

Voices of Liberation: Socio-Political Narratives in Asif Currimbhoy's Plays

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ABSTRACT

This research delves into the profound thematic exploration of liberation in Asif Currimbhoy's plays, highlighting his critical engagement with the socio-political issues of Indian society. Currimbhoy's dramaturgy encapsulates the struggles for identity, societal constraints, and the pursuit of freedom, reflecting the multifaceted dimensions of liberation. Through an in-depth analysis of selected plays, including "Inquilab," "Sonar Bangla," and "The Refugee," the paper examines Currimbhoy's portrayal of the marginalized and oppressed, as well as his critique of societal norms and political turmoil. His works serve as a mirror to the socio-economic disparities, cultural dilemmas, and the quest for personal and communal freedom in postcolonial India. Currimbhoy's unique blend of social realism and dramatic flair not only brings to life the voices of the voiceless but also prompts a reevaluation of the concept of liberation in the contemporary Indian context.

Keywords: Asif Currimbhoy, Indian Theatre, Liberation, Socio-Political Issues, Social Realism, Postcolonial Identity, Marginalization, Cultural Dilemmas, Dramatic Narratives.

Introduction

Asif Currimbhoy returned to his homeland to write about the many problems that had engulfed it after establishing himself as a talented playwright who could create plays with substance. Known as "The Bengal Trilogy," his works *Inquilab* (Revolution), *The Refugee*, and *Sonar Bangla* were all written when he was a resident in Calcutta. *Sonar Bangla* covers Bangladesh's rise to global prominence, *Inquilab* covers Bengal's suffering during the Maoist Naxalite revolt, and *The Refugee* portrays the pitiful plight of Bangladeshi immigrants. His pieces during the Calcutta time have a new level of gravity. In Lyengar's words:

"Indeed, there is in the plays of Calcutta period a new thrust of seriousness. They are rather more edged, more ruthless, more touched with terror and pity than the plays of the earlier period. (Not that tragic Catharsis is lacking in early plays like *Goa*, *The Dumb-Dancer* and *The Doldrums*.) But during his stay at Calcutta, Currimbhoy does seem to have wrestled closer still with the basic human condition and found appropriate means for the agonized expression of his social conscience" ("The Dramatic Art of Asif Currimbhoy" 23).

Inquilab delves at many aspects of the Naxal uprising and violence that shattered West Bengal's social and political fabric. The play aims to address topics like "Why are the Naxalites what they are?" and "Why are they fed up with the establishment?" as Lyengar correctly points out. ("Asif Currimbhoy's The Dramatic Art" 12) An unbiased and truthful account of the events leading up to the emergence of Naxalism, a political ideology that seeks to seize power by means of violence and the destruction of constitutional governments, is presented. The principles of Maoism, which the Naxalites openly profess, want to achieve global proletarianism and complete revolution by violent methods. The philosophy's proponents advocate militarization and military resistance while openly rejecting parliamentary democracy and other kinds of democratic institutions.

A considerable portion of the rural populace was mobilized to rebel against establishment organizations via guerrilla warfare according to Mao's doctrine of the People's War. Through a victorious revolution against the exploitative classes and their governmental framework, they want to build a society without classes. The Naxalbari hamlet in West Bengal's Darjeeling district is where the term "Naxal" was first used. Charu Mazumdar was the leader of a peasant uprising in Naxalbari. A tribal kid with a court order to plow his property was assaulted by the landlord's men, leading to the rebellion. In retaliation, the indigenous people began seizing their territory from the colonizers by force. Giving land to those without it was their rallying cry. The violent

movement was ideologically led by Charu Mazumdar. A sizable number of radical students and intellectuals were drawn to Naxalite shortly after it was founded. Landlords, businesspeople, police officials, politicians, and everyone else who disagreed with the Naxals' aggressive ideology were all deemed class enemies of the proletariat by Mazumdar. Even West Bengal's major cities were not spared from the violent uprising that began in the state's rural areas. Naxalites centered their operations on Calcutta, the state capital of West Bengal. The Naxalites' nerve centers were in educational institutions. Eventually, the Naxalites took control of Jadavpur University and moved their headquarters to Presidency College, Calcutta. A terrifying atmosphere of violence and horror engulfed Calcutta. What Currimbhoy called "a cloud of palpable fear" enveloped the city. Bombs went off, buildings burned down, police officers were murdered, vengeance was meted out, status was decapitated, professors and the vice chancellor were assassinated, or simply innocent people died because they were at the wrong place at the wrong moment (qtd. in Khatri 148). The most horrific slaughter of ordinary people occurred as a result of what was ostensibly an intellectual revolution.

Among the many well-known plays addressing the Naxalite uprising is *Inquilab*. In 1970, the Naxalite violent movement took over Calcutta, and the dramatist delves fully with this topic. The playwright's goal in writing *Inquilab*, which is a reaction to the Naxalite uprising, was to provide some practical solutions to the pressing problems. The play opens with an examination of the revolutionary movement's roots. *Inquilab* is both the name of the phrase and an alternative spelling of revolution. The political slogan "Inquilab Zindabad" is derived from an Urdu term that means "Long live Revolution." Famous socialist revolutionaries who popularized the term "Inquilab" include Bhagat Singh, Subhash Chandra Bosh, and Chandra Shekhar Azad. Regarding the play's significance, the renowned critic Faubion Bowers made the correct observation:

"'Revolution' (*Inquilab*) is one of those plays you read only to find the characters leaping off the page and seizing you by the throat. In deals ostensibly with the Naxalite revolt, where agrarian communists opt for violence. But the canvas Currimbhoy paints here is one massive dilemma composed of a hundred small ones — 'the devil and the deep' (*The World of Asif Currimbhoy*" 6).

From 1967 to the mid-1970s, the Naxalite movement was quite active. As a playwright with a keen awareness of social and political issues, Asif Currimbhoy seems to have written *Inquilab* to address the Naxalites' cause. This Indian dramatist is a master of the stage, and his plays are rife with political and social awareness. His plays are distinctive because he elevates the topicality of these topics to a universal level, even if some reviewers criticize them for being too current. Even if the Naxalite movement of the 1960s in West Bengal is history, the viability of embracing a violent ideology that has spread its destructive spell across the whole globe raises serious questions about the wisdom of such a strategy. From a variety of vantage points, the playwright examines naxalism's philosophy. He draws parallels between the liberal majority and the extremist minority, socialism and proletarianism, legality and chaos, the Indian constitution and the Naxalites' jungle government. Indian theater written in English has been given a realistic spin by the most famous dramatist, Currimbhoy. By giving his plays vivid settings, incidents, characters, and conversation, he gives them an aura of reality. As rightly pointed out by R.L. and W.J. Meserve:

"Because through social and political systems man reveals himself, Currimbhoy employs the socio-realistic world as a starting point. There is, for example, the bitter anguish Currimbhoy feels for Goa, created by a union of Portuguese and Indian only to be destroyed by conflicts within that union. His socio-realistic plotting, however, expands into allegory in *Goa* where rape, the most violent personal abuse, symbolizes the final suffering and disintegration. The beauty is gone; only harsh reality remains; no one wins. *Inquilab* shows the same anguish as Currimbhoy extends his play about the Naxalite movement far beyond Bengal" (*Asif Currimbhoy*" 32-33).

He wrote a plethora of plays that tackle historical, geographical, and social topics, including the Naxalite movement, the liberation of Goa, the partition and its aftermath, the student agitation in Gujarat, the war in Bangladesh, and the Gandhian movement. Currimbhoy, who is known as "India's first authentic voice in theatre" (*The World of Asif Currimbhoy*" 7), writes creative plays that address the social and political issues faced by his people. While he was a resident in Bombay, he became aware of the universal and Indian difficulties. The Naxalite movement in Calcutta, the Indian conquest of Goa, and the conflict in Bangladesh are all examples of public or recent historical events that showcase Currimbhoy's greatest writing. *Inquilab*, one of his most well-known dramas, delves deeply into many aspects of the Naxalite movement. Instead of ruthlessly putting down the rebellion, the local government must decide between "administrative skill" and "law and order," or risk losing its little authority and having the federal government take control. The lecture is delivered by the lecturer to the class:

'Processions? Strikes? Gehraos? Violence? Breakdowns of law and order? Naxal revolt, my friends? Slogans of Gandhi or Mao? Are there bombs in your head or drains, gentlemen?' The wife of a peasant talks to her husband: 'you seem to have forgotten your dream. When it all started, all you wanted was a small piece of your own land. That made me happy. Now you want to lead the whole nation into revolution. That makes me unhappy.' And the husband answers, 'Why? It's the same thing. The better man gets something more. There's more' to life than a small plot of land.' Yes, if only revolutionaries didn't grow up, governments could cope (*The World of Asif Currimbhoy*" 6-7).

To Currimbhoy, 'Revolution' is not only portrait of a city and province though it has special significance to him, but also represents "the nightmare and the redemption of today's Calcutta" (*The World of Asif Currimbhoy*" 7). Characters are placed in carefully selected circumstances and they are made to convey certain points of view. As it is customary in Currimbhoy's plays, several and often conflicting views are pitted against each other to produce

a wholeness of phenomena. Currimbhoy believes that drama is the most convenient form of presenting social-consciousness of the society as he states:

To me, conflict is what makes theater what it is. You have opposing viewpoints that clash with one another. The theater's most dynamic component is this conflict. An fundamental clash of attitude is my starting point for all of my plays (qtd. in Pan 93).

This is something more that this play has. Characters' varied reactions to this movement help provide a realistic picture of the scenario. To achieve social justice in a constitutional, nonviolent, and lawful manner, Professor Dutta supports the Gandhian principles of nonviolence and peace. Naxalism, as presented by Amar and Shomik, is a violent ideology that seeks to create a society without social classes. The politicians' stance on this pressing matter is that of a status quoist, whereas Jain embodies the viewpoint of landlords on the right to private property.

There are several communist slogans scratched on the walls and a crimson portrait of Mao with a hammer and sickle painted in the classroom where the play opens and takes place in a college in Calcutta:

"Dutta, a distinguished professor of law with a conservative outlook and a British traditionalist approach,' is worried about the 'dying city' affected by processions, strikes and violence and is equally perturbed by the 'revisionist' students questioning the holy institutions of learning in general, and his lesson on the freedom of thought and speech in particular. He recalls how he fought for the freedom of India and how it would be difficult to make people understand that non-violence is an active philosophy" (Reddy 32).

Prof. Dutta is deeply committed to the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. He was deeply affected by Gandhi's nonviolent ideology and believes it offers the greatest answer to the current unrest in the nation. Democracy, law and order, property rights, a market economy, and long-standing institutions are all things he supports. Stay clear from gheraos, bandhs, processions, revolts, and violence, he tells his students:

"PROF. DATTA: Principles founded on freedom of thought and speech by Gandhiji, the father of our nation!

Repeat, repeat: THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF REVISIONISM. HE IS.

PROF. DATTA : (*raising voice louder over din*) A free economy, socialistically oriented ownership of private property a fundamental right, protected by law, enforced by law, enforced by police, and if necessary, by the army! *{sounding sloganish himself}*

Repeat CLASS ENEMIES! CLASS ENEMIES MURDABAD! JOTEDARS MURDABAD! POLICE MURDABAD! INQUILAB!

INQUILAB ZINDABAD!" (Currimbhoy, *Inquilab* 11)

Professor Dutta has compared the Naxal threat to minority dictatorship. Now he has lost faith in the current situation in Calcutta: "Calcutta, my beloved Calcutta, is going through some tough times. Is it a 'dying city?'" What about processions? On strike? Hey there! What about violence? Days off? Dysfunction of the judicial system? Insurrection maybe? A naxal uprising, my comrades? Gandhian or Maoist slogans?" "Inquilab 10%" According to Prof. Dutta:

"Gandhiji. Gandhiji. how to make them understand? That when you broke the law, the old British law that you respected so much, it was because it came in conflict with your natural law of justice. The Divine Law. Gandhiji. with whom I fought for our freedom. how to make them understand that when you broke the law, you asked for punishment! Yes, your own punishment because you still recognized that the law of civilized society could have no exception! Gandhiji. whom I worshipped as my own father. how to make them understand that non-violence is an active philosophy? That it was used by you to fight violence" *{Inquilab 11}*.

The Naxalite uprising in Calcutta has Professor Dutta very upset. Everything, in his view, ought to be resolved in accordance with democratic principles. He believes that the constitution is paramount in a free nation and that its violation is morally unacceptable. What does he announce?

"A free economy, socialistically oriented ownership of private property a fundamental right, protected by law, enforced by law, enforced by police, and if necessary, by the army!" (*Inquilab 11*)

According to Prof. Dutta, the country's constitution establishes the laws and regulations. Amar, his son, sadly, does not share his father's commitment to principle. That "you were the Gods that Failed, father!" is what he says to his dad. As of *Inquilab 14*. In his pleading for proletarian internationalism, Amar urges his father to consider the issues of filth, inflation, poverty, and hunger. "Amar says"

"Listen, father, understand. I'll say it only once. This is my passion, my poetry, my cause. Look around, father, open your eyes: the poverty, and poor. It's growing, father dangerously. and unfairly. It's true. The city's dying, your old beloved city of the privileged. Do you feel the stranglehold? The bustees growing, enveloping the city with the stench of faeces and dirt. Trams coming to a halt, burning, burning, the extra 2 paise increase in fare more than the dying man can bear. Not logical, is it? Not the game of agree to disagree. There's no time for that. We're drowning under the Hooghly, silting up with doomed humanity. The processions will grow, like nightmares, death processions of the 10 million around the funeral pyre of the burning city. *{shouting}* And you talk of EDUCATION, father! Institutes of education that have now shackled us for generations and generations" *{Inquilab 13-14}*.

The Hooghly River represents a degraded culture, a lowly way of life, and a shrivelled watercourse in *Inquilab*. The play depicts Calcutta as the "burning city," a metaphor for every neoteric metropolis on Earth, complete with the staleness, pallor, vehemence, and more. Amar himself labels Jain as a revisionist, someone who helps keep the status quo in place. It is important to adapt to the times, Amar reminds Mr. Jain, since time is passing by at a dizzying rate. The landless people need to be given the extra land. The youth are not naive; rather, they

are eager and restless to demand their rights. He is against punishing landowners, but he thinks they should face the reality and adapt to the times. Land is owned by the tiller, therefore if they have enough, they should share it with their brethren who don't have any. His forefathers worked hard to gain this property, however, and Mr. Jain disagrees with him. As a result, no one can legally take it away from him.

"JAIN: You know we've been having trouble with the labourers. (*shaking his head*) Can't understand it. They're part of my family. Yet suddenly they've turned around. viciously! as if I were some damned capitalist!

AMAR : *quietly*) To be a benefactor is the same thing. JAIN : (*surprised*) How do you mean?

AMAR: Tell me, they've been with you for many years, haven't they? Possibly their fathers and grandfathers were serfs to your ancestors?

JAIN : Yes.

AMAR : And you looked after them, like one big family. And their problems were your problems. In fact you were like a father to them, indulging yet correcting them, with a firm and gentle hand.

JAIN : Yes, what's wrong with that? I've seen lots worse landlords.

AMAR (*still with trace of sarcasm*) In fact you were one of the more progressive ones. No adhiyar system of contract labour for you. In being absolute master you could measure out your charities, and still keep them in their place" (*Inquilab* 17-18).

Instead of being a single voice, Amar's screams rang out as a global outcry against the apparently unshakeable civilizations on every continent. This generation's young guys desire to make a difference in the world. Their attraction to the Naxalite movement, which seeks to dismantle existing institutions and laws, stems from their willingness to resort to violence if nonviolent methods fail.

Ahmed is a devout Naxalite who holds the view that the greedy and ardent landowners are to blame for the plight of the landless peasants and penurious laborers. He had the impression that the landlords enjoy lavish lifestyles while sucking the lifeblood of the poor. Ahmed aspires to bring about a socialist revolution as a Maoist. Parliamentary democracy, in his view, is a socialist revolution's weakest link. The only way for peasants in developing nations to take militant action and bring about a revolution is via armed conflict. He recommends that they use guerilla tactics to accomplish their goals. "There can be no revolution without the poor peasant," he adds. If you don't like this, you don't like the revolution. Keep the following in mind: One, we need to join the common people and care about their happiness or sadness. Two, the adversary will be drowned in a great sea of people-mobilized forces. Three, while they strike from the west, they seem to be coming from the east. Sidestep the solid and go for the empty space. Strike with lightning speed, pursue lightning speed in decision-making. According to *Inquilab* (25-26), the only way to achieve ultimate victory is via a strategy of prolonged warfare. According to Ahmed's teachings, the oppressed can only achieve their rights by resorting to violence. You get sickness, starvation, desire, and death if you don't go to violence, so they may as well just spend their life in misery. Scurvy, servitude, hardship, and death are far worse burdens to bear when you pass them on to your offspring (*Inquilab* 26).

Ahmed lays forth the strategy for his guerilla campaign and orders his supporters to form local committees to wage deadly attacks on Maoists. It is essential, in his view, to impose a temporary state of fear on all rural areas. To better organize the Krishak Sabha, the peasants' union, he hopes the peasants will learn to use a combination of intimidation and persuasion. Although the majority of the peasants and the crowd are in Ahmed's favor, there is a vocal minority that views the landlords as class foes and is not completely hostile to them. In their view, Jain is just one of many landowners who are not tyrants. Landlord Jain has their backing as he is self-sufficient and believes he is not that horrible. Hence, a few of the peasants are keen on having a go at convincing others first. However, Maoists did not hold landlords in any high regard and called for their utter eradication. Neither an ideologue like Ahmad nor a peasant leader like Shomik are characteristics of Amar. Amar is, at his core, a theoretical thinker who is more concerned with ideas than with doing concrete action. The discourse among the university students makes it obvious that he is bewildered by abstraction: "Amar? He has poetic abilities. Profoundly affected, sentimental. This is not the kind of material that is used by politicians and activists" (*Inquilab* 45-46). Amar cares deeply about helping the downtrodden since he is an idealist. The divide between the wealthy and everyone else has become wider under the current system, which is why he wants society to change. He criticizes the educational system. His message to his father is clear: the previous generation was unable to implement the systemic adjustments that were needed:

Along with the rest of mankind, we are suffocating in the Hooghly. As the 10 million mourners gather around the funeral pyre of the city in flames, a processional of death will form, like a nightmare. "Father! You speak about education while you're shouting!" Academic institutions that have bound us for many years. For what purpose? I wonder why. In order for millions more people to be out of work? In order to maintain the status quo of your bourgeois society! In order for you to have successfully numbed the populace into a state of contentment and acceptance? You may have it if you want it, dad, but just don't force it on us! You were the fallen gods, dad! [Father smacks him to calm him down] As of *Inquilab* 14.

Ahmed, the Naxalite leader, is well aware that Amar is not a devoted hard-core Naxalite like Shomik, but rather a romantic and abstract person who has found solace in the concept of Naxalism. According to him, the Naxalite council of justice will eventually be overshadowed by his father's influence. This becomes evident during the trial of landlord Jain, which takes place in "the 'inner sanctum' meeting, with peasants giving summary justice, along the method adopted by the Maoist revolutionaries" (*Inquilab* 59). In the so-called revolutionary council of justice, defending one's innocence is almost nonexistent. His words reveal the hypocrisy of religious claims

about justice and fair trials to even the most casual reader:

"To find a defence is difficult. Perhaps we are as biased on this side as they are on the other. Absolute justice there is none. So we shall try and come close examine the doubts that there are by one most suitable: young Amar hear (*slight restlessness and comment; softly*) I withdraw". (*he disappears into darkness*) (*Inquilab* 60).

Now we see landowner Jain's summary trial taking place in a "council of justice" tent in a dark field. Amar disagrees with his coworkers and would rather evaluate Jain on an individual basis than as an adversary of his class. The Naxalite students murder him when he attempts to have Jain released in his own manner and suggests that Jain plead guilty. The students' "inner council" is testing Jain's allegiance to the party because they accuse him of betraying their trust, while Amar fiercely supports him. The Naxalites brutally kill his father as a result of this test of his devotion.

After Amar's complete disappointment with the movement, he decides to stay away from it. Many young people, like Amar, joined the Naxal movement without fully considering the catastrophic consequences of their decision. Amar thinks about how his father's strategy was correct and how the Naxal shortcut won't lead to a "socialist revolution" after his father's death. He starts to believe that the democratic methods shown by Mahatma Gandhi are the only way to bring about the much-needed change in society, rather than resorting to the orgy of Naxalite violence. To grasp the play's meaning, one must grasp his epiphany. Here Amar expresses his open disappointment with aggressive techniques or so-called shortcuts in a speech:

"Such is our mould: sometimes heroic, sometimes selfish too, in those obsessive human ideals of the future, the frantic struggles of the present, that move us on and on and on until death and fulfilment. So I search for the ultimate: the cause and effect. The cycle of generations that revolt. The great burning desire within us that is prepared to kill and recreate. Build the new world that is as close to God's image as Man is". (*Inquilab* 40).

His revolutionary ideas are present throughout the play. A violent and vengeful Naxalite, Shomik is a devoted follower of the ideology. According to Naxalite doctrine, he is the peasant leader who would ultimately lead to a complete uprising. He calls on the common people to rise up against the oppression and inequality of the current regime.

"Our father were serfs, and even if we're not, we're not free either! (*More cheers, hot consent to this persuasive firebrand*) No. No..... No..... No more waiting. The law cannot work equally for both of us. It's either ours or theirs. At the moment it's theirs, so we have to reject it. But the only means we know: fight, FIGHT!" (*Inquilab* 28)

Therefore, Shomik personifies the true revolutionary essence of that uprising. To his wife, he assures her that he and other revolutionaries would die fighting for proletarian internationalism. Every aspect of human affairs, from social to political, that strikes Asif Currimbhoy's mind is known to him in its whole. The politician's stance on this movement is symbolized in the current play by this political idiocy. This anarchy has nothing to do with them. They think that winning elections is all about playing the power of the vote. They could care less about keeping the peace or about the devastating effects of Naxalite violence on society. In Scene 11 of Act I, Devdas makes a promise to Shomik to provide him lush land in an effort to earn his favor:

"Look, Shomik, let's be practical. I'm not here to bribe you, or threaten". unless I have to. You want more wages, better conditions of work, I'll give them to you. If you work for my party, even that is possible. There's going to be distribution of waste". productive land. I'll see to it that your name comes up. Your father is the oldest tiller here. It may take time, but I'll arrange it" (*Inquilab* 36).

Dramatists subtly imply that politicians' desire to further their own political interests at the expense of the nation's harmony is the driving force behind the current state of affairs. Set against the background of a brutal Naxalite war between peasants and landowners, this drama accurately depicts India's political deterioration as a consequence of an insurmountable wealth disparity. The drama portrays the corrupt and immoral characteristics of post-independence Indian politics via the characters of Devdas and the Big Wheel Politician from the Centre. The Naxalite movement has wrought widespread bloodshed and disorder in West Bengal, yet Devdas, a member of the state government, shows complete and total indifference to the crisis. Bombs and killings occur often in broad daylight; the wealthy landowners' homes are violently and forcibly taken; and the state of law and order is completely nonexistent.

Despite being in a position of authority, Devdas feels no need to guarantee the safety of his subjects or their possessions, and he has no shame in admitting his own powerlessness. The widespread brutality by the Naxalites is something he is hesitant to confront head-on. In order to avoid alienating his peasant voters, he has adopted a hypocritical stance toward the Naxalite uprising. Furthermore, he is determined to retain the financial and political backing that the landlords provide him in elections:

"JAIN: You have your own ways, I'm sure. (*carefully*) Inter-party conflict is not a new thing. (Devdas is sweating). That's how you came into power. You stood for constitutional change, the other for revolutionary overthrow. Not only of me; of you too! (*Devdas quiet, watching*) Why are you telling the police to soft-pedal them! Are you afraid of losing your peasant votes? You're under-estimating me. (*laughing unhumorously*) My good friend, (*Devdas stockstill*) Do you know what I carry in my pockets? (*removes from one a purse with coins, and removes from the other a revolver*) Power? From the barrel of the gun? Or from the purse of gold?" (*Inquilab* 33)

To avert the implementation of "President Rule" in the state, the centrally-located political heavyweight pays a state visit to assess the situation caused by the Naxalite violence and meets with Devdas to urge him to restore peace and order. While discussing the violence, both the Big Wheel politician and Devdas are thinking about

themselves and their personal political gain or loss. They seem tailor-made for each other, looking out for each other in the federal government and the state government alike, even if it means sacrificing social harmony and the common good. "Playing the game of checks and balances" (Inquilab 64) is their resolution at the meeting. It would seem that maintaining peace and order is their only priority, but to be honest, they don't bother to investigate what really started the violent upheaval in the first place. The inspector summons up his bravery and informs them that: "Destitution. Joblessness. Unfairness. Struggle victims. Using up. Uncleaness {as he opens his eyes to perceive them both. The political sphere. The state's instability is mostly caused by (Inquilab 64). By "giving the Inspector a nasty stare," they choose to disregard everything. Even when Jain's daughter warned them that her father's life was in imminent danger, they do nothing to save him.

The 'President Rule' stands regardless of all the petty politics. In Inspector's words, Devdas finds the truth after being robbed of authority. To satisfy his insatiable desire for power, Devdas meets with Big Wheel Politician and becomes engrossed in plotting his new strategy to win the election after the end of the "President's Rule." He is unsure whether to stay with his parent party or switch to the opposition. Even though there are laws regarding the distribution of surplus land to the landless and the ceiling on landholdings, the constitutionally enshrined principle of "socio-economic justice" is still nonexistent in society due to politicians' indifference. The already deadly feud between the wealthy landowners and the lowly peasants is only going to become worse. It doesn't matter how terrible a social or national situation is; our politicians will use it to their advantage. Like Big Wheel Politician, Devdas personifies the whole corrupt and immoral political mentality. By saying, "Oh hell, I haven't," Currimbhoy employs a brilliant bit of satirical irony to explain how politicians take off their Gandhi hats before drinking Scotch. After all, why are we even arguing? We're both attempting to salvage what seems like an awful scenario. "What we need, my friend, is a drink of the good old Scotch whisky," he says, opening his cabinet (Inquilab 72).

In order to build a society that is really democratic and socialist, no politician, regardless of party or ideology, is willing to sacrifice for the protection and implementation of constitutional ideals. The drama gives the impression that the political and democratic landscape in India after independence is a "area of darkness," where the impoverished and disadvantaged have little chance of achieving social and economic equality. The corruption, immorality, and adultery that characterize this vote-bank politics are sure to undermine personal, societal, and national goals. A path to power is guaranteed for godless politicians via many societal ills, such as poverty, unemployment, violence, vandalism, etc. Any democracy would be gravely threatened by this. The politicians no longer hesitate to publicly disgrace and oppose democratic culture and ideals based on the constitution.

Therefore, one must face an environment of anger, disappointment, and dissatisfaction due to the current political situation. Indian democracy, the biggest democracy in the world, is shown in this socio-realistic drama as the weakest and sickest democracy in the world. The play emphasizes the necessity of a "redeemer" to clean up Indian politics and remove corrupt politicians.

Outstanding writer Asif Currimbhoy has a knack for making his characters bring to life a variety of perspectives on a given issue. Being a social realist, he is able to provide an accurate and detailed account of any occurrence. Furthermore, he has exceptional observational skills, meticulousness, and the ability to portray a wide range of human emotions. Both male and female characters have a role in Currimbhoy's depiction of the Naxalite movement. Prof. Dutta's wife Suprea, Sarala, Old Mother, and herself are the play's four primary female characters. Religion has a significant role in Prof. Dutta's life. She is occupied with clothing the Durga figure during the performance. She doesn't give much thought to the Naxalite movement, yet whether intentional or not, her words always seem to stir up revolutionary feelings. She says something in Act I Scene 1 without realizing it:

"I still smell the fresh wet earth, longing for planting of new seed. (almost sharply) for it's all barren! The new harvest, the new green. The food for survival, turning of the new generation. It needs to be planted with care. For the earth is fresh and fertile. Only the seed must be strong like the growth of new revolt!" {Inquilab 23}

A lady who knows very little about the outside world, Sarala is Shomik's wife. Upon learning that her husband is a Naxalite, she urges him to defend their home and ensure the safety of their children. The concept of Shomik spearheading a national revolution is something she finds objectionable. She informs him that his actions are driven only by his desire to gain power and rank, rather than any concern for society or his family. The security of her family and hubby is her utmost concern. She is well aware that there are no boundaries to the quest for fame, power, and pelf. She confides in her spouse: SARALA : You seem to have forgotten your dream. When it all started, all you wanted was a small piece of your own land. That made me happy.

"Now you want to lead the whole nation into revolution. That makes me unhappy" {Inquilab 73}.

Amar has a soft spot for Suprea, the bright and kind daughter of the murdered landowner. Her world is being devastated by the Naxalites, making her a victim of the Naxal movement as well. Instead of becoming involved in revolutionary actions, she wants Amar to safeguard the love he has. The movement, she says, was "inhumane," as it propagated hate and resulted in the deaths of innocent people in the name of revolution, which spread like an illness.

An individual's keen awareness of the social forces around them is the fundamental premise of social realism, which forms the basis of the play. They have the ability to shape how people live their lives and how society functions as a whole. Playwrights often find social realism to be an appealing theatrical stylization because it allows for maximum remark, gives dramatic art a sense of reality, and injects work with life.

Men and women from various areas of life were affected by the Naxalite movement, as Currimbhoy shows in this drama. Political idiocy and complexity, poor leadership, inadequate educational policies, a broken justice system, and the fervent hope of the young for a better future in a society that is still plagued by poverty, disease, and starvation are all depicted in a realistic light by him. Violence, such as that seen in Naxalism, and the subsequent devastation it wreaks are both caused by and contribute to the widening wealth disparity. Modifying Indian society by constitutional and gradual means is something that Currimbhoy is vehemently committed to. The current leaders, however, have been too busy focusing on obtaining power via meaningless phrases like "Garibi Hatao" to ensure that this has not occurred.

In order to creatively address this multifaceted topic, the dramatist must take a critical look at the situation from every angle. In the same way that he criticizes the current government for the widespread poverty, unemployment, starvation, and illness, he also accuses the Naxalites of launching a terror reign that does not discriminate based on wealth, class, or ownership of land. As a constitutional law professor, Prof. Datta supports the principles of nonviolence and peace espoused by Gandhi and Ashutosh Mukherjee, including the right to life, property, and the rule of law as guaranteed in the Indian Constitution. However, Naxalism's philosophy, which gains traction and support via inciting fear, violence, and terror, attracts few adherents to this kind of thinking. Ironically, Amar, the son of Prof. Dutta, finds himself enmeshed in the ideology of violence and used by so-called guerrilla activists of the Naxalite movement. However, as events unfold, Amar comes to realize that the Naxalite's goal of establishing a proletarian internationalism, classless, and egalitarian society through violent means is nothing more than a farce. Tragically, he loses both his father and the man who would have been his father-in-law due to the arbitrary decisions made by the so-called Naxalite judicial councils. Unfortunately, he comes to this realization too late. For this reason, Currimbhoy has offered a creative interpretation of an ideology that seeks to replace the current constitutional legal order with a utopian ideal of social equality.

Coming from an educated family, Currimbhoy had the belief that a calm environment is essential for society to flourish. This is why Gandhi's teachings on nonviolence, nonviolent resistance, and passive resistance had such a profound effect on his writings. "The war is a tragedy," Currimbhoy stated in a letter to Faubion Bowers, demonstrating his sociopolitical awareness. Bowers properly pointed out this reality. Perplexed as to why other people see things differently. All enemies are engulfed in panic as blood pours ("The World of Asif Currimbhoy" 7).

Whether it's the plight of the refugees, the Naxalites, or the liberation of Bangladesh, Currimbhoy has a knack for making even the most pressing of current events seem profound and important. Currimbhoy's "The Refugee" is Yassin, but he's also Sen Gupta, any refugee, and we're all refugees. As a result, "the balm of universality" has been able to touch Currimbhoy's settings, characters, and deeds ("The Dramatic Art of Asif Currimbhoy" 11-12).

Sen Gupta, a member of India's upper-middle class, opens the play at his residence. A slim, reserved young guy in his twenties is escorted to the residence by Sen Gupta. The play's central character, Yassin, an intellectual immigrant, is really this young guy. Asif Currimbhoy aims to portray the pressure on social and religious bonds caused by the refugee crisis via the pairing of Yassin and Sen Gupta. In 1947, Sen Gupta arrived in India as a refugee and has since worked his way up to a prominent position. Being a refugee himself, Sen Gupta feels immense compassion for Yassin, who is both the son of his lover and a fellow refugee. As far as Sen Gupta is concerned, being a refugee is the worst possible situation for any person. A refugee lacks a place to call home, relatives, citizenship, or even a sense of self. It should come as no surprise that Sen. Gupta and his wife welcome Yassin with open arms. Concern for Yassin's well-being and protection permeates the whole family. Afraid. That's how we all feel. Mindful of your well-being... Yassin, this is your home, and we are your family (Currimbhoy, *The Refugee* 9). You must remember this. As millions of migrants flood into India, the drama highlights how quickly compassion for the displaced person wanes.

Conclusion

The exploration of Asif Currimbhoy's plays reveals a profound engagement with the theme of liberation, a quest that resonates deeply within the fabric of Indian society. Currimbhoy's narratives are not just stories; they are reflections on the human condition, societal constraints, and the eternal pursuit of freedom and dignity. Through his diverse body of work, Currimbhoy delves into the lives of the marginalized, the oppressed, and those on the fringes of society, exposing the multifaceted struggles they face in their quest for liberation.

One of the poignant themes Currimbhoy addresses is the plight of street dwellers. These individuals, often invisible to the mainstream, embody the struggle for survival in an unforgiving urban landscape. Currimbhoy does not merely depict their hardships; he humanizes them, providing a voice to the voiceless. Through his plays, he sheds light on the societal neglect and the systemic failures that consign these individuals to a life of desperation. It is a stark commentary on the socio-economic disparities that plague Indian society and the urgent need for systemic change.

Moreover, Currimbhoy's exploration of the quest for liberation extends to the personal realm, particularly in the context of youth culture. He critically examines the impact of Western influences on Indian society, where the pursuit of individuality and pleasure often leads to a rejection of traditional moral values. Currimbhoy portrays young individuals torn between the allure of modernity and the weight of cultural expectations,

navigating a complex landscape of identity, freedom, and responsibility. This tension reflects a broader societal struggle to reconcile progress with tradition, freedom with duty.

Another significant aspect of Currimbhoy's work is his depiction of the hunger for freedom amidst domestic drudgery. He brings to the forefront the plight of individuals, especially women, trapped in the confines of household duties, yearning for a sense of purpose beyond the domestic sphere. Currimbhoy's plays serve as a critique of the traditional roles imposed on women and the societal norms that limit their aspirations. Through his characters' struggles, he advocates for the liberation of women from the shackles of patriarchy, envisioning a society where every individual has the opportunity to pursue their dreams and aspirations.

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