

Prejudicial Treatment in Asif Currimbhoy's *Goa*

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ABSTRACT

Inequalities are ubiquitous throughout the world and have been a defining aspect of society since prehistoric times. They typically get smaller as civilization develops, but they still exist. They have to do with the unfair distribution of certain highly valued characteristics, such as earnings, wealth, standing, expertise, and power among various units, including people, dwellings, social classes, religious congregations, organizations, castes, regions, and nations. An analysis of disparities' primary objective is to identify the factors that influence how the writer is distributed among relevant units and to explain their causes and effects. An Indian writer who writes in English, Asif Currimbhoy, was familiar with experimental American theatre. He wrote plays with modern themes. He addressed issues of race, class, and gender. Post-colonialism is made up of these three components. His dramas thus draw their themes from the currents of modern politics and existence. He has been referred to as a karma yogi and India's first theatre attention voice. For him, the 1965 drama "Goa," which had its world premiere at Michigan State University, is very special. The Indian invasions of Goa in December 1961 are the subject of the drama. The imposition of the idea of racial supremacy by the white masters and the encouragement of class and caste-passed discrimination by the colonizers essentially changed the future generation as well.

Keywords: *Civilization, Inequality, Political, religion, segmentation.*

Drama has always been a powerful and reliable form of expression in literature around the world. Drama's origins and growth in Greece, Rome, England, and India highlight how crucial these have always been to culture. It has always been the best media for highlighting moral values, religious fervour, philosophical positions, and social, economic, and political changes in many countries. Drama, a mimetic representation of life, unites art and factual truth in one cohesive whole while presenting the events and characters in the context of time and space. Of all literary endeavours, drama is unquestionably the strangest, most alluring, and most amusing. It has been considered the ideal method for exploring human nature in all its forms and expressions since it so closely resembles the inner consciousness of human beings. Drama is a hybrid form of art in which the playwright, actors, and audience all participate in creating and

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sharing a single artistic experience. To generate the desired impression in a drama, the sense, subject, storyline, character, language, and method must be right. The problem of discrimination has fascinated and frustrated social science for a long period. It is both fascinating and irritating since it is a potent mechanism that underlies numerous historical and modern patterns of inequality.

English theatre, a significant stream of creative expression, was unable to develop in the post-independence era. Although pre-independence theatre is known for its poetic brilliance, subject variety, technical competence, symbolic significance, and commitment to ethical and moral principles, it was largely not intended for practical stage performance. The growing international post-independence drama has benefited from interest in Indian English literature in general and Indian English theatre in particular. Several plays by Indian authors, including Asif Currimbhoy, Pratap Sharma, and Gurucharan Das, have been successfully presented in England and the United States. The problem with Indian English drama is that there isn't a regular school for the genre in our nation. Asif Currimbhoy is India's first authentic voice in the theatre. He is the first contemporary Indian playwright who has demonstrated a keen interest in creating drama. English-speaking, an urban middle-class society that is currently experiencing a notable cultural transformation is the subject of contemporary Indian theatre. In post-colonial India, issues connected to the aforementioned become the themes of the plays. The text's structure and plot are modelled around contemporary western drama, not traditional Indian drama. The characters serve as exemplars of the society that these plays are intended for. They are typical Indians from the middle class who live in cities. Their nonverbal cues and emotions reflect their values, concepts, and ideals, which reflect the cultural shifts. The theatrical environment for Indian English drama is currently evolving and developing.

The traditional Indian culture, the dichotomy between the East and the West that has acquired such importance in postcolonial studies plays a major role in Asif Currimbhoy's plays. Along with such issues of contestation as the opposition between the East and the West, racial issues also have propped up as significant areas in postcolonial discourses. The colonial differentiation among human beings based on skin colour assumes considerable importance in many discussions of post-colonialism. It is in this context that the issues regarding ethnicity, primarily concerning the colour of the skin, as dealt with in Asif Currimbhoy's plays are discussed here. It must be analysed how the distinction between the dark-skinned and the white-skinned operates in his plays. In the years following Independence, the Indian theatrical tradition had to deal with the issue of canon construction. The complexity of the endeavour

was increased by the country's varied performing arts, traditions, and its wide variety of languages. An attempt to overcome difficulty of several regional languages and support development of a national theatre was the translation of well-known regional plays into English and other regional languages. The audience did not, however, favour plays that were originally written in English. Dharwadkar observes, “English language drama has not acquired a strong theatrical base or textual currency ... plays written in English, however, remain on the periphery of contemporary Indian theatre and are rarely translated into the indigenous languages of the subcontinent (82)”.

Miranda is only focused on her beauty and her white skin. She considers it to be her biggest asset. Earning the respect, admiration, and love by merit, hard work and real emotions do not concern her because she knows she can just get them if she can please the powerful men. She reiterates to Alphonso that living in Portugal will make her beautiful and it would be for Alphonso. She knows she must keep Alphonso interested in her. Goa examines what happened after Goa gained political independence from the Portuguese in 1971. The play dramatizes the social-political conflict between Goa's Hindu nationalists and the Portuguese, who take advantage of the former. In "Goa", which examines the latter years of the Portuguese occupation of Goa, the issue of racial supremacy is highly prominent. With the aid of a few of his Portuguese characters, Currimbhoy attempts to address the issue of racial superiority in his plays. In some cases, racism and the contradiction between oneself and the other are related, according to the playwright.

The observation that science did not entirely aid in the dispelling of any of the prior pre-colonial assumptions about inferior races strengthens the theory. Race served as a marker for people's civilizational and cultural traits in addition to their skin colour. It is in this context Loomba observes that the European scientists' prejudice about their own racial identities prevented them from "radically questioning scientific theories of racial difference" (Currimbhoy 62).

Miranda's knowledge of colour extends to her daughter as well, and due to her apparent disdain for people of colour, she bans anyone from contacting her dark-skinned daughter. She knows that "Only I am fair, and she's dark" (Currimbhoy 37). The traditional maternal attitude is destabilized by colour difference that in turn functions as a harsh irritant and reminder to Miranda of her daughter's inferiority as demonstrated in her statement. Thus, "they say it should give rise to love when it's cut out from your flesh. But the colour is different. A constant reminder" (Currimbhoy 37). Miranda is aware of the importance of parental love, but she downplays its importance due to her underlying concern with skin colour. Her perception of skin tone seems to be profoundly set and it captures her colonial aristocratic attitude, down to

her daughter, whose dark skin acts as a constant reminder to her of something she does not share. In colonized societies, power is held by the white due to the same racial bias, and people of colour are viewed as strange and foreign. The Portuguese regard Krishna, the black native in Portuguese-colonized Goa, as an outsider and an alien. Senhora Miranda frequently reiterates the widely accepted colonial adage that black is unclean and white is neat. In her reference to Krishna, she says, "He is a stranger here. I can make it out. He is not like the others. Dark, yes, but not like the others" (Currimbhoy 43). At this juncture, Senhora Miranda, a fair-looking woman of about forty, who is also a prostitute, enters her home on the east side of the stage. She seems to tell the young man, "It's getting dark now. I can see your lips no longer: I do not know what you say. ... But my heart is full of love... and I would love ... this secrecy..." (Currimbhoy 15). Though Senhora Miranda has many customers as a prostitute, she purely loves Alphonse because both belong to Portugal and also, he is very rich.

Alphonso usually gives gifts to Miranda. When she introduces her daughter Rose to him, he calls her the fairest flower in the whole world and says that "Rose is Goa. Goa is Rose." (Currimbhoy 34). Krishna unfolds Miranda that he loves Rose and says that "I've waited for her too long. It took care and patience, and long years of understanding. You see, we had something in common. It rhymed; it matched. But, it was more than that. I love her." (Currimbhoy 42). But, Miranda does not like him for her daughter. As Alphonso too wants Rose, there is a dispute between Alphonso and Krishna. Alphonso could not bear the love of Krishna on Rose, so he beats him, but Krishna does not afraid of him and tells him "I said I stay here. I've taken your place." (Currimbhoy 66). Alphonso thinks that Krishna is interested in Miranda. Indeed, he loves her daughter Rose. Though Rose loves Krishna, she is not allowed to meet him because Miranda does not like her to be Krishna's girl. As he cannot control his wrath, he kills Alphonso and goes to Rose who is called "Rose is Goa and Goa is Rose" and rapes her. Finally, both the mother and daughter have turned up to be prostitutes. In the play, Goa becomes the metaphor for the vicissitudes of Goa and its history. All the main four characters, Rose, Krishna, Senhora Miranda, and Alphonso assume allegorical significance. Currimbhoy did not think about the political things regarding the plot. He is not supposed to "disturb the balancing forces which are in the play" (Currimbhoy 47).

The other aspect of the play is 'lust' which dominates all over the play on all the main characters. The dialogues make the audience bemused and keep them in a buoyant mood. If we want to discuss 'lust,' one should remind the character Miranda who is a diplomatic lady and attracts men with her sexual structure. She compares Alphonso to her former husband to get sympathy

and always praises Alphonso. Although they have different characters, their lust and sexual passions bring them together. She is very happy to have sex with him and wants to get married to him. She says: "I am your girl. I'm your mistress and your wife" She does not believe in love. She makes sexual corruption on Alphonso as well as Krishna. The play presents a pen picture of Goa's disintegration from the Portuguese. Based on this historical occurrence, Goa addresses the problem of Indian subjectivity on the axes of race and colour distinction and articulates a discourse of resistance against the colonial discourse inextricably linked with imperialist power politics. "Asif Currimbhoy has in a roundabout way mentions how colonialism still dominates in India by the names of love, lust, and romance."

This seemingly simple love story develops with symbolic dimensions into a strange and terrifying play of deep emotions and uncontrollable forces. Within the framework of a story centering around the romance of an Indian boy and a Goans girl, as P.B. Reddy opines, "the dramatist highlights colonialism and colour prejudice in a light ironic vein". Goa majorly shows the theme of colour distinction. Senhora Miranda, who is an upper-class lady, represents the white Portuguese in the play. She ill-treats the dark-skinned people and says, They make me feel dirty" (Currimbhoy 37). She does not only consider the dark-skinned beneath her, but she also is repulsed by them. She thinks she might get polluted by the "dirty" black natives. This displays the general disgust and contempt that the non-whites in general and the blacks faced at the hands of their white masters. Being overly conscious of the white colour of her skin gives Miranda the confidence of improving her prospects of the more privileged life. She expresses her self-confidence with enthusiasm thus: "See how white my skin is?" (Currimbhoy 26). She is proud of her skin colour as it gives her a sense of being superior to the general dark-skinned populace without having earned it. She does not have many accomplishments to justify her being superior other than having fairer skin. She consistently derides and puts down the native dark-skinned people, which serves the dual purpose of giving her more confidence while at the same time creating a sense of being inferior in the colonized populace. This is a very serious example of how the general attitude of the whites and their deep contempt and hatred for the black-skinned creates a cycle of lifting the whites and lowering the native black-skinned at the same time. The "difference" between the white and the dark-skinned in his play Goa have evidenced in a conversation between the term "different" here show how the whites have always considered the dark natives as alien creatures and apart from exploiting them as a "human material", they do not wish to encounter them. The entire purpose of the blacks is to enrich and supplement the lives of the whites. The whites think that having too much friendly

contact is "unbecoming" of them. It is supposedly all right to talk to them occasionally to keep them in line but becoming friends with them is beneath the superior white man.

The "difference" in the white and the dark-skinned in his play Goa have evidenced her in a conversation between Senhora Miranda and Alphonso:

Senhora Miranda: Why, Alphonso, I've seen you talk for hours on end...with your friends.

Alphonso: Oh, they're different...

Senhora Miranda: I should hope so. I wish you wouldn't mix with... alfof them.

Alphonso: What do you mean?

Senhora Miranda: Oh, I mean it's alright if you have a drink with the Administrator, or have a chat with the Vicar... but the rest... (Shrugginghershoulders)... of the Goans...

Alphonso: Why, what's wrong with them?

Senhora Miranda: They... they don't have the same background. Youunderstand. Oh, it's alright, I suppose if you occasionally meet them, but this idea of being too friendly with all and sundry hasn't exactlybecome.

Alphonso: Why not? Senhora Miranda: Well, I don't have to keeprepeating myself, do I? We're different, you know.

Alphonso: ... We?

Senhora Miranda: Yes, I remember my parents telling me, me... how itwas necessary to keep a distance (Currimbhoy35).

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SENHORA MIRANDA: You're not peaceful Krishna; you're violent.

KRISHNA: Peaceful...to Rose.

SENHORA MIRANDA: (Pause) Is that...how Rose sees you, Krishna?

KRISHNA: Yes. (Currimbhoy 59)

Gender is a particularly complex subject because it includes actions, attitudes and the personality traits associated with a particular sex. It is generally considered as a set of specific

norms that deem what is socially and culturally appropriate for the individuals belonging to a specific sex. The social and cultural norms arise from a myriad of complex factors, which include historical context, religion, geography, political landscape and the prevailing views in the society. These norms often are carried from one generation to the next and are highly resilient to change. The seemingly permanent categorization of the gender roles is the product of these norms. Asif Currimbhoy fully realizes these challenges faced by the women and often gives more importance to his women characters in his plays. He shows his different perspective from the usual characterization of women. In the plays of Currimbhoy, women take centre stage. His female characters are mostly housewives, instructors, mistresses, daughters, slaves, and servants who come from lower- and middle-class backgrounds. Asif Currimbhoy fully realizes these challenges faced by the women and often gives more importance to his women characters in his plays. He shows his different perspective from the usual characterization of women.

In Currimbhoy's plays, women take the stage. The majority of the women he writes about are housewives, instructors, mistresses, daughters, slaves, and servants. Currimbhoy's portrayal of Senhora Miranda in the play *Goa* shows how she can lose her 'self' and blindly follow the ideas and structures the men have established. In her desire for a higher status and recognition, she does not even shy from doing various injustices to her own daughter Rose. Senhora Miranda is undoubtedly the pivotal character who influences all the others. She is a strong, bold lady who is aware of her effect on others and thoroughly enjoys the attention. A woman in her forties, she is a fair-skinned and good looking which makes her egotistical and callous. Thinking of herself above others perceived as less beautiful, she is not averse to ill-treat others. She is obsessed with the external beauty as desired by men. She uses the desire of men for a woman's external beauty to attain a higher social status. Even in her desire to use men's desire to get a better life for herself, she is in fact a victim of the sustained conditioning of women to seek recognition and approval of the men in the society. She is indeed aware that it is the men who are the real centres of power in the society, and she must place them in order to reap the benefits of the power and control exercised by the men. She seeks powerful men to bask under the influence of their power. When she says to Alphonso:

SENHORA MIRANDA: Ah, be cheerful Alphonso. I love you that way. It's so much fun then. Be cheerful, Alphonse. For my sake, tell me about

Portugal... wonderful Portugal, Ahh, wouldn't I look beautiful there... and young too.

The climate... does things... for your skin. Makes it firm and tight... for you my

dear and rosy.

ALPHONSO: (Dully) Rose?

SENHORA MIRANDA: (Sharply) I said rosy! (Then softly, trying to get back

to dream-life) Rosy, pink and red. See how white my skin is? It would turn

pink and red. (Currimbhoy 17)

As a playwright, Currimbhoy has always created drama out of morally bizarre political situations, and Goa is possibly the best example of the form. It animates the difference between oneself and the other by emphasizing colour distinction as a criterion of racist analysis in the postcolonial world with its dichotomy between oneself and other, against the backdrop of Goa's disintegration during its liberation from colonial authority. The play explores whites' beliefs that people of colour are inferior to them because of their skin colour and how whites have historically held a dominant position in colonial politics as stated beneath Senhora Miranda, I always thought Rose's defects were congenital having been originally theirs, rather than by accident. If something is inevitable, it becomes congenital rather than accidental (Currimbhoy 64).

Asif Currimbhoy portrays the tension between one and the other in Goa by using colour difference as a factor in a racist interpretation in a postcolonial setting. Concerning postcolonial human connections, it highlights the significance of an existing cultural and racial preconception paradigm. Fanon's powerful critique of colonialism, the wretched of the earth, demonstrates how the nations of racial hierarchy robustly inflected the capitalist exploitation, "Western bourgeois racial prejudice as regards the nigger, and the Arab is racism of contempt; it is a racism which minimizes what it hates... The racial prejudice of the young national bourgeoisie is racism of defence, based on fear" (131). Even family ties are built on the duality that exists between the upper and the lowest poles of society. Due to his inventive portrayal of a racial paradigm that helps understand a postcolonial conflict between oneself and the other in Goa, Asif Currimbhoy has established himself as a postcolonial dramatist in English. Goa amply exhibits Currimbhoy's outstanding theatrical sensibility and his prowess as a playwright.

Even with extensive legal protections for all citizens and guarantees of equality, widespread discrimination persists in one's society. One of the most prevalent types of human rights abuses and breaches is discrimination, in all of its manifestations and forms. It is one of the hardest to recognize and it impacts millions of people every day. Discrimination not only affects the individuals and groups who are subjected to it directly, but it also has significant indirect effects on society. People are prevented from freely achieving their full potential for themselves and

for society in societies where prejudice is permitted or accepted. Discrimination can be applied directly or subtly. The purpose to discriminate against a person, or a group, is what defines direct discrimination. Indirect discrimination is when a seemingly neutral rule, standard, or practice, in fact, disadvantages members of a certain group in comparison to others. Asif Currimbhoy's curious eyes check out all sectors of society. In his plays, he has tried to portray people from rock bottom to the very best.

Asif Currimbhoy believes and affirms that each political event features a profound impact on society. So, he doesn't forget to touch on the social aspect of the matter albeit he has done any political event because of the theme of his games. His heart is filled with love for suffering mankind. One of the unique aspects of Currimbhoy's plays is the intricate and overlapping issues of racial discrimination, alienation of the poor, oppression of society based on class, and cruelty and indifference of individuals & society towards the sufferings of the less privileged. No play written by Currimbhoy deals with only a single issue. While a particular issue of the theme may be central to the plot of the play. Currimbhoy explores the full range of human emotions and human conditions. It creates a play that captivates and holds the audience to appreciate the different perspectives of the characters and empathizes with them. He is a masterful playwright, and he uses a lot of devices to show the plight of the affected and indifference, cruelty, callousness, and immorality of the perpetrators. Race, class, and gender in Currimbhoy's different plays establish the variety, versatility, and universality of his dramatic art. His plays are necessarily "emotional reactions". The imposition of the idea of racial supremacy by the white masters and the encouragement of class and caste-passed discrimination by the colonizers essentially changed the future generation as well. It was a complex process of subjugation and manipulation of societies over a span of multiple centuries.

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