Chapter: III

‘Revolt’ in the Select Plays of Mahesh Elkunchwar
Liberty, that nightingale with the voice of a giant, muses the most profound sleepers. . . How is it possible to think of anything today except to fight for or against freedom? Those who cannot love humanity can still be great as tyrants. But how can one be indifferent?

Ludwig Boerne, February 14, 1983

Literature has been an important tool to register various responses of mankind and the stimulus for all kinds of responses has been of different nature and origins. Unfortunately history of civilization has been the history of subjugation, injustice and imperialism. These vital issues have the characteristics of economical and political nature and they somehow still form the core of human affairs. Literature, in a way, is an expression not only with the view and intention of writing of course of incidents and events in a certain literary form but it is the inevitability of the expression as a result of the conflict of two or many entities. It would be not difficult to see how there has been inevitability of the conflict since the time unknown. The dialectics could never be an ineffective characteristic of the changes that have marked the beginning and end of various phenomena.

There is glorious tradition of the literature that could be called as the literature of conflict or literature of revolt. The revolt could be defined as the instant reaction to the certain change, action, process or behavior. Agitation, defense, protection, violence are some of the features of revolt. The first decade of twentieth century also witnessed the strong undercurrent of the literature of revolt beginning with the literature of
revolutionary ideas of nationalism to the Dalit Literature of revolt against the atrocities against dalits in India. Dalit literature and tribal literature marked the major development in last decades of twentieth century Marathi literature. It also marked the beginning of a luminous literature of revolt in entire India. It presented altogether new aesthetics of its own. Its impact had been remarkable and it governed the literary scene of Indian literature for more than three decades and caused much discussion on various levels. Though it had its origin in political and social movements, Dalit autobiographies, memoirs, testimonies, etc became an effective tool of the writers to express their experience and saga of pain through the type of narration. One of the reasons of the great authenticity of the literature was involved in the fact that the people writing the testimonies or autobiographies were not the writer by profession but the ordinary common people who happened to express their experiences in life through the medium of written form.

Feministic literature, colonial and post colonial literature, African colonial and post colonial literature, socialist or Marxist literature are in strongest sense of meaning the literature of revolt. It has been the revolt of different nature. The causes of the revolt are different and have received the stimuli from various sources but the common feature of the revolt is that it acts against the subjugation that the ‘other’ had to suffer from for ages. The layers of the suppression are of myriad folds. Women and dalit were doubly suppressed whereas the dalit women were triply suppressed due to the multiple nature of suppression embedded in the form of gender, caste, religion and patriarchal discrimination. It is interesting to observe that dalit literature was effective in certain forms like poetry and autobiographies only. Feminism and post colonial literature were in
vogue mainly through the fictional writings that flourished in the second part of twentieth century.

It is true that we are able to concentrate on certain strong epoch making types of literary presentations. Such presentations vary time to time. The way the subject matter of the expression and presentation matter, the observation also reveals how there had been a specific choice of certain genre among fiction, poetry and drama. However such strong undercurrent at least for short period of time blinds us to the other forms of streams of human expression. There are many factors of course that decides on the popularity and the flux of development of the form of writing through discussion and expression through critical and creative format. As a part of amalgam of whole literature produced in a specific time, every trend, that human experience registers, matters in order to arrive at the understanding of human nature and culture.

Drama is one of the most significant and effective form of writing that has proved many times fruitful in expressing and achieving its impact on society. It has been effective in conveying the message it wants due to the nature of the presentation in dialogic form and more importantly the facility and advantage of dramatic presentation on the stage.

It is evident how religion has made use of this form of expression from the beginning in the types like morality and miracle play and in Indian context it was presentations like Nautanki which had majority of themes of expression from religious text like the Mahabharat and the Ramayan. In the recent times, theatre has been viewed as the place for more opportunities to achieve the desired ends of the intention of the
writing. Brecht looked on theatre as a means of social change. The socialist and Marxist perspectives always attempted to make theatre as a place of experiments so that more effective form of expression could be found out in order to quicken the process of the desired change.

When talked about the revolt in the dramatic writings of Elkunchwar, they exhibit such tendencies of two kinds. One is that of the selection of subject matter for his writing which predominantly characterizes the expression of feelings that have been tabooed and prohibited. Secondly his writings in their totality are a form revolt as compared against the backdrop of the Marathi dramatic writings before 1960s.

Since 1960s the change that took over the various forms of Marathi had been more prominent. Dramatic writings changed radically since then. It changed on two levels one is that the plays started to be written with great precision and professional theatres were strengthened and secondly the playwrights began to handle subjects of innovative nature that eventually enriched whole tradition of dramatic writing in the language. The newness of the change lied in the detachment of them from the tradition of conservative writing that never attempted the thematic concern that would connect to the larger implications of literature on the universal level.

Dr. Supriya Pendhari observes in her book *Marathi Natyasrushtitil Vidroh ani Navata* that in world of Marathi theatrical writing Khanolkar, Tendulkar and Elkunchwar are some of those playwrights who represented the Marathi theatrical writing scenes more vitally than others could do in the thematic concerns and subjects.
Revolt in the present connection however is conceived and realized on two important levels. One as an act of a playwright that become in itself an act of revolt due to its newness; its ability to break down the established social, political and creative norms; it is the that has entire ability to bring about a new tradition in the existing ways of doing literature. Tendulkar and Elkunchwar have ushered in an era in Marathi dramatic writing that marked the beginning of an era of revolution. The nature of this revolution however was not limited to the matter of opposing the old tradition or it was not the mere result of the thinking against the traditional conservatism and totalitarianism. Both the dramatists had in their background the reservoir of information and knowledge of European and American tradition of theatrical writings and trends among them. This fact could be supposed as the crucial feature. It brought later on to many new Marathi writers, the understanding of various advancement that took place in different parts of the world and contributed to the overall knowledge of human nature.

Tendulkar brought a shock to the minds of Marathi People with the characters like Sakharam from *Sakharam Binder*, Shivappa from *Baby* or Ghashiram from *Gharshiram Kotwal*, Leela Benare from *Silence! The Court is in Session*. These are however some of the selective examples of the personae that represent a social psyche. They come upon the scene to propagate not only its existence but also to reveal that it is form in itself that has grown out of shape. It rather asserts its existence and possesses the ability to make a human mind give thoughts to it and the complexity of its existence. The contribution of Tendulkar to the Marathi theatre in particular and Indian theatre in general has been immense. In Sri Ram Memorial Lectures, Tendulkar narrates his lifelong involvement in theatre as follows;
What I like about those years is that they made me grow as a human being. And theatre which was my major concern has contributed to this in a big way. It helped to analyze life – my own and lives of others. It led me to make newer and newer discoveries in the vast realm of the human mind that still defies all available theories and logic… Now I am aware of what I am doing while I do it. I am my own audience and the critic, if one may use the language of the theatre (Chakroborty 118).

Elkunchwar in his Yatanaghar, Desire in the Rocks dealt with the subject of incest and it had been basically too daring way of selection of subject matter to such audience who could never imagine such thing to be written and would personally prefer silence on the subject. It has two aspects one that incest is still considered as a taboo and is less talked about. Silence is major practice observed whenever there is a scope of talk or discussion on it. It begins right from the informal situations in the family and perhaps it is the significant place that looks after the security of such silence is maintained.

Garbo is about a prostitute and three friends of her, who have physical relation with her and the complicated relation that results into the murder of Garbo the prostitute. In Autobiography, reality of human desire is revealed. In Holi resistance of a student community against the authority that denies them Holi day, is registered. The form of their revolt has many characteristics like that of violence and destruction. Elkunchwar does not however miss to offer the account of the homosexual desire in the play. The visibility of it however is pure form of revolt that has multi layers of resistance to the gendered self and voices against the authority that insists the conformity.
In the play *As One Discardeth Old Clothes*..., Elkunchwar presents to us the last moments of a person on deathbed who realizes the futility of man’s existence and the form of revolt he adopts is becoming one with God and at same time denying and breaking himself free from the relationship that he tried in vain throughout his life to bring a satisfactory meaning. In *Party* Elkunchwar reveals the psyche of middle class set of people who represent different profession in the society. He depicts the hypocrite nature of the people in their vanity of wishes and meaningless pursuit of popularity. The character of Amrit in the play represents the consciousness in the society that believes in working for social cause. He believes that the movement against social and political injustice could not be defeated unless one brings about the revolt in the active form. He believes that the passive forms like that of writing and philosophizing are mere vain attempt of dreaming of the change.

Mahesh Elkunchwar in his *Wada* trilogy i.e. *Old Stone Mansion, Pond* and *Apocalypse* brings out the strong image of the pond that defines the dissatisfaction of the major male characters like Chandu, Parag and Abhay. Elkunchwar here presents perhaps in the most effective form the existential struggle of human beings and their lifelong struggle to belong to certain space. The vanity of the life experiences and desires; their meaninglessness and inability of them being capable to offer solace to minds of individuals, eventually takes the shape of a revolt against them. It results into the systematic attempt of establishing oneself in either a nostalgic or an abstract or a material form of symbolism so that extremity of conflicts in the minds could be pacified. It automatically becomes an event that offers solution to the internal and external
struggle of the mind and body. And most importantly it offers the space to human psyche to feel at ease at least for time being.

Handling of the themes like prostitution, sexuality, incest, homosexuality, activism, suicide, death, futility of Indian marriage system, disappointment of the youth against the political and rigid democratic systems and man’s perpetual existential conflict with the notions of dissatisfaction, meaninglessness, longing to belong to a certain space, indicates the variety of issues with which Elkunchwar makes an impact on the Marathi theatre. These conflicts represent the typical forms of resistance and revolt. The subjects that receive the treatment in the plays of Elkunchwar however have the characteristics of novelty, different manner of presentation and the skillfulness of using the space of stage to present the subject matter considering its scope and limitations.

It will not be naïve generalization when it is summed up saying that the plays of Elkunchwar succeeds in making the audience and readers consider and ponder over the subject matter of his plays mainly due to the revolutionary nature of human affairs he depicts in the fabric of the story. Though violence, ideological conflicts, deterioration of the Indian family system, sexuality, psychological complications, loss of identity, longing for meaning of life, suicide and death have formed the basis of the main action various plays of Elkunchwar, they have the existence of them without any sort of repetition and resemblance with other subject matter. The revolt and the conflict with the themes have been presented by the dramatist with no artificial assertion or longing for certain impact on audience. Of course Garbo is an exception to it. It happens in the case of Elkunchwar due to the notion of inspiration for writing a play. He does not believe in numbers.
Speaking on the necessity of revolt and conflict as an answer to the charges of pessimism on him, Tendulkar says “[m]y experience of my times, my life, has shown me that the individual is largely disempowered, made abject, reduced to the groupings” (Chakroborty 117).

The identification of the inspirations and the stimuli of a writer behind writing a piece of literary work is not an easy job for any critic. Problematic of this notion begins right from the authority of the author in claiming the importance of becoming the core in the process of creation and holding the capability and ability to control the work of art and modulate its impact as a result of his/her individual efforts. However it is not always impossible to make out the nature of the time in which the work of art is written and also to identify the possibility of the existing elements that are likely to participate in the process of stimulation. The description of the process becomes difficult due to basic complex nature of the phenomena ruling the contemporary time. The responsible elements and ingredients for forming stimuli to regulate the process of writing get intermingled and grow more complicated due their inseparable nature assimilation with other elements. In his book *The Age of Revolution 1789 - 1848* Eric Hobsbawm observes such type of assimilation and calls it ‘dual revolution’ and says:

If a single misleading sentence is to sum up the relations of artist and society in this era, we might say that the French Revolution inspired him by its example, the Industrial Revolution by its horror, and the bourgeois society, which emerged from both, transformed his very existence and modes of creation (Hobsbawm 255).
In *Holi* a group of students who stay at hostel, is unhappy because the principal of their college has not declared a *Holiday* on the day of *Holi*. The presence of various issues that make the students revolt against the principal of the college, notifies the consciousness of the students. It represents almost omnipresent conditions at educational system in Maharashtra. As the play begins and the students come to know that the principal did not declare a *Holiday* and besides it he has organized a talk by speaker who is an ‘authority’ on the subject of Hindu religion and Indian culture, the language used by the students from the beginning of the play suggests the powerful hatred and disappointment with the educational system they are the part of.

Ananda Lal in his introduction to the second volume of *Collected Plays of Mahesh Elkunchwar* exhibits the repulsive tone of the play. He says:

*Holi* was Elkunchwar’s first major play, albeit short, and surely the product of an angry young man (he was barely thirty years old) about angry young men. The play highlights the frustration of Indian students faced with a bureaucratic and authoritarian administrative system totally impervious to their needs and grievances (Lal xv).

Vijay Mehata a renowned critic and director has special consideration for the play *Holi* by Elkunchwar and she thinks as she writes in the foreword of the second volume of *Collected Plays of Mahesh Elkunchwar* that in 1970 Elkunchwar got in the mainstream of theatre with his two one-act plays *Sultan* and *Holi*. He was very young then. She continues writing that “[F]rom Mahesh’s earlier writings, *Holi* went on to become – and still remains–the most path-breaking experiment on many counts. It captured the
restlessness and tragic frustration of students on a campus, an experience deeply felt by Mahesh as a young lecturer in Nagpur University” (Mehta xi).

Both Vijaya Mehta and Anand Lal have attempted a connection of an autobiographical nature behind the inspiration for writing the play *Holi*. However there are two different things they talk about the same person. Though Vijaya says that Mahesh was a young man then, she believes that it is his experience as teacher in Nagpur University when he saw the frustrating experiences of students. Anaand Lal however thinks that the play was a result of the suppressed anger of youth of India, who wants to eradicate the bureaucratic authoritative system and it is the outcome of the wish according to which such responses must be registered; they should get voiced.

Right from the opening scene of the play, we experience the violent and angry responses by the group of students. They exhibit such tendency though the particular use of sexually abusive language, verbal attack, impatient conclusions, pessimism, repulsive tendency and violence.

When Gopal hears from Madhav that only their college does not have holiday that day, he expresses his anger. He says, “Bloody pimps go on reducing our holidays. Has even this Principal’s father ever seen a holiday for *Holi* curtailed” (Elkunchwar 03). The compulsory attendance to the lecture made by the principal irritates them. Timur ironically makes fun of the person who has been declared as an ‘authority’ on the subject. He says, “Authority means some pseudo-scholar sermonizing on how great our Indian culture is and how you youngsters of today ought to substitute your jeans for dhotis!” (Elkunchwar 6)
Thakur doesn’t like the way Timur talks about the hypocrisy of the speaker who declare themselves an authority in the subject. Thankur thinks that one has to study and practice things to get command over the subject and Gopal does nothing of it. Vasanta gets angry and replies to Thakur:

Fuck off you proper speaker, you! I’ll tell you what’s culture. Yuou bastards making shaven widows pregnant, how dare you holler about culture? Out! Out with a fucking smoke! (Elkunchwar 6)

Exhibition of sexuality has been one of the ways of the indicators of the repulsive tendencies. The use of sexually abusive language is not aimed at only attacking the other person but it aims at achieving certain desired effects. It challenges the sexual potency of a person, which in a complex way is ambiguous and full of uncertain of its meaning and nature. However there exists a lifelong confusion and doubt about the sexual capability and strength in one’s mind especially before one gets acquainted with sexual experience. It is here the sexual fantasies play an important role. It has been the result of sum of the culturally constructed ideas of sexuality i.e. manliness or feminine.

When Foucault says in his book The History of Sexuality: An Introduction that ‘silence’ has been assigned a significant role to play as far as the expression of sexuality is concerned. He presents whole network of reasons and discourse in the particular historical period when such silence was maintained and sometimes free expression was also sought on a certain standpoints. This issue however in Indian context holds significance on various levels perhaps since the gravity of the silence in this context is more severe than Foucault might have experienced in different spacio-temporal context. He 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 05).

It is almost in all the cultures, the abusive sexual expressions are visible. It is also evident that the more political turmoil the country faces, the more the youth of the country develops repulsive tendencies. It is Vasanta’s remark about sexual experience he had makes the idea of sexual expression an important one. After the discussion on the need of ‘grown hair down there’ for being able to make love, Vasanta does not miss the opportunity in showing his knowledge of sexual experience. He says:

Why do you need hair for making love? I had made love in my effing seventh standard. The flogging I’d got from my father, darling! How was I to know the effing fossil was watching from a hole in the door?

(Elkunchwar 07)

His remark suggests two things. First his expression on the issue psychologically sets him free at least on the basis of showing and being able to show his knowledge and ability of making love in his seventh standard and secondly his anger against his father’s dominance. The discussion over the importance of cow urine ultimately leads to dig out the dire disappointment of the youth on the campus. Vasanta replies to Timur:
So has human piss! Wanna drink it? Bastard, if one person drinks it, you pseudo-culturist think it’s piss, but if all drink, then what’s it? Elixir of life! Bravo! Culture! On one hand, we have these effing culturists and on the other, those khaddar-wearing freaks! Fuckers have completely fucked up our lives. Out with a smoke! (Elkunchwar 13)

With this remark of Vasanta the disappointment becomes very clear. It is also indicative of the variety of issues that ultimately hatch the repulsive tendencies of youth. Vasanta’s attack on the ‘culturists’ is actually on the tendency that unnecessarily gives importance to the trivial things. There are many activities a society has to perform though they are not important or necessary. And it becomes the target of attack when the movement begins to bring about the change in the thinking that is based on blind beliefs. In Indian context, complexity of the problem grows larger than life due to many reasons. The major concern in this regard is the ignorance of the meaning of culture and the necessity of its preservation especially in the times when foreign cultures are intruding. The citizens of a nation always possess a tendency and concern for preservation for their culture that has been brought to them in the form of history, monuments, songs, folklore, literature and tales in oral traditions. Every strata of the nation however possesses it in different ways with all its variety at the level of age, religion, caste, region, history, gender, role, class, etc. Here in the play Party, it is mainly the youth who attacks the two important issues of Indian social consciousness. The first is culture that creates and sustains a typical thinking and the second it the politics that affects larger part of the social life. The disappointment of Ranjit is revealed through his remark about the politicians and businessmen. He says:
I have just one effing ambition. Collect some potbellied ministers, some fat businessmen, and removing their clothes in some public square, kick them on their naked asses! (Elkunchwar 13)

Gopal says that there should be one correction in Ranjit’s remark that after they are done with the kicking, they should set rabid dogs after them. The intensity of the revolt is felt only with the timely growth of the repulsive responses from majority of sections from a society. Generally it takes a considerable time to bring about such kind of unification of responses. It requires many things till it comes to the terms of collective response. Until it happens, the society and the sections in the society experience many small revolts. It does not become necessary always that it should be accompanied by violence or the visibility of the change as an aftermath of the revolt. Every effort of resistance and of showing aggression matters in the process of building a response that ultimately contributes to the thought that becomes the base of a revolution. Murray N. Rothbard in his book Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature and other Essays defines the word ‘revolution’ in a specific larger manner. He writes about common opinions about revolution which are mainly manufactured by media and virtual reality. Explains the nature of revolution and says:

Revolution is a mighty, complex, long-run process, a complicated movement with many vital parts and functions. It is the pamphleteer writing in his study; it is the journalist, the political club, the agitator, the organizer, the campus activist, the theoretician, the philanthropist. It is all this and much more. Each person and group has its part to play in this great complex movement (Rothbard 191).
Before the denouement of the play comes with the lighting up the fire of Holi, suicide of Anand and appearance of police on the stage for interrogation, one could feel the presence of the evidences of feelings of revolt in different forms. The treatment they give to Anand is an outcome of the anger they have harbored against the system. Unfortunately Anand becomes the victim of it. But the treatment is an evidence of the violent capability the youth has developed in the years. When Vasanta expresses his anger in the following statement:

I’ve seen so many culture-wallahs really need to be praised. Build temples and gobble up the money. Spouting religious shit all the while. Who’s that Desaiji coming today? Supposed to be blessed one. Keep looting bastards, in the name of god, religion, and the nation! You bloody Brahmins have fucked up everything! (Elkunchwar 14)

It becomes more obvious of its multifaceted nature of repulsive tendencies the youth on the campus has developed. Vasanta supposes Brahmins responsible for bringing in the redundancy of culture in Indian society. Politics, business, education system, varna system, cultural teaching have turned antagonistic to the students and it represents on the larger scale the Indian situation in which the youth of India vainly attempts to come over them. The multitude of the issues has one of the major concerns. It eventually reduces them to the thinking of impossibility of any change. It also results in losing one’s faith in the possibility of a change in lawful and gradual manner. It poses the challenges to the positive attitude by which possibility of desired change is sought on the basis of truth, rights, appropriateness, justice and non-violence.
The inevitability of revolt by the youth is strengthened by the way the forces that straightway affect and disturb the youth in dominant manner. The discourse of power always looks after its sustenance and security. There are always two ways to bring about a change in any system. One is internally and the second is externally. One can bring changes in a system by becoming the part of it. When it is not possible to become the part of the system, the revolt becomes necessary to turn it topsy-turvy. But the superstructure does not however allow the possibility of revolt. The knowledge of this again turns the youth to despair. It is the reason why Ranjit says that he “feels like burning all the fucking buildings down!” (Elkunchwar 20). The treatment they give to Anand as punishment for revealing their names to the Principal or lighting up *Holi* fire by using the chair from the hostel recreation room has been symbolic of the revolt the students wish to bring out against the all the adverse conditions they wish to change and annihilate the evil practices of the system they cannot change.

It appears that the inevitability of revolt does exist not only in the public and external spheres with all its political and social implications but personal dimensions do have their roles in it. Sexually abusive language suggests the anger of the youth and the abusive terminology imply deeply the problematic of sexuality and questions the notions of various sexual orientations. In *Autobiography*, we get to witness the revolt of a woman that has been instigated by certain personal tendencies developed in the course of time. Unlike the political implication for the repulsive tendencies developed by the youth in *Holi*, *Autobiography* presents a way to suggest how there exits another possibility of repulsive attitude that could result into a revolt on the small scale. Unlike the revolt against the totalitarianism prevailing as a part of whole system as felt by the students in
the college in *Holi, Autobiography* offers an opportunity to consider the development of problematic of the culminations of the action one decides to take in order to activate the revolt against the influence, power, helplessness, lack of identity.

Though here in *Autobiography* it is Vasanti who seeks revenge on her elder sister Uttara for the bad treatment she receives from her sister. It is not the only cause that Uttara never identified her younger sister as worth human being but it is Uttara’s overall behavior that changed after marriage brought the sense of anger in Vasanti. The unfair practice of elder sister to keep her younger sister under control and exhibiting frequently the patronizing gesture towards her harbors in her the feeling of revolt that ultimately succeeds in confiscating the reason of Uttara’s vanity. It is how Vasanti planned. What becomes of it is altogether a different story. But the question remains how such type of antagonism is constructed and what its ingredients are.

Sexuality and realization of sexual powers with a social context occur on two level of gender crudely one a female realizing or subjugating her female sexual identity under male dominance and social structure of institutions and roles of a female in them and the certain family system.

In *Party* Elkunchawar seems to be putting the event of party and the exhibition of a group of certain people enjoying a status in society away from the painful experiences and labor of life, as the preface for the situation when an activist like Amrit is killed. After independence India has witnessed few movements which consisted of revolutionary ideas both socially and politically. Few of them chose violent ways to attain their goal while others trusted law and order thought the democratic ways would bring them help.
Dalit movement had to go through the ways where violence and atrocities were frequently faced and it history has not remained homogeneous. It is also certain that a situation guarantees the revolt in which a point is reached where injustice is so high that it gets unbearable, slave like and all possible ways of hopeful life are shut. *Adivasi* people in India have been triply subjugated and the growing vicious impact of capitalism is making their live impossible by denying them their freedom to live independently relying on natural resources and even destroying the resources in terms of profit.

Agashe, Bharat and Barve belong to the community of writers and are enjoying a party given by Damayanti in honour of Barve for getting an award. Their talk brings the idea of a world where they have no connection of the life the common people live; their only concerns remain around the personal development in terms of awards, money and foreign tours. It all happens under the false pretence of creativity and understanding of life. The news of death of Amrit brings them a shock. Though there had been talk that the reason for Amrit’s going to tribal region and fighting for their rights is his frustration and disappointment in love but it is Doctor who tells Damyanti in the beginning of the play that she should not mix idealism up with romanticism. He says:

Actually Amrit isn’t even an idealist. He’s convinced that many people in our society are exploited with nobody on their side to fight. So he’s gone across- that’s all. As simple and straightforward as that, the way he sees it (Elkunchwar 159).

It is Doctor who is a ‘spectator watching the glittering world’ asserts the division of the society in terms of this side and going across the side. It is always expected that a
nation should never be oblivious to the painful patches it has developed or developing. Since the complexity of the various factors that contribute in making a nation great and flawless, grows with the presence of variety of discrimination in time, space and culture of people. Strangeness of the situation grows more vivid with the nature of the struggle. Some people like Mohini are not able to sleep because they are pestered by the idea that they are not loved anymore and consumption of alcohol does not help them either whereas the people in the tribal areas are living a life worse than animals. They do not even get sufficient food to eat; clothes to cover their bodies, primary education to their children and basic aids if they fall ill. It is way far away from the phrases like right to education, right to information, right to live, freedom of speech and it is the reason the ignorance do not even bring them idea that they have the right to fight it back. The fatalistic ideas prevail the regions so deep psychologically and it plays a vital role in bringing hurdles in the ways of new ideas of development.

Simultaneously a larger part of the society remains oblivious and ignorant to the plights of the people living so miserable life. It is with a sort of adventure of few truly learned people, attempts are made to fight against the Government and the prevailing systems that do not allow any change that challenges their advantageous positions. It is the reason why Amrit is killed who organized the *adivasis* and did demonstration there. The journalist Jogdand talks about the dramatic show of the power of state through the police and military organization. It is how the very system that has been created to protect the people of a nation against injustice, operates to sustain and take care of the advantage and benefits of certain people that hold the main streams of power including itself. He says:
The armed police have been posted there for the last fifteen days. On adivasi lands. Amrit’s been taking out demonstrations of hundreds. A stone hurled from somewhere hits a policeman. Then there is a lathi charge. Then teargas shells. A show of rifles. Very dramatic. Very very dramatic (Elkunchwar 187).

It is only Jogdand who brings the information to the people at the party how the government wants to give license and facilities to a couple of big promoters so that they can deforest the entire area and once the land is developed the prices around the area will shoot up and the land is owned by the wife of the chief minister. As Barve talks to Damyanti he makes the idea clear how there has been hypocrisy in his writing that boast of writing noble human feelings based on experience. He tells her the incident when he was going to Delhi to receive the award. It is there he realizes poverty prevailing in the country when he sees poor women and children standing in the rain. He confesses that:

I could see no relation any longer between my words and the agony of the endless suffering of these people. My words are no words. They are like an outer skin that can be discarded. Amrit knew this. That is what made me feel uncomfortable in his presence. May be Amrit had realized this when he went away (Elkunchwar 197).

The discussion at the party is clearly indicative of the several Indias that exist devoid of the knowledge of each other though they are related to the core with each other internally but they do not realize the connection nor do they wish to acquire knowledge of it. It eventually brings about the widening of the distance between the two areas. With
the growth of time it fortifies the stability of the conditions and brings about the impossibility of changing it. It is not affected only politically and economically but the impact of the differences and inequalities go down deep into the psychological, cultural, ethnic, traditional spaces.

In the novel *The White Tiger* by Arvind Adiga the protagonist Balram Halwai writes to Jiabao the difference between the two Indias: the choice. According to him in cities one can remain good if one chooses to be so but in villages there is no choice. Lack of choice to be good or remain good is denial to get knowledge or rather sustenance of ignorance. It is the perpetuation of criminal traditions through exploitative and oppressive regime. Political, social, economical and moral developments seem to be positive for such regime to continue as they are the results of it or vice versa. It becomes no matter of wonder to see democracy and village people discussing the elections “like eunuchs discussing the *Kamasutra*” (Adiga 98).

Amrit knew what he was doing would not bring a revolution but it is the way he had chosen to bring justice to the people in the region. His has been a non violent way of struggling for the rights of the tribal. But it is also true as Balram says there is no choice in villages to remain good for everyone. He wronged the many institutions and giants who held the power and were reluctant to release the hold of them on it. It certainly connects to the movement that began in the small village in West Bengal called Naxalbari. It then very notoriously developed itself making violence its main tool to affect the state regime and control. The base of the movement however was the atrocities and injustice the tribal have been facing since the time of colonization. It is also notable
to realize the situation when India dreams of becoming world power and at the same time it has certain areas of darkness where ignorance about such dreams prevails.

It is more than half century since India received freedom from British rule and larger part of the population of India cannot conceive what exactly it means to be free. The glory of freedom and the national consciousness have gradually ebbed away and large poverty ridden section of the society realized that there will be no ‘avatar’ that can bring changes in their lives. It was not only the unruly rule of the British Government that had vicious impact on Indian life. But during the shift of power from the ‘anarchical’ regional rule of the kings to the control of the landlords over the means of production, the oppressed never received any opportunity of progression. As a consequence, various means were attempted to deal with the vicious circles poverty has created. Violence was one of the most prominent of them. Of course one must never forget that it is the last weapon one has to choose realizing well the possible threat to one’s existence. Naxalbari was the first village to embark upon the violent act towards ‘freedom’.

Though there have been vast developments in the movement, reducing it to more ideological complexity, this ‘people’s war’ does not seem to lose its grounds since they are buried in their age long poor conditions and humiliation. The changing nature of economy has brought but more disheartening and challenging conditions making their lives impossible and state’s totalitarian regime poses political impossibility. In his article in *Economical and Political Weekly* in August 1972 Mohan Ram emphasized,

[W]ith the arrest of Charu Muzumdar, just as five years ago they gleefully pronounced revolution in India dead with failure of the Naxalbari up-
rising, as though Naxalbari was the beginning and end of the Indian revolution. It was neither; at best it could be vested with a certain symbolism (Ram 1471).

This transformation from non-violence to violence is an upshot of the so many contradicting and antithetical thoughts rising in his minds. The realization of helplessness and humiliation as a reward for the money brings out the feelings. On the other hand, holding on factual line of recent development in Naxal crises in November 2008 PCAPA (People’s Committee Against Police Atrocities) led mass protest against police brutality. The spokespersons of PCAPA Asit Mahato declared the outfit would no longer continue democratic protest. “After continuous torture by the joint forces, the PCAPA has decided to combat the forces” (Mittal 30). The bureaucrats sitting at capital repeat the much void statement:

However the depth of the fear imbedded in such statements provides us with the revolutionary potentials that exist in the country. Indian mindset requires breaking through the shackles of human civilization oscillates between the ‘Freedom from Fear’ and the ‘Fear of Freedom’… The contest may be physical, existential, political and social. Freedom without context is too abstract to contemplate (Mohanty 220).

In the end of the play all characters leave the party place and move to their places with certain gestures after hearing the news of murder of Amrit. The dramatist is successful in showing the typical nature of various psychologies dominant in the society especially those representing middle class which is self indulgent. It is no wonder how
certain type of people have such crude and false fantasies for the very sensitive issues in
the society. But the choice the people like Amrit make are not out of romanticism but it is
the faithful activism that believes for a better change.

It seems that the treatment Elkunchwar gives to the subject matter of revolutionary ideas of both scale smaller and larger can be divided in two ways. The revolt his characters bring about in the certain form is social and political. It could further be divided into tiny segment of social and political nature. Secondly he has strength in depicting the revolt on personal and psychological level. It is of course also true that mingling and complex nature and presence of different characteristics of personal, social, cultural, political and psychological issues in the plays does not allow to divide them into tight categories. It is however easier to realize the strong current of the predominant issue.

In Garbo, Party, Desire in the Rocks, As One Descardeth the Old Clothes..., Reflection, Autobiography, there exists the acts of revolution especially by the female characters that could be called as what Kate Millett in her book Sexual Politics called it as ‘sexual revolution’. Garbo in Garbo, Lalita in Desire in the Rocks, Aai in As One Descardeth the Old Clothes..., woman in Reflection and Vasudha in Autobiography do possess certain aura of the sexual revolution. Their major concern however seems to be acting against the patriarchal forces that have been keeping them in submissive gestures. It is important to recognize how patriarchy and construction sexuality and female identity have been effective naturalizing the artificial category of the feminine.
It has taken years for women to be recognized as human beings and they too deserve the rights of every kind being the as important part of society as men are. Women have undergone the trauma of suffering of manifold. They have been doubly suppressed being female that has to be feminine and woman who is ‘other’ in male dominated society. It takes just a moment of realization against the suppression for a revolt. Women come to realization in a specific situation and conflict the agencies through which they have been dominated and the dominance have been naturalized. It takes more time, more degree of suffering and realization of vanity and meaningless of certain cultural construction and practices. Strange enough, in the situation of such realization women tend to react in a manner which is also a result of patriarchal system. The actions of resistance also seem to be defined and maintained for or against patriarchal discourses. The possibility of erasing the inevitability of the conflict between the binary opposition appears less. It mainly happens due to the nature of cultural creations and process of significance.

In her book *Sexual Politics* Kate Millette divides the revolution in two phases Sexual Revolution first phase 1830 -1930 and the Counter Revolution 1930 -1960. She studies it in terms of politics, literature, reactionary policy and ideology. She writes;

A sexual revolution would require... an end of traditional sexual inhibition and taboos, particularly those that most threatens patriarchal monogamous marriage: homosexuality, “illegitimacy”, adolescent, pre- and extra-marital sexuality. The negative aura with which sexual activity has generally been surrounded would necessarily be eliminated, together with the double standard and prostitution. (Milllett 62).
With this Millett thinks that the event of revolution would have certain characteristics like ‘permissive single standard of sexual freedom,’ and it is ‘uncorrupted by the crass and exploitative economic bases of traditional sexual alliances’.

In *Garbo*, Garbo is murdered by the trio who represent the forces of patriarchy in society. They could be in the form of intellectual, richness and fancy. It is how the trio represents their significance being male to the female Garbo. Before Garbo is killed, it makes intelligible show of functioning of matriarchal subjugation against Garbo and she has been the victim of the double standards of sexuality as Millett calls it.

Society looks down upon the prostitutes and considers it evil relating it with characteristically bad nature of the prostitutes. Society does not recognize the complete lack of choice for the prostitutes and it is the society which does not offer any way out. The situation where patriarchal conditions already closes off the ways through which economic stability could be sought by women, becomes responsible to refrain them from resistance and attack the system. Garbo has to work as junior artist in order to earn money for her livelihood. For it she requires to be fit and look beautiful. Her pregnancy becomes threat for her career as an artist and she knows that a life as a wife to rear the child is impossible for her due to the label of prostitute. She accepts and knows it well what value she holds in society.

The trio knows her body and receives different meaning of the relationship they have developed with her. The peculiarity of their thought is that they consider her only the ‘other’ in making their opinion regarding her. Shrimant says: “Her (Garbo’s) only business in life has been jumping from bed to bed. She’s nothing but a sex-machine”
(Elkunchwar 16). Shrimant reduces her to inanimate mechanical object. She has been
denied of value being human. Though Shrimant says that she is great in bed, she remains
only a machine for him. Though he recognizes goodness in her, it has been Garbo status
being woman and a prostitute both does offer him to think that she is just a commodity to
be paid for and consumed. Intuc on the other hand philosophizes her value in his own
way. He says that the idea that woman is an enigma is not true. He considers it a kind of
literary stupidity. It is here he confesses how a woman is cheaply treated every time. She
remains an attraction until the time she is not explored (sexually). Once it happens, she
loses her importance in the mind of the male. Intuc expects:

   A woman should be able to satisfy you fully, and yet withhold a part of
   herself from you … To put it in a nutshell, Garbo never becomes common.
   Even after fulfilling the needs of all three of us, a part of her still remains
   untouched (G 18-19).

Garbo is pregnant and she tries to tell the trio about her pregnancy but every one
of them makes fun of her. In the talk she realizes more how it is impossible to think of
motherhood for her. Though it is the child of Intuc, the trio is afraid that she would plant
it on one of them. Intuc asks Shrimat:

   And why the hell did she get into this messy situation when motherhood
   is the easiest thing to avoid these days? It can’t be the first time it’s
   happened to her. Why come here and tell us about it? Do you think she’s
   going to plant this on one of us? (Elkunchwar 35)
It is this realization that brings Garbo to the terms of killing the child in her womb. It is not that she straightway decided to kill the child. She wanted to give birth to the child but she knew what worse kind of fate would trouble the fatherless child. She never intends to tell them whose child she was bearing nor wanted them to take the responsibility of the child as a father. She expects form them they should help her in this by taking the responsibility being friends of hers. It should never matter who the father of the child was. She also realizes and expresses that the minute she becomes pregnant, she also becomes cheap. She rather sarcastically mentions how they followed her like dogs. She tells them that she did not come to them to have sympathy or help; she just came there as she was feeling lonely. However she declares that;

But today I’ve seen you in your true colour. Remember one thing though I could not implicate all three of you in this if I wanted to, so don’t think you can shrug off responsibility (Elkunchwar 36).

She had been for a period of time under the influence of Intuc’s romanticism and she admits that it brought her dreams to live a happy life as a woman should deserve. She tells Intuc that it is not so easy to remain in that sheer romanticism. Her mind became so calculating with the pressure of the life that has to be lived with the help of money and for money one has to struggle when the person is a woman. She realizes though she feels tenderness for someone for certain times, her mind gives the intimations about the dangers of such development and lack of life for such relationship. She knows the hardship the attachment would follow. Though Intuc, Pansy and Shrimant attempt hard to convince her that they would be people who will take care of her child and give name to
it but she knows the impossibility in besides the damage it would bring to her livelihood as she will not be able to work anymore and would lose everything eventually.

Gabo’s becomes the revolt against the social conditions when all doors are shut for a gender and set of people who have been caught in a structure of values and relations. Garbo is to certain degree successful in bringing a kind of assertion of independence through the way she utilizes her body for personal gains. She becomes a powerful woman with the magic of her sexual gesture. She too knows that brings her authority exploitation against the society that does not allow her an easy life.

No revolt however is devoid of pain, suffering and sacrifice. It is done with much labour. The pain for Garbo is in taking decision to kill her child in her womb keeping aside all the longing for motherhood. She thought at least the director would have a pale face when he realizes that she had abortion but she finds there no one except a huge, coarse woman. Her suffering ends with her murder by Shrimant who does not wish to allow her to leave the place. She could have been a woman for him who would guarantee the world about his potency and masculinity. When she does not respond to him, he kills her. It is how she keeps on becoming the victim of almost every kind of difficulties the patriarchy and subjugation of women. It gets over with her murder only.

In *Desire in the Rocks* Lalita comes to terms with suicidal thought and gets successful in it due to certain realization that have been brought to her by understanding consisting of discovery of nature of love her brother has for her. It has been so due to the destruction of the conceptions on which she had been constructed her philosophy of life. It mainly consisted of the ideas of love that crossed the boundaries of kinship and the
thought they were doing something wrong hardly touched since Hemkant was the only savior for her after the traumatic period of time she experienced when her father Dadasaheb was alive and after the death of her father, the trustees troubled her. Lalita lived a lonely life in the huge mansion of them. She grew so dependent on her brother Hemkant that she would never bear the thought of Hemkant going way from her.

There were several patterns that made Lalita behave in suicidal way. The death of her mother, brother becoming rebellious against father leaving the home, father’s negligence towards her, father’s strict nature, her everlasting loneliness, have been the key factors that made her weak at core of her heart. She being a child could not cope up with it and developed a liking towards her brother. It was mainly in pursuit of love that she never received. She surrenders herself to Hemkant and she knows it. She says:

Don’t. Don’t you come near me. Brute. You know I’m weak. And so full of yearning. Hem, even if you don’t come to me, I will. I’ll follow you wherever you go. Like a shadow. Hem. How am I? (Elkunchwar 89)

Though there has been the moment when she feels that she has been getting the love she longs for. When Hemkant tells her that she is beautiful, she says him to say that again she “can give him anything to hear this over and over again”. (Elkunchwar 91). Intensity has been major characteristics of her passion for Hemkant. Hemkant takes her to old mansion in a village full of rocks so that he can carve statues there. He is so engrossed in his work that he spends more time in that work. On the other hand, Lalita is afraid of darkness and loneliness but becomes ready to live with Hemkant there since she cannot live without him. It is only with the realization that Hemkant has messed up the
idea of love with the idea of art and its permanence. Hemkant does know that Lalita is too weak to dare to think independently and realize that he is leaving no space for her to exist independently. Lalita expresses her conditions truly. She says:

I am your slave. Oh Lord, my lord. When you descend from there, I will spread my hair under you feet. Trample over me. The seal of your authority has been stamped on every drop of my blood. My body is yours, my heart is yours, my will is yours. I am nothing but a pile of dried leaves without you; a mere sapless plant trailing on the ground. One glance from your eyes and I sprout tender green leaves. You blow life into my body with just your voice, your glance, your touch (Elkunchwar 95-6).

Lalita eventually realizes that Hemkant values his work more than her love and her pregnancy. She begs to him to be with him because she needs him at that time but Hemkant does not realize the importance of it. She tells Hemkant how there is a void in the idea of art he has. She tells him that he does not even understand the idea of creation and he cannot be a creator. It is because she thinks that creation is a very easy thing and one has to realize it being human. For her Hemkant is no human. She loses her child and realizes the curse that had been effective in the mansion. She revolts against him. It has indeed been against the attitude that considers humanity lesser than anything else. Though it is not a revolt that aims at challenging a patriarchal or masculine world that does activate its holds for sustenance of its power. It is the revolt of an innocent and devoted mind against the ruthlessness and numbness of human mind lacking human feeling. The realization that Hemkant does not love her as she imagined him doing so makes her lose faith over her love for him. He was the only man for whom she fought
against the whole world. The strength she received for it was from the idea that the love
they were in had been pure and she trusted him a true lover and artist. When she comes to
know that he has given the child to the beggar to bury, her faith gets destructed
completely. It is then she grows repulsive. The idea that she has sinned becomes
dominant in her. She says:

It’s like a patch of leukoderma that has spread all 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).

Lalita goes in search of salvation from the sin. She becomes an independent
person after experiencing the great pain. She wanders the places so that she could get rid
of the feelings of sin. She brings pains to her body. She expects her body to fall but it
does not happen. She says:

I am inflicting this on myself. I have sinned. Mustn’t I be judged? I am
going to burn myself. In his fire of retribution, Hem. I want to be pure
again. Hem, I have laid this body under so many bodies. As retribution.
Even them my heart won’t stop breaking. Why doesn’t it stop? Hem, hem,
the retribution for sin is to remain in sin forever. To continue sin
(Elunchwar 124).

Hemkant was responsible in bringing about the destruction of Lalita and himself.
Lalita’s only fault was that she loved him and trusted love for love’s sake. Hemknat
observed only objective reality and could never learn and reach the pure light of truth. He
brought the layers of feeling on the outer parts of the stones but he could never reach the reality of feeling and human desire. He could not understand the truth in the centre of reality. Lalita went through the ordeals of the reality and pain. The major reasons for her transformation from Lalita who was fearful and needful of protection, to the person who was fearless, self negating and emotionally neutral were the destruction of the emotional and ideal world where Hemkant was a considerate human being. The realization of Hemkant’s true nature instigates Lalita to become repulsive and lose her faith, child, and life including that of Hemkant.
Works Cited


