4.1 Tradition and Modernity in Karnad’s Plays:

Girish Karnad seems to have deep interest in the traditional Indian life and ethos of Indian culture. He projects various facets of traditional Indian life through Karnad’s selected plays. These plays project different virtues and morals of traditional Indian life and present how tradition of Indian culture plays very significant role to demonstrate moral path to human beings in the modern context. In his *Hayavadana*, he reflects Indian ethos in his own way. In his plays, he is keenly aware of Indian life, different types of people living in society, their anxieties and joys, likes and dislikes, aims and objectives, ways of thinking and living, maternal and paternal love, strong family ties, beliefs and values, rites and rituals, customs and traditions, myths and legends, woman’s predicament and human relationships. In this regard Aparna B. Dharwadker has observed:

Karnad belongs, perhaps, to the last generation of *urban* Indian writers who encountered the ‘great’ and ‘little’ traditions of myth, poetry, history, legend, and folklore at first hand in their earliest childhood, and internalized them deeply enough to have their adult authorial selves shaped by them. Karnad comes uncannily close, therefore, to the kind of modern writer T. S. Eliot imagined in his essay, one of the founding critical texts of twentieth-century modernism: (Tradition) involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence;…this historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes
a writer traditional. Karnad’s ability to contend with ‘the timeless and temporal together’ is clearest in his juxtaposition of myth and history, in the simultaneous embrace of the ahistorical and the historical.¹

To think of Karnad as an Indian English playwright, it is evident that Girish Karnad adheres to Indian tradition when he uses Indian myth, folktale for the plot construction of his plays. Girish Karnad tries to bring to the fore the rich cultural heritage of India by using myths and traditional stories in his plays. It is his attempt, through his plays, to uphold Indian values and its cultural ethos. Girish Karnad seems to be a staunch supporter of giving to his readers and audience examples from Indian myths and legends:

The central episode in the play—the story of Devadatta and Kapila—is based on the tale form the Vetalpanchavimshika, but I have drawn heavily on Thomas Mann’s reworking of the tale in The Transposed Heads and am grateful to Mrs. Mann for permission to do so.²

It is noticeable that the main plot of Hayavadana has its source in one of the stories from Vetalpanchavimshika (Twenty-five stories about king Vikrama and Vetala.) Each of these stories poses a riddle at the end, which the Vetal asks the king to solve. In this regard the comment of Aparna B. Dharwadker is worth-quot ing:

‘In the Kathasaritsagara, the story of ‘The Heads That Got Switched’ contains a simple riddle. A woman travelling with her husband and her brother discovers the men’s decapitated bodies in the temple of Parvati, receives a boon from the goddess to bring them back to life, but switches their heads by mistake. The resulting problem of ‘true’ identity has an unambiguous solution in this version: (In some versions of the story, however, the second male is a friend rather than the woman’s brother.)³
A contemporary basis of the theme of *Hayavadana* is Mann’s story in ‘Transposed Heads’ (1940). In this context, the story of Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini in Karnad’s *Hayavadana* follows elements of characterization and the order of events in Mann’s story. Here researcher opinions that Girish Karnad has looked back to the distant past for themes. Karnad exposes rich traditional Indian culture through the use of myth, folklore and folk stories. Karnad tries to expose human’s despair condition in modern age. Human’s condition becomes despair in modern age because human’s existence may be destroyed within second by nuclear weapons invented by science and modern people find little hope of the survival. Modern age witnessed two great world war and they played very vital role in creating the mindset of people of modern world that emotions, love has been shaken and made life mechanical ruled by head/brain. In this relation Mann, in his story, exposes the view that the head is superior to the body and the head rules the limbs and personal identity depends on the head. So human pursues for completeness or perfection. Therefore in the opinion of the researcher that Karnad combines the human condition of transposed heads with the Hayavadana story. Hayavadana who has a man’s body and horse head tries to get rid of his head. He is in search of identity and comes in a state of dilemma to get completeness in life. On the contrary, the Sutradhar or commentator explains when Lord Ganesh is brought on the stage that Lord Ganesh has head of elephant and body of man who is the Lord and Master of success, perfection and complete one.

Further, it seems that Girish Karnad adheres to Indian tradition when he projects tragedy of human by placing it alongside two other realms of experience- the divine and the animal. Lord Ganesh, despite his comical appearance, the elephant-headed and pot-bellied is the patron deity of scribes and performers, the remover of obstacles (*vighneshwara*) who is the god of all auspicious beginning-an embodiment of both divinity and perfection. On the other hand, Hayavadana, the horse-headed man who gives the play its title, lacks any vestige of divinity and appears painfully suspended between the animal and human world. Unlike the God, Hayavadana cannot endure to remain mixed up; unlike the humans, he does not possess a prior self that can reassert itself. But as in the human world, the head determines identity, even if that means the triumph of the animal over the human.

Besides, Girish Karnad derives an ancient Yavakri myth from the *Vanparva* of the *Mahabharata* for the dramatic construction of his play, *The Fire and the Rain*. Also, it is obviously noted down by Girish Karnad:
The myth of Yavakri (or Yavakrita) occurs in Chapters 135-38 of the *Vana Parva* (forest Canto) of the *Mahabharata*. It is narrated by the ascetic *Lomasha* to the Pandavas as they wander across the land during their exile. I first came across the story of Yavakri and Parvasu, while still in college, in C. Rajagopalachari’s abridgment of the *Mahabharata*. For the moment I read the tale, I knew it had to be turned into a play.  

Girish Karnad confesses that he read the story of Yavakri and Parvasu. And he decided that the myth of Yavakri would be selected for the structural design of his play. Karnad derives thematic properties from the ancient Indian myth of the *Mahabharata* for his play, *The Fire and the Rain*. Through myths such as Yavakri, Indra and Vritra, Karnad explores the question of identity, crisis between good and evil, *dharma* and *adharma*. It is seen that Girish Karnad’s writing is influenced by great traditional Indian myths. This is observed especially in the case of psychological conflicts and also of various problems and tabulations faced by modern man of India. The following remark of writer A.S Gangane is relevant with regard to myth and its relationship with Indianness:

> It is a fact, it cannot be denied that the real Indian character has been given to our literature by the myths and epics. These values are being inculcated in day-to-day life of the Indian people. The very pivotal function of our epics is supposed to make men ideal and virtuous by temperament and action. One of the things about the ideal man is that he turns aggressive against injustice to preserve human virtues like honour, nobility, morality, principle, respectability, virginity and all that is against vice. The *Bhagavad Gita* symbolizes the soul’s quest for the ultimate truth.
Girish Karnad explores the theme of family life in the context of marriage in his plays. Besides, he presents conflicting elements of tradition and modernity within the institution of marriage. Karnad, in *The Fire and the Rain*, presents problems centered to relationship of man-woman in conjugal life in the modern context. Karnad’s play, *The Fire and the Rain* based on the Yavakri and Indra myth presents two pairs, Paravasu and Vishakha are husband and wife and Arvasu and Nittilai are lovers who plan to get married. Vishakha loves Yavakri but is forced to marry Paravasu at the insistence of her father after Yavakri left in search of knowledge. In *The Fire and the Rain*, Girish Karnad sends a message that the marriage system is on verge of decline. In *The Fire and the Rain*, consent of Vishakha, Nittilai is not considered while tying couples into marriage life. Vishakha and Nittilai reluctantly agree for getting married. In other words they are forced to marry. Vishakha admits:

**Vishakha:** Yes. Father was happy. I was married off to Paravasu.

I didn’t want to, but that didn’t matter. The night of the wedding,

my husband said to me: ‘I know you didn’t want to marry me.’

In view of the researcher Karnad’s character, Vishakha throws light on the traditional marriage in Indian society in which woman suffers a lot. Vishakha’s yearning for true companionship for herself always remains unfulfilled. Vishakha herself expresses that her husband knew she did not want to marry him. Vishakha and her husband are not made for each other. Vishakha’s husband is like ‘the hollow man’ of modern times who is not interested in consent of girl or her love has significant place in married life. He simply pursues material things and takes interest in only physical aspects. Vishakha, despite her reluctance to marry Paravasu is quite happy in the first year of her marriage. But she blames Paravasu about her painful married life as:

**Vishakha:** The night of the wedding, my husband said to me: ‘I know you didn’t want to marry me. But don’t worry. I’ll make you happy for a year.’ And he did. Exactly for one year. He plunged me into a kind of bliss I didn’t know existed. It was heaven-here and now-at the tip of all my senses. Then on the first
day of the second year of our marriage, he said: ‘Enough of that. We now start on our search.’ And then-it wasn’t that I was not happy…. 7

Thus, Vishakha and Paravasu could enjoy only one year of married life. Because, Paravasu went to Royal Fire Sacrifice. Meanwhile, after seven years of separation from her husband Vishakha falls an easy prey to Yavakri’s lovable talk. This tragic event occurs in Vishkha’s married life because the relationship between Vishakha and Paravasu is a troubled one. There is a complete lack of communication. Paravasu refuses to answer any questions put to him by Vishakha. There are several references to the silences that existed between Paravasu and Vishakha in the early period of their marriage. Vishakha is fed up of the continuous silence of her husband. It seems that there is an attempt on the part of Paravasu to keep the wife isolated and out of the picture of the external world. The husbands try to exert their monopoly over their wives in various ways and when they feel that they have failed to retain an absolute hold over their wives and their physical and emotional selves they get emotionally charged and become aggressive. Devadatta of Hayavadana, kills himself in fit of jealousy, in The Fire and the Rain, Paravasu leaves the Fire sacrifice incomplete and tries for revenge. However, it is truth that Devadatta and Paravasu failed in married life. In Hayavadana and The Fire and the Rain, marriages are presented as mockeries. The failure of marriages affects the lives of not only the couples but also others. Consequently, both Padmini and Vishakha suffer in their own ways in their life. Kapila, Yavakri and Raibhaya lose their lives. Vanashree Tripathi argues:

What makes women most vulnerable is their accepted roles as the upholders of the dignity of the community or the family. Women are not only seen as symbolizing the domestic space but also as symbolizing the embattled terrain for rival groups. The convoluted motifs of Yavakri in seducing Vishakha are not only intended to serve the purpose of emasculating the enemy and settling his scores but also ironically gratifying his long cherished sexual desire, to own her physically. It is in offending her owner that he could blatantly hurt the
Vishakha’s situation is like that of the prototype of the story of Draupadi in the *Mahabharata*; like her she is a victim as well as an instrument of violence.⁸

Girish Karnad describes married life of Devadatta, in *Hayavadana*, who is a bit doubtful about loosening and weakening of roots that keep the family integrated. Karnad goes deep into the psychological revelation of Devadatta. It is true that Devadatta is influenced by Indian traditional culture. On the other hand, Padmini protests against the established traditions of familial codes of conduct and social taboos. The violation of moral code of conduct leads her to live a life of disappointment, frustration and vanity. Her extra-marital relationship with Kapila degrades her.

The facets of marital relationship with all its variegated forms have been intensively explored in Karnad’s *Hayavadana*. Devadatta, being a traditional moralist, fails to keep his wife away from the possibility of being defamed. So he refuses to go on the journey to Ujjain with Kapil but Padmini insists on continuing with the arrangement of going to Ujjain. For Padmini, Kapila is more attractive than Devadatta because of his energy and vitality. Devadatta lacks this vitality. In other words, Devadatta is a gentleman of mental power while Kapila is a male of strong physically. Therefore, on way to Ujjain, she praises the charm of Kapila’s strong body. In this respect, P.D. Nimsarkar’s comment on marital life of Devadatta and Padmini, is worth quoting:

The researcher is of opinion that Karnad exposes a woman’s innermost feeling i.e. a desire for multiple husbands through the female character Padmini. A man can keep as many wives or mistresses as he likes but a woman is denied such act. The play *Hayavadana* presents that a woman has a desire for multiple husbands. Karnad projects through Padmini that a woman
has her desire but cannot live like a Draupadi in the modern age. In the modern age, women are more outgoing now for education, job and they get freedom to meet another man. They are aware about their equal right in society so they expect that they must be treated as men in society. But Karnad focuses on the consequences of such desire. For instance, when Padmini goes to meet Kapila in the forest, Devadatta follows her with a sword in hand. Nittilai in The Fire and the Rain is killed by her husband when she walks out with her lover. In this sense, traditional concept of Pativrata is very important and modern women must follow it for happy marital life.

Padmini becomes very happy after Kali temple scène where she gets Devadatta having obtained Kapila’s body in him. However, Padmini while departing to Kapila she plays her trick unashamed, communicating that she has not stopped her relationship with Kapila. She says:

**Padmini:** Let’s go. (Pause.) Wait. (She runs to Kapila. Don’t be sad, Kapila. We shall meet again, shan’t we? (in a low voice, so Devadatta can’t hear.) It’s my duty to go with Devadatta. But remember I’m going with your body. Let that cheer you up.

(Goes back to Devadatta.) Good-bye, Kapila.

Here the words of Padmini reveal that she has assured Kapila that she went with Devadatta under the pressure of traditional marriage institution that society values supreme. She could not accompany Kapila, for it would have been a scandal. Further it comes to happen when Devadatta looses manliness and strength of Kapila’s body, she came in wood to meet Kapila. Even first Kapila denies her company and requests her to return to her husband but Padmini becomes successful to convey her love. Consequently, at the end the fighting between Devadatta and Kapila results into their death. Padmini’s decision to offer herself as Sati is an option not born out of her sacrifice but fear of the social compulsion. She laments the reason for their death as well as for her own act and repents:

As many ladies pray to god that they would ge same companions in future life and this makes very small comfort.

Here, Girish Karnad wishes to give moral message through the portrayal of marital life of Devadatta and Padmini. Padmini’s quest for perfection remains unfulfilled. Karnad projects reality in the twentieth century, a century which is an age of materialistic stress and problems
such as confusion, disappointment, breakup and futility. The existential encounter with nothingness (hollowness) is typical strain of modern man’s life. The charms or *Maya* of materialistic life is very difficult to avoid because the modern man pursues to get physical satisfaction from material things but inner *(soul)* satisfaction is very important in life.

As far as conjugal life in selected Karnad’s plays concerned the researcher thinks that Girish Karnad not only upholds rich Indian tradition values but also points out some of the shortcoming of it such as, woman as a victim of the patriarchal order where women are subjected to the patriarchal culture, the caste based distinction of human beings. Women characters such as Padmini, Vishakha, Nittilai are victims of the patriarchal order. The marriage between Devadatta and Padmini as well as Paravasu and Vishakha is settled by the parents without considering bride’s inclination and choice. Even women are used as tools to avenge something and also for quenching of lust. In short the patriarchal society has the moral rope tied around women’s neck expecting them to be a sex object for gratification of physical lust mere means of procreation. Their feminine delicacy and beauty is wasted within house. In this connection, by comparing Padmini with Sita in the mythological stories Aparna B. Dharwadker points out:

First, women in these works are objects of desire as well as desiring subjects, and they want something other than what society has ordained for them. The very presence of such desire violated the norms of feminine behaviour and disturbs established notions of propriety.  

Besides, Anshuman Khanna logically argues in this connection:

In *Hayavadana* Karnad has described various problems faced by women and has questioned social conventions…Padmini wants to marry a perfect man and not finding all the qualities in one-man she drifts towards another man. And the end of this quest is death. This can lead to multiple manipulations. First, nobody can look for all the
qualities in just one person. Or to put it the other way, dream person is really a dream.\textsuperscript{13}

It is very significant to note that Girish Karnad goes back to the rich traditions of the \textit{Vedas} and the \textit{Purusharthas} in order to dramatize morals and social virtues from Gods to men. It is pertinent to note that Karnad presents the moral from \textit{Vedas} and the \textit{Purusharthas} to expose nuisance of modernity. Besides, in this sense, Karnad’s play, \textit{The Fire and the Rain}, projects conflicting values of good and evil, moral and immoral, justice and injustice in other words crisis between \textit{dharma} and \textit{adharma}. This play points out a relationship between gods and men on the earth from the period of the \textit{Mahabharata} to the modern contemporary society. It mirrors the growing war between saints (\textit{rishis}) and evil persons, man and woman to achieve the height of superiority and power. In this connection, A.S. Gangane aptly comments:

\begin{quote}
The persistent themes like Karma, Dharma, Artha and Moksha are the fundamental four goals of Indian life. The faith in rebirth has been indomitable part of the cultural life that has shaped Indian sensibility. Similarly, Indian sensibility has been shaped by ideas like destiny controlling human life, the sequence of belief in \textit{pap-punya} and the cycle of birth, mutability of life- all the world is a stage, coordination of joy and grief and ethical considerations like sense of humanity, nobility, generosity, renunciation, gratitude and reverence.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

Besides, Girish Karnad projects the theory of \textit{Purusharthas} to reveal man’s true face in the society. The theory of \textit{Purusharthas} is very relevant to the play, \textit{The Fire and the Rain}. In this play, the characters such as Bharadwaja and Raibhya-two saint-friends- try to achieve supremacy of knowledge. But their \textit{dharma} becomes a game of \textit{adharma} for achieving the status of Chief Priest of the fire sacrifice as a symbol of \textit{artha} means political and economic power. Paravasu and Yavakri are also a part of such political ambitions. Yavakri is involved in fulfilment of his \textit{kama} with the wife of Paravasu and finally, they are deviated from the moral strands of \textit{Purusharthas} which create a hell for them. Therefore, they do not find any liberation from human bondage and become victims of their attitudes. In other words these characters
represent the modern men of present-day society who are trying to attain their goal of political heights without even caring for *dharma*. In this respect, *Moksha* is finally eluding the modern people who have no option but to share their pleasure of hell created by themselves.

Here, Yavakri is a modern man who wants to get the super knowledge without going to Gurus, but direct from gods. And such short-cut to get knowledge may lead the humanity to disaster and may throw it out from heaven to hell. Such insatiable ambition to be great is an act of evil ambition and like Yavakri, modern man may be compelled to lead a miserable life on the earth. Yavakri does not follow the path of *dharma*. However, Yavakri is a symbol of an ambitious person who wants to get knowledge without maturity and experience, not knowledge from human gurus. In this regard, Yavakri represents the contemporary scholar of knowledge who tries to remove all ladders of experience and to reach the peak of knowledge and seat of learning with less experience and less knowledge. The story of Yavakri is a lesson to modern people that knowledge should be pursued in the right manner. In other word, knowledge should be pursued according to the principles of *dharma*.

When Paravasu decides to go to the Fire Sacrifice, he leaves Vishakha in the security of his father, Raibhya, and leaves the hermitage for the sacrificial place for performing the rituals of Fire Sacrifice (*Yajan*). But Vishakha as a young wife feels lack of desire and she meets Yavakri to fulfil her desires. In other words, she wants to fulfil her own desire however she fails to recognize traditional Indian woman’s virtue, piousness of a wife. She shares her emotional feelings as well as physical desire to another person. Even she reports them in front of Yavakri:

**Vishakha:** Then on the first day of the second year of our marriage, he said: ‘Enough of that. We now start on our search.’ And then-it wasn’t that I was not happy. But the question of happiness receded into the background. Nothing was too shameful, too degrading, even too painful. Shame died in me.\(^{15}\)

But, Vishakha, the wife of Paravasu, goes to the extent of sharing physical want with Yavakri. At least being the wife and matured enough she should have thought about consequences of her extra-marital relationship with Yavakri. But she is fearless enough to describe her physical satisfaction through Yavakri:
**Vishakha:** I was so happy this morning. You were so good. So warm. I wanted to envelope you in everything I could give. It was more as a mother that I offered my breasts to you.

The words of Vishakha reveal that she realizes the deeper and mysterious meaning that originates from the union of man and woman, body and soul. Thus Vishakha is not pious wife to Paravasu. Her dharma becomes a game of adharma for getting physical gratification, as a symbol of illegal Kama, she keeps extra-marital relationship. Vishakha and Yakakri are deviated from the moral principles of Purusharthas which create a hell for them.

Girish Karnad in order to make his case strong for the concept of social change and for ignoring the caste-based distinction of human beings, brings forth a comparative opinion about Vishakha and Nittilai. Vishakha as wife says before Yavakri “I am a married woman.” and yet she breaks all the moral point of wifehood when she submits herself to Yavakri. Nittilai, on the other hand, loses Arvasu as her husband and yet she loves him without polluting the sense of wifehood. Nittilai makes her friendship with Arvasu transparent before the audience:

**Nittilai:** Arvasu, when I say we should go together-I don’t mean we have to live together-like lovers or like husband and wife. I have been vicious enough to my husband. I don’t want to disgrace him further. Let’s be together-like brother and sister. You marry any girl you like. Only please, Arvasu spare a corner for me.

Thus, words of Nittilai reveal her highly pious moral character as a wife. Her moral characteristics may be compared with the sensuous life of Vishakha. Even Paravasu breaks the pious design of the Chief Priest. Arvasu reports about him:

**Arvasu:** Don’t confuse me with questions. But if such an evil man continues as the Chief Priest of the sacrifice, it’ll rain blood at the end.
Thus, Arvasu accuses Paravasu as he is an evil man. On the other hand, Nittilai saves Arvasu’s life at the cost of her own life. The Actor-Manager (Sutradhar) brings into light the miserable and suppressed condition of Arvasu when he is thrown out of the grounds of Yajan (the Fire sacrifice) on the false accusation of the murder of his father. But he is saved by Nittilai at a very crucial moment:

**Actor-Manager:** I didn’t save your life. She did. I only found you.

You were lucky that she turned up soon after and it’s she who’s been nursing you. Mopping up your vomit, wiping your bottom. Like a baby. I’m grateful to her because my babies were starving when she came and now they get a bite to eat every day.

Where she gets the food from I don’t know—but she knows the woods. We would have moved out of this town the day the old man died, except that we’ve become dependent on her. For food. For nursing. For laughter. We’re just waiting to leave with her but she won’t budge till you’re better. 20

Thus, Nittilai and Vishakha are symbolically presented as representing conflict between good and evil, traditional virtue and modern evil. Dramatic art well be understood if the reader/audience have a understanding of the symbolic meaning of various human relationships. Here it seems that Nittilali is presented symbolically virtuous traditional woman. She represents traditional virtue that is to do good to other is not the forte/birthright of any particular religion; but it is a right unto death of the religion of humanity. On the other hand, Vishakha is represented as an example of modern woman who is not interested to do something for others. Therefore she faces loneliness, isolation in her life.

In the modern age, even it is recognized as age of science and technology, modern people believe in the traditional caste-system. In order to project evils of modern society Girish Karnad makes use of the concept of social distinction between human beings, such as Vishakha is an upper caste woman and Nittilai is a girl of hunting –tribe as dalit. Through Vishakha and Nittilai
the playwright projects the conflict between tradition and modernity. Nittilai recalls back the words of her father for showing the hypocrisy of high caste people thus:

**Nittilai:** So Father’s to blame? Do you know why Father called the elders in such haste? He always says: ‘These high-caste men are glad enough to bed our women but not to wed them’.

Thus, words of Nittilai reveal a harsh reality of society. She represents traditionally a low-caste woman who is exploited by the high-caste people. Though she belongs to low-caste, she saves Arvasu’s life from the cruelties of his elder brother, Parvasu, and reflects only on a humanitarian act. On the other hand, Vishakha belongs to high-caste woman who is not chaste to her husband but is recognized as elite woman in the society. Girish Kranad seems to expose the evils of modern society as conflict between rich-class woman and low-class woman. In the modern age, the compassion, love and humanitarian are the traits of low-class people, on the other hand rich-class people seem to be devoid of these virtues because they are just engaged in earning money and enjoying materialistic life.

### 4.2 Tradition and Modernity in Rakesh’s Plays:

As a modern dramatist, Mohan Rakesh is very much conscious of what he describes vividly the confrontation between tradition and modernity. Besides, the conflict between tradition and modernity is one of the themes of his plays. It seems that he emphasizes the need to revolt against the demerits of modernity than on the acceptance and upholding element of modernity. Rakesh is at his best when he exposes the malady of modernity and championing the cause of Indian tradition as a cure for the ills of Indian society. In this regard P. S. Kasture writes:

Mohan Rakesh’s *Halfway House* is one of the significant modern dramas that powerfully echoes this modern malady, transcends time and space and symbolizes eternal human predicament. The pervasive sense of alienation has corroded human life from
various quarters. Modern man has shrunk in spirit languishing in confusion, frustration, disillusionment and alienation.²²

Here the opinion of researcher that modern man has faced frustration, disillusionment and alienation the institutions of family and marriage have come under tremendous strain in the modern times, primarily because of influence of the western culture. One of the major causes of the disintegration of family is the extra-marital relationship. Another reason is the lack of a set routine of work, women have found economic freedom that makes a marriage less necessary and has increased the divorce rate in the modern times. Even western concept such as ‘live in relationship’, ‘contract marriage’ and ‘marriage for sexual relationship’ occur in an institutions of family and marriage in the modern times. Concept ‘ live in relationship’ is kind of new definition of marriage reveals that economic security for wife seems to be aside and complete sexual freedom preferred in marital relationship. Such marriages are lack of emotional touch and love often break down and leading to divorce.

It is very difficult to fix an exact date for the beginning of modernism in the context of India. But the period of highest intensity is seen in the first quarter of twentieth century in the Indian context. The roots of modernity are mainly found in industrialization. Because of industrialization a number of changes occurred in Indian society. Middle class came into existence by people migrated in cities in search of jobs. People worked in industries and they had good salary but they were separated from their people, their relatives, their native places and the result was the disintegration of society. The traditional joint family structures converted into nuclear family. Old system and old values start to collapse. Thus all these changes in society created a feeling of alienation in the modern people.

There are different shades of modernity such as the growth of industrialization, science and technology and urbanization advocated a break with tradition, blind belief and slavish obedience to any kind of authority and the application carries out rebellion in two ways: on the one hand, it rebels against the past such patriarchal system, male-dominance on the other, it fosters a new form to enforce a different medium of expression. In this context, Jean-Francois Lyotard says:
The extremely thought related with modernity is nothing but to split with conventional custom and organization completely innovative conduct of living and thoughts.²³

Besides, excessive indulgence in modernity paved way to ‘hollow men and women’. Some stark feature of this type of modernity are a high degree of skepticism about the existence of moral religious values, money at the stake of one’s relations, extra-marital relationship and the devastation of moral ethics. Therefore the researcher is of the view that modern dramatists may unfold the struggle of modern man and woman in the domestic life for survival and for preserving the status in the socio-cultural life. In this sense, the researcher thinks that Mohan Rakesh aims at exploring the psychological climate of the characters’ sensitivity that rambles like thunder and lighting. In his play, *Halfway House*, the action of the play is located in city. The family is portrayed as a modern middle class family where the children are irresponsible, conjugal relationship on the verge of decline. C.L. Khatri aptly writes:

> The reality of Rakesh is the reality of his age and of the modern urban life around him. His plays are also dominated by the themes like man-woman relationship, incompleteness, bitterness, constant nagging, utter helplessness and endless pain and suffocation in domestic life or marred life. He presents the simmering side of the picture of married life of India.²⁴

Rakesh projects the theme of incompleteness through Savitri in *Halfway House*. Mohan Rakesh’s play, *The Great Swans of the Waves*, is based on the distant historical incident of Nand, Sundari, Lord Buddha, Yashodhara, however he makes relevant historical characters’ emotions to the modern man’s agitation and predicament of in marital life.

Mohan Rakesh projects contradictory values of tradition and modernity in the context of ‘marriage’. Mohan Rakesh has exposed the importance of traditional Indian marriage and its significance in his plays. The traditionally wedding is set by parents is one kind of best decision in life. On the other hand, the rejection is certain when male and female place their own marriages without receiving permission and approval of parents. In this context, Binny engages
love marriage and consequently fail in her life. Therefore it is observed that she exposes her problems:

**THE OLDER GIRL (Binny):** What reason? A cup of tea spilt from his hand or a short delay when he returns from work? These little things are not really reasons; they become reasons. A strange sort of feeling mounts up within me and spreads like poison through my whole being. Everything I touch or see or hear becomes distorted and I stand helpless and fearful under the spell of a destructive fate.  

Here researcher is of the opinion that Binny expresses her predicament and such feeling experienced by many modern Indian women. Binny marries to Manoj to escape from middle-class boredom to the exciting world of money and sophistication of modernity. Marriage ushers glamour, fascination and freedom for most Indian girls but once the marriage ceremony is over, the dreams come to crashing down and they face sullenness of harsh realities in life. Because of excessive greed for money compels both husband and wife to work and spends much time out of home therefore modern woman has found that love, affection are lacking in married life. Consequently they feel alienated and realize that they are caught up in meaningless marriage. Binny’s own assessment of her disturb married life is quite right as she married the wrong man. She summed up her marital life as on the verge of decline.

Under the impact of modern life Savitri tries to get modern men but she departs from her husband. Unfortunately Mahendranath expresses his solitude;,

**The First Man (Mahendranath):** On no grounds. I am of no use, of no use at all. I’m only an idler... to be kicked and bullied just as you please. Can anyone tell me why I should stay here? (*silence*)

You can’t, can you?  

Savitri looks very sophisticated and in a job and by observing modern values as she asks her boss to get together at home. However such kind of incitement is not liked by traditional Indian husband. This is the family where Mahendranath and Savitri quarrel with each other constantly and are unhappy. It seems that, as a consequence of the break with the traditional
institution of the joint family in the modern urban life. The principles of modernity cannot provide any sympathy and support to Savitri. This reveals that those who clash against the traditional morals are forced to suffer.

In *Halfway House* the husband-wife relationship has a special importance in the psychological and mental development sense. Savitri’s husband, Mahendranath who is an image of morality indirectly convinces her wife to stick to conventional religious Indian morals. He is a moving and living virtue of tradition. He does not like an entry of Savitri’s boss, Singhania in the house so he always finds opportunity to leave house whenever Singhania comes. The feminist approach of Rakesh displays Savitri and Binny as lonely figures facing the experiences of loveless marriage like any modern woman of contemporary elitist society where men folk are busy with making money and fame. The agonies of the modern woman are not much different. Therefore, Savitri’s confession of her betrayal and her forceful justification of it to her friend is enlightenment of the modern woman. The facets of familial relationships with all its variegated forms have been intensively explored in Rakesh’s play, *Halfway House*. In this connection R.L. Nigam aptly comments:

Mohan Rakesh’s *Aadhe-adhure* is a highly significant play sociologically. In its particularity, *Aadhe-adhure* is the story of a particular family set on a downward path, currently facing a threat of total disintegration.

Mohan Rakesh in his play, *The Great Swans of the Waves*, projects the clash between Nand and Sundari as hostility between the modern materialism and the spiritualism related to the values of Buddhism. In this play husband-wife relationship seems devoid of love. Rakesh presents Sundari’s failure to understand Nand and his conflict. Sundari is the typical self-effacing wife; she is more interested in her personal fulfilment as more important than the welfare of her family. Sundari is blinded by her beauty and her self-important nature.

Mohan Rakesh projects upper class woman with all her vices. Sundari is a rich housewife who takes pride in her good looks. It is worth to note that Rakesh takes keen interest in presenting all the facets of the new woman’s aesthetic preoccupations. He observes in great detail the interest of her protagonists to enhance their physical beauty in ways with which high
society women outside the play are quite familiar. An example of Sundari’s pre-occupations about her beauty may be quoted here. About maintaining the beauty of the body Sundari says:

**Sundari:** Prince Siddhartha has become Gautam Buddha today.

The credit for it goes to Lady Yashodhara

**Alka:** The credit for it?

**Sundari:** Yes. If Lady Yashodhara could have bound Prince Siddhartha with her charms, wouldn’t he have remained Prince Siddhartha today? 28

Mohan Rakesh presents Sundari as a modern sensitive woman in her married life. Sundari’s problem seems to be due to materialism. A deep change takes place in Sundari, from being queen. A close observation of the Sundari’s personality shows that Sundari has more a psychological problem than being external as resulting from unfulfilled wishes. Tragically her wishes of getting love and affection from her husband end in illusion and despair. The point here is that her husband, Nand ignores her instincts, and what she likes him to treat her in a gentle and tender way is what he cannot do. As a result, the husband-wife relationship is dragged into difficulties that come in the form of identity crisis, as both Nand and Sundari stand for binary oppositions. Nand is a creature of traditional society, spiritual whereas Sundari is hypersensitive, emotional and possessive identity.

Mohan Rakesh projects tradition versus modernity through the conflict between husband and wife as they represent different root of background and principles through their behaviour. By temperament and upbringing Nand’s root is in Indian religious tradition represented by his elder brother, Siddhartha. Events in Nand’s life such as his sudden encounter with Siddharth, his embarking on path of spirituality, becoming monk comes as a jolt to Sundari. When Nand becomes monk, he demonstrates the glory of the spirituality but on the contrary he faces problems such as isolation, loss of identity and breakdown of his relationship with his wife in the family. Therefore first Nand was confused between his unconscious inclination to preserve and uphold traditional religious values in the form of lord Buddha’s preaching and values of civilization are at root of his happiness and his identity.
The portrayal of family in the play, *Halfway House* and *The Great Swans of the Waves* bears strong relevance to the present day family structure and challenges of disintegration. Mohan Rakesh presents a nuclear family that has broken with the tradition of the classical Indian joint family. It is also a family where the traditional gender roles are changed and shows the transition of values in the changing society of India. Here, it is worthwhile to note comment of Kasture:

The man-woman relationship is used by Mohan Rakesh to bring out the essentially alienated condition of human beings. His protagonists are alienated from the world, from society, from their families and even from themselves as in *Aashadh Ka Ek Din* and *Lehron Ke Rajhans*. The psychic breakdown is quickened by the marital discord as in *Halfway House*. Rakesh is quite aware, as seen by his dramatic experiments, that there is no easy or final solution to these problems.\(^{29}\)

It is one of the major themes of Rakesh’s *Halfway House* is alienation of modern man resulting from a clash between tradition and modernity. Juneja and Savitri come forward as the agents of tradition and modernity. Juneja’s sensibility is conditioned by traditional Indian culture and moral preaching. On the other hand, Savitri is strongly influenced by Singhania’s fantasies of modern life. Savitri always felt some inappropriateness with her husband and therefore sought the company of other men like Juneja, Shivjeet, Manoj and Jagmaohan. However, Juneja narrates the history of Savitri’s extra-marital life very clearly:

“It was obvious even then that you didn’t consider Mahendra to be the man, every year you’ve tried to free yourself by looking around for another man! In the beginning I was one of these men... After me, you were enamored of Shivjeet, and then you met Jagmohan.” \(^{30}\)
At the end, when Savitri desperately goes out with Jagmohan and requests him to accept her as a life-partner, but he refuses to do so on account of his position.

In *The Great Swans of the Waves*, Rakesh projects such pain and sorrow of Nand who is compelled by the time to choose either married life or spiritual life. In a helpless situation he turned himself in dress of monk. Further, when Nand came to see Sundari, but he was not recognized by his wife. She finds him different personality. In the end Nand leaves home out of frustration, which arose out of his inability to understand the words of Sundari. Nand leaves house in search of his identity. Therefore, Nand presents many questions about his personality:

**Nand:** He cut my hair. But has that made my appearance more true? Would it be truer if the tongue is cut off or the limbs are cut off? And yet who can say who is more deluded-he or I? he had said,’ I am not I, you are not you, he is not he, but everything is a picture an invisible finger has made in the sky, which as soon as made is obliterated, that it makes no difference whether it was made or not, whether it has been. But my question is, if there is no difference between being and not-being, why cut my hair? 31

Nand’s questions are raised as metaphors of the fact that life itself consists of a series of such questions which cannot be answered. Also, questions have another meaning: they communicated something about the pressures, the violence, the dangers of life, expression of sad mood and even the tragedy of the human condition on this earth. The play portrays the image of fragmented characters struggling with their relationships and circumstances. At the end of play Nand in extreme mental distress he goes without meeting Sundari in search of his lost hair or his identity.

Mohan Rakesh projects his woman character as a modern woman in male-dominated society. However, Savitri is strongly influenced by modern education so she is aware of her equal right in society. This raises problem of identity crisis and strives for equal rights in not only in society but also in the familial life. Sundari is the central character who seems to protest against the male dominated Indian society where women are denied the freedom to act according
to their will and continue to cherish their own dreams in futility. Women are treated as subaltern and mere ‘man’s shadow-self’. They are considered the otherness of man and not one with men or individuals. However, the role of women in society has been changing with each decade of a century, always with a good deal of social conflict and ideological struggle. Sundari is far more confident, forceful and brave in comparison to her male counterparts. She is not submissive. She is not guilty about her affairs and attitudes. She does not lead a life which is defined by her husband. She follows her natural instincts and makes her own rules. Sundari invites friends and relatives for love-feast but realizing some people are not coming to participate in love-feast, she boldly claims to Maitreya:

**Sundari:** The love-feast is a festival to be desired, my Lord Maitreya. Can I postpone today’s desire to tomorrow? My desire is desire of my inner self. And it can be fulfilled by myself. For which circumstances are not as important as some people think.  

Thus, Sundari challenges the traditional set-up of the society. In the course of breaking social traditions and conventions she expresses her emotions openly without any feeling of guilt. By Indian tradition, guests are recognized as Gods but she does not hesitate to use harsh words for guests. She says:

**Sundari:** I’m the cause of my own disturbance. I do not give anyone else the right to be the cause of my disturbance. If Lord Maitreya wishes to leave, please let him do so and ask him to once again visit all those houses he has already visited and tell the people concerned that they needn’t expect to come to my house on any tomorrow. As far as they are concerned, there will be no tomorrow. Never.  

Mohan Rakesh projects his central protagonist, Nand in *The Great Swans of the Waves*, as a true representative of a society in a state of conversion. Nand is caught between two worlds. He cannot break free from tradition, and yet the pull of modernity is strong upon him, and this gives rise to tensions in his soul. To reveal this, Rakesh projects Nand in symbolic situation that
is ‘Nand-tiger fight’ which testifies to Nand’s conflict between Nand and Sundari. Sundari’s materialism is the tiger and spirituality is symbolized by Nand. Even Nand says:

Nand: Why I engaged with the tiger that came snarling up? Why I invited my own death or why I fought so hard for my own survival? I coexisted with the instincts of self-destruction and self-preservation then-how and why? Was the simply a need for gratification that impelled me to live? Or was it merely a mental conflict-assuming a belief without a belief? 34

Besides, Nand’s words reveal as a situation having intense psychological pressure on Nand who is torn between a desire to have that husband-wife intimacy and a shocking lack of it. At this stage, Nand is compelled by the time to choose either married life or spiritual life. In a helpless situation he turned himself in dress of monk. Further, Nand came to visit his house to show his house, garden and wife to Anand. But when Nand happens to see Sundari, he was not recognized by his wife. She finds him different personality. Symbolically, it means that influence of materialism on Sundari compelled her not to recognize spirituality which is represented by Nand. The dilemma is the predicament of a modern man anywhere he engages in household duties, loves material life as well as has a wish to achieve spirituality as per the religious precepts. Therefore Nand, at the end, leaves house in search of true identity.

Mohan Rakesh presents significance of Pancha Shila which is five moral precepts in Buddhism, in The Great Swans of the Wave to expose conflict between tradition and modernity and reveal the nuisance of modern life. He presents philosophy of Buddhism through characters such as Anand and Nand. Nand has another significance regarding inner conflict due to the violation of Pancha Shila. When Nand says:

Nand: Not just escaped. It’s not so much physical weariness as mental. The fact that the deer was not wounded by my arrow did not hurt my mind so much as seeing him, when I was returning tired and dispirited, lying dead a little distance down the road.

Sundari: Was it wounded by someone else’s arrow?
Nand: No, not wounded by anyone’s arrow. He died of sheer weariness. I have no mental reactions when I see a deer struck down by an arrow. If I have any reaction, it’s simply a mild feeling of achievement.\textsuperscript{35}

Besides, it is significant to note down that Nand expresses his useless achievement by explaining how he pursues to kill innocent animal, deer. He fails to recognise pains of poor deer. Thus, Nand does not possess the sense of one of the moral precepts in \textit{Pancha Shila}, that is, \textit{Avoid killing, or harming any living thing}.

\section*{4.3 Comparison:}

Modern times, Indian dramas in Hindi, or in regional languages or even in English till date are predominantly problem plays. They deal with either individual problems or socio-political, economic problems of the day.

Girish Karnad and Mohan Rakesh, both contemporary playwrights whose translated works have become as much a part of Indian English Drama as they are of theatre in their respective languages, Kannada and Hindi. Both have experimented in their own unique way, with the broad framework of the modern theatre. However, the two are very different in their choice of the aesthetic and thematic weave of drama. Girish Karnad transports his spectators into the land of folklore and myth where existential questions about love and identity, love triangle, delicate flights of imagination, stylized violence are symbolically relevant to modern life. Whereas Mohan Rakesh presents to shock us out of modern bare reality of modern life.

\subsection*{4.3.1 Thematic Comparison:}

Mohan Rakesh portrays modern Indian family life as it is in a middle class setting and his characters spring from the soil of modern life. On the other hand, Girish Karnad went back to Indian myths, folktale and history to find parables for the contemporary problems. As Karnad has expressed:

I met Dr. K.J. Shah who used to teach Wittgenstein at a Karnataka University college. He remarked that the \textit{Natyasashtra} mentions the four Purusharthas as themes for theatrical enactment and
wondered whether a modern drama could be written to exemplify them. I contemplated these issues for several years. I recalled the myth of Yavakrita that I had first read in C. Rajagopalchari’s abridged edition of *Mahabharata* while I was still in college and had never been able to forget. The story figures in the “Vana Parva” of the epic and is narrated by saga Lomasha to the Pandavas. Like the other episodes of the epic, it had tremendous theatrical potential. I knew that the myth could show both the centrality of *yagnya* with parallel drawn with theatre and also dramatise the interplay of *dharma*-as ritual, tapasya; *artha*-power; *kama*- love, sex; *moksha*- redemption, sacrifice.\(^{36}\)

Mohan Rakesh uses not only historical characters but also modern middle class characters to project the breakdown of communication in marital life in *Halfway House* and *The Great Swans of the Waves*, besides; he uses contemporary situations and social problems to project the life-in-death attitude of modern life in *Halfway House*. But Girish Karnad brings his characters not only from Indian myth but also from folklore, folktale to expose nuisance of modern life. He did not use direct setting of modern life he indirectly conveys the morals and virtues of traditional Indian culture. In this connection M. K. Naik comments:

In addition to its thematic richness, The entire play is cast in the form of traditional Indian drama (or folk drama) which took several features of ancient Sanskrit. Drama but adapted them to its own special needs as a popular form of art. The particular form of drama that Karnad draws upon is Yakshagana of Karanataka but this form has much in common with other traditional forms extant in the different parts of the country.\(^{37}\)
It seems that Girish Karnad adheres to rich Indian tradition when he uses Indian myth, folktale for plot construction of his plays. Girish Karnad exposes the rich cultural heritage of India by using myths and traditional stories in his plays. It seems that he has made a great effort to uphold Indian values and its cultural ethos. It is observed that Girish Karnad does not use myths in some of his plays in their totality. The researcher further observes that Girish Karnad uses the great tradition of the Indian mythology, Bhagavad-Gita to dramatize morals and social virtues from Gods to men on the earth in the play. The mythical and symbolic plan of The Fire and the Rain is so designed as it links in its structure with the original myth of the Mahabharata to project Indian ethos and modernity apathy towards human relationship. Here Girish Karnad wants to convey a philosophical message of Karma-yoga (As referred to in the Bhagavad-Gita) through the character, Arvasu and Yavakri Karnad has successfully tried to prove the supremacy of the Karma-yoga through the presentation of Arvasu’s acts. It seems that Arvasu follows path of devotional selfless service. He tries to be helpful to everyone without any presupposed intention. In other words, it is stated in the verse 3.3 in Bhagavad-Gita a person without self-interest, action spring from the depths and is governed by the Supreme secretly seated in the heart.

An important character in the play is Yavakri who suffers from the weakness of ambition, revenge and lust. Yavakri is a victim of lust. It is seen how lust is the worst enemy of the living entity in the verse 3.37 of the Bhagavad-Gita. It is yearn only which is instinctive to get in touch with with the substance form of infatuation which turns into anger and at last leads to the end of existence with enemy.

Thus, lust is the worst enemy of the living entity, and it is lust only which induces the pure living entity to remain entangled in the material world. In this regard, Yavakri’s scholarship and his knowledge fail to recognize sacred way. Yakakri’s Universal knowledge could not liberate him from Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), and Moha (desire).

Unlike Mohan Rakesh who delved deep into the problems of the middle class man and mildly exposes jealousy, frustration without bloodshed, Girish Karnad exposes the evils which are inside human beings namely jealousy and revenge. Karnad’s The Fire and the Rain is a play of jealousy and revenge which finally leads to destruction and condemnation. Jealousy and revenge are such evils which destroy everything and do not allow to progress towards Moksha. These evils have no boundary of caste, creed, sex and nation. These are inherent human
weaknesses which lead human beings to ruin and death. This theme is very relevant to modern society where visualize the face of jealousy in man and woman, father and son, brother and brother and wife and husband. In *The Fire and the Rain*, Yavakri, Raibhya, Indra and Paravasu are continually burning in the furnace of jealousy and hatred. They are well-read and well-versed in the scriptures, but they fail miserably to imbibe in their mind to the principles of *Purushartha* and implement them in life.

Even after ten years of rigorous penance Yavakri fails miserably to control his lust for vengeance. He fails to control jealousy, hatred and lust. Girish Karnad subtly reveals the futility of Yavakri’s that knowledge which he receives directly from the Heaven-god *Indra*. Even after receiving knowledge Yavakri cannot free himself from the bondage of selfishness. His knowledge makes him even more miserable and wretched. He avenges Raibhya in a cowardly manner and his son Paravasu by seducing Vishakha, the wife of Paravasu. His superficial knowledge does not help him at all to conquer the evils inside him. On the contrary his knowledge inflames his passions and boosts his pride and desire for revenge. In this respect, Vishakha rightly points out:

**Vishakha:** I can’t believe it! The whole world may be singing your praises. But you haven’t grown up! These ten years have not made any difference to your teenage fantasies.  

However, Yavakri’a sole purpose is to destroy the happiness and reputation of Raibhya and his son Paravasu. He is such person who is continuously burning in the furnace of jealousy and hatred like Milton’s Satan. Even, Yavakri says to Vishakha:

**Yavakri:** one night in the jungle, Indra came to me and said: You are ready now to receive knowledge. But knowledge involves control of passions, serenity, objectivity. And I shouted back: No that’s not the knowledge I want. That’s not knowledge. That’s suicide! This obsession. This hatred. This venom. All this is me. I’ll not deny
anything of myself. I want knowledge so I can be vicious, destructive! 40

However, Indra grants Yavakri his desire henceforth he becomes vicious like beast and restless. His knowledge does not help him to get rid of his evil nature. His only aim is to bring about the disaster of Raibhya and Paravasu. The character of Raibhya is presented as cruel and jealous. He is a educated person but like Yavakri, he is a slave of his selfhood. Out of jealousy, Raibhya misuses his spiritual powers and creates a Brahm-Rakshasa in order to kill Yavakri. Despite knowing the nature of evil he cannot stop from submitting himself to evil desires. Bharadwaja, a learned saint and a friend of Raibhya, feels offended by the jealous acts of his friend and in revenge, he curses Raibhya to be killed by his elder son, Paravasu. Then, Paravasu kills his father with his own hand and returns to the city where the fire sacrifice is going on. He is the chief priest. He has polluted himself with the blood of his father. Still he continues to be the Chief Priest and blames his brother, Arvasu for murdering Raibhya.

Indra is not free from the evils of jealousy and hatred. He kills Vishwarupa and Vritra because he is envious of them. He calls Vritra ‘demon’ thus:

**Indra**: Vishwarupa! Everyone admires Vishwarupa. Everyone sings his praises. His wisdom and gentleness and mastery of the lores inspires a love which makes me feel like the eclipsed mood. It threatens my sovereignty of the worlds. But how can I destroy him? 41

Besides, Indra kills Vishwarupa. Therefore it seems that Yavakri, Raibhya, Bharawaja, Paravasu and Indra are continuously burning in the jealousy and want to take revenge. Finally, everybody is condemned and destroyed.

Both, Girish Karnad and Mohan Rakesh project one of their theme a ‘quest for identity’ in terms of women characters. In the opinion of this researcher Karnad’s women characters are in a state of transition to become aware about their identity whereas Rakesh’s women characters already made their identity in house and in society as a modern woman who is aware about her equal right. In *The Fire and the Rain*, Vishakha in her meeting with Yavakri confesses her unwilling marriage with Paravasu. Even she recollects exact words of her husband, Paravasu,
Thus: “I know you didn’t want to marry me. But don’t worry. I’ll make you happy for a year”.

Both Paravasu and Vishakha are shown by the dramatist in their respective quest for identities; but neither is successful in that quest in the play during the entire course of action. Vishakha feels heavenly pleasures in her sensuous fulfilment in the company of her husband, for she is eager enough to know the real meaning of life through the attraction and experience of the body. But Paravasu decides to leave her alone in the hermitage. He leaves her in the security of his father, Raibhya, and leaves the hermitage for the sacrificial place for performing the rituals of Fire Sacrifice (Yajan), for it becomes a quest for his identity as a priest but Vishakha as a young wife suffers pains and she meets Yavakri to fulfil her desires. In other words, she wants to make her own identity except as a wife and shares her feelings to another person. Even she reports them in front of Yavakri:

**Vishakha:** Then on the first day of the second year of our marriage, he said: ‘Enough of that. We now start on our search.’ And then-it wasn’t that I was not happy. But the question of happiness receded into the background. But I knew he knew. Nothing was too shameful, too degrading, even too painful. Shame died in me. And I yielded. I let my body be turned inside out as he did his won.

Another woman character is Nittilai in *The Fire and the Rain.* She asks questions about priests, exposes the problems related to low-caste people who are denied to attend Fire Sacrifice. The women’s problems in India are very different from the west. Rural based women who work for agriculture are illiterate and bound by traditional principles of male-dominated society and superstition. They are not even aware of the extra burden which is put on them and they suffer willingly. In middle class women are educated and some of them are employed but this has not given them satisfaction. These women have to maintain the burden of domestic responsibilities and the demands of career or office work. Nittilai who belongs to low-caste tribe exposes her problems in context of social status.

Further, in Karnad’s *Hayavadana,* woman character, Padmini wants to fulfil her desire even she strives to get an ideal husband. However, human desire for completeness represented by Padmini ends in a disaster as the transposition of heads gradually proves that it is the mind that
rules. After the transposition of heads by Padmini at the Kali temple, complications arise. Devadatta’s head on Kapila’s body and vice-versa solves her problem only temporarily. Devadatta’s head-Kapila’s body mingle slowly reverts to the nature of Devadatta. And so the other combine of Kapila’s head and Devadatta’s body. Padmini’s final choice, however, is Kapila with whom she spends four satisfying nights when Devadatta goes to Ujjain to buy dolls. Padmini has selected option for her and even she is aware about right to fulfil her desires. But her decisions are not right according to traditional Indian moral context because it seems that she is in a state of transition to become aware about her identity and in such position she becomes much aggressive and hasty to take decision. Though Padmini is repressed by the power of patriarchal values of the ruling class ideology, she is brave and frank unlike the archetypal Indian women. She does not suppress her desire for Kapila and wants both of them alive, although she fully aware that her living with two men would be socially unacceptable. Throughout the play she appears as an example of an emancipated woman who refuses to accept the typically passive feminine role.

On the other hand, women characters of Mohan Rakesh possess their identity in house and in society as a modern woman who is aware about her equal rights. Mohan Rakesh presents women’s identity in relation with the economic factor. Unlike the traditional housewife who is confined to her home and hearth and is loyal and obedient to her husband, Savitri is educated and employed. The position of a working woman has given her the right to assert herself and a new identity. Like a modern liberated woman, Savitri does not believe in chastity. She is deeply interested in material comforts, position and wealth. That is the reason why she keeps contacts of four men. But it is very crucial to note that in spite of having these love affairs, Savitri was never happy with anyone of them nor did she stick to any one of them. However, Savitri wants to make her different identity when she wants to arrange a job for son, Ashok therefore she invites her boss to her house. She wants her husband and children to accept silently the presence of her male friends. But the husband goes away every time when she brings them home. Juneja the male friend reveals towards the end that Savitri has been selfishly pursuing purely personal goals meant to further her material status in the society. In this regard, Rajinder Nath comments:

Here is a class where all human bonds of love and concern for one another have been replaced by very mundane and materialistic
compulsions. Whenever bonds of love and concern are replaced by materialistic compulsion, the ‘hell’ is inevitable. And that is what *Aadhe-adhure* is about.\(^{44}\)

In the opinion of this researcher that there must be reciprocal coordination of love and affection among the members of family. For happy family it is expected that each member to be integrated from others by love. When love is replaced by modern materialistic compulsion, family members try to gain material benefit and luxurious life instead of sacrifice for love.

Further, Mohan Rakesh’s play, *The Great Swans of the Waves*, exposes an egoist kind of woman through the character of Sundari. Besides, Rakesh reveals Sundari’s failure to understand her husband, Nand and his predicament. Sundari is the typical self-effacing wife; she is more interested in her personal fulfilment as more important than the welfare of her family. Sundari is blinded by her beauty and her self-important nature. Nand is a part of traditional society, spiritual whereas Sundari is emotional and possessive personality. Even she does not hesitate to comment on Yashodhara and Gautam Buddha, for instance, she says:

**Sundari:** Prince Siddhartha has become Gautam Buddha today.

The credit for it goes to Lady Yashodhara.

**Alka:** The credit for it?

**Sundari:** Yes. If Lady Yashodhara could have bound Prince Siddhartha with her charms, wouldn’t he have remained Prince Siddhartha today? \(^{45}\)

Words to Sundari reveal that she is very proud of woman’s beauty but when Sundari sees her husband, Nand in the dress of monk with shaved head, her ego turns into extreme wrath. Therefore she neglects to identify her husband, even she says:

**Sundari:** No, he has not returned. It is someone else who has returned. \(^{46}\)

Thus, the clash of identities between Sundari and Nand that takes an unhappy dimension has other interesting points of focus. At the root of the husband-wife conflict there is the theme
of tradition versus modernity. By temperament and upbringing Nand’s root is in tradition represented by his elder brother, Siddhartha. Events in Nand’s life such as his sudden encounter with Siddhartha, following path of spirituality, becomes monk threatens Sundari who stands for modernism.

This researcher thinks that Rakesh’s male characters seems to be in a state of transition to become aware about women’s identity and her equal rights in the familial life as well as in social life whereas Karnad’s male characters are just men of patriarchal society and they are not willing to accept that woman has equal rights. Girish Karnad’s selected plays offer a spectacular view of the ills of the self-divided orthodox and tradition bound Indian society at different levels such as social, political and religion. Girish Karnad’s male characters such as in Hayavadana, Devadatta, the Brahmin scholar and poet, and Kapila, the low caste, ingenious wrestling champion, are attractive but represent their behaviour and nature as complete individuals of male-dominated society. In The Fire and the Rain, male characters such as Paravasu, Raibhya, Yavakri, do not probe much light on women’s anxieties, love and psychological problems. It is a remarkable achievement of Karnad that he adapts the male-oriented folktale and myths in such a manner that it becomes a representation of the experience of men who are unconscious about women’s rights. They try to have complete control over their women partners. Therefore it is observed in Karnad’s plays that men of Indian traditional society who are conditioned by the age-old and customary mindset that women from their very birth should be cared either by their father, brother, husband or son. Consequently, it is observed in The Fire and the Rain, Vishakha is neglected and subjected to isolation and ill-treatment. Vishakha is pushed into the arms of other man by the negligence of her husband, the humiliation of her father-in-law and her loneliness. In other words she is represented of woman in a male dominated and elitist society in the present times. Even, Raibhya represents orthodox man of male-dominated society for instance, Raibhya dares to call whore to his daughter-in-law as:

**Raibhya:** You whore-you roving whore! I could reduce you to ashes-turn you into a fistful of dust-with a simple curse. But let that husband of yours handle you. Paravasu, Chief Priest of the sacrifice! Let his clean up his own shit! 

47
Further, Paravasu represents orthodox husband of traditional male-dominated society. Paravasu after enjoying Vishakha’s body for one year joins the Fire Sacrifice as the chief priest and he does not return house for seven years. In this sense, as a traditional husband of patriarchal society, he neglects wife’s emotions, love and he has left her after giving her taste of sexual pleasure. Consequently she is left to lead an isolated life. He has forgotten his familial duties completely. Therefore Vishakha complains:

**Vishakha:** The site of the fire sacrifice is only a couple of hours away from her. But in all these seven years he hasn’t come back. I know he can’t. But I look forward to having him home once the seven years are over. Alone, I have become dry like tinder. Ready to burst into flames at a breath. To burn things around me down at the slightest chance- 48

On the other hand, male characters of Mohan Rakesh are in state of transition to turn into aware about women’s identity and her equal rights in not only in the familial life but also in social life. Therefore, they seem mild while treating women in the familial life. It seems that in *Halfway House,* Mahendranath is torn between patriarchal society and modern society. At the severe provocation from Savitri and in a state of frustration due to Savitri’s misbehaviour, he leaves his house in a huff. But he cannot live without his wife, his children for a long time. Even he sends Juneja to convey his love to Savitri. However, it is observed that first; he possesses the qualities of male-dominated society but later he turns himself into mild husband as a life partner. For instance, at the beginning Binni describes Mahendranath’s behaviour as dominant as traditional patriarchal husband’s behaviour:

**The Older Girl:** Uncle! When I lived here it was like being…you can’t imagine what it was like…Daddy’s rages when he tore Mama’s clothes to shreds…when he gagged her and beat her up behind closed doors…dragging her by the hair
But when Mahendranath became aware that Savitri too has equal rights in familial right even she is breadwinner of family. Therefore it seems that he turns himself from traditional husband into life partner and likes to adjust in modern time. Consequently, at the end of the play, he comes back to Savitri, weary, tired bitten by the love of Savitri. In *The Great Swans of the Waves*, male protagonist, Nand seems to feel losing his assertion of superiority. In other words his ego is injured when he is denied to recognize by his wife. In the end Nand leaves home out of disgust and frustrate psyche which arose out of his inability to understand the words of Sundari. Sundari is angry not because Nand’s head is shaved, but because at that point she lost her belief in him. Nand believes Sundari is irritated by his hairlessness. That is why she says in the end, ‘that’s all they can understand!’ in the conflict of the material and the nonmaterial view of life.

Girish Karnad’s plays belong to category of folk plays. On the other hand Mohan Rakesh’s plays belong to urban realist drama. Substantially speaking, Girish Karnad went back to myths, folktale, and legends and made them a vehicle of a new vision. Even by using these traditional aspects he tries to show the absurdity of modern life. In this connection, by comparing urban realist drama with folk plays in the Aparna B. Dharwadker points out that:

*Hayavadana* also resonates in present dramatic and cultural contexts because it gives primacy to women in the psychosexual relations of marriage, and creates a space for the expression, even the fulfilment, of amoral female desire within the constraints of patriarchy. In this respect, the genre of ‘urban folk’ theatre to which both *Hayavadana* and *Naga-Mandala* belong offers a radical contrast to the representation of women in the ‘urban realist’ drama of such playwrights as Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, the early Badal Sircar, Mahesh Elkunchwar, Jayawanat Dalvi, and Mahesh Dattani. The essential basis of difference here is not the gender of the author, which continues to be exclusively male but the qualitatively different attitudes to gender that emerge
within the plays when male authors move out of the urban social-realist mode into the anti-modern, anti-realistic, charismatic realm of folk culture. Plays such as *Hayavadana* and *Naga-Mandala* (as well as Kambar’s *Jokumaraswami* and Tanvir’s *Charandas Chor*) are important in the discourse of gender because they embody several principles largely absent in realist drama.\(^{50}\)

Girish Karnad uses indigenous resources for the structural design of his plays and he picks up Indian myths, folktale and symbols and uses in such a way as to interpret the contemporary social and moral issues authentically. The classical texts, such as the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and other texts shape symbolically in the plays of Karnad. Further, he derives the ancient tradition of literature like folklore, folktale and gods of Hindu cultural tradition to interpret and present his theme in very authentic manner. For instance, the structural plan of *The Fire and the Rain* has been derived from the *Vana Parva* of the *Mahabharata*. In this sense, it seems that Girish Karnad belongs to category of folk theatre and remains the playwright of Kannada theater. Therefore in the support of this view, the comment of Khatri C.L. is worth-quoting:

> Girish Karnad has effectively demonstrated how Indian Drama in English can revitalize itself by turning back to its root in ancient Indian drama and how myths and history can serve as a powerful medium to dramatize contemporary situations.\(^{51}\)

On the other hand, by comparing urban realist drama with folk plays Aparna B. Dharwadker points out that:

> Realist drama emphasizes and often romanticizes the maternal role, folk narratives stress the feminine but not necessarily the maternal. Or, to put it differently, fertility and motherhood are important in folk plays, but can be detached from the constraints of marital fidelity. In all these plays, the women
want or get men they cannot legitimately have; each one accomplishes her desire, but only provisionally, and like the queen bee destroys her male partner (lover or husband) in the process. The ideology of urban folk drama thus manifests itself most conspicuously in the treatment of femininity, sexuality, absolute, women in folk drama find the means of exercising an ambivalent freedom within its constraints, unlike their urban counterparts in such plays as Rakesh’s Adhe Adhur or Vijay Tendulkar’s Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe.52

Besides, it is noteworthy that Mohan Rakesh belongs to part of new writing that emerged after Independence and which was mainly the work of the city-based, middle-class writers specially in the history of Hindi theatre. These writing mainly focused on the problems which were the creation of the urban life and which concerned the rise of industrial development and its influence on middle-class group. Here, in this regard the comment of Subhash Chandra is worth-quoting:

The period from 1950-1972 explored the psychic complications of the modern middle-class man, caused by his angst and frustration from breaking human relationships. Rakesh was an active part of this creative milieu and his writings constitute an in-depth study into the psyche of the city-bred, city-harassed middle-class man.53

Traditional ways and values and modern life-styles find a prominent place in the portrayal of women characters by Girish Karnad and Mohan Rakesh. In other words, women who conform to the traditional moral ethics, code of conduct and social norms, especially with regard to their relationship with men, are certainly traditionalist. On the other hand, those who
defy traditions and opt for modernity are modernist. In this connection, L.S. Ningthoujam appropriately discussed and differed modern and traditional woman:

A traditional-abiding woman even sacrifices her happiness for the well being of the family, but at the same time retains her individuality. The Indian woman is more tradition bound. She is ever ready to serve her family unquestioningly. To her the well-being and happiness of the family rise above everything else and she does not even think once when she sacrifices all her desires and happiness for the sake of all those who call her the custodian of their family’s honour and prestige. The modern woman does not find any sense in being acquiescent. She is not ready to suffer and sacrifice as the traditional Indian woman does. She wants to project her image as an individual, free from all kinds of conservative thinking which she seeks to overthrow. She is ready to fight her way against all odds coming in her way in fulfilling her aspirations. She rebels against the existing moral codes and social norms. Her rebellious craving for individuality and happiness cannot but result in the break up of family and relationship within the family.54

The researcher thinks that Girish Karnad portrays two types of women-first, traditional women who still retain their individuality and second, women who face challenges in their quest for self-fulfilment and they are as true representative of society in a state of transition. Therefore, women who are traditional, oppressed, exploited and tortured in the name of tradition are found in the women characters of Girish Karnad. On the other hand, Mohan Rakesh portrays women who choose modernity for convenience and use modernity as a licence to act according to their will and they are daring, educated, unconventional, shrewd, rich and self-absorbing with loose morals.

Mohan Rakesh projects the world of the new woman. It is only natural that as a literary writer he presents an honest and truthful image of woman who aspires to challenge the male-
dominated modern society. This researcher thinks that Mohan Rakesh has been able to throw significant light on the inner life of women belonging to the glittering world of modern Indian society and on the new woman who now occupies the centre-stage in this society. Mohan Rakesh indirectly focuses on the unhealthy aspects of the character of a new woman. On the other hand, he criticizes out at the Indian males by delineating their unwelcome behaviour and psyche, besides he satirically exposes the emptiness in the lives of modern women. In his fearless presentation of modern women living a high life, there is surely a deep moral purpose beneath their surface. In *Halfway House*, Mohan Rakesh presents background of family that belonging to an educated middle class home where Savitri has been shown the new face of the totally, emancipated woman with all her daring adventures and deeds. He projects the psyche of modern women in order to reveal how the changes in the their behaviour come about and how far the changes have been rewarding and at the same time modern woman tending to destroy the softer, timid feminine quality of these women which is contrary to traditional image of woman.

In *Halfway House*, Rakesh exposes glittering backdrop of metro-politian social circle where men and women lead luxurious but irresponsible lives, throwing away all traditional and moral inhibitions of the conservative Indian society. Rakesh’s women characters such as Savitri, Binni are passionate with aspiration for wealth, power and fame. They acquire an image which is in contrast to the image of the traditional Indian women who are seen to devote in the service of their husbands and family. Extra-marital affairs are beyond imagination for traditional women even if their husbands keep several mistresses. They feel that it is patriarchal man’s right to have any number of wives while a woman has no right to such relationship for if she does she will be shunned and dubbed as characterless. Traditional Indian women have no voice of their own. These women feel that whatever men and society tell them to do, it is their sole duty to obey obediently. Consequently they suffer countless injustices in their married life.

Besides Mohan Rakesh projects the predicament of modern woman i.e. even women who are born in the modern age and have full awareness of the new voice of women’s emancipation are still find themselves influenced by the traditional customary practices of the male-dominated society. For instance, in *Halfway House*, Savitri does office job and house work therefore she frustrates and says:

**The woman:** No one’s ever at home! Kinni! Out I suppose!...Another torn book! And Ashok’s been...! Idle all day but he can’t
look after his clothes...or even clear the table! Everything’s left for me to do.\textsuperscript{55}

Savitri’s words reveal the fact that she frustrates to see all house work remain same to do for her and no one in the family is responsible to do though she earns money for her family by doing official job. Also, a number of well-educated women who could have gone out on their own and made careers for themselves have to sit back at home when the family is traditional and disapproves of their working outside homes. Here researcher thinks that women still occupy a very sub-ordinate position in our society despite the fact that it is now the down of the age of science and technology. The new twenty-first century should create a new awakening in the men and make them realize that the new age demands that they should accord due recognition to women as equal partners in all walks of life. People, at large, should welcome them to take part in decision-making in all affairs inside and outside the family matters, a new life which is lived in mutual cooperation and mutual respect for husband and wife. While this is the demand and spirit of the new age, the shades of the old spirit and values of life have not yet given way to the new values. Therefore it seems that Mohan Rakesh projects a new woman through Savitri, Binni to convey this message to audience. Rakesh’s women characters seem a kind of rebellion against the old culture with the emergence of a type of new women from the middle class of Indian society which challenges men’s hierarchy in every sphere of life. Besides it seems that Rakesh’s women characters are highly challenging, educated and assertive and they are able to tell men that whatever they do, they too are entitled to do the same. Even they keep men tied under their belts, so that when one fails to live up to their expectations, they can move on to the next one. In this regard Rakesh’s woman character, Savitri is relevant to new modern woman because for her a marriage is a formality and a matter of personal convenience. When that purpose is not served by husband, she does not hesitate to cast him from her life. Therefore she says:

\textbf{Savitri:} Let me tell you about the reality I know. Why does one get married? In order to fulfill a need...an inner...void, if you like; to be self-sufficient...complete. But that’s not why Mahendra got married! The object of his existence is ... as if...he were there only to fill in the gaps in the lives of others...whatever
other people expect of him …or in whichever way they think they can use him.\textsuperscript{56}

Thus, the words of Savitri reveal the fact that she expects a number of things to be fulfilled and she blames her husband, Mahendranath for his failure and frustration without realizing his part in it. Mohan Rakesh presents a appealing image of the actual lives of the high society women with all their power and weaknesses. This modern woman is fearless, bright and eager to comment on failures of other. For instance, Savitri very boldly replied her son, Ashok as:

\textbf{Savitri:} The burden of this house is so great that I need someone to share it with me. I can’t manage it alone! Your father lost all our money and has been idle ever since. You, far from doing something on your own, even consider my efforts to help you an insult! If no one else is bothered, why should I alone go on? Why shouldn’t I enjoy life? If I did that, you wouldn’t feel small, would you? Why are you silent? Tell me in what circumstances you don’t feel small?\textsuperscript{57}

On the other hand Girish Karnad projects his women characters in domain of male-dominated traditional Indian society. In the opinion of researcher Karnad’s women characters face challenges in their quest for self-fulfilment and they are as true representative of society in a state of transition in patriarchal society. These women are traditional, oppressed, exploited and tortured in the name of tradition. On comparative lines, Karnad’s women strive to satisfy their desires within traditional terms and conditions of society and while breaking tradition they hesitate and think about tradition of Indian culture and code and conduct of society. Consequently they are not such extreme bold as compare to Rakesh’s women characters. For instance, Girish Karnad’s woman character, Padmini, in \textit{Hayavadana} says:

\textbf{Padmini:} Kali, Mother of all Nature, you must have your joke even now…….\textsuperscript{58}
Padmini utters above mention dialogue when she was going to perform *Sati* and it is fact that at the end she feels guilty of her immoral act as she aspires for an ideal husband who possesses brilliant brain like Devadatta and strong body like Kapila. But when she realized that her conjugal life with Devadatta is ruined because of her frailty, she prepared to go *Sati*. In this regard researcher thinks that Girish Karnad wishes to convey the significance of traditional Indian culture which always sticks to moral virtue and paves the way of pious relationship in married life.

On the other hand, Rakesh’s women characters never hesitate to break tradition of Indian society. Even they do not feel guilty about their deeds. For instance, Savitri boldly accepts that she has extra-marital relationship with a number of persons when Juneja blames her:

*Juneja:* But every other year you’ve tried to free yourself by looking around for another man! In the beginning I was one of these men. You have also just said. After me, you were enamoured of Shivjeet..his university degree, his trips abroad, or whatever. In reality he interested you only because…he was not Mahendra. You met Jagmohan. You admired him of his excellent contacts, his smart way of life, his generosity. But the real reason was the same; no matter what he was, he was Jagmohan…not Mahendra.  

But it is the view of researcher that it is the artistic quality of Girish Karnad who presents both traditional Indian woman and a state of transition as traditional into modern woman in one play to project difference between good and evil. In this sense, Nittilai and Vishakha are presented as conflict between good and evil, traditional virtue and modern evil. In the play, *The Fire and the Rain*, Nittilai is presented virtuous traditional woman. She represents traditional virtue that is to be good and benevolent. On the other hand, Vishakha is represented as a modern woman who is not interested to do something for others. Therefore she faces loneliness, isolation in her life. Nittilai is typical Indian traditional woman. She is like a traditional woman who
believes in the principles of male-dominated society. She regards it is a sin even to think about another man. Therefore when she gets married she conveys Arvasu as:

**Nittilai:** Arvasu, when I say we should go together-I don’t mean we have to live together-like lovers or like husband and wife. I have been vicious enough to my husband. I don’t want to disgrace him further. Let’s be together-like brother and sister. You marry any girl you like. 60

It is the view of researcher that words of Nittilai reveal to the reader as morally upright and a pious wife. On the other hand, Vishakha loves her husband with sincerity and serves him loyally with devotion but the moment he proves to be selfish one, she throws away his divine image and becomes ready to love Yavakri. Nittilai raises questions about priests who think as a special group of people who only can perform Fire Sacrifice. She says:

**Nittilai:** you know, their fire sacrifices are conducted in covered enclosures. They mortify themselves in the dark of the jungle. Even their gods appear so secretly. Why? What are they afraid of? Look at my people. Everything is done in public view there. 61

The researcher opinions that through the words of Nittilai, Girish Karnad exposes the problems related to low-caste people who are denied to attend Fire Sacrifice. Nittiali raises questions about the secretly performance of ‘Fire Sacrifice’.

Mohan Rakesh projects how women are responsible to create problems in their married life but he does not expose majorly the problems of women. On the other hand, Girish Karnad projects how women create problems in married life and presents major problems of women.

Girish Karnad projects the problem faced by Indian women. ‘Chastity’ and ‘loyalty’ are terms limited to women alone in the Indian context. Chastity is one of the values invented by patriarchal culture. The great epic the *Ramayana* in which Sita undergoes the flames trial to show her pious nature and body to Rama has been a ethical lead to Indian people. Every mother along with father and other elders in the family enslave her daughter by teaching her verbally that chastity is more important than life and that its loss, which brings an unbearable social
stigma, is worse than death. It is observed in the society that many women lose their lives to protect their chastity and many other women bear in silence all the oppression and violence of their husbands. If any modern woman violates these values, she is not only looked down upon in society. Therefore it is clear that the concept of chastity is gender biased and that women care more for chastity than men.

This is the opinion of researcher that Girish Karnad projects his woman character, Nittilai, to expose the suffering of the age-old suppression and humiliation of the lower-class people. In this context Karnad implicitly presses for greater social reform in the rigid positioning of women and the intolerable plight of the deprived class. The character Nittilai is that of a submissive and meek traditional woman who falls flat the feet of upper class. Even she does not complain but takes it as a normal part of her life and survives long enough till her death. She just blames and raises question against upper class when she says:

Nittilai: So Father’s to blame? Do you know why Father called the elder in such haste? He always says: ‘These high-caste men are glad enough to bed our women but not to wed them.’

In this regard Karnad focuses on the plight of those Indian women who are ruined and always at the mercy of the men folk in male-dominated society. Right from the ancient times till the present, with certain exceptions, the situation has remained the same. Nittilai is not an individual, but a representative of the early twentieth century Indian woman. Through the mythical story, Girish Karnad authentically reveals the plight of ancient Indian women in the male dominating society. Besides, Girish Karnad exposes the way marriages are fixed in India from ancient times to modern age. Woman in India is taken for granted as men have failed to realize that she too has feelings and emotions. She is exploited simply because she is a woman and no one cares to ask for her consent. Though Kapila realizes that Devadatta is not suitable partner of Padmini, as the two families decide, their marriage takes place leading to the utter failure of their life. Here, Karnad projects a problem of woman through Padmini, though she is an enchanting woman, wages a war against the patriarchal order of command and ultimately she too becomes a prey to the tyranny of the patriarchal society. In The Fire and the Rain, Vishakha enjoys her happy married life just for a year. Her husband, Paravasu without considering her emotions and love accepts the invitation from the King to be the Chief Priest for seven years.
Even the place of the Fire Sacrifice is only a couple of hours away from his house but he never came back. In such situation Vishakha feels lonely figure and suffers the pangs of loveless marriage like most women in contemporary society. Ultimately she becomes a prey to Yavakri who seduces her just to take revenge against her father-in-law and her husband. In this context her loneliness, lovelessness, frustration, humiliation reveal the pangs of such pathetic women in the modern society.

Woman characters of Mohan Rakesh express their feeling of love to another man and they do not keep quit against male-dominated society. Even they are aggressive and bold to accept that they keep extra-marital relationship. On the other hand, Karnad’s women characters remain in a traditional society where they are not permitted to express their feelings of love to another man. Girish Karnad portrayed the harsh and realistic circumstances faced by women in India from ancient times. In *Hayavadana* and *The Fire and the Rain*, Karnad exposes two worlds- inside the house and outside the house. Inside the house is such a circle that revolves around the husband and the wife. The out-of-house world comprises the friends, brother, father and even concubines. The wife is isolated and keeps herself aloof from the external world. In this sense, the husbands try to survive their monopoly over their wives in many ways.

4.3.2 Comparison: Dramatic Skills and Presentation:

Observing on the relationship between character and dialogue in play, Prof. K.R.S. Iyengar comments in his book, Indian Writing in English:

Characters is projected in play with dialogue-and as of could it repeat with dialogic mode with action. 63

Mohan Rakesh used his unique characteristics such as repetition of phrases, statements, pauses and silences in the dialogue. One of Rakesh’s devices is the use of repetition in the dialogue. This device presents the mental processes which lie behind the words. It is the fact that Rakesh’s characters repeat themselves, or each other’s phrases, the dramatist employs the device of repetition to fulfil a definite function in the action. For instance, Nand says:

Sundari: Is there nothing more you have to say for yourself?
Nand: No, nothing else. Indeed there is nothing else.  

Thus, the emptiness of the dialogue here clearly indicated the emptiness of the relationship of Nand and Sundari with each other, the boredom of their lives and yet their determination to go on making good conversation. Hence the repetition of the question and statement is more relevant than the statement and the explicit content of the statement itself.

The employ of ‘pauses’ has its own importance in Rakesh’s play. That is why silences and pauses play very vital role in character’s dialogue. When Rakesh indicates a ‘pause’, he conveys that character’s strong thinking is continuing and that silent intensions are rising. Also, the ‘silence’ which is a refusal to communicate is one of the dominant images in Rakesh’s play. ‘Pause’ is used when Nand and Sundri talks each other, for instance:

Nand: …..because I’m this as well as that …not any one of them, which everyone believes for himself to be my reality!

(Pause)

Sundari: Is there nothing more you have to say for yourself? (Nand turns to her. Pause)  

Here, Nand’s silence is incapacity to speak, silences and pauses present the indeterminacy of the character as well as the ambiguity of events actually heightens the dramatic tension. Mohan Rakesh had the unique ability for creating visual and auditory impact on stage. Monologue, choruses and symbolic situations are used as the favourite means of communication. Consequently his play divulges a fusion of dialogue and action producing the desired effect on spectators. A noteworthy feature of the play concerns the portrayal of women. The primary characters are men but the power and the strength of his women characters instantly attracts attention. Sundari is more impressive woman than male character in the play with immense modern force and energy. It is indeed creditable for a male writer to probe deeply into the psyche of the women characters and succeed in portraying them with a proper comprehension.

Interestingly enough, the title of the play *The Great Swans of the Waves* is extremely meaningful and symbolic. The title is related to the characters in the play focusing on their psyche, their agonies, mental turmoil and attempts to reconcile with the unusual upheavals of
Though this play is related with historical event, his characters are modern in their realization that no one is free in this world; every human being is in chains, in captivity of some external force or the other which could be family, society, country, religion. In this regard the play is complete with meaning containing a definite message to convey to the audience.

It is very significant to note that Mohan Rakesh uses unique dramatic devices such as ‘The Prologue’, ‘One man playing five different roles’, ‘Repetition and omission of language’ in his own way therefore he is very different from other modern dramatists. Mohan Rakesh’s usage of the dramatic performance device, ‘One man playing five different roles’ implies that the emphasis is on the human situation which has been projected through a set of human beings and not so much on those human agents themselves. Therefore, each individual does not want a single conventional identity but each individual behaves alike in a given situation.

It is noteworthy that Girish Karnad is aware of the problems and challenges Indian playwrights had to face after Independence when he writes about post-independence playwrights, he says:

> They had to face a situation in which tensions implicit until then had come out in the open and demanded to be resolved without apologia or self-justification: tensions between the cultural past of the country and its colonial past, between the attractions of Western modes of thought and our own traditions, and finally between the various visions of the future that opened up once the common cause of political freedom was achieved.66

Thus, in order to deal with the pressing problems, contemporary Indian playwrights turned towards the Western modes of expression and their theatrical practices. They were attracted and overwhelmed by the novelty, and were keen to learn something from their worldview as well as their aesthetic approach. However, Girish Karnad explains especially the role of theatre in relation with audience as:

> To my generation a hundred crowded years of urban theatre seemed to have left almost nothing to hang on to, take off from. And
where was one to begin again? Perhaps by looking at our audience
again by trying to understand what experience the audience expected
to receive from the theatre? 67

Therefore, it is the opinion of the researcher that keeping in view that present day
requirements of the spectators, Karnad preferred to turn to the traditional popular regional forms
of theatre which had been using usual language of the people and had their own aesthetics.
Further, this researcher views that Brechtian influences on Karnad and his influence made him
aware of the theatre devices, imaginativeness and inherent power of the myth in context of
modern people to explain their modern predicament. The German playwright Bertolt Brecht is
one of the most influential modern dramatic theorists. In this regard, it would be relevant to
quote R.N. Rai:

Brecht is opposed to an Aristotelian theatre when emotions of
pity and fear are aroused and then purged off leading the spectator to a
balanced state of mind, “calm of mind, all passion spent. Such a
theatre renders the spectator a harmless member of the society”. It
makes him emotionally involved and prevents him from using his
rational faculty. It makes him identify himself with the protagonist of
the drama and thereby have a falsified picture of reality. His eyes are
open but he stares rather than sees. When he looks at the stage, it
seems as if he is a trance. The aim of epic theatre, however, is to “lead
the audience not to feel intensely but to judge critically, to see the
characters’ actions as determined not by fate and human nature but by
social circumstances, to leave the theatre not emotionally drained but
intellectually stimulated and determined to bring about Marxist
reforms” 68
Brecht’s use of language is also very significant. He makes use of his own dialect which is nothing but South German Colloquialisms. He does not want a figurative and pompous language but a simple and controlled one. Also, he adopts tale and history in order to achieve and generate the effect of dramatic aim.

Besides, admitting Brecht’s influence on his dramatic works Girish Karnad notes:

Brecht’s influence, received mainly through his writing and without the benefit of his theatrical productions, went some way in making us realize what could be done with the design of traditional theatre.  

However, R.N. Rai explained the remarkable features of Brecht’s non-Aristotelian theory of drama which influenced Karnad immensely:

i) Brecht is anti-cathartic in approach; he is opposed to ‘emotional identification’ or ‘willing suspension of disbelief.

ii) He is against the notion of ‘a unified spectacle’: he is against the ‘unity of action’ in the Aristotelian sense of the term.

iii) He does not consider drama merely as the source of entertainment but as the means of intellectual stimulation and social transformation.

iv) He prefers to use myth and folk-lore in order to produce a ‘complex seeing’ and ‘alienation effect.”

Thus it is the view of researcher that Karnad is influenced by all these aspects of Brechtian theory but discovers them in his own theatrical tradition and uses them accordingly. Hence, Girish Karnad explores the inner paradox of human life and satirical situations. Karnad uses myth in The Fire and the Rain and derives from a tale from the Kathasaritasagara for his Hayavadana. This play is mainly concerned with the exploration of the crisis of human identity in a world of complex relationships. Bhagavata in Hayavadana is such dramatic device which bring out many functions, especially that of a narrator or commentator. Commentator interrupts the process of emotional identification which is certainly not-cathartic and hence nor-Aristotelian in approach. Girish Karnad uses chorus and song in order to suspend the flow of dramatic action and provide variety of themes. Karnad also focuses on the crisis of human identity and analyses
contemporary reality with far-reaching implications such as myth, folklore, folktale etc. In this regard the comment of R.N.Rai is worth-quoting:

Like Brecht, Karnad too does not regard drama merely as a means of entertainment. It is a serious work of art and is concerned with the exploration of duality and complexity of human character….it is not a means of emotional identification but intellectual stimulation which helps us in forming our attitudes towards the problems contemporary society is facing. It provokes us to think and does not allow us to come out of the theatre with a sense of satisfaction.  

Girish Karnad in his play makes use of motifs of folk theatre i.e. masks, curtains, songs, commentator, dolls, chorus, horse-man to convey his ideas and exploring different characters and to interpret human situation with reference to contemporary experience. Folktale can never be dismissed as belonging to the past, because a great deal of its charm lies in its principal quality that of repeating itself. The play, Hayavadana opens with Ganesh Puja means the offering of worship accompanied by singing to the God Ganesha. It is very symbolic and related to the theme of the play. On comparative line, opening of literary play with Ganesh Puja is not found in Rakesh’s play. Besides, it is noteworthy that Girish Karnad follows tradition of Indian theatre which is one of the most striking points of Indians. Even the choice of elephant-headed God is significant because Lord Ganesha with human body and animal head aptly suggests the central theme of incompleteness of being.

In Hayavadana, Karnad uses dolls to project very effectively to the audience the thought processes, desires and inner psyche of woman character. The two Dolls brought by Devadatta from the Ujjain fair talk with each other but their conversation is inaudible to other characters. Girish Karnad projects Padmini’s inner psyche by using two dolls, for instance two dolls narrate Padmini’s dreams about Kapila as she sleeps, focusing on the unlawful desire she feels but cannot, as a married woman in Indian society. In other words, it seems that the dolls allow Karnad to introduce his voice in the play to satire on immorality of characters.
Thus observing dramatic art and techniques of Girish Karnad, the researcher thinks that the entire plays are cast in the form of traditional Indian folk drama which took several features of ancient Sanskrit drama but adapted them to its own special needs as a popular form of art. The particular form of drama that Karnad draws upon is Yakshagana of Karnataka.

To sum up, in present chapter, at the outset researcher focused and pointed out with analysis all related assumptions on ‘Tradition and Modernity in Karnad’s Plays’. It is observed how Girish Karnad presents tradition and modernity in *Hayavadan* and *The Fire and the Rain* by using mythical aspects, folklore and folktale. Further it is discussed in detail how Karnad links the question of identity with the idea of completeness. Consequently none of the main characters is complete in plays. The female characters possess traits of modernity and they are more energetic and dominating than their male counters. Women in Hayavadana and The Fire and the Rain, besides being objects of pleasure, seek something beyond what society permits them. They want to have contact with men they cannot legitimately have and find the means of enjoying freedom within the family frame.

The second part deals with ‘Tradition and Modernity in Rakesh’s Plays’. It is studied in detail how Mohan Rakesh delineates tradition vis-a-vis modernity in his plays. In the play, *Halfway House*, Savitri is educated and is employed and being a modern woman she invited her boss in house. Also, she likes to keep relation with Juneja, Jagmohan and Singhania and she is fearlessly bold to say that she has extramarital relationship. It seems that as a consequence of the break with the traditional institution of the joint family. Mohan Rakesh’s play *The Great Swans of the Waves* based on the distant historical past brings out the restlessness and predicament of modern man and yet another facet of familial relationship. In this play, modern aspiration and traditional spiritual solace are juxtaposed against the basic conflict of a man who is entrapped between the two and compelled to choose between them.

The third part deals with ‘Comparison’. A writer is generally shaped by the age he lives in. It is an enlightening enterprise to study any author in the context of his age. History and socio-political life is reflected through the works of great men of letters. In the opinion of the researcher Girish Karnad and Mohan Rakesh have presented tradition and modernity in the context of conjugal life. This bears strong relevance to the present day family structure of a nuclear family and challenges of woman’s boldness, career-oriented approach to life and search for a good social identity. So also, the aspects of tradition and modernity in the context of the
family institution in the plays of Karnad and Rakesh are discussed on comparative lines. At the end it discussed on comparatively to assess the writers' works and their ability, in portraying women characters, familial life and Indian ethos realistically and bring out the writers’ similarities and dissimilarities on the perspectives of tradition and modernity.
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