

A Critical Inspection of Socio-Cultural Realities in American Society Based on Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* with the Ethical Lens of Emmanuel Levinas

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Abstract

Political theater reveals the problematic issues of a society to make its audience stand up for their suppressed rights and to compel the States to make political and social reforms. Although the American politicians claim to have established justice, equality and morality, the marginal minorities have lost their identity in the American society as a result of the discrimination imposed by the government and the mainstream. This Article aims at depicting the dark reality and the real position of marginal minorities in the American society as well as the solution of this issue suggested by Tony Kushner in his play *Angels in America*. This study was conducted under the light of Levinasian ethical principles and his concepts of the other and face to face encounter. Having scrutinized *Angels in America*, it was found that marginalizing the minorities causes them not to participate in social movements and also to hide their real identity. Also the result of this study showed that solidarity, hope and social activism are the solution to prevent the devastation of the American society. More political theories can be taken to reduce ethical problems that America is faced with as well as in the Middle East.

Key words: Tony Kushner, *Angels in America*, Emmanuel Levinas, the Other, Morality, Ethics, American society.

Introduction

In this Article the Levinasian ethical approach is taken as the theoretical framework to study Tony Kushner's masterpiece *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Theme* part one: *Millennium Approaches* and part two: *Perestroika*. Tony Kushner is considered as one of the most effective postwar drama play writers and the winner of Pulitzer Prize for *Angels in America* in 1993. It is noteworthy that both parts of *Angels in America* have been praised by Jack Kroll in Newsweek published in 1993 as the broadest, deepest, and most of cited play in the American literature. Aside from Pulitzer Prize, the play received the Tony Award for Best Play in 1993 and Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play in 1993. *Angels in America* is an eclectic play that the majority of critics and reviewers have marked it as an "epic drama" or "AIDS drama" (Smith, p. 152). The first official production of *Angels in America* was by Eureka Theatre Company in San Francisco. In 1992, it was published by Nick Hern Books in London. Later, Mike Nichols directed *Angels in America* as a miniseries that won the Golden Globe and Emmy Award of 2004. Moreover, in 2003 the composer Peter Eotvos produced the opera of *Angels in America* in Paris at the Theatre Du Chatelet.

In *The News Yorker*, John Lahr looked at *Angels in America: Perestroika* as a masterpiece and claims that no playwright announced his poetic vision with such authority on the Broadway

stage since Williams. Also, Robert Burstein considers *Millennium Approaches* as "the authoritative achievement of a playwright with a clear expression of his ideas. John Clum believes that, the presentation of the *Angels* on the Broadway heralds a big change in the history of American drama as well as the American literary culture. Frank Rich, in *New York Times*, points to the ability of the play in reconsideration of the whole esthetic of American political drama as the reason for its success. According to *Contemporary American Playwrights* it is "a theatre of the right politics engaged in the context of an unfolding history, and a theatre that imagination is a primary force. In the *Theatre of Tony Kushner: Living Past Hope*, James Fisher quotes Kushner: "I think theatre has to have the jokes, the feathers, and the mirrors and the smoke." (p.16).

In the American society, although American politicians claim that America observes human rights and provides equality and justice for everyone, it seems that the mainstream majorities systematically are ignoring all the other members of the society due to the differences in the ideas, race, sex, religious beliefs and sexual tendencies, and other differences. Blacks, women, AIDS sufferers, religious minorities such as Mormons, Jews and many others, and those with different sexual tendencies are deprived from equal opportunities and social justice. As a political activist of his society, Kushner tries to inform the American citizens about the dark reality and the hidden immoralities that are imposed by the mainstreams and the American government on the marginal minorities of the American society. Apparently, there is no sense of brotherhood and love in the American society. It seems that the marginal minorities do not participate in social activities because of the fear of revealing their true identity. Here, the present writer by choosing a Levinasian ethical lens tries to melt the icebergs of the play and let the readers experience the immoralities of the American society imposed on the marginal minorities and the solution that Kushner implicitly and explicitly stated in the play. The point is that, as a result of othering, omitting and marginalizing those with different religious or political ideas from the core of the society or mainstream, the society would fall in a state of inaction. The eliminated members of the society are not provided with the equal opportunities and justice, and do not have the chance to be developed and flourished. Today, the American society is filled up with many inactive citizens who take no action to save the society. Moreover, the Blacks, religious minorities, AIDS sufferers, and those with different sexual tendencies are not provided with equal opportunities and facilities because of their differences with the main stream. Tony Kushner as a political activist of this society, encourages the minorities to stand up for their rights to live like any other accepted citizens. It reminds minorities that they deserve the same opportunities and justice. He also invites all to forgive each other and announces solidarity as a solution for the American society. More specifically, This Article is to reveal whether being considered as the other leads to the fear of revealing one's real identity in social interactions in America as a social liberal country or not.

Theoretical Framework

Generally, Ethics is studied from three different viewpoints including Normative Ethics that articulates moral theories so as to be followed, Applied Ethics that concentrates on practicality and application of so-called moral theories proposed by Normative Ethics, and Meta-Ethics that focuses on the nature of moral regulations and norms. However, Immanuel Levinas has different views on ethics.

Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) suggested his ethical philosophy on the basis of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology and also Martin Heidegger's question of being, but he moved beyond them. Levinas believes that "morality is not a branch of philosophy, but first philosophy" (*Totality and infinity*, p. 304). "The Face" and "The Other" are two central concepts in his philosophy. An ethical Face-to-Face situation is a condition in which a moral agent faces the other without any

presupposition. An important aspect of this face-to-face situation is the way that the presence of the *other's* face questions the spontaneity of the self. If one judges the *other* based on sameness or differences in comparison with him or another criteria, the ethic fails. Facing the *other's* face establishes a demand upon the self that penetrates into self and such a demand and encounter are the bases of ethical actions. Self is responsible towards the *other* as the encounter takes place. However, the others are simply neglected since they are different. As Kuusela puts forward:

The face of the *other* contests the subject in its aspiration to reduce all otherness into itself, and in this sense the face makes a claim on the self. This claim constitutes a breach of the self's world, and limits the self's imperialistic tendencies, calling it to respond to the claim made by the *other's* face. (p.128).

For Levinas, as a matter of fact, "the self is asymmetrically situated in relation to the *other*" (*Entre Nous*, p. 149. In Levinas's view: "The self is only brought out of its narcissistic enclosure into a state of moral responsibility through encountering the *other*" (qtd. in Skempton, p. 230) and it is the face of the *other* that calls one to act morally and enact a responsibility. So all moral actions have external sources. Levinas is not to create a moral system in which moral rules and regulations define what to do or what not to do, nor to introduce a moral model agent to be imitated by others, Levinas focuses on the issue of the ethical relation someone is in with the others or how people are in an ethical network. Such ethical network is an essential base for establishing human. Hence, Levinas considers "human existence as characterized by an underlying ethical dimension; the mode of being of humans is fundamentally ethical." (qtd. in Kuusela, p. 126). However, people usually ignore this ethical demand posed by the *other*.

In his essay "Transcendence and intelligibility" published in *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*", Levinas states: "Knowledge is a relationship of the *same* with the *other* in which the *other* is reduced to the same and divested of its strangeness" (p. 151). He introduces an irreducible other that cannot come to the order of the same. According to Leche, "Ethics is the practical relation of one to the *other*, a relation which is prior to ontology. The absolutely *other* is the other person (autrui)" (p. 117).

Review of the Literature

Today, Tony Kushner is considered by many researchers as one of the greatest contemporary literary figures of the 21st century whose works have effectively inspired many other authors and researchers. As a result of Kushner's attempts as an influential figure in the establishment of social trends and changes, different books, theses and articles have been published about his works and his ideas. What follows is a short review of the studies done on Tony Kushner's works especially on his masterpiece *Angels in America*. Although each of the following studies focuses on a specific point in *Angels in America*, the current article stresses on an attitude of Levinasian ethical approach as well as highlighting Kushner's purpose of showing the result of marginalizing the minorities that causes them to hide their real identity.

Tony Kushner's "*Gay Fantasia on National Themes*": *Initial Impact, Adaptations and Reverberations* by George Ainsworth Christensen is a thesis submitted to the English Faculty of the University of Delaware for the degree of Master of Arts in Liberal Studies. In his thesis Christensen compares the text of Kushner's *Angels in America* and the script of the film adopted from it. He finally concludes that the film has eliminated some anti-Reagan political content of the original play and also the queer parts. Focusing on the play in details, George Ainsworth Christensen states that *Angels in America* plays the role of an education system and educates many minorities to be self-confident and develop self-acceptance. Christensen compares the play to the film adopted from the

original play to see how the changes, censorship, elimination and addition of parts have reduced the critical power and anti-Reaganism of the original play.

“Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America: Histories, Futures, and Queer Lives*” is an article by Vanessa Campagna that studies the general themes in *Angels in America*, Histories and the futurity of queer life in America. Vanessa tries to study the framework of queerness in the history of contemporary America and its future in the American society. This article concentrates on some of the rules and regulations that America has passed to support LGBT (Lesbians, Gay, bisexual and transgender) society and also the current conditions of queers. The article compares *Angels in America* with other prior literary works and the themes and characters of them to see how Kushner represents a different atmosphere about queers. Vanessa states the aim of her article as a deeper cultivation to the history that *Angels in America* challenges by placing it in conversation with earlier plays from queer repertoire. Moreover she contextualizes and illuminates the future imagined and demanded by the protagonist of the play.

In “Kushner’s Political Theater” by Suzana Stefanovic, a faculty member of the Philosophy in Nis, Yugoslavia, the focus is on the critical role of *Angels in America*. Stefanovic explores Kushner’s epic play along with the context of traditional American drama. In this paper, the author states that although the play is dominated by gay themes, Kushner is searching for an American identity which is lost in American immoral society. He compares Kushner with other playwrights such as Miller, Albee, and Mamet who challenge the collapse of social, religious and moral structures in the American society. Stefanovic believes that Kushner criticizes the social structure of America through the viewpoint of his characters who are mostly gays - a symbol of marginality. Moreover, this paper talks about Kushner’s apocalyptic view of America and holds that America is approaching the end of millennium. It also argues that people should have an impact on the historical process through political engagement and activism. He finally states the possibility of potential change and salvation.

In “Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America* or How American history Spins Forward”, an article written by Alfonso Ceballos Munoz published by the University of Cadiz, *Angels in America* is introduced as a successful work, showing a real turning point in the American drama. It focuses on the way Kushner treats the history of America and those factors that led America to have a social crisis in 1980s. The writer thinks that Tony Kushner has embedded his Brechtian and Hegelian visions of current matters through the characters and those circumstances that they undergo in the two parts of the play. Munoz states that Kushner has merged the traditional American myths and culture to reconstruct an identity. This article expresses that Kushner’s use of a gay as a protagonist and inclusion of religious elements along with apocalyptic literary style and political criticism of Reagan provides a revision of the new America, a social atmosphere in which all individuals would re-create their capabilities.

Eric Harrod in his study of *Angels in America* entitled “Collaboration in *Angels in America*” investigates the sense of collaboration between the characters of the play toward progress. It states that the progressive movement toward positive change and success are not possible unless the collaboration between engaged people take place. In this article prior’s resistance against his disease AIDS is considered as a difficult task that was not possible without the help of Harper. Here, Harrod tries to uncover the importance of collaboration in any tasks especially social changes.

Scott Ebersold from Columbia University worked on his Master degree thesis entitled *A Bright Room Called Day: Adaptation and Performance*. Tony Kushner’s *A bright Room Called Day* is somehow similar to *Angels in America* and Kushner follows his critical role as an American citizen. The thesis stresses on the political involvement and social responsibility of citizens. The main point in this work is the rise of Nazism in Germany, the pressure that Jews and other marginal

minorities suffered and also the hope of eliminating such unethical norms. Kushner states that the so-called evil idea that overcame the social life and all folks of people in Germany and spread in all over the world, was so dangerous. Kushner warns his readers to be careful about the results of such evil ideas that considers the different people as the other, and also the possibility of the re-rise of such fascist ideology in the society.

“Angels in America: AIDS as an Epidemic of Signification” by Kara DeMilio looks at *Angels in America* as a serious play about politics, spirituality, death and politics criticizing 1980s Reaganism and also conservative political and cultural movement of the U.S after World War II. This paper investigates the messages the play conveys including resistance against the problems and also the hope toward possibility of the change. Mostly it focuses on the political nature of the play and how it criticizes American politicians in 1980s. Basically, DeMilio narrows his canon to the historical background of the play - 1980s - that AIDS epidemic strikes America. Also, the period that Jews emigrated to the U.S so as to have a better life. What is different in this paper is the comparative study of the characters of the play with the figures in real world.

“The Great Work Begins: Rituals of Catharsis towards a New Era in Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America*”, a paper by Chrysoula Titi considers *Angels in America* as a depiction of an apocalyptic world that is coming to an end. Titi believes in the positive role of this play in establishing a sense of hope about the future and also the way Kushner criticizes the moral, spiritual and political decaying American society. The main focus of Titi is on the catharsis that the sick individuals and in the larger extent the American society would reach through the changes in individual and social trends. Titi explores the redefinition of a new world free from immorality and also the difficulty of the change. Creating or redefining a new innocent society is hard but the harder task is saving such community. Reaching such a society is a valuable achievement, however, there is the possibility of losing everything again. Titi warns that making the change is not enough and one should struggle progressively to keep the trend.

“Universe of Wounds: Visions of Redemptive Apocalypse in Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America*”, an article by Amaal Jassim Muhammed investigates the sense of apocalypse evoked by Tony Kushner in *Angels in America* and the notion of necessary ends and their effects on the marginal minorities’ lives. This article suggests that *Angels in America* is a reminder of catastrophes such as AIDS, racism, homophobia, drug addiction and etc. in the American society and the signals of the end of history and America as a nation. Muhammed mentions these as revelations of catastrophic breakdown in politics and culture of the American society. This article studies the point of apocalypse that Kushner tries to evoke in his readers so as to inform them about the social crisis in the society. Moreover, it stresses the necessity of the change and redemption about the current immoral trend in America.

Emil Rybczak in his article named “Tony Kushner’s Use of Angels in Building a Community” explores mutual and social supports as necessary factors to reach personal and social goals. Rybczak claims that Kushner shows the mutual and social supports via angels and angelic roles of the characters of the play. Moreover the limitations and power of the inherited cultural statements and identity in providing helpful framework to establish one’s placement in relation to others is studied. The main point here is the replacement of the old values but not all, with the new ones that would lead to the development of the society and its people. It is believed that to make a progressive community as well as an efficient cultural identity we need angels and angelic behaviors. These angels are not going to come from heavens but by serving the other members of the community everyone can be an angel.

Methodology

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This research is corpus based, descriptive and library based. To conduct the research, the Levinasian ethical approach is used as the theoretical framework of the research. The focus of this thesis is on the state of ethical nature of American society toward the social minorities with different religious ideas, race, and color and also different sexual tendencies. The concepts of the other, and face-to-face encounter, are the points taken to conduct this research. A descriptive- qualitative analysis was done on Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasy on National Themes Part One: Millennium Approaches* and Part Two: *Perestroika* to understand the social placement of each character in the hierarchy of power in the American society. To do so, a descriptive analysis of the points about the unethical and immoral state of the American society toward minorities and the others, what Kushner tries to show them to his readers in *Angels in America*, will be presented. Moreover, the solution that Tony Kushner heralds for the readers to be out of such immoral conditions is analyzed on.

Discussion

The Reality of the American Society for the Marginal Minorities

Although Levinas considers the *other* as the one who provokes ethical reaction in a moral agent, the cults, black, religious minorities, AIDS sufferers and those with different sexual tendencies are not treated as equally as typical members of the society in the United States. As Kushner depicts the feeling of marginalized minorities and the intra-group relationship of marginal cults, these minorities are afraid of revealing their real identity. Minorities cannot improve and flourish their abilities easily or reveal their tendencies freely due to the fear of being neglected by the society.

Kushner claims that the way the American society treats the minorities, people who are different from the mainstream, caused these marginal groups not to be flourished. Campagna said "Prior and other queers, in turn, fights to re-appropriate space for reimagined lives and futures." (p. 2) in *Angels in America*, the characters such as gay and lesbians, AIDS sufferers, Blacks and other cults fight for their identity and resist against the force that tries to make them *the Same* or to eliminate them from the society. Campagna states that:

Prior not only lives, but he lives on his own terms. In this sense, the play not only reimagines queer lives in America, but functions meta-dramatically to redirect historical representations of queer characters in the American drama...Prior is a revolutionary character for his resistance of that tragic frame, and for his subsequent demand for a future incumbent of a decidedly queer citizenship. (p. 3)

The social placement of Marginal Minorities in the American Society

Kushner dramatizes Prior as a representative of all suppressed members of the society whom the government and members of the society have not considered them as typical members. When Prior says: "We will be citizens, the time has come" (p. 280), he means that the American society is going to recognize these marginal groups as citizens and they can freely reveal themselves. There will be no need to hide their Mormon ideas. It will be no more necessary to conceal ones sexual tendency by marrying an opposite sex, as Joe Pitt did in the play.

Being considered as an outsider is very hard and causes so many troubles for the minorities. Such discriminations and immoralities are common for the minorities and they are used to the pressures and discrimination that are imposed on them. The following line by Prior reveals the reality of the circumstances for the marginal minorities in the American society.

Prior says: "I can handle pressure, I am a gay man and I am used to pressure, to trouble" (p. 123)

He has been treated pejoratively because of being different from the rest of the society and now he is used to it. Kushner shows that Prior is fighting for his rights and is not going to hide his reality. It is going to be a must-be cliché for LGBTs and they have to be able to handle pressures otherwise they cannot live their life.

The Fear of being considered as the other in American society

In act III of Millennium Approaches, Kushner depicts the sense of fear of loneliness in Prior in the dialogue between prior and Louis. Although Levinas stated that “I am responsible for the *other* without waiting for reciprocity, were I to die for it” (*Ethics and infinity*, p. 98), the fear of being ignored does not allow the minorities to show their real identity even to their close friends.

Louis: When did you find this?

Prior: I couldn't tell you.

Louis: Why?

Prior: I was scared, Lou.

Louis: Of what?

Prior: That you'll leave me.

Louis: Oh. (p. 28)

Prior and Louis are a homo couple that live together for a while, however when Louis realizes that prior has got AIDS he decides to leave him or at least Prior is afraid of losing Louis. Based on Levinas ethical approach, Louis's action is not a moral one because he is just considering his own benefits of not being infected by HIV and is indifferent toward his partner Prior. One would claim that Prior's fear is not logical and Louis would not leave him, but Louis does leave prior due to AIDS. Where is the humanity here then? What is the ethical role of a friend? Who should support Prior in this situation? Prior is just a sample character and representative of so many folk of his own type. The minorities who are being ignored due to the differences in their beliefs, religion, sexual tendencies, skin color, gender and disease.

Seemingly there are some of the minorities in the hierarchy of power in the American society, but with a fake identity. They are not successful in achieving their goals, but in hiding their real identity and pretending to be with another character. Roy Cohn is successful in the first place, but to what price. He has hidden his real identity of gay hood and is afraid of revealing his identity. He is at risk of loss in case of revealing the truth. The following dialogue between Toy Cohn and his doctor depicts the tragic sense of fear of being ignored and loss among the marginalized minorities. Roy Cohn is afraid of being judged as an AIDS victim due to the fear of being classified in the Homo categories.

HENRY: Well, I have just removed one of three lesions which biopsy results will probably tell us is a Kaposi's sarcoma lesion. And you have a pronounced swelling of glands in your neck, groin, and armpits—lymphadenopathy is another sign. And you have oral candidiasis and maybe a little more fungus under the fingernails of two digits on your right hand. So that's why. . .

ROY: This disease. . .

HENRY: Syndrome.

ROY: Whatever. It afflicts mostly homosexuals and drug addicts.

HENRY: Mostly. Hemophiliacs are also at risk.

ROY: Homosexuals and drug addicts. So why are you implying that I. . .

(Pause)

What are you implying, Henry?

HENRY: I don't. . .

ROY: I'm not a drug addict.....

Go on, Henry, it starts with an "H. (p. 50)

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Roy tries to change the facts and everything in order not to let the reality appear. He attempts to save his false moral and unreal face by changing medical documents to pretend that he has died as a result of liver cancer and not AIDS. He is afraid of being considered as the other and losing moral responsibility and praise of the society.

As James Fisher poses “no less a question than can a nation—its society and its people—be considered moral if it oppresses any portion of its citizenry.”(p. 26). The immoral trend of othering and pushing minorities into the margin of the society is clear in the following monologue by Roy Cohn:

Homosexual. Gay. Lesbian. You think these are names that tell you who someone sleeps with, but they don't tell you that . . . Like all labels they tell you one thing and one thing only: where does an individual so identified fit in the food chain, in the pecking order? Not ideology, or sexual taste, but something much simpler: clout ... Homosexuals are not men who sleep with other men. Homosexuals are men who in fifteen years of trying cannot get a pissant antidiscrimination bill through City Council. Homosexuals are men who know nobody and who nobody knows. Who have zero clout. (p. 51)

Roy knows that in the American immoral society instead of encountering the other as a source of moral action, the American society pushes the other into the margin in order not to be morally responsible toward them. Roy is sure that if his disease and also the reason of his sickness or death be revealed for the society he too would be pushed into the margin of the society and he would lose his rank. Roy hides his real identity as a result of his fear of losing his position in the American society and hierarchy of power.

Moreover, Louis admits that the American society is not the claimed heaven that the American politicians talk about. he shows his hatred of this community with the following statement.

Louis: Fuck assimilation ... [with] the monolith of White America. White Straight Male America (p. 96).

Louis states that in the American society there are different levels of limitation and marginalization that limits members of the American society in each level. Blacks due to their skin color, women because of their gender, homosexuals due to their sexual tendencies, AIDS sufferers due to their disease and some due to their political approach. Belize, who is a black ex-drag queen, works as a nurse and serves Prior and Roy. He has felt the discrimination and says that he has “a rather intimate knowledge of the complexity of the lines of [oppression]” (p. 100). Prior's monologues challenge the traditional American immoral action of marginalizing the minorities including AIDS sufferers community and queers and othering the religious cults.

Prior: Bless me anyway. I want more life. I can't help myself. I do. . . . Death usually has to *Take* life away. I don't know if that's just the animal. I don't know if it's not braver to die. But I recognize the habit. The addiction to being alive. We live past hope. If I can find hope anywhere, that's it, that's the best I can do. It's so much not enough, so inadequate but. . . Bless me anyway. I want more life. (p. 267)

However, Kushner invites his readers and the suppressed minorities to stand up for their rights. By using the minorities as the main characters of his play Kushner tried to express the reality of the American society in the first place to inform people about the depth of the immoral state of the American society. After revealing the truth for his readers, he heralds a change that is going to happen in case of solidarity and cooperation of the members of the society and participation of the minorities in the social activities. As Prior expresses:

Prior: This disease will be the end of many of us, but not nearly all, and the dead will be commemorated and will struggle on with the living, and we are not going away. We won't die secret deaths anymore. The world only spins forward. We will be citizens. The time has come. (p. 280)

It is time to have a Moral American society

In the article entitled *Tony Kushner's Angel Archive and the Re-visioning of American History* Howard writes: "Kushner ... create[s] a tentative theatrical intimation of a *different*, less injurious future." (Howard, p. 10). Kushner himself as a writer is morally responsible toward the members of his society and is to make them free of the moral crisis that the American society deals with. Based on Kushner's play "it is time minorities including queers, AIDS sufferer community and other marginal demanded futurity, they are the source and causes of moral action and must not hide themselves in reaction to immoral treatment of the society. (p. 280). Prior does not accept death because he wants to be morally active and make changes for himself and for the society. He is to help society to be moral. According to Campagna:

The time had come for a queer character to receive not merely access to life, but to a life lived on *his own terms*. And so, Prior boldly rejects death. He rebukes the tragic frame that says to queers, "conform or be written off." In the final analysis, Prior is not an anti-hero; he is a prophet (p. 11)

Kushner included "Millennium Approaches" in the title of his work, since the play has an apocalyptic theme and brings up the idea of millennium that Christians are expecting to come. The time of Jesus Christ second coming that means Christ would come back to world again and governs the world and judges all human being. Kushner heralds that the millennium approaches and a change is approaching and that is the change of immorality into morality, considering minorities including homosexuals as citizen as homosexuals would be encountered by society and cause the society to be morally responsible toward them. As Muhammad reports:

The play functions as a reminder of catastrophes: AIDS, racism, homophobia, sexism, moral erosion and drug addiction. These are the plays' most obvious examples of the imminent end of history and of America as a nation. the term "apocalypse" refers to catastrophes that resemble the imagined final end that can be interpreted as an end of something, a way of life or thinking. (p. 37)

Kushner believes that by spreading social ties and morality and also embracing the marginalized minorities it is possible to be united again and recover all old values of humanity and morality. "only in the wake of ADIS, but also out of the ruins of the entire postmodern collapse." It is an opportunity for rebirth and renewal. (p. 45). Kushner is calling humans beings to make a united world without othering any one or any different race. If one avoids facing the other in order to escape from moral responsibility, immorality spreads all over the country and all would be suffered. Kushner believes that human being can progress and have redemption in spite of dark and catastrophic future. The American society in which, due to the fear of being pushed into the margin, people are afraid of revealing the true identity of themselves. In another part Louis explains his nightmare to Joe and the sense of unreliability is felt in the nightmare. Louis does not know that Joe is a Mormon and Joe does not reveal it. As if all members of the American society wears mask when they face one another.

Louis: I had a freaky nightmare. We were celebrating having spent a month in bed and we'd decided to meet at a restaurant, only I wasn't sure it was right to be celebrating and when I got there it wasn't a restaurant, it was the funeral parlor of some sort of creepy temple, and it was you and me and some furiously angry woman, and it turned out that you were a member of some bizarre religious sect, like a Moonie or a Rajnishi or a Mormon or something, and you hadn't told me, and it was like I didn't know you at all. Joe? (p.186)

Joe: I am. I am a Mormon.

Louis: (A beat, then): Huh.

The last line by Hannah that express her wonder about the future shows that the movement toward future is along with sense of uncertainty and concern. Although the future is vague but people are hopeful and are ready to progress because human beings cannot go backward or stop in the time. As prior says:

Prior: This disease will be the end of many of us, but not nearly all, and the dead will be commemorated and will struggle on with the living, and we are not going away. We won't die secret deaths anymore. The world only spins forward. We will be citizens. The time has come (p. 280).

Conclusion

Tony Kushner is believed to be one of the most impressive political dramatists who has greatly affected the political drama as well as his society. He is an acclaimed play writer who won Pulitzer Prize for his *Angels in America* part one *Millennium Approaches* and part two *Perestroika*. Technically, realistic essence of Kushner's theater and the way he dramatizes the social issues along with use of fantasy and supernatural characters have caused many critics to admire *Angels in America*. In general, the significance of Kushner's theater is due to its theoretical and dramatic innovation such as showing angels on the stage, the conflict between human and divine beings and also political atmosphere of his play. Theoretically, political drama refers plays that reflect political atmosphere of the society or writer's political approach. Political drama plays a critical role in keeping the current status quo of a country by supporting the policies and activities of the authorities on one hand, and causes social and political reforms by criticizing policies and activities of the authorities on the other hand .

Angels in America is a critical play that challenges America's social policies toward American citizens and questions judicial discriminations imposed on marginal minorities. It also Pictures the reality of minorities' social performance and contributions. Moreover, Kushner aims at bringing hope and brightness to the depressed American society and poor marginalized minorities by encouraging them to contribute to tackling the discrimination and marginalization of minorities. Kushner invites American citizens in general and his readers in particular to be socially and politically active and play their supposed role in shaping their communities. Informing the readers about the results of considering the minorities as the other, Kushner warns about the growth of hopelessness and social inaction among marginal minorities. He warns people about the risks of being indifferent toward problematic issues of the community and attempts to eradicate the depression and hopelessness among citizens.

This research attempted to answer the following problematic issues based on Kushner's *Angels in America*. First question is how being considered as the other leads to fear of revealing oneself in social interactions in America as a social liberal country and what the result of this fear is. Secondly, the real social placement of marginal groups in claimed social liberal United States will be specified. Next question is about the reality of America's social liberal approach toward minorities and marginal groups as the other. Finally, Kushner's solution of eliminating all these social and ethical problems and establishing a new moral community will be extracted from this thesis. In order to answer the questions raised the researcher opened up a discussion in regard to the ethical issues in Tony Kushner's drama in order to diagnose the social problems as well as the political aspects of his drama.

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