Chapter: II

‘Desire’ in the Select Plays of Mahesh Elkunchwar
Mahesh Elkunchwar seems to be largely influenced by certain philosophical thinking about the presentation of human nature on the stage. Death, sexuality, absurdity and vanity of human wishes are some of the most prominent themes he pays more attention to. Desire formulates the core of almost every living thing on the planet. Elkunchwar’s presentation of desire on the stage exhibits certain traits. He brings about representation of desire in certain ways in which it could best be expressed and secondly it is a learning process on the part of the playwright to understand the nature of the human relationship. It could be difficult to register how certain influences affect the style of one’s writing. It is almost impossible to trace totality of impact on Elkunchwar’s writings.

Elkunchwar’s initial writing inspiration could be related to the writing style of the playwrights like Eugene O’Neill and Vijay Tendulkar. Impressionism, existentialism and absurdity remain the characteristics of his plays as far as the plays that depict desire in man-woman relationship. Such plays oddly may include Garbo, Desire in the Rocks, Autobiography, Flower of Blood, Party, Holi, As One Discardeth Old Clothes ..., and Reflection. However they represent ethos that could be identified as the true picture of Indian culture. Writers like Satish Alekar and Vijay Tendulkar attempted depiction of desire in their plays and succeeded in making the groundbreaking revelations of Indian culture. Their plays like Sakharam Binder, Vultures, Ghashiram Kotwal, Baby, Silence! The Court is in Session, Deluge, Begum Barve, are some of the plays that deal with the theme. The main difference that lies among the each writer’s writing is the spacio-temporal conditions that prevails the writings along with the other contributing factors.
There are two ways of approaching the theme of desire in literature. One can take the moments of desire and analyze its connection with the immediate factors that influence and instigate it along with their contexts and their connection with psychological orientations. Secondly one can probe into the issue of desire finding out its broader sociological, political and economical perspectives originating from certain ideological constructions. This chapter attempts to evaluate the issue of desire in both the ways.

The word ‘desire’ is frequently taken and understood in the manner implying sexual orientation. It is a common practice. However the word is also used in everyday life situation meaning as ‘longing’ for something. Its use usually changes according to its object. If the object is material, it tends to mean a wish or longing to have or possess it but in case of person as the object of the verb, it means longing for someone that could be predominantly ‘sexual’. While talking about the definition of the word we find that in the volume III of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the word ‘desire’ is defined as “to long for (something lost); to feel loss of, miss, regret, desiderate” and “to have a strong wish for; to long for, covet, crave.” (247) In the 8th edition of *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, the word desire is defined as “(--for sth) a strong wish to have or do sth” and “(--for sb) a strong wish to have sex with sb.” (Turnbull 411) The dictionary gives the meaning of the word as a verb as “to want sth; to wish for sth” and “to be sexually attracted to sb”. (411). This predominant connection of the meaning of word desire with sexuality suggests the vital role of sexuality or sexual desire in human life.

In his documentary entitled *Pervert’s Guide to Cinema*, Slovej Zizek attempts the evaluation of the sexuality in the movies like *Birds, Psycho, etc* by Hitchcock in light of
Lacanian psychoanalyses and Neo Marxist ideology. He announces, “There is nothing spontaneous about our desire... We are taught to desire” (Zizek). This sets a broader context for us to evaluate the motivations behind the seemingly natural phenomenon called human instincts. It leads us to critically analyze how in a social context certain relations are labeled as ‘queer’ and ‘natural’ whereas the phenomenon if considered a result of particular social order and formalized and accepted social inter and intra personal relations, it becomes essential to trace the mechanism of the instinct and the artificiality of its origin and structure. It also becomes essential to identify the true conditions related with origin of desires and the portion of external social agents in it.

*Kamasutra*, a canonical text on sexuality was produced in India. The text was compiled by Vatsyayana during the 4th century AD. It is translated by Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821-90) who was a British explorer and the translator of *One Thousand and One Nights*. Vatsyayana defines *Kama* as

> the enjoyment of appropriate objects by the five senses of hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting and smelling, assisted by the mind together with the soul.

The ingredient in this is a peculiar contact between the organ of sense and its object, and the consciousness of pleasure that arises from that contact is called *Kama*. Kama is to be learned from the *Kamasutra* (aphorisms on love) and the practice of citizens (Burton 02).

There were various issues that are essential to be considered while studying the conditions in which the text *Kamasutra* was produced. The most important of them was that it was written for the members of king’s family in particular and common citizen in
general. The text offers the practical analyses of sexual performances with all its details where sexual gratification of the partner is valued the most. The references that he makes about the sexuality as a weapon to use against the enemies also makes it clear its vital monarchial orientations. There are many factors Vatsayana deals with detailing their sex wise psychological and physiological differences.

Auddalika in the same treatise says that females do not emit as males do. The males simply remove their desire, while the females, from their consciousness of desire, feel a certain kind of pleasure, which gives them satisfaction, but it is impossible for them to tell you what kind of pleasure they feel. The fact from which this becomes evident is that males, when engaged in coition, cease of themselves after emission, and are satisfied, but it is not so with females. She asks Vatsayana the need of different work on the part of male and female when the semen of female fall in the same way as that of male. He replies:

…this is also so because the ways of working, as well as the consciousness of pleasure in men and women, are different. The difference in the ways of working, by which men are the actors and women are the persons acted upon, and vice versa. And from this difference in the ways of working follows the difference in the consciousness of pleasure, for a man thinks, ‘This woman is united with me’, and a woman thinks, ‘I am united with this man’ (Burton 17).

The contribution of Vatsayana becomes significant due to main reason that he identifies the importance of peculiarity of orientation of female sexuality. His is the
positive attitude towards the female sex and insists on importance of learning the art of love by the both male and female. It represents the period in Indian history when women were considered worthy of learning though he believed that the learning of *Kamasutra* should be continued “along with its arts and sciences, before marriage, and after it they should continue to do so with the consent of their husbands” (Burton 3).

The result of ideological forces of patriarchy very systematically ignored the presence of difference of female sexuality. The gradual subjugation of women resulted in erasing the identity of female sexuality. Until recently there had been the manifesto of feminist movements that give call for necessity of realization of female as different, independent person. Vatsyayana however does not offer any remark on the issue of authenticity and artificiality of sexuality which mainly is considered as the territory of males to enjoy. It is why the back cover of the book *Kamasutra* reads that it as an indisputable classic of world literature, the *Kamasutra* remains one of the most enjoyable texts of antiquity. A work of philosophy, psychology, sociology, Hindu dogma, scientific inquiry and sexology, it has, at the same time, both affected Indian civilization and remained an indispensable key to the understanding of it.

However there remains a question that the openness that could be seen in the treatise of Vatsyayana could never become the part such books in India until recently and the issue became taboo as a result of fortification of social institutions. Foucault attempts to trace such similar development in relation with the European literature and expression of sexuality. In the beginning of *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* Foucault writes how “certain frankness was still common…Sexual practices had little need to secrecy; words were said without undue reticence, and things were done without too
much concealment; one had a tolerant familiarity with the illicit” (Foucault 03). But Victorian regime carefully confined sexuality and never allowed bodies to have “display of themselves”.

It is most probably the second part of nineteenth century when the impact of Renaissance had been causing changes in Europe and England became source of the change for India as Indian scholars receiving education from the country were initially were influenced by the scientific ideas and felt a need of social and religious changes. It resulted in abolition of practices like sati and encouraging widow marriages. It had to see twentieth century for India for a woman to write a book like Stri-Purush Tulana Tarabai Shinde or Maharshi Dhondo Keshav Karve to marry a widow. The role played by ideology in making the sexuality a taboo resulted negatively especially in the context of women who for ages suffered from the evils of patriarchy. Since the Vedic period in India, there had been many customs and traditions that were followed without any interrogation of them. Silence on the issue of sexuality of one of them. Those became the target of conservatism, who tried to violate the silence.

In case of Charvak in Vedic period of India, silence, subjugation, prohibition and violence took place against them as the result of Vedic principles and their followers could not bear the thought of denial of God and reason as superior to Vedas. Dr. A.H. Salunkhe mentions in his book Astikshromani Charvak that one of the Charvaks who followed Charvakdarshan was killed and the incident is described in the Mahabharat by one of the followers of Vedas. Charvaks were the followers of a set of beliefs according to which nothing could surpass the clear stream of reasoning in living a life and there existed no God. Foucault observes a similar thing about the classical age. He says,
We are informed that if repression has indeed been the fundamental link between power, knowledge, and sexuality since the classical age, it stands to reason that we will not be able to free ourselves from it except at a considerable cost: nothing less than a transgression of laws, a lifting of prohibitions, an irruption of speech, are instating of pleasure within reality, and a whole new economy in the mechanisms of power will be required. For the least glimmer of truth is conditioned by politics (Foucault 5).

Perhaps, it is the cost mentioned by Foucault Charvaks had to pay. Along with the other revolutionary ideas of Charvaks, their ideas of kama were repressed. They were condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence. It was not only that every possible kind of pleasure from sex was denied but also the ‘knowledge to be gained from sex and the right to speak about it’. Dr Salunkhe says that Charvaks propagated ideas of freedom to women about sexual expression. The ideas were realistic, rational and based on empiricism. As they posed direct opposition to Vedic ideology, they had been reduced to the nonexistent status. Vedic followers rigorously maintained the silence and Charvaks were perfectly labeled as atheists. The labeling made them anti-religious and in the course time the sect remained in the minds of few people only as a notorious, hedonistic sect and for most of the other non-existent entity.

Foucault’s idea is that sexuality is not an innate or natural quality of the body but rather the effect of historically specific power relations falls in the thought line similar to that of Zizek or vice versa. According of Foucault science helped to create a sexual and social order that organizes and regulates ones’ bodies, desires and identities and social
behaviors. Foucault articulates this perspective. He reminds that silence itself is the integral part of power relations.

Silence itself the things one declines to say or is forbidden to name…is less the absolute limit of discourse. The other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said with them and in relation to them within strategies -There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one cannot say…There are not one but many silences, and they are integral part of strategies that underlie and permeate discourses (Quoted in Narrain 27).

For Foucault, resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. According to him, the regulatory powers of literary discourses, psychiatry and jurisprudence which acted upon ‘perversity’ made the possibility of reverse discourses. Homosexuality began to speak on its own behalf to demand that its legitimacy or “naturality” be acknowledged often in the same vocabulary using same categories by which it to medically disqualified (Foucault 101).

After this realization, it is clear the word desire necessarily carry the aura of meaning of sexual attraction combined with the presence of the factors like ideology, social norms, religion and so on. In work of criticism of the select plays of Elkunchwar, desire has been taken as an object of the study. The desire aimed is taken in those contexts when it appears to make its vital impact on the life of the characters or the course of the story of the plays like Desire in the Rocks, Flower of Blood, Garbo,
Autobiography, Reflection, Holi, As One Descardeth the Clothes... and Yatanaghar. The desires depicted are taken for consideration in the course of analyses to unfold the whole network of stimulus and response in human relationships and the very basis of its existence.

The last part of the twentieth century was time when Elkunchwar wrote the plays like Desire in the Rocks and Garbo. Though his treatment of the issue in his writings is manifold, sexual desire’s depiction is path breaking in the plays. The plays were controversial as they appeared on the scene of Indian Marathi commercial theatre and caused much upheaval at literary and political circles. Embodying dramatic form to the themes like incest and prostitution was not an inviting practice at the time of their arrival. Consequently they had to face strong opposition. This fact suggests the strength of the social practice of keeping silence on forbidden issues and subjects.

The culmination of the desires in the plays brings about whole problematic of human relationships. They characteristically receive violent, unpleasant and negative end. This kind of end could be observed frequently. Lalita and Hemkant in Desire in the Rocks embraces ‘death by fire’ as the wada is set on fire by the village people. Garbo in Garbo is killed by lusty and disappointed people like Shrimant, Pansy and Intuc. In Autobiography Anant Rajadhyaksha, Pradnya, Uttara and Vasanti have a complex network of relationship that ultimately reveals that human desires are not so easy to analyze though they may have simple appearance. In Flower of Blood the daughter and mother confront with each other at war of which reason and nature of motivation is different. Feeling of love of the young daughter, and feelings of love of the mother who
lost her son and vainly attempts to seek the redemption of the loss of it in Raja, get complexly mixed and result into quarrel.

Elkunchwar’s writing has variety of desires that describe human relationships in their specifications, unique qualities and strangeness. His *Desire in the Rocks, Garbo, Reflection, Autobiography, Flower of Blood* present the problematic of taboo relations like incest, prostitution, unfulfilled desires, motivated desires and desires that human mind seeks in order to gain substitute for the loss it has experienced.

Elkunchwar subtly describes the complex part of an Indian society in its wake of modernity. It was intentional on the part of the author to treat the subject and lay bare the complications that have been concealed and presentation of Indian life always sought as uniform, having solid bondage and renunciation of pleasure principle. However this presentation by the author marks an outstanding beginning of a style of writing that went on becoming most effective and intense on various levels. Treatment to the issues like incest and prostitution could be very daring at the time when the author wrote it in the 1980s.

It was the period of great social change exactly before Indian independence. There hardly dawns a time when sexual desire was discussed and exhibited in any form of literature until the wave that dominated the writing of few Indian poets, novelists and playwrights. Mohan Rakesh’s *Halfway House* and *Sakharam Binder* by Vijay Tendulkar are some of the instances. Foucault’s mention about the ‘certain frankness’ about expression of sexual practice being common during seventeenth century has British context. In Indian context, has been largely different due to the strict and dominating
religious ideas about giving priority to soul rather than body. The silence mentioned by Foucault is more prominent in this context and hailed from the ancient times.

Elkunchwar’s attempt to write *Garbo* could be viewed as resistance to silence maintained by various means. It was however not only the intention as he admitted to be about writing a play to shake and shock the minds of Marathi people of the time but it has also been an expression of the sexual practices in the parts of society that existed against the regime of the power that maintained the silence about the sexuality and carefully sought the nonexistence of such practices from the eyes of common people denying it every kind of appearance in formal society. Interestingly it is still maintained in the common mind of Indians and discovery of such practices is labeled either illegal or obscene. The attempts of Elkunchwar to write about such desires, however does not limit only to expression of the issue with certain frankness but also assertion of its existence with certain aura of importance of the issue in itself and its significance in relation to the other issues of human life from social and psychological perspectives.

*Garbo* has four characters through whom Elkunchwar presents perhaps they are the innermost spaces of consciousness of Indian society. Shrimant, Pansy, Intuc and Garbo represent psychological and social segments of society at the same time. Their names also clearly suggest the intention of their creation. Shrimant represents the haves possessing legitimacy to enjoy every kind of pleasure their fancy desires and Garbo, utter useless like garbage hence full of desire. Intuc is the intellectual strata of society that thinks itself equipped with the weapon called knowledge with the help of which they distinguish between what is good and what is bad for society ultimately conceiving
themselves as the judges. Pansy is that immature psyche of any society largely driven by fancy and tends to act on superficial level.

They also represent various stages of totality of experiences in life of a human being. Emotions play an important role in our life and childhood, teenage, adulthood, old age, etc. are predominantly governed by certain emotions. Those segments of life undergo the benefits and disadvantages of their own. Simultaneously qualitative characteristics of the three exhibit the longing for status and privilege enjoyed by the other. Pansy craved for richness possessed by Shrimant. Shrimant on the other hand could not bear the thought living alone without his friends. This contrast in desire however is governed by absurdist thinking towards futility of life.

Shrimant is predominantly driven by sexual desires and Intuc tells Pansy what Shrimant said about organizing a music concert,

I once said to him, come on, cough up a thousand chips for some really good music. So he says, I hope she’s going to be a female. So I said, ‘Done. A female it shall be.’ So the bastard says, ‘What are her tits like?’ that was the end of that little plan (Elkunchwar 14).

Shrimant believes he could buy every kind of happiness but is tormented by the feeling of unavailability of such pleasure and says, “A whole morning wasted. Didn’t meet a soul. Those girls need bring down a peg or two. Shrin wasn’t home. Babi said, ‘I’m indisposed!’ to hell with you. And there’s still the entire day to get through. I hope at least Garbo turns up…” (Elkunchwar 12) But internally he is afraid of losing the company of his friend and thus horrified by the thought of being left alone whereas Pansy
does not like the talk of Intuc but never can tolerate the silence and says to Intuc when Intuc remains silent. He tells Intuc that he should keep talking as it gives a feeling of comfort to Pansy. The silence of Intuc for Pansy is scary. He begs Intuc to say something. And he mentions that the arrival of Shrimant would bring him certain entertainment to pass time pleasantly.

Pansy always craves for being rich like Shrimant though his is the life that seems be moving to and fro between the values Shrimant and Intuc represent. Intuc who considered himself an intellectual also admits that the concepts of fame and popularity in life are a void. When asked about greatness by Pansy he replies,

I thought so at first. And then suddenly I felt disgusted. And this talk of fame is utter crap! People are fools… Fame is a sort of nonsense. Forget about whole thing and wallow happily in boredom. People are worse frauds than you think… All they want is somebody’s boots to lick (7-8).

The trio has a peculiar relationship with Garbo a prostitute who is “prepared to bed with anybody who’ll give (her) a role” (38). Shrimat call her ‘a sex machine’ and says she is great in bed. The responses of the trio to the desires for Garbo are driven by specific orientations that are in a way result of the social, economic factors that have been responsible in constructing their psyche. For Shrimant she is a sex machine, for Intuc the relation with her is ‘sacred and sublime’ and for Pansy it is a ‘rare and beautiful experience’. Intuc says that it doesn’t make any difference if they call Garbo by different names as she would remain Garbo, while they will continue to search for the kind of Garbo they want. He confesses that in this process if they find Garbo that they wanted to
find, it will be a good thing. But if they fail to find her in the certain form, suffering becomes inevitable. And while insisting on letting Garbo to be what she is, Intuc emphasizes that they should first know what they themselves really are. According to him, this would be a ‘sound enough basis for their relationships with her’. The following is the remark by Intuc that could be called as an underlined thought as far as discourse on sexual desires is concerned. According to Intuc all the business about woman being an enigma and all that is a myth. He calls it a bit of literary truth. He contributes to man-woman relationship saying once one understands a woman; one does not want to look at her again. He adds that once one explores her, the thrill is gone. Here ‘explore’ has more significance of ‘sex’. Intuc’s philosophy about women takes an ultimate turn when he comments rather gender biasedly that a woman should be able to satisfy you fully, and yet withhold a part of her from you.

As it gets unbearable to Garbo to listen to the talk of Shrimant and Intuc, she starts to go out and Pansy begs her to stay there. It is here Intuc tells that it is her escape as he has his ‘morbidity’, Shrimant has ‘perversity’ and she has her ‘sentimentality’. It is here she according to Shrimant, is more sentimental but he fails to recognize that it had been difficult all along for her to bear the nonsensical talk from the trio ever after her telling that she is pregnant. The thought of abortion is not comforting her. As the pressure builds upon her about thinking positively to give birth to the child, she breaks down and opens up saying she wants to love somebody one day and lose herself in love. But also realizes the impossibility of it. When she says that under hopeful desires lies a burning coal, it suggests that she has completely realized any positivity of thought will not work
for her. And major cause of trouble comes from within her. She understands it in the form of being unable to live it up with the same intensity.

After the role play, Garbo frequently mentions how dirty and filthy lives they are living. This thought has been the result of her understanding that her pregnancy had been against the impossibility of a relationship that would never find a place in legitimacy of social norms. The feelings of disgust do not dawn upon only Garbo but all of them. Intuc also says that the conditions make you feel revolted. He tells that it is not the matter that they only living such bad conditions but everywhere there is filth. He finds no clean place there. For the wallowing in filth means there is no escape from it; it is inevitable. It is here he tells the human reality that one live under certain conditions and one has oppositions to the conditions. However it culminates into accepting the situation and bringing out positivity of thought about the conditions. He says that in order to render the filth endurable, we will have to make up new theories about beauty. It could be a sort of aesthetics of filth and depravity.

At the end of the act first, Intuc insists Garbo on giving up the idea of hers about abortion. Initially Intuc grows very uncomfortable and is afraid that Garbo would blame them and they had to take the responsibility. He also insists her to accept money from Shrimant but she rejects it. Realizing his mistake, he starts pleading her to give birth to the child. Shrimant and Pansy also join him. Thought of bringing up the child pleases them and the news that Garbo is pregnant brings them a meaningful reason for their existence and they dream of the beautiful creation that could be a way to retain the guarantee of their perpetuation of their kind. Beautified and glorified idea of motherhood is not appreciated by Garbo. She realizes the difficulty of sustaining the life against the
danger of losing her livelihood due to the pregnancy and impossibility of receiving the name of father for the child. She knows the idea of bringing the child in the world means making the child face the crude realities of social life even before it is mature enough to understand the concept of society itself. Intuc is full of romantic ideas about the phenomenon called creation. He says,

What an awesome thought, that we are the cause for the birth of something beautiful… You are life about to give to another life… I wonder what the earth feels when a sapling takes root, grows, and blossoms. To give birth to a life, a living, breathing bit of blood and bones which grows… he will be like… a messenger from the gods, who will wander around the world embracing its sorrows (Elkunchwar 44).

The reaction of the trio to the news that the child was aborted and that was an accident, was that of loss and care for Garbo. It was the desire to own the feeling of being a father. Though the desire stems from different sources within the individuals, it is the unique thing that unifies them to the core and each one of them insist her to go with her to live her rest of her life. It was in Garbo the three of them received the origin of a life that could bring them a solace from the penance of loss, lack of satisfaction in life and a void created from the feeling of impotency. Shrimant finds the roots of the cause in money. He expresses his renunciation of wealth. He realizes that money is the root of all that happened. He recalls how from his teenage he had been used to worldly pleasures of body. He wanted at the time only ‘things of flesh’. For Shrimant the child was the only hope to give him a label of becoming father though it was not real either. And the only chance was lost. It was a helpless effort on the part of Shrimant to sustain his name
through the child. The birth of the child would have formed a meaningful whole in his life full of sexual despairs. He exploited all the possibilities of sexual pleasure and lost everything in the pursuit of those pleasures. The lost of child was the lost of object of desire for him, that would have functioned as filling of gaps formed due to the impotency he has developed.

For Intuc the child was the only way to get rid of the vicious impossibilities of the world and it could bring him a feeling of completeness in the form of happiness of a creation. It was the reason he always told Garbo how she is lucky to possess the happiness and potentials of creation and ability to give birth to an entirely new life. The death of the child was a return ‘filth’. He says, “The world we desired was not for us, could never have been. We were idiots, out to turn dreams into reality. Let’s go back to our old world now. The world of filth. As a punishment. And as a sort of consolation too” (49).

Intuc suffers from the anguish that he has lost beauty; the ability to create and everything worth possessing. According to him, he is at war with beauty and ‘the very concept it represents’. Beauty remains only ‘a figment of imagination, ‘a sort of mirage’, ‘a trap’. The feeling of loss makes him think that ‘filth is the only truth’ and it is the only choice they are left with. He determines to choose it and live with it. He feels a strange freedom now and feels a strange numbness ‘without experiencing any emotion’. It is with the despair of desire, three are devasted. It is why Dr. Sidney Shirly in her paper “Sexuality versus Psychology: A Study of Mahesh Elkunchwar’s Garbo and Desire in the Rocks” writes that “[s]exuality works in these individuals as a mode of manifesting their inner condition whether it is frustration or a desire to control. The idea of sexuality is
continuously evolving into various complex meaning” (Shirly 124). She thinks that the three characters along with Garbo meet a destructive end and sexuality in an uncontrolled, savage atmosphere is the major reason.

As far as the structure of the play Garbo is concerned, Chandrashekhar Jahagirdar does not rate it a systematic play. He writes in his article entitled “Marathi Drama” After 1060 that the playwright could not always find a perfect correlation between modernist experimental techniques and the thematic compulsions of the text. The treatment of sexuality in the plays like Desire in the Rocks and Garbo is “a kind of modernist experiment which, being too loud, rhetorical and self-conscious is somewhat detrimental to the themes… These are some of the sad examples of the ideological gap between technique and text” (Jahagirdar 64).

In the play Autobiography, Rajadhyaksha a renowned writer living alone in his late seventies in his house and being interviewed by a young girl of twenty to twenty four named Pradnya. She is working on her project of assisting Rajadhyaksha in writing his autobiography. The life of the writer can be viewed through three perspectives one being the life of his own as an author who writes with certain responsibilities and moral values imbibed from nationalism and “the absolute morality that was intrinsic to Gandhi’s political thought as well as its spiritual base” (115) particularly as an aftermath of struggle of independence and implementation of democracy in India and construction of a new nation. Secondly, the marital life of the writer with his wife Uttara does not prove to be happy as the couple is not able to beget a child of their own. And the appearance of Uttara’s younger sister Vasanti in their family affects the life of the couple as Rajadhyaksha and Vasanti in the absence of Uttara get attracted to each other and the
union result into the separation of the writer from the both the women. Thirdly, the solitude that is experienced by Rajadhyaksha after this break up, is majorly characterized by his realization nature of desire and his attempts to seek justification to it and ignorance about the fact that the child of Vasanti is his own.

The desire begotten against this background brought the feeling of being wronged to the both Rajadhyaksha and Vasanti. Though Vasanti admits that it is mainly the patronizing gesture of Uttara that prompted her revenge it and she decided to win against Uttara since the insult caused by Uttara piled up. Vasanti tells Uttara that she could not bear her arrogance. It refuses to even raise an eyelid and glance at anyone else. She tells Uttara that she was so immersed in herself, smugly feeding on her inflated ego.

Desires indeed have various ingredients that are composed of different set of situations, cultures, psyches, ways of seeing, ideas of satisfaction and morality, absence and presence and so on. The desire in the context of this play originates perhaps seemingly very trivial cause as compared to the desires depicted in Desire in the Rocks, Garbo, Flower of Blood and Yatanaghar. They are antagonistic feelings of a woman for her sister who treats her very badly. It was the same woman who treated her so lovingly when she was a kid and both of them were staying with their parents. But as she got married to Rajadhyaksha, she changed completely. The feelings of arrogance, vanity and egotism quickly took over her and she started behaving badly with parents as well as her younger sister. As a result of it, Vasanti says to Uttara, “I dint ever want to compete with you. But when you began to assume the pose of a patron, I decided … I’d defeat you.. by taking away that one thing that gave you all your sense of power” (143).
The complexity of the desire affected the trio so deeply that the aftermath of it resulted in spending rest of their lives in separation from their ‘love’. Sexual desire of Rajadhyaksha for Vasanti caused a great deal of pain to Uttara for she could not bear the thought her husband going close to someone physically. In turn, the act suggests and provides her with set of other feelings.

On a common ground level, it is the feeling of love that one enjoys possessing and being possessed. Marriage offers the possibility and in a way guarantee for such a possession. The dispossession of it causes whole universe of problematic for the both husband and wife. Presence of sexual desire for someone else other than the partner brings about the feelings of loss emotional support on certain levels. This loss however proves to be the most important factor in the separation of partners in a marriage. The act does not only bring the feeling of void of disappearance of emotional support that has been always felt and taken for granted for its longevity of existence till the end of life but it also challenges one potentials and ability being capable of possessing certain things like love and it is the thing that forms core of human life in love relationship. It is the loss of the feeling of being able to be capable of bringing sexual gratification and happiness to someone. A member of a couple could never conceive the possibility of sexual gratification of the other member in his/her absence and realization of such act brings again the feeling of loss of the unique feature that his/her mind perceived and imagined about. It is monopoly one enjoys worth possessing. And the loss of this monopoly closes the possibility of restructuring the relationship again. Even attempted, the presence of the image of the act brings forth the impossibility of such construction and it produces the feeling of hatred and outrage in the mind of the person. Revenge is a common experience.
in such cases. Violence is seen more often at this point of time. Violent acts are more frequent when the male partner is wronged.

Alix Kats Shulman in her article “Sex and Power: Sexual Bases of Radical Feminism” mentions the history of British feminism and how sexuality was confined to certain institutions and their regulations had a major role to play as in defining the boundaries of sexual liberation for women. She says:

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, such sex-related institutions as family, motherhood, chastity, prostitution, birth control, and the double standard of morality had been subjected to feminist analysis by the "first wave" of feminists. Sexual repression had been privately acknowledged as a primary problem…”The first great work to be accomplished for woman is to revolutionize the dogma that sex is a crime."… Though first-wave feminists did focus on the connection between the subjugation of women and male sexuality, for the most part they did not make women's sexuality central to their analysis of woman's social condition, except as it affected other institutions, like motherhood (Shulman 591).

In case of Uttara and Vasanti the problematic of motherhood are distinct on the ground of incapability to bear a child and longing and wish to grow a child as a motherly feeling. Vasanti began it as a revenge and lesson that she wanted to teach her sister but she was of course fond of Rajadhyaksha. The lack in case of Uttara becomes an experience of motherhood to Vasanti. It is the reason why she decides to bring up the child.
Vasanti never loved Rajadhyaksha and was preoccupied with the thought that she had to win over her sister; to devastate her. This characteristic of her nature was not limited to her sister only but extended to Rajadhyaksha too. She never told Rajadhyaksha that Dilip was his son. She thought that he would control her life as he would come to know about the child. She knew that he could never resist himself from reaching out his child. And once he manages to find access to his son, she feared that she would lose the control of her on her child. She felt the knowledge of truth becoming a trouble to her. She felt insulted when Rajadhyaksha came to Devdatt but never glanced at her. He would ignore her completely. Vasanti confesses that she wanted to be sure of her powers. She adds that once she became sure of them, she did not turn around to look at him.

The most peculiar feature of the desires of the characters in the play is vanity. The feelings understanding and realization of futility of all complex experience caused by certain behavioral traits of members of her family including herself, dawn on her. She advocates to putting an end to all the ‘unceasing cycle of torment’ and tells Vasanti to tell him about his son.

Rajadhyaksha dies before he listens to the news that he is the father of Dilip. This ultimately becomes a part of the sustenance of the vanity. It is not that they do not realize and understand the value of the thing they have lost. The lesson learned from it for lifetime however the lifetime is spent in the form of the upshot of the choice they made. Vasanti realizes her failure as soon she comes to know that Urmila has also abandoned Rajadhyaksha as she left the house.
The instigations to act against her own sister rose up to Vasanti as it was Uttara’s ill treatment to her that caused various troubles about her very existence and self esteem. Vasanti says, “I didn’t want to compete with you. But when you began to assume the pose of a patron, I decided … I’d defeat you … by taking away that one thing that gave you all your sense of power” (143).

Uttara’s vanity is destroyed with knowledge that Dilip is Rajadhyaksha’s son because Uttara maintains that she left him with her all dignity and honor unscathed. She believes that the world knows her as his wife and she never lost her prestige being so. She took everything that was rightfully hers.

It was only Rajadhyaksha who did not possess any grudge against none of the ladies. However both the women, in a way wished to cause pain to Rajadhyaksha. He replies to Vasudha the character in his novel, “I’m aware that I have wronged you. Charudutt gave you Pradeep. But in the novel, I made him my son whom Charudutt raised. But can I tell you the truth? I really wanted a son … I understand my mistake. I’ve changed a lot in thirty years” (149).

But it is Rajadhyaksha who felt hurt that Vasanti left him but he felt more hurt because she left him for someone whom he never appreciated on certain person grounds. Devdutt and Rajadhyaksha were in conflict on the issue like social responsibilities of an author. Pradnya asked him what he felt when Vasanti left him and went to live with Devdutt, Rajadhyaksha says, “I was unhappy. I felt insulted. She left me. I might have been able to digest that. But for whom? An ordinary, mediocre, unintelligent bohemian writer?” (135)
When Pradnya talks about breaking relationship with her boyfriend, Rajadhyaksha realizes what kind of mistake she is committing. He tells her not to break it since he experiences the result of breaking a relationship. He says that there is nothing as transient as human relationships. He tells her that the truth of a relationship should be confined to its moment. It doesn’t cause pain then. He believes that we should be happy in receiving the amount of love though we get if for a moment.

The play *Autobiography* perhaps is the best attempt on the part of the writer to indicate the vanity of human wishes. It is not only in this play that Elkunchwar does attempt to present absurdity and meaninglessness of human relationship in its all complexities. It is always a moment that Elkunchwar seems to be presenting where human wishes contradict with what is being called as a common way of life. Sometimes it is confusion about valuing and giving importance to life or art or vice versa. This confusion leads Hemkant and Lalita’s life in a destructive culmination. It indeed becomes a violent and horrible end for the couple and it gets too late for Hemkant to realize his mistake and make improvement upon it. Elkunchwar brings about the delicateness of such issues on a micro level. Rajadhyaksha’s realization that his practice of writing literature, was never devoid of vanity and falsehood. It however the realization dawned upon him as a result of lateral thinking. It could be called as the limitations of human experiences that the pressure of a situation allows very little time to contemplate about the action being taken by a human being regardless its profession or degree of maturity. It was Rajadhyaksha who wished Dilip could be his son as he loved to have a son but he could not have any and in the novel made Dilip his son. He admits that he wanted to have son and fulfills his desire so unknown to the fact that he was his own son.
To write a novel about his life itself was an attempt to prove that he was right all the way in decisions he took. It was certainly the pressure he had to carry always of the grandeur of high human values that he vainly maintained in his life especially about nationalism and responsibilities of a writer. He received recognition and a prestigious place among the contemporary writers. The decision of writing the novel comes against this backdrop when the world knows his wife abandoned him and his wife’s younger sister moves to stay with Devdutt. Rajadhyaksha could not bear the silence of a certain magnitude of meaning among his readers and society. In his novel thus Uttara and Vasanti become Urmila and Vasudha respectively. Devdutt becomes Charudutt. But he realizes the vanity of his desires and replies to Pradnya’s question rather wisely about what he meant when he says he does not understand human relationships. She asks him whether he does not understand the relationships among the characters he develops in his writing or relationship in his real life. He replies, “Both. Or rather the relationships between my characters are the efforts I make to understand those that exist in my life” (133).

As he realizes the vanity of it more, he is afraid to talk as he fears whether he is capable of speaking truth. He says, “Why do we behave this way? Why do we live disguising lies as truth? I made Uttara’s, Vasanti’s, and my story so untrue! Conjuring up an imaginative truth to conceal my own lies. Or is there no truth in the world? Or does truth turn to lies when you don’t understand it?” (150)

Uttara and Vasanti have deep instigations and motivations of their actions against Rajadhyaksha that are articulated actually at a fantasy level.
It is indeed a truth that Elkunchwar’s *As One Discardeth the Old Clothes* … is the most subtle play that lays bare the reality of desire in its totality of life. There are six characters in the play: Mukund, Sanjeevani, and Bal are three children of Baba and Aai and there is a widow whom the family has given shelter after the death of her husband.

It exhibits whole problematic of the desire of a man that affects the whole family of his. It surpasses material objects of desires gradually as he approaches his death and waits for Raghu who could be a figure that he craved for his life. It is an abstract entity that every human being craves to achieve in the persuasion of happiness and completeness of his desires. It is the tireless chasing of one’s life to find the completeness of meaning in one’s life. In the case of Baba in the play, it has been Raghu who was the desired entity. But it remains however more abstract and unclear to himself as he could only describe him as a figure he could visualize when he was playing in mango grove, he fell from a tree and then saw Raghu for a moment. He searched then form him entire grove. But he disappeared. It happens twice in his life that he visualizes Raghu. Baba says, “Then again, once while swimming in the Morna, my feet suddenly cramped up and I was drowning unblinkingly from the shore. Somebody rescued me. After that I had sought him so often, foiling on the riverside. He was not to be found” (102-03).

Baba admits that it has been since his birth that his object of desire has been craving for a figure he names as Raghu that could be identified with the god Lord Krishna. It could have been the impact on his mind of the stories of Hindu gods and goddesses that could appear as forces that would seek to him ways of salvation. It is the hallucination that disturbed mind seeks under certain mental depression and problematic of mind. It is revealed to the audience only when Baba is on deathbed and his spiritual
self can move freely on the stage while his body lays calm on the bed. He goes to
everyone who talks but nobody can see or hear him.

It is with this technique Elkunchwar seeks the space where the character Baba
reveals his desires that he otherwise could not have expressed. He reveals it on the two
grounds that nobody is able to hear him and the second is that he realizes those are the
last moments of his life and being his dear Raghu, the fear of hurting his loved ones is out
of questions. It is here perhaps in the best manner the dramatist achieves the success of
being able to reveal the mind of his character that speaks truth of his life. It is also
unveiling the layers of positions taken by a human being as a member of society, family
and position held in a structure influenced by social, political, economical and cultural
factors.

He fell in love Kaku in her marriage when he was already married. It had been
only few days after his marriage the event happened and he decided that he would have
her by any means. Madhu the husband of Kaku died on the second day of her marriage.
Baba brought her home and provided her shelter there for her lifetime. She too was in
love with him since the time she eyed him in the marriage ceremony. He brought her
home and always pined for her but never expressed his feelings of love to her whole of
his life. The desire was never expressed by either side. He also thought he brought her
here needlessly. If hadn’t brought her here, she would have found a man for her
somewhere else. But it so kept unspoken. Though he never confessed it to her, she could
sense it and that was enough for her to fill her heart.
Baba’s longing for her left her bigger void in the relationship between him and his wife. He could not associate himself with his wife completely. In the first place it was Raghu, his hallucination that busied his mind entirely and later on it was Kaku to whom his desires were engaged. This condition resulted in making Aai feel the loss of love she always craved for. She always felt a detachment from him. She says coming closer to his body:

My life was spent in yearning for you. My ears kept thirsting for just one call from you. But no, even at the most intimate moments my name never merged from your lips…Nothing moves me anymore. It is too late… You never asked for anything rightfully or demanded anything. Why didn’t you ever show some possessiveness? Why did you never quarrel with me? Why was this cold distance permanently between us? (109).

Human relations thus could never be a matter of study in isolation as it is a vivid reality that existence single unit of problematic in certain individual results into creating disturbance in whole network of relationship that exists in relation with it. The lack of clarity adds the aura of mysticism, ignorance, meaninglessness, absurdity, unfulfilled lifelong longing for answer to questions in the mind. The life of an individual falls short of time to measure and recognize the change within the span of life time. It witness the changes of stages like teenage, youth, middle age and old age with addition to the responsibilities that keep on changing with time. It is with this impact Aai asks Baba:

Or is there somebody else in mind?... Initially there was physical gratification. I agree. But my mind was never satiated. It always remained
empty, starving. Neither my mind nor my body came to be fulfilled. Everything was mechanical, cold. Our children were born without love. When once I angrily asked you to stop all this, you stopped forever without any fuss. Didn’t you really want to ever reach my mind? Whom did you have in mind? (109)

Aai always feared that he has Kaku in his mind. Due to this fear, she never left him alone in house. She always kept eye on her so that do not get time in her absence to get attracted to each other. She never went to her parents fearing the consequences. But she never found a single moment when he did not have inclinations towards Kaku nor it was found in her behavior. However it was systematically maintained by Baba that the care of children would be taken by Kaku as he insisted it was right as she was lonely woman and she needed the company of children but he admits that the real reasons were quite different. He confesses, “I abused your body a great deal. But there was always somebody else in mind” (96).

The feelings of lack of love in the mind of Aai drove her to seek the love somewhere out of the house and she did seek for that once vainly. It is in the relation, Sanju was begotten. She confesses that she could not find the solace there either and carried the weight whole of her life of the guilt and now that she wanted to confess to him that Sanjeevani is not his child. It was Sanjeevani he loved so deeply. He did everything he could do for her.

On other hand, he had a doubt that Bal is not his son. He could not ask her as the feelings of doubt would fill him with the feelings of guilt. He felt so ashamed of himself.
Once he beat him for going for swimming but suddenly felt how he could get the right to beat him when he is not his blood. He really wanted to love him but he could really not love him due to the feelings that he is not his child. This detachment of him from his son Bal brought all negative feelings to him and he pines that he “[A]lways kept me at a distance. Never picked me up on your won. I would insist on coming close and sticking to you, and only then would you lift me onto your lap. But even then I could sense that your touch was cold” (104).

Bal always craved to be like his father. He grew with all his admiration for his father and the lack that he could not inherit anything of his father physically and psychologically. The level of influence had been so deep that compared his married life with his parents and wished he could have such life.

In this way, the play As One Discardeths the Old Clothes…presents the possibility of complexity of human emotions and relations. What it adds to the knowledge of readers is, the understanding that creation of desire for someone could be a matter utter uncertainty and devoid of logic. One could hardly make out the complete functioning of the origin of desire of one’s own leave alone someone else’s. It becomes clear the desired end of a sexual desire does not always culminate into sexual union of two persons. Sex is not the act that in general sense taken and considered as an end in itself. Though in modern times, considering sexual pleasure is taken an end itself and it has come to the terms of challenging the traditional point of views that sex is negative has to be avoided for free expression, it has not been a complete thesis. The longings of Baba on the death bed cross the boundaries, around which the complexity and lack of clarity of his desires existed. He craved for the widow for lifetime but never dared to express his desires.
The locus of human desire at times becomes a more difficult thing to trace. It is not the only matter that one cannot so easily find out and identify the origins of desires of a person as one does not always possess sufficient knowledge of a human being as a psychoanalyst might demand information about the persons’ childhood memories, dreams, habits, interests and so on. A piece of writing like that of a play does not always have a space to be occupied with necessary information. This inability is a one side of the problem. The difficulty becomes graver with the understanding that a person most of the time does not understand motives of his or her own desires. It falls beyond his area of cognition to recognize in the first place how his desires for specific object, person or thing, are generated. Certain desires however could be recognized very easily as the result of certain circumstances, basic needs and those that often become the matter of familiarity in the course of time of life, whose existence could be recognized as natural and it anticipated. In the case of sexual desire however the nature of the matter becomes rather uncertain.

It has been always an important issue for the critics of literature and anthropologists like Levi Strauss who tried to present a poetics or a universal structure of incest relationships. Following its investigation, one reaches its various interpretations that hinges on specific factor like primitivism, culture, politics, social milieu, psychology, etc, or the practices indicating the amalgam of the all the factors mentioned above are also visible.

Observation regarding the role of fantasy in human psyche directing desires, behavior and activities with reference to Elkunchwar’s *Desire in the Rocks* becomes a fruitful practice to understand the nature desire. It is in connection with the incest
relation between Lalita and Hemkant, the torture Lalita causes herself and the suicidal
depend Lalita instigates to herself and Hemkant. Fantasy could never receive a responsible
place among the frequently talked issues like conscious, unconscious, complex,
imagination, dreaming, psychosis, neurosis, wish fulfillment, etc. For Freud there exist
conscious and unconscious fantasies. Let’s bring a proper introduction to this issue.

Fantasies are a very essential part of our cognitive world. Fantasy, dreams are the
components of our inner world. As long as they are in harmony with the outer world, we
are lucky but a minor problem or inconvenience with them can bring us horrifying
experience of nightmare and problematic world of experience.

Especially in the Age of Enlightenment, the role of fantasy in any creation was
derogated. The poets like Coleridge declared a distinction between imagination and
fantasy. For him fantasy was inferior to imagination. Fantasy was always denied of any
role in creativity and was thought to be harmful to the capacity of human being for being
able to produce serious and imaginative work of art and achieve uniformity of human
psyche and world. It could also be traced back in ancient Greek when Plato used the term
to mean it as a ‘purely mental activity that did not have relationship with external reality’.
After him Aristotle used the term with slightly different meaning and it was used with the
little difference from time to time. However, its disconnection from reality or rational
view of reality was maintained. The view never allowed fantasy to perceive any serious
attention. The result was that the creative side of fantasy was never given importance.

Freud used the term in psychoanalyses and the original German term used by him
was “die Phanasie”, and the related verb was “phantasieren”. He used the words to denote
conscious fantasies and pre-conscious fantasie- the once conscious and then changed into
unconscious “phantasies” – and to phantasies which, according to him have always been unconscious. In the course of time it has created many problems. Antony Easthope in his book *The Unconscious* says, “For psychoanalysis fantasy means: 1) an imaginary scene or narrative; 2) in which the person fantasizing is present: 3) but a scene altered or disguised; 4) so as to fulfill a wish” (Easthope 110).

Lalita comes to the terms of killing herself. It happens only when she realizes that her brother does not love her and he has messed it with his concept of art. It is why her mind is full of thoughts of guilt, loss, the curse of the beggar, self destruction as to get the punishment for the sin she has committed. The existence of complex and phobic situations in which Lalita lives since her childhood, have prompted her to think it.

Lalita: You’re older than me. By fifteen years. That’s why I feel scared. I’ve spent all these twenty years of my life just being scared.

Hemkant: Were you afraid of Dadasaheb.

Lalita: Petrified. After he died, I thought I was free of fear. But then the trustees and solicitors came. I was afraid of them. I couldn’t understand what they were saying. Then you came, Hem. And I felt really free (Elkunchwar 72).

It had been quite late for Lalita to come to the realization of the freedom she anticipated. The fears and suppression she lived with since her childhood had affected her mind too deeply. What made her continue her life living and wait for her messiah to come, were her fantasies. It included both the conscious and unconscious. The problem with them got her into the destructive end. It could be said so because fantasy realizes a desire in a systematic way or
“rather, its function is similar to that of Kantian ‘transcendental schematism’: a fantasy constitutes our desire, provides its co-ordinates; that is, it literally ‘teaches us how to desire’… fantasy meditates between the formal symbolic structure and the positivity of the objects we encounter in reality – that is to say, it provides a ‘schema’ according to which certain positive objects in reality can function as objects of desire, filling in the empty places opened up by the formal symbolic structure” (Zizek 7).

The entry of the brother and sister into the wada brings the feeling of fear to Lalita and she could easily connect it with the dark time she lived in. The feelings of guilt, sin, betrayal, renunciation that led the tragic end of the duo had been the outcome of the disturbance of the ‘schema’ Lalita maintained. It included her brother as lover as it is how her world of fantasy realized a desire and solace and in a way it was at the same time an escape into and results of the dreadful childhood memories. This could be the answer to the question of incest. Hemkant as the result of the prevailing conditions functioned as an object of desire. The aftermath of it, relates oneself (Lalita) in contrast with religion, God, social norms that could also bring about violent responses to one self and to others as well. So it means in a way, fantasy not only tells how to desire but also to appropriate other feelings once the specific object is desired. Thus result could be in renunciation of one’s own child or body:

Lalita: It’s like a patch of leukoderma that has spread over the whole body. A few days of shame, but when the whole body is covered, what shame can there be? Sin once. Then it’s over. That’s not how it is. Sin never ends (Elkunchwar 115).
The consequences of incest relationship in almost all cultures are negative. The main reason behind it is the way the code of conduct in the human relationships are structured and evolved through times. After the evidence of destructive end of Hemkant and Lalita in the mansion, we realize that the culmination that occurs as the result of such relation is due to not only that it comes against the socially accepted ways of behavior and conduct and society punishes such intrusion, unfamiliar and unaccepted gesture, but also it has the share of personal histories, psychologies and concept of love. The actual conflict in life commences when the maintained gestures are broken or shaken. Human beings tend to maintain a structure of ideas that takes for granted many things, results, culminations that they anticipate and the stronger the structure of such ideas, longer they hold on the views and lead a life in the same direction. It is only with the conflict with the maintained structure of ideas, the minds of human beings are fractured and they are left such state of mind when violence, death, depression, struggle, agitation, breaking of hearts and many other such negative results could be anticipated. However, it occurs only with the conflict with the structure. It does not always happen that the very base of it shaken so easily. It requires an event that could be socially, economically, psychologically, politically or historically instigated. In the process an individual arrives on a realization that the anticipation and the very base of structure are not real or the other person or entity has disrespected it. At such times, the individual like Lalita, cannot always prepare themselves for an other way of life as an acceptance of such possibility. That such behavior could be expected in most of day to day life situations but in this case it does not appear that simple as the problematic after the realization fortifies since the structure of the ideas had already become the way of their life and the very part of their
psyche that thinks and anticipate things in a specified way. The shakes to the view do not instantly offer them a way out. They undergo an experience of agony and trauma.

In his article entitled “The Indian Oedipus”, A. K. Ramanujan declares that it is so easy to find a parallel example where a son marries his mother and kills his father. He tells that the Indian writers while defining the incestuous sin of intercourse with a guru’s wife, they add a list of other sins ‘of the same form’ or ‘equal’. He quotes Nicholas (1976: 16) who emphasizes from the *Naradasmriti*.

If a man has sexual intercourse with any of these women viz. mother, mother sister, mother-in-law, a wife of a paternal uncle or a friend or a pupil, a sister, a sister’s friend, daughter-in-law, the wife of one’s Vedic teacher, a woman of the same gotra (clan), one who has come for protection, a queen, an ascetic woman, one’s wet-nurse, a woman performing a *vrata* (vow) and a *brahmana* woman, he becomes guilty of the sin of the violator of the guru’s bed (i.e., incest). For that crime no other punishment is laid down except that of cutting the penis (Quoted in Ramanujan 121).

In the play *Flower of Blood*, there are four characters and it opens at such time when the couple Bhau and Padma who have lost their young son and has a young daughter Leelu who studies at school. Raja is a paying guest at their house who is a student studying in a college. The complexity of the relationship among these characters grows more complex with the confusion of the mother’s longing for her lost son and finding a solace of the love in Raja and for Bhau it had been the loss of the son and wife’s
and daughter’s inclination towards Raja puts him in psychological trouble and the love of Leelu for Raja makes it more complex.

The Oedipal Complex takes more influential form than that of love and Bhau’s regime as a father. Maternal ego and daughter’s love feeling for Raja encounters and they being the most antagonist about each other cannot thus resolve into positivity of culmination. It seeks its origin in already established formal symbolic structure of relationships. The complexity and unacceptability of the relationships including that of incest emerge due to the way human psyche realizes the desire and fulfills it and it tends to function in such a manner where it does not follow the regulations set by the certain culture and its ideology. The social order is governed by the set of ideas in a certain period of time and its ideological forces have strong disciplinary ideas of control especially about sexuality. It does not allow any challenge to its formal symbolic order. This established order is enacted from the certain positions like religious, political, economical, etc. nature. While the realization of a desire by an individual is governed by “a ‘schema’ according to which certain positive objects in reality can function as objects of desire, filling in the empty places opened up by the formal symbolic structure” (Zizek 7).

This idea has been taken help of while analyzing the nature of the incest relationship between Lalita and Hemkant in the play *Desire in the Rocks*. It had been the case of incest relationship between the brother and the sister. In the play *Flower of Blood* the object of desire is appropriated in certain form. The maternal love for son comes naturally under the same category but in the play the loss of the son is attempted to recover by offer the affection to male child and he does not happen to be a child from any
close relationship. The substitution found by the maternal ego in the form of Raja could be called as a peculiar characteristic of human psyche especially that of female one. The substitution for the desired object of desire is sought in different forms in order to receive the same happiness and pleasure out of it. It works on both levels of wisdom and unconscious.

In case of the love of Padma for Raja works on the both levels and is predominantly governed by the feeling of loss of her original son. The realization of the loss becomes frequent point of discomfort in the process of longing for the love from Raja as a son. It clearly suggests the extreme possibility of appropriation of the object of desire in reality. And Raja the object in reality can like any other human being finds it strange why Padma does not charge him for staying there as a paying guest and why she tidies up his room. Padma however does not give to the imbalances like that of illogic and lack of reasoning. She tell Raja, “Dear, dear Raja, you will never understand this deep, deep affection that we women feel. If your mother comes here some day, I’ll tell her, give me your son, I’d like to adopt him” (Elkunchwar 38). Besides the many things that bring complexity to the desire of the mother for the boy Raja, Padma’s understanding of Raja as child of someone else is clear. Her desire is full of reason and makes the strategies to treat him as her own son at same time to take care that he does not get fed up with it. She tells Raja to stay in the house and never to leave it. According to her we need people to fill our house. When she tells Raja about her son Shashi and how he wanted have a big house. She mentions that Shashi “alone would have filled it, with his vitality, with his presence” (Elkunchwar 39). This emotional account of her becomes one of the
strategies of her. It is both planned and result of certain unconscious traits of her mind caught in the frustration of the loss and it attempts to acquire a substitute pleasure for it.

This leads to a condition where Leelu does not respond to her mother very well for the both reasons that her mother does always scolds her for small things and spends more time with Raja and on the other hand she causes troubles to Bhau also. The one of the major reasons of the complexity mentioned above could be traced to her realization that it is time for her menopause. The realization of it troubles the mind of Padma. It is commonly seen in women in their forties and fifties. Whenever it gets late for her periods, her mood sways. The realization of this possibility brings with it the loss of hope and capability to become a mother again for Padma. It is something that a woman amidst the regime of various forces and responsibilities take pride in possessing. It is the capacity to be able to create and becoming the source of the creation. It is not so easy for Padma to handle the pressure of the various forces while her mind is already tormented by the loss of her son. When she wishes to fulfill her desire for a child and also to seek a lover in the son who is not of hers, the understanding of the reality however does not leave her at ease. Though she tries to hold on the boy, it becomes irritating for the boy to cope up with it. The swaying of her mood is fanatic and irresistible due to the fact of the loss. It does not however again mean that she would have behaved in the same manner if her son were alive. It was she who let Shashi to join the army. Padma admits to Raja, “But I don’t understand myself. Am I wrong or are the others wrong? How should I behave? I don’t seem to find anything interesting. Nothing attracts me. I keep wondering what I am doing, and for what or for whom” (Elkunchwar 54). The next thing she does is
another attempt of regaining and asserting a moment of pleasure when she complains to Bhau that he has a wife and she has desires and expectations.

It becomes more complex for Padma to manage the pressure and it results into psychological abnormality like that of writing sort of love letter addressed to nobody but relive the experience of love that once she lived happily. The reluctant desire of Bhau in their early period of marriage also plays negative role in the construction of her psyche. It leaves her in a certain state of mentality where she craves for the pleasure. It will not be more suitable to say the loss of an only son was the only cause that was responsible for Padma’s disturbed behavior. It is connected to various relationships she has in the family besides the memories of her son, her marriage, her youth, the signs of old age, etc. She cannot tolerate the idea Leelu talking to Raja and suddenly takes the decision to tell Raja to find another room for him. The way the possibility of adopting Raja as her son is broken down with the realization of his mother being alive and loving him intensely; it is with the same sudden internal compulsion she abandon the idea of possibility of new child immediately after she expresses her desire to Bhau. Bhau asks her whether she wants divorce from him so that at least then can live happily. But Leelu finds out the letters in her room and calls her mother “a dirty woman”. It comes as an embarrassing situation for Padma. It becomes almost impossible for her to make Bhau think the condition in which such fake love letters were written. And finding it impossible to explain she breaks down saying.

Don’t be angry, please. These letters, they’re not even real letters. Look. Take a look at them. All of them. Look, they are not even addressed to anybody. They weren’t written with anybody in mind. They were just
something to do. Something to keep me busy. I used to get so bored… I’m not what you think I am. I am really not. I’m really not like that. Forgive me, please. I have no one. Please don’t leave me (Elkunchwar 60).

Desire, saying it in a more generalized way, forms a base for almost every kind of problem and complexity of relationship; it is the desire which becomes the source of solution to the problem. In the first place, it is the cause of problem and in the second it is the panacea. The loss of desire ultimately results in ultimate destruction. It is the destruction at the core. A person like Padma engulfed in psychological complexities finds it very difficult to come out of it and live life normally. It is the people around her who can offer real comfort and realization of her troubles and her vain attempts get involved in certain bondages due to their personal lives and engagements. It happens with many people suffering from psychological disorders. Padma attempts to tighten her grip on the situation to control it but it tends to slip away with her strength. The too much affection irritates Raja; Leelu is tired of her lectures and scolding and husband feels more pity for her and loses desire for her. The reactions that of Leelu and Bhau give when Padma appears in front of them in the sari, makes her feel that she has done something abnormal that she is not supposed to do.

There are two things that happen in process of realizing a desire by a tormented person like Padma. First the person tends to seek immediate happiness out of the direct way of receiving pleasure. It could be for Padma by cleaning the room of Raja or just lying down on his bed keeping the lights off. Though it is momentarily, such ways are sought in order to get rid of the pressure building up in one’s mind. There remains a very little time to think logically and plan systematically before one act to avoid the growing
complexity of web of thinking about certain matter at hand. Secondly, it is the burden of realization that people around one, have noticed one doing the crazy thing. In case of Padma it is wearing the sari or writing the letter leaves her beyond explanation. This remains in mind and bring about feeling of guilt making the person feel more depressed. But what keep this complex play goes on moving is desire of human beings for something. The time when such desires die out completely, the human psychology becomes impossible to find comforts in normality of the world. Unlike Padma, Lalita find her resolution of the complexity grown in her mind in suicide in *Desire in the Rocks*.

Elkunchwar’s *Holi* describes the conflict of the students studying in a college and staying at hostels at college campus. Elkunchwar’s this play becomes perhaps the first play that points the situation of the growing intolerance among the youngster studying at college and registering their protest against the institutionalization and authoritative regimes hailing from different systems. The homosexual desire between Shrivastav and Anand marks the visibility of gay relationship between the two distinctively. At times it seems to be at the core of the thematic concern of the play since it is the concerns that instigate the major course of action in the play. It is out of this desire Anand reports the name of the students creating mess in the program organized by the principal on the day of *Holi*. It ultimately results in torture to Anand by the group of students and suicide of Anand.

Hoshang Merchant in introduction to the book *Yarana : Gay Writing from India* writes about the development of the study in concern with homosexuality and how it exited from the time unknown but silence was always maintained on the issue like all other issues like incest and other taboo relationships. He says that there is no such beast
in zoology as a ‘homosexual’. He talks about the etymology of the word and says that it is an invention of late nineteenth century European science, half Greek (Grk. ‘homo’ = ‘same’) and half Latin (‘sexual’ being Latin in root). He explains that

It denotes not a person but a category that several sensitive persons, obliging science, have tried to fit themselves into. NRI gays in Trikone (San Jose, California) have concocted a terminology for Gays: ‘Samlingan’ for the sexuality, ‘samlingia’ for ‘homosexual’, i.e., a literal translation of Western terms. Such a term does not exist in India where the practice is not codified, only quietly condoned and above all, not talked about. As Foucault reminds us in History of Sexuality, sex is not modern, talking about it is (Marchant xi).

Having thus realized a state of study regarding the homosexuality in Indian context from the expert of the book by Marchant that offers the true account of homosexual experience by the people in India, it helps us in investigating the relationship between Shrivastav and Anand who share a room in the hostel. Elkunchwar describes the relationship with certain passing references that occur in the conflict the students have with college authority. Anand loves Shrivastav and is more involved with him than Shrivastav. The way he treats Anand suggests that he has his interests of different kinds. For Shrivastav he is the source to gain monetary and other benefits out the emotional attachment Anand has for him. He at times threatens him if Anand does not get ready to offer him the things he demands from him. When Anand complains to him about why he sold his sunglasses, Shrivastav tell him that he is going to change the room. Anand
cannot bear the thought of Shrivastav changing his room. He replies, “I’ll kill myself!” (Elkunchwar 10) Shrivastav deploys this strategy in order to get five rupees from him.

What however matters in this regard is not how the both develop the homosexual relationship. It is of more concern that the homosexual desire does exist and the play has its visibility. Anand faces more troublesome remarks from other student friends of him for his intimacy with Shrivastav. It does not detain him from keeping is exhibition of concern for Shrivastav limited to himself. It is more interesting to find out the strangeness of the relationship when one partner does not respond the other respectively and it is known to the person loving the other. Though the text does not offer detailed discourse on the construction of homosexual identity of Anand, it remains to see the factors that promote him to assert his homosexual desire for Shrivastav. He goes at the extent that in order to save him from the strict disciplinary actions, he goes to the principal and reports the names of the students involving the trouble at the program and deliberately exclude the name of Shrivastav.

Hoshang Merchant in his quote as mentioned above makes the mention of Foucault and it poses a question regarding the suitability and authenticity of application the western theories regarding sexuality in Indian context. In this regard Janaki Nair and Mary John write:

We cannot, but draw upon western theories, since they determine at an unconscious level, the reading practices we bring to bear on our work. But this till leaves us with the task of theories action, which can never take the form of the application of a theory that one possesses in advance, but
must resemble a process, a historical and political mode of conceptualizing sexual economics that would be true to our experience of an uneven modernity, calling for multiple levels of analysis and the forgiving of articulation between the global and the local (Quoted in Narrain and Bhan 7).

The homosexual desire in the play could thus be analyzed with the help of the basic framework or western theories like that of Foucault bringing down the forces like patriarchy, power, knowledge, reason and religion. What makes the personal and contextual experience of the analyses altogether a different practice of realization of new notions that go into making the reality of experience of homosexuality in Indian context is the very framework of history, tradition, memory, culture and social norms that underlie the life style of the people at a certain period of time. It involves the conscious acknowledgment to the issues like psychology, politics, economics, history, sociology and the process of cultural identification. And they are time specific and cannot always be isolated from its local and national relevance and significations.

One of the reasons that could be cited regarding the reluctance of Shrivastav in the homosexual desire other than his disinterestedness is the way in which the common thought is prevalent about the sexuality. It is labeled as dirty and outrageous. Foucault in *The History of Sexuality Vol.I* puts it in the following way:

> As defined by the ancient civil or canonical code, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The nineteenth century homosexual becomes a
personage, a past, a case history and childhood, in addition to bring a type of life, a life form, and morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology (Foucault 43).

The mention of such sexuality in Vatsyayana’s Kamsutra and other canonical texts produced on the subject shows the existence of such practices. The texts never does approve of the relationships. It however does not become only the subject to the disapproval by the common subject but it becomes the part of regulatory body that legalizes the rules of code of conduct in a certain matter of relationship. It is here identification of the areas is done and as a necessity they are defined in a very clear way and it tends to culminate into certain practices of overlooking, undermining, ignoring, generalization, politics, cultural and religious dogmatism, etc. The section 377 of Indian Penal Code drafted in 1860 by Lord Macaulay contains:

Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished with imprisonment… which may extend to 10 years and shall be liable to fine. Explanation: Penetration is sufficient to constitute the carnal inter course necessary to the offence described in this section (Narrain and Bhan 7).

As mentioned above here is an example how the generalization in a legal way of defining misses certain possibilities of more forms of ‘queer’ relationships. It calls such desire as “sexual acts against the order of nature”. In Indian context the law clearly states the nature of crime of sexual nature. It talks about the sexual acts against the order of nature between same-sex sexual activities between men; even of it is consensual, between
adults, and in private. It is the reason Ashwini Sukthankar, in her introduction to *Facing the Mirror: Lesbian writing in India* (1999) points out the exemption of lesbians in Indian law. She knows that it is not out of any kind of privilege but out of contempt and ignorance. She is not happy about the nonexistent nature Indian lesbianism. She writes:

...we don’t live outside the law, as gay men do in our country, we live between the lines. ‘Section 377’ of the Indian Penal code makes homosexual acts between men illegal but it does not have technically have lesbianism in its purview, since he legal definition of intercourse requires penetration (Sukthankar xiv).

It is the death of Anand that puts the end to his life so condemned by his fellow companions. The inclinations he has towards Shrivastav could never be understood by the students other than a way that could not be called as normal and accepted. No one seems to acknowledge the possibility of homosexual relationship. Nevertheless it is also to be taken into account the positivity of development of consciousness regarding the matter in the form of writing by a writer like Elkunchwar.
Works Cited


