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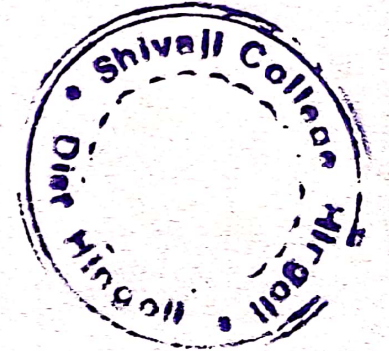
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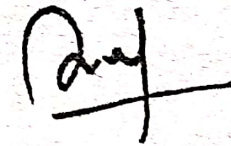
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Feminism in Girish Karnad's Plays

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Abstract

Jnanpith awardee (1999) Girish Karnad's contribution is not confined to his playwriting only. His greatness lies in the fact that he has given new directions to the post-independence Indian drama. His plays were originally written in Kannada language and were later translated into English. Women characters play an important role in his plays. His is perhaps the last generation of Urban Indian playwrights who heard narratives from the native myth, legends, folklore and history. His women characters are from different back- grounds, play different roles, struggling to find their own identity. This research paper focuses on the women characters from his plays excluding *Tughlaq* and *Tale Danda*.

Keywords: characterization, Women Studies.

Jnanpith awardee (1999) Girish Karnad's contribution is not confined to his playwriting only. His greatness lies in the fact that he has given new directions to the post-Independence Indian drama. Infact his roles outside theatre-as an actor, a screenplay writer, and as a filmmaker have very little to do with his being a Jnanpith winning dramatist. On his manifold contributions, his achievement as a dramatist has made his place secure in the galaxy of world playwrights. The purpose of this paper is to focus on the use of female characters in his plays.

Karnad wrote his first play *Yayati* in 1961 which marked the beginning of modern Kannada theatre to escape his stressful situation when he was planning his first tour to England as a Rhodes Scholar. He used the myth of King Yayati from the Mahabharata and made it the vehicle of a new vision. His scholar. critic friend, Kirthinath Kurtkoti had a complaint against the Kannada playwrights that no dramatist tried to deal with the Indian history as Shakespeare did with the English history. All attempts in this regard ended up into the costume plays. Karnad took it as a challenge and the result was the brilliant play *Tughlaq* that came in 1964. The debates over the use of traditional folk forms in the urban drama in the sixties made him write his third play *Hayavadana* in 1971. It is based on Thomas Mann's short-story *The Transposed Heads*. Actually, Karnad wanted to make a movie on it but his friends B.V. Karanth advised him to write a play than a movie instead. Karnad wrote a beautiful play making use of the Yakshagana, a folk-theatre form of Karnataka. Meanwhile came *Anjumallinge* in 1977 and *Hittina Hinja* in 1980.

His association with the great Kannada figure A.K.Ramanuja proved fruitful and highly productive. Inspired by the two folk-tales retold by Ramanujan, Karnad wrote the play *Naga-Mandala* in 1988. Karnad is a politically conscious human being. The communal disturbances caused by the official endorsement to the recommendations of Mandal Commission for reservation policy for backward classes prompted him to write *Tale Danda* in 1989. He used Mahatma Basaveshwara's Sharana Movement and its defeat in the 12th century Karnataka to invite attention to the unresolved issues of caste-system. His next play *Agni Mattu Malle* (1995)

took thirty-seven years to appear on the piece of paper. He wrote *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* in 1998, which is published in English along with English translation of *Hittina Hittina* as *Dan The Sacrifice* in 2004. He has also brought two monologues *Flowers* and *Broken Images* in 2005. In 2009, Oxford University Press has published Karnad's *Wedding Album*, a play with a modern setting.

Karnad has used the myth of King Yayati found in the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata. Sharmishtha, the tribal princess and Devayani, the daughter of Sage Shukracharya and the broken hearted bella of Kachha, are arranged to live together as King Yayati's Queen and the royal maid slave. In addition to the mythical characters of King Yayati, Sharmishtha, Devayani and Pooru, the playwright has added two new characters Chitrlekha, the newly wed wife of Pooru and Swarnlata, the royal maid. Yayati narrates, Pooru, story of his mother, senior queen sharmishtha, Pooru's mother has been a rakshasi. She married Yayati because the Aryas had destroyed her home and hearth. She wanted to avenge on the Arya race. She had made sure that the crown prince of the Bharatas had rakshasablood in him and thereby, a half caste would rule the Aryas. She succeeds in polluting the blood of the Aryas because he, the next king, has rakshasa blood in his viens. Chitrlekha, like other women in the play realizes King Yayati well. She bluntly questions Yayati, "What about your duty to your son? Did you think twice before foisting yours trouble on a pliant son? (62). Chitrlekha with an interrogating spirit, puts a cross question to him quite shockingly for Yayati, She asks him to accept her as his bride:

Think. And will Your Majesty also think about how old I shall be by the time that future is attained? I am here, this minute, sir. And I cannot interest myself in your unborn future. I married Pooru for his Youth. For his potential to plant the seed of the Bharatas in my womb. He has lost that potency. He doesn't possess any of the qualities for which I married. But you do. You have taken over yours son's youth. It follows that you should accept everything that comes attached to it (64).

Chitrlekha is the strongest of all the characters from Yayati. She is educated, beautiful and well-versed. Apart from chitrlekha the other female characters like Devyani Sharmishtha and Swarnlata are struggling a lot for their existence and are lost in the crisis of their own. The suicide of Chitrlekha serves for Yayati as an eye-opening event.

Tughlaq, Karnad's second play, is the most popular and the most forceful play, which marked the beginning of the 'New Drama' in India. This play was a fitting answer to the criticism that Indian plays in English donot go back to history to establish modern man's relationship to history, to interpret historical material and donot establish the modern Indian relation to history.(Eunice de Souza 160).

Girish Karnad's play *Tughlaq* and *the The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* women of the courtor of outside life donot fit in his dramatic design. So, by simply keeping them behind the curtain regaling, wailing, crying and dying without having any say in the social and political system Karnad speaks his mind about the women of the respective eras and their condition in the Islamic rule in India.

Though Karnad's *Tughlaq* (1964) shot him in to fame, his second play *Hayavadana* (1971) came as a milestone in his career as a dramatist. This play has female character as its protagonist, named Padmini, an energetic daughter of a tradesman. Devadutta, the grandest poetry but a man with long dark hair, delicate fair face, falls in love with her and with his loyal wrestler friend Kapila, manages to marry her. But Padmini, true to her name, rooted in the earth symbolizes anupward progression to the sky. She is not satisfied with Devadatta who is more interested in Bhasa than in her. She feels drawn towards Kapila who has an ethereal shape, broad back and the muscles rippling across it. Devadatta becomes aware of her gradual inclination towards Kapila and on their way to Ujjain; he behads himself before the Goddess Kali, Kapila, who reaches there in search of him, finds him in the pool of blood. He too, follows him by cutting his own head with the same sward. After some time, Padmini

also comes there and finds both her husband and lover lying dead. She fears that people will think that Devadatta and Kapila fought for her and killed each other. When she, too, picks-up the same sword to end her life, the Goddess Kali appears before her and asks her to attach their heads and press the sword on their heads to bring them to life. So, Padmini places Devadatta's head on Kapila's body and vice versa to get the best of both intellect of Devadatta and strong body of Kapila.

The man with Devadatta's head and Kapila's body is declared to be her husband. The man with Kapila's head and Devadatta's body reads her mind and rightly puts it "I knew what you want, Padmini. Devadatta's clever and Kapila's strong body" (148). Padmini doesnot keep her desire hidden. But Padmini's satisfaction doesnot last long. She enjoys the combination of her desired man for a very brief period, and once again, she begins to feel something missing slipping from her hands and she feels same incompleteness in her life. Infact she has seen four men as she confesses, "Kapila! Devadatta! Kapila with Devadatta's body! Devadatta with Kapilas's body! Four men in a single life time." (169). Yet she feels herself incomplete. Through out the play, she strives to get the best of both men. Her restlessness makes her run after these two men but she meets nothing but failure and disappointment even in death.

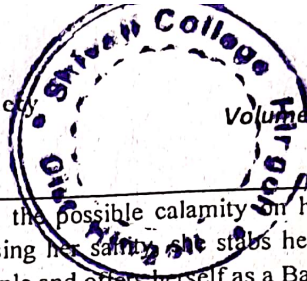
Naga Mandala(1988) describe its protagonist Rani's gradual transformation from a bond slave wife to the master of her house and husband. She represents and undergoes the kind of oppression and suffocation that every Indian woman suffers in the male dominated social set-up. Her husband Appana locks her into a house and treats her as a bond slave who has nothing else to do but to wait and cook for him. He isolates her from the world outside and denies her status not only as a wife but also of an individual . She is not allowed to establish any, contact with the world. He keeps a dog allowed to establish any, contact withthe world. He keeps a dog to prevent the outsiders approaching her.

Rani frightens at the sudden and unexpected loving treatment of the Naga.

The magical appearance of the Naga brings a gradual but radical transformation in her life. Her womanhood and motherhood exchanges the roles of the oppressed and the oppressor. The snake ordeal In public makes her a goddess incarnate and her rude husband turns into her helpless obedient servant. He becomes so docile that he agrees to accept and carry out her any command what ever unpleasant and unconvincing to him. Infact, she avenges his atrocities on her by making him accept another man's child as his own even when he knows that he has not slept with her.

Bali: The Sacrifice (2004), the English reworking of Karnad's own play *Hittina Hunja* (1977), has the most heated debate as its serious concern. In the very preface of the play, the playwright discusses and debates the elemental presence of violence in the impulse of human beings. By its nature, the play enacts a debate between the Hindu belief of sacrifices made on the altar of the Yajna and the elemental objection of Jainism to it.

In the sanction of a ruined temple, the Queen Anritmati opens herself in the arms of an ugly Mahout and calls shame upon herself. The headless idol is the witness to their love making, but the Queen refuses to have committed adultery. She is neither ashamed nor does she regret what happened. The sanctity of her marriage ceases to exist as she has betrayed her husband, who has embraced her jain faith to produce any child for the kingdom. When he reminds her of their marriage bond and asks her to prove her faithfulness by making live there, he says, "Prove that you'll be mine. Here in front of this...absent god." (236). She denies to her lawful husband in the name of the temple sanctity, she replies, "This is a temple! You want to violate it?" (227). Infact, she has voluntarily offered herself to the Mahout in the very sanatum of the temple. In the name of non-violence the Queen has prohibited all the bloody sacrifices of her mother-in-law and strongly objected to participate the



rite of sacrificing the dough cock as a remedy to avoid the possible calamity on her family invited by her adulterous act. But finally, finding no alternation and losing her sanity, she stabs herself with the same knife brought to sacrifice the cock in the very sanctum at the temple and offers herself as a Bali (sacrificial offering).

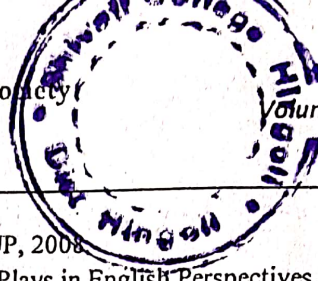
Like all his mythical and folk-tale plays *Broken Images* (2004), this monologue, too, permits the simultaneous presentations of alternative points of view, of alternative attitudes' (Karnad 14). Manjula Nayak - a famous Kannada turned English novelist in the play - her introductory talk to her debut novel based tele-film, her conversation with her image, her exposure as an imposter who has passed off her dead sister Malini's novel as her own form the content of the monologue. Manjula Nayak in this monologue becomes both Karnad's mouthpiece that she justifies her writing in English, and also an object of his criticism. She has become an overnight celebrity the literary phenomenon with her debut novel *River Has No Memories* in English. Through her TV speech she answers the accusations of betrayal to her Kannada people by writing in English after writing many novels in Kannada. She does not hide the fact she chose to write in English for the sake of fame, fortune, glamour, power and for vastly wide audience. Her choice of writing novel in English has raised furies of her Kannada readers. They have asked some question to her like "Why did you choose suddenly to write in English? Do you see yourself as a Kannada writer or an English writer? (263). Karnad seems to have answered all these questions through his protagonist Manjula Nayak. Karnad's choice of a famous novelist as the protagonist of this dramatic piece is deliberate. Hereby, he point out that overnight fame is possible in India for novelist only.

Karnad through his protagonist, wants to give vent to his grudge that an Indian dramatist cannot survive by writing plays only. For his survival he has to keep his eyes on the global, consumer-oriented market economy. Somewhere Karnad has said that his playwriting cannot feed him properly and he has to take to acting. These two monologues (*Flowers* and *Broken Images*) indicate a turning point in his 42-year long career as a dramatist, as they deal with the new subjects and the new forms.

For *flowers*, Karnad falls back upon his favourite dramatic treasure-house the folk world. Here, he uses the famous legend of the priest Veerana of the Chitradurga region, which is a well-known Kannada writer. T.R.Subbana has used in his novel *Ham Sageethe* (Swan Song). Unlike his earlier full-length plays, here Karnad projects a male protagonist involved in an extra-marital relationship. The priest affair with the Courtesan Chandrawati, Chieftains finding of the long hair in the prasadam, sprouting of hair on the Shivalinga and finally priests suicide. Karnad sidelines the threefold contest between the priest, the temple singer and the chieftain. He presents the legend of the conflict between devotion and erotic love leading the protagonist to suicide.

In *Wedding Album* (2008) Girish Karnad used modern setting for the modern play. For the first time Girish Karnad used modern theme for his play, '*Wedding Album*.' The story resolves round the protagonist of the play Vidula, the younger daughter of Nadkarni family. In the play, we come across with the female characters such as Mrs. Pratibha Khan, co-worker of Rohit, T.V. serial produces. Tapasya sirur-wife of Rohit, Isabel beloved of Rohit, Radhabai-Yamuna etc. In this play Karnad's female characters are modern in the sense that they are capable of taking their decisions, the modern woman is very conscious about her rights. The female characters has the courage to rebel and raise voice against the system. They try to gain Their identity.

At the end it is observed concerning the female characters from the plays of Girish Karnad that they are submissive and subversive. Some of his women characters are rebel in their own ways. These women try to create space for themselves within the patriarchal set-up in the society and in the family.



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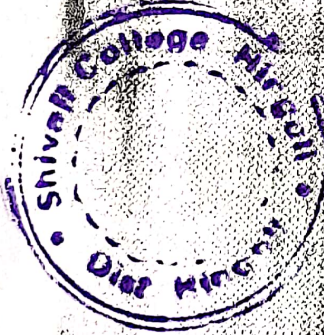
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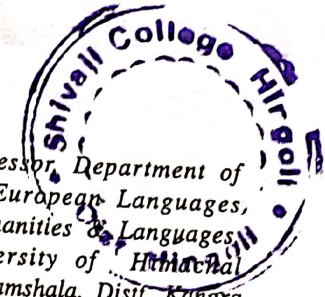
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One Problem, Two Solutions : A Comparative Study of the Plays of Nissim Ezekiel & Shiv K. Kumar

Dr. Gawali M.B.*

Abstract

Indian drama in English is not so well-developed a branch of Indo-English literature as the Indian novel or poetry in English. It has also not come up for as much scholarly and critical attention as the other two. It is in the post-independent period that there has been a conspicuous attempt to deal with political, economic, domestic, psychological and other problems as themes in drama. Especially playwrights like Nissim Ezekiel, Asif Currimbhoy, Girish Karnad, Badal Sircar and a few others have built enjoyable plays around some of these subjects. The present article is an attempt to make such a comparative study of two plays based on a common theme.

Keywords: Psychological, Comparative Study, Solution, Hypocritical, Superficial-adjustments.

It is in the post-independent period that there has been a conspicuous attempt to deal with political, economic, domestic, psychological and other problems as themes in drama. Especially playwrights like Nissim Ezekiel, Asif Currimbhoy, Girish Karnad, Badal Sircar and a few others have built enjoyable plays around some of these subjects. Though the themes dealt with by these writers are different from one another, occasionally one can come across plays on the same theme written by different authors. The present article is an attempt to make such a comparative study of two plays based on a common theme.

The two plays under consideration are Nissim Ezekiel's *Marriage Poem* (1969), Shiv K. Kumar's *The Last wedding Anniversary* (1975). The theme of the two plays is the domestic discord due to the temperamental differences between the husband and the wife and also because of the extra marital relationship of the husband. It is

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interesting to note that, though there are striking similarities in theme and even in characterization among the two plays, they differ from one another in the general tone, in the dramatists attitude to the problem and in the dramatists attitude to the problem and in the solutions they offer to the problem.

Naresh, the protagonist of Ezekiel's play *Marriage Poem* and his wife, Mala, are of different temperaments (our temperaments are very different, p.79). Mala is the typical suffering, nagging sort of wife who just does not know what to do to keep her husband to herself. She has a strong feeling of being neglected and humiliated by Naresh. Hence even insignificant unintentional lapses on his part like forgetting to post a letter given by her or failing to ring up her sister etc. provide Mala with opportunities to pick quarrels with him. Mala complains to her neighbour, Mrs. Lall that he is efficient except when he has to do something for me and is sure that he does not remember important occasions like her birthday or their marriage anniversary etc. This feeling of neglect is intensified by her suspicion that her husband is running after other women. When Naresh, for instance, shows her an invitation for dinner from the Guhas, her immediate reaction is, 'I'm not coming, I don't like Mrs. Guha'. When Naresh hits back 'You don't like any of my friends, do you?', she twists his words and retorts, 'Is Mrs. Guha one of your friends? I didn't know it. Later when Malati and her husband, Ranjit, call on them, Naresh talks to them freely and eloquently and particularly to Malati. When the guests are gone, Mala tells her husband, 'I don't trust Malati, the way she looks at you and later complains sarcastically, 'You never want to say anything to your wife. But when visitors came, you know how to talk. What long speeches!' (p. 77). There is a touch of pathos and innocence when she asks Mrs. Lall 'What would you do if your husband became attached to another woman?' Mrs. Lall's spirited account of how she would harass the other woman and also her own husband makes Mala resolve not to give up her husband! 'I won't give up my husband either. He's married to me. He is my husband. We have two children. I'll never give him up.'

Mala's suspicion about Naresh's involvement with other women is not baseless. On one occasion when Mala leaves the room in a huff after one of her usual skirmishes with him, Naresh goes to the dream world, where he meets his sweetheart, Leela. Leela is jealous of Mala because she has Naresh all the time, whereas she (Leela) could have him only once a week, sometimes only for an hour. This Leela does not mind the secrecy, the lies, the danger of scandal involved in her relationship with Naresh.

However, Naresh's amorous games do not stop with Leela. When Malati with her husband visits him, Naresh after flattering her on her charming looks, adds meaningfully, 'We should meet often. Her reply is equally significant: 'It's up to you. I am accessible. On this occasion, when Mala expresses her contempt for Malati, as usual, the argument between the husband and the wife begins on a mild note but grows into a heated exchange of words. When Mala expresses her contempt for Malati, as usual, the argument between the husband and the wife begins on a mild note but grows into a heated exchange of words. When Mala becomes hysterical, Naresh cools her down by making love to her. As he embraces his wife, Naresh goes to the dream world and meets Leela. This dream is interrupted when the couple is awakened by the knocking on the door by the children. Naresh wakes up from his dream and Mala from her sleep. Chetan Karnani has a very valid point when he comments on the ending of the play. Ezekiel somehow can't do without the interplay of dream and reality. After Naresh makes love to his wife and she sleeps peacefully, this should have been the end. But the dramatist once again gets theatrical and rather contrived when we are told that Naresh raises his arms slowly in the crucifixion (sic) pose against the door. Leela enters slowly, dream walks towards him, wipes his face lightly with a handkerchief. (Karnani, 120).

Marriage Poem which is described as a one act tragicomedy has more of comedy than of tragedy. The tragic element is to be

One Problem, Two Solutions...

the light and shade that constitute the life of the couple. The dream sequences which cut into the realistic scenes not only reveal Ezekiel's ingenuity in the matter of technique but also serve to show Naresh's attempts to escape the naggings of his wife by seeking the company of other women. The scenes also provide a little variety to the action of the play. The other characters just look like puppets. In spite of these defects, with its brevity, its smart dialogue and the visual and audio effects, the play may click as a fine visual and verbal piece on the stage.

Shiv K. Kumars *The Last Wedding Anniversary* presents a profile of the marital incompatibility as depicted by an upper middle class couple Lalit, a sensitive editor of a popular magazine and his wife Rupa, a shrewish and ambitious socialite. The scene is a party to celebrate their second wedding anniversary but because of the many stresses and strains that have developed in their relationship, the second anniversary turns out to be their last wedding anniversary. Though the immediate cause of the problem is the appearance of Lalit's first love, Neela, the root cause is a basic clash of wills, of personalities which are too headstrong to abide together. The opening scene is laid in the drawing room of Lalit Khanna's house. The room is decorated with festoons as a mark of celebration of the marriage anniversary, but the external decorations ill accord with the bickering of the couple. While Rupa insults in most of her husband's remarks, Lalit asks her to control her fiendish temper: 'Will you control your fiendish temper my soft and gentle wife? I know you can't stand my friends but you could at least try to be civil. If this weren't our wedding anniversary, I would have walked out this minute.' (Kumar, 20) This tension and strife go on increasing during the course of the evening.

The guests begin to arrive. When Vinod, Lalit's friend, tells him that Neela is in town, Lalit tells him, 'But that's not a surprise. I

angry that he is not interested in cultivating the friendship of Ved Aggarwal who Might help him in starting a magazine of his own. She is unhappy with the acquaintances of Lalit To cap it all, she has Seen the greetings sent by Neela and has also understood its significance. In Scence 2, when Lalit is searching for the card, she pullsit out of a book rack and flourishes it before him. The dialogue that follows this situation shows how their relationship has reached the brink. After accusing him of lying to her, Rupa bursts out and asks him, Then who is she ? This Neela !

Lalit (regaining his composure) : Just an old classmate. And whats wrong in her sending me greetings on my wedding anniversary

Rupa (sneering) : Ours! Pardon my interruption, please.

Lalit : Yes, ours! What s wrong with kthiscard ?

Rupa : Nothing whatsoever. Except that its heart- shaped and a womans instinct knows belter.

Lalit : Okay, then how and scream. Do whatever you like if you are to sniff out all this in a perfectly innocent card.

Rupa : I guess we have played enough patience and innocence.

Lalit : Time for action now?

Rupa : Precisely. (Kumar, 20)

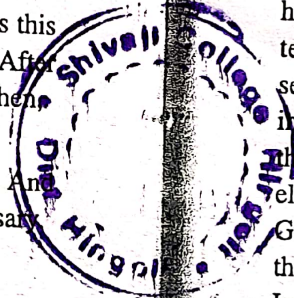
Finally they agree to part. Next morning Lalit meets Neela in her room in Hotel Plaza. When Neela feels sorry for the problems she had created by sending the greeting card, Lalit consoles her saying : No, youre not to blame for it, it would have happened sooner or later. When they are in a reminiscent mood, Rupa knocks at the door. Lalit hides himself behind the partition. The door is opened and Rupa enters. Introducing herself as Mrs. Khanna, Rupa tells Neela that Lalit was really mad the previous night and had tried to hit her with a paper - weight. She also refers to Lalits flirting with Gulmohar. When Rupa is gone, Lalit comes out of his hiding and is faced with some jealous questions from Neela about his relationship with Gulmohar. But when he explains that Gulmohar is one of the egoistical fools one has to suffer in life and that he is least interested

One Problem, Two Solutions...

in her, Neelais satisfied and agrees to accept him as her husband, adding half humorously and half seriously, But no wedding anniversaries, please!

The play in a realistic way presents the conflict between the husband and the wife as a clash of two strong willed persons. The temperamental differences between them are the cause for the severance of their relationship, though Lalits extra marital interest in Neela acts as the proverbial last straw on the camels back. Both the characters and the dialogue are convincing enough. While the elements of satire and humour are found in the characters of Vinod, Gulmohar and InderBhan, there are certain interesting situations in the play. The last scene is one such where hiding behind the screen, Lalit listens to the complaints of his wife against himself. Moreover Neela who does not find anything wrong in her own relationship with Lalit becomes jealous of his supposed flirtations with Gulmohar. The dramatist has treated the theme quite competently and it is said that when this play was put on boards in Hyderabad in 1974, it was a tremendous success.

Shiv K. Kumars play seems to imply that if a couple cannot get on well and smoothly in life, the honest and best course of action is an honourable divorce between them and this is preferable to a hypocritical life of superficial adjustments. Shiv K. Kumars solution is modern in as much as it does not consider marriage as a holy or indissoluble bond but introduces the idea of divorce which is still to get total acceptance in Indian society. Nissim Ezekiels play, on the other hand, appears to give a solution which is rather a compromise between the other two extreme solutions. In Ezekiels play the husband enjoys the best of both the worlds- the domestic and of love. Neither would his wife give up her hold and right over him nor would he sacrifice his involvement in other women. The play seems to give a hint of husbands in the predicament of Naresh that while they could find emotional and sexual satisfaction with other women, they should tactful and clever enough to keep up the façade of loyalty by humoring their wives. The solution given by Ezekiel is neither conservative nor modern but one of the compromise and expediency.



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background of the respective writers character. Dr. Johnsons Preface to Shakespeare excuses Shakespears lapses on historical and personal grounds. In that context Dr. Johnson observes: Every mans performances, to be rightly estimated, must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived, and with his own particular opportunities.(Raleigh,30) Shall we add that every mans performances to be rightly estimated must take in to consideration the writers own attitudes towards the social, economic, moral and religious questions of the society of which he is a member, perhaps an articulate member?

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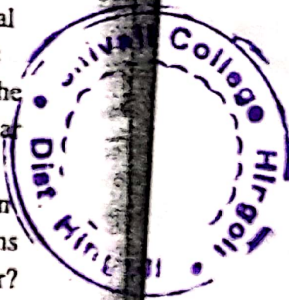
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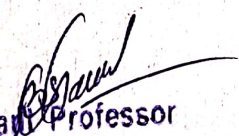
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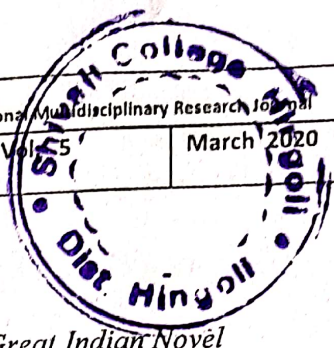
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Mahatma Gandhi: A Multifaceted Personality

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Abstract:

Mahatma Gandhi, by name of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (born October 2, 1869, Porbandar, India-died January 30, 1948, Delhi) Indian lawyer, politician, social activist and writer who became the leader of the nationalist movement against the British rule of India. As such, he came to be considered the father of his country. Gandhi is internationally esteemed for his doctrine of nonviolent protest (Satyagraha) to achieve political and social progress. His fame spread worldwide during his lifetime and only increased after his death. The name Mahatma Gandhi is now one of the most universally recognized on earth. The present paper focuses on the multi-layered personality of Mahatma Gandhi, and his struggle for nation through his writings (diaries)

Keywords: Nationalist, Multi-layered Personality

"If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. He lived, Thought, and acted, inspired by the vision of humanity evolving toward a world of Peace and Harmony. We may ignore him at our own risk."

– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Many Indians have played a prominent role in freeing India from the foreign yoke and giving a concrete and definite shape to independent India through their sacrifice. These great politicians and selfless social reformers, who called as freedom fighters, never hesitated to embrace imprisonment during the freedom movement. They are quite distinct in both matter and manner from those written by others not involved in this struggle for independence and ideological politics. Many of these were eminent statesmen like Mahatma Gandhi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vijayalaxmi Pandit, Jayprakash Narayan and others. The present paper focuses on the struggle of Mahatma Gandhi for nation, through his writings (diaries).

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, affectionately and respectfully called MAHATMA GANDHI, a philosopher, politician, humanitarian, statesman, scholar and writer all rolled into one was born on 2nd Oct 1869 at Porbandar, Kathiawad District, in the state of Gujrat.

Gandhiji devoted his entire life to the struggle to free India from the clutches of the British and for the uplift of the Harijans.

In 1919 Gandhiji emerged as the leader of the Indian National Congress and advocated a policy of nonviolent and non co-operation to achieve independence. He started papers and magazines like 'Navjeevan', 'Young India' and 'Harijan' to serve his specific purpose. He also wrote countless articles sharply worded in a simple and effective style.

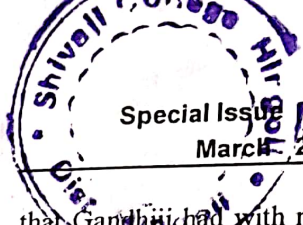
Through his vision and sacrifice and his leadership qualities, Gandhiji got a large mass following, because of which the freedom struggle became a national movement. India got her independence in 1947, but unfortunately Gandhiji did not live long enough to witness the early fruits of this hard gotten freedom. And he was greatly grieved at the partition of India and the resultant communal riots which he took to his heart.

Gandhiji was one of the very few people of his day who impressed the world most as a born leader of men. He has left behind an autobiography and voluminous other writings which have influenced other great leaders after him, like Martin Luther King Jr.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, among Indian political leaders has been a star not only on the Indian political scene but also an Indian literary scene. His autobiography *My Experiments with Truth* and other writings, mostly journalistic written both in English and Gujarati, are the proof of the literary power of his pen.

In his life Mahatma Gandhi has written diaries: They are *Delhi Diary*, *London Diary*, *Diary for 1915*, *Punjab Diary* and *Leaves from My Diary*.

Gandhi's diaries presenting a very sincere and factual record of his movements and activities, covers a period of one year from January 9 to December 20, 1915. The diary is, for the most part a detailed record of the persons Gandhiji met – Mr. Tilak, Mr. Gokhale, Swaminarayan, Mr and Mrs. Hailey, the places and the monuments he visited. Bangalore and Kutub Minar, the discussions he had with Krishnamachari, J.B. Andrews the Muslim League leaders and Sorabji's sister, the letters he received, the interviews he gave, the speeches he delivered at different places and the telegrams he sent. In his diaries, whatever he has recorded he has done it in a very lucid style. His sentences are short and the language is simple and very effective. Talks and discussions



that Gandhiji had with national celebrities impress us with their patriotic fervor, ideas and feelings. His talks breathe the spirit of patriotism and act as a wake-up call to our national conscience.

However, Gandhiji's diaries can never equal his *Experiments with Truth*, his autobiography, famous not only because it is the life of a man who rose to the heights of a Mahatma but also for its literary value. In the autobiography, Gandhiji's English is disarmingly simple. He turns the plain facts of his life into great wonders and that too without using pedantic words. For this M.K. Naik rightly comments "His autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* contains frank confessions of a great soul." (p.17)

Being a theist, Gandhiji speaks of God and his power at length. For Gandhiji, God is the only source of consolation for all human problems and sufferings, mental and physical, individual and collective, regional and national. His faith in God may be discerned as follow;

Only God was motionless form, He was, is and will be the same yesterday, today and tomorrow; and yet was ever moving (p.124)

all time he was a great teacher, Gandhiji also taught us three important principles other than truth and non-violence self-help, self-reliance and self-respect, which one has to regard as a garment to cover and beautify one's body with.

K. R. Srinivas Iyengar writes about Mahatma Gandhi that, "Gandhi was the apostle of decent realization, for he thought that the village was the safe sane unit of human association." (p.253) Gandhi advocated decentralization in every sphere of human activity through his writings and speeches.

Freedom at last came to India but accompanied by the bitter fruit of partition. Gandhi's *Delhi diary* assumes the status of a national and international document because, therein, he has recorded in detail the aftermath of the partition drama, both in India and Pakistan. The following diary entries give us an understanding of the tragedy of Partition;

Temples were destroyed and converted into Mosques and Mosques were destroyed and converted into temples. It was a sad state of affairs. It could not but lead to Destruction of both the religions (p.98)

Gandhi's thoughts seem to be so relevant even today because it deals with topics that are alive to this day. The burning problems of the Indians society like enmity between Hindus and Muslims, hostility between India and Pakistan and the draw-backs in the public distribution systems troubled his mind and weighed him down because of his intense love and concern for all.

The issue of national language remains a problem even today. We, the Indians have not been able to solve this issue even after 60 years of independence. There has been no political consensus on accepting Hindi as a national language. Gandhiji records his own views;

(Gandhiji) had no doubt that Hindustani would be suited to be inter-provincial language for all Indians. Neither Persianised Urdu nor Sanskritized Hindi could easily be understood by the masses. With the end of the British Raj, The English language had to go as the common medium of speech or the court language. It was usurpation. It could never become India's national language. (p.95)

Gandhiji loved his country-loved everything about his country, its geography, its agricultural wealth, its natural beauty and its rich vegetation. His description of India's natural wealth and bio-diversity makes the reader feel proud of his country.

Many a time Gandhiji appears more like a poet. For him the chirping of the birds is not just a sound, but also 'beauty' 'joy' and 'adoration', reminding us frequently of all the Nature poets, specially the romantic one William Wordsworth and John Keats in England and Thoreau and Emerson in America. When he is speaking of the chirping sound of birds, he speaks as a poet and a mystic would: "The chirp of birds in the morning and evening signified that they adored their maker." (p.129)

As we muse over the events of Gandhi's life and martyrdom, we come to realize that there was no hiatus between the material and spiritual life for him. It was perhaps an acquaintanceship with Thoreau's and Emerson's philosophical writings that made Gandhi develop a bend towards transcendentalism.

Gandhi, the writer uses English as a necessary tool to achieve proper communication. He records facts in a straightforward manner, which never seems insipid. The very simplicity of Gandhi's words continues their strength.

Gandhi's writings show that he did a great deal of general reading and found time for a serious study of economics, astronomy and for watching the stars with great zest as well.

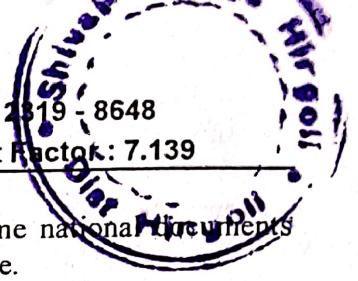
Mahatma Gandhi's writings supply information about those times which were crowded with happenings, introduce personalities worth remembering, abound in ideas that seem relevant forever, and reflect

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his simple and very potent philosophy of life and his spirituality. So they have become national documents since they have recorded events that shaped history the history of India's freedom struggle.

The writings (diary) of Mahatma Gandhi have both political and social references. Hence, it can be called politico-socio-literary diaries.

Thus, the writings of Mahatma Gandhi shed ample light on the political developments in the country. His writings are patriotic in spirit and throws light on his multifaceted personality.

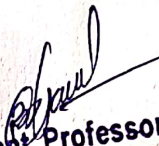
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