans who exploit the common people and make a business out of religion. Muhib’s justification of using the sword is to stop the priests from using the
religion for material gain. Muhib insists on his king to fight the priests who cheated the people by telling them that the idols would be pleased with the people’s donations offered to them. Bakatheer’s concept of Jihad in the play is that the new religion which calls for monotheism is not based on sword. He maintains that the sword is used to safeguard this religion and to fight the pagans and idols’ worshippers who use their position to impose a levy on the people which led to depravity and poverty in the kingdom of Ikhnaton. Bakatheer’s reference to the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) reinforces the idea of Jihad. The Prophet (pbuh) is described to be holding the Sun in his right hand and the sword in the left. This explains the fact that the sword was a secondary option to establish peace and not used to spread the new religion.

Unlike Bakatheer, Al-Hakim’s stance towards war in The World Is A Comedy is different though they belong to the same ideological background. Al-Hakim is a pacifist and against war. The President in Comedy advocates pacifism and comes up with a decision that will change the world as he believes. He wants to disarm his state and he thinks that the decision will lead other states to follow suit. In one of the scenes, he also depicts the harm of the nuclear weapons on the mankind. A fisherman was living calmly is an island but he was asked to vacate it due to expected atomic experiments. Al-Hakim points out how these weapons of mass destruction threaten the mankind and nature. He attributes this race in armament to what he calls ‘the balance of power’. Like Miller, he also maintains that the only profiteers from wars and violence are the capitalists and the monopoly companies.

What war destroys is not the economic or political structure of the society; this structure can be and is often raised and may be, in a better way. What war actually destroys is the spirit of man; it is the essential, inherent spirit of man that is brutally mauled. So brutal is the mauling that it becomes impossible to recognise even the face of humanity, let alone its essential spirit. And when the essence is gone, the life is gone. It is this dead thing that needs the real revival.

So, to the anti-war dramatists, the humanity, in its collective consciousness seems to be set in much the same split mould as in the earlier years of the century. So the idea of war – a brain-child of the capitalists and industrialists working for the culture of commercialism and cash-nexus in change for the better is simply obnoxious and hence unacceptable as dramatised in Mother Courage, All My Sons and Serjeant Musgrave’s Dance. War, to them, is a machinery used to despoil humanity by robbing
it of its own spirit and making it hollow where nothing solid subsists. Their concept of humanity is that of a hollow man. The concern of these writers is not the fact that war destroys men, women and children when it is in operation. Their concern is the fact that it slashes humanity into such unrecognisable bits that one man fails to recognise another as his own as portrayed in Madmen and Andha Yug. In All My Sons, the father is not concerned about his son, rather he is little concerned with himself and his soul. He grows selfish in the sense that he covets more and more for himself. He lives and dies for the cash-nexus. The young sons try to imbibe a moral spirit and be courageous but soon become emotionally directionless and lose their ways in suicide or in the death of their near and dear ones. The mother tries to keep patience and the family and the society going even at the cost of being superstitious and called mad.

The writers, like Miller, Arden, and O’Casey, are closer to the female consciousness. Men assert themselves through violence and instability. Women – in marriage and family – work for non-violence and stability, for culture and spirit. In Miller’s All My Sons, the mother attempted to keep the family coherent despite the violent blow of war. She did not want to admit that her son would not return from the war front because if she did, the family would collapse. She knew that her husband was a war criminal but attempted to stand with him and tolerated the tense situation to keep the family tight. In Arden’s Musgrave, Annie protested against the colonial system of the Empire and called the Empire a desert where nothing grew and flourished except exploitation and subjugation of the common man. In The Plough, O’Casey is closer to Nora and Bessie in their opposition and criticism of the Easter leaders and the follies of war. He depicted them as being right in their objection to their men’s romantic view of war. Like Lysistrata, though the way is different, they attempted to bend their men from taking part in the war, but they failed. Brecht was not with his female character’s view of war. For Brecht, Mother Courage suffered because of the false notion she had about war which she did not correct. He depicted her as a capitalist who deserved the turmoil and suffering she faced. Through her, Brecht wanted to send a reminder to his audience about the notion of war and capitalism and the consequences of being passive.

Undoubtedly, Brecht is right in his view that war is created by man and it is not a fate or a natural disaster. It is man who can make his existence a heaven with peace and harmony or a hell with war and violence. It is upto man to decide the
direction of his own future. The modern age has lost its values and morals due to warfare. It needs a different kind of humanism which can bridge the gulf between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. The Old Man in Madmen felt the dilemma of humanity in losing its ethics and began to re-humanise the dehumanised leaders. He was quite right in his intention but mistaken in his method which had worsened the situation further though the lesson was learned at the end of the play. Musgrave also attempted to arouse the consciousness of the people against the inhumane practices inside and outside the Empire. He wanted to bring the guilt to where it belonged – England. Like the Old Man, Musgrave’s plan was illogical. Similarly, the President in Al-Hakim’s play attempted to act humanely to save the world from nuclear weapons. His plan to disarm the world was also illogical and difficult to be implemented.

This research work has dealt with war and its related issues from a cross-cultural perspective. The anti-war view is dominant in the dramatic works of the playwrights selected from different cultures. To the best of my knowledge, the modern plays which glorify war and encourage it are not common in English except for O’Casey’s Oak Leaves. There could be few more plays which glorify war in English or other languages which could be another area of research work in the future. In fact, I have come across with many pro-war writings in Arabic language which justify and glorify war on various grounds – national and religious such as (Jihad) where bloodshed is considered holy and rewarded with Paradise.