CHAPTER-III

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The treatment of history in Pre-Independence phase comprises very short number of plays. As Indian English drama was in its infancy in the phase so the number of historical plays written in this period is very limited. The playwrights like D.N. Wadia and Mrinalini Sarabhai handled history as a theme for their plays. Pre-Independence phase marks for a little imitation of Shakespearean Historical plays. Though one may find imitation in the phase, Indian cultural heritage and tradition has always been integral part of this phase.

D.N. WADIA: *The Indian Heroine* is a play written by D. N. Wadia. It is a collection of some incidents of the Sepoy Revolt of 1857. As it is based on historical event, the play has been considered as a historical play. Focusing light on that particular event and citing its importance is the main idea of the historical play. The very purpose of such plays is not merely to entertain but strengthen and freshen the memories of the past.

Central theme of the play is obviously 'history'. As it is mentioned earlier, the playwright has taken an event from the past i.e. Sepoy Revolt of 1857. Every moment of the past which has contributed in getting freedom has its own importance. The Playwright has tried successfully in giving justice to the theme of history. In the very beginning of the play i.e. in scene I, Stanley gives information about the Sepoy’s rebel at Meerut. It means at the beginning of the play, the playwright has created historical atmosphere. Through the characters of Yunadar, Allyghur, Yusaf readers get the idea of the situation. Their rebellious behaviour shows the seriousness of the situation.
Yunadar, who is the father of Omelia, tries to persuade his daughter that she is repeating the same mistake which once his sister has committed. There are two groups, one is of soldiers and another is of Sepoys. Conflict is between Britishers and Indians. Stanley one of the soldiers is intensely in love with Omelia. When Yunadar found it, it is unbearable to him to accept it. Yunadar as a typical father does his unfruitful attempt to persuade his daughter not to love Stanley. He calls them that they are English curse. He feels that they are Christians and trying to convert his daughter.

Omelia loves Stanley to such an extent that she disobeys her father. She is ready to do anything for the sake of Stanley, her love. Yunadar thinks that soldiers like Stanley are not serious in love. They want to convert all people by using various tricks. They are grabbing the liberty of our kings.

Theme of history develops when Yunadar gives information regarding his plan. He feels that if their adverse fate does not fight against their plans then within a week they can win Delhi. The Playwright has added beauty to the play by introducing the character of Nana Saheb, the king of Bithoor who is a great politician. The way he talks to Omelia shows he is a tricky and cunning person. When Allyghur presents Omelia in front of him, he praises her daring and calls her as a wild bird.

Omelia is too bold to make dispute with the king Nana. As she blindly loves Stanley, she is totally in favour of England. She tells Nana that sons of the Britain will rule the land of India. Nana feels that they have made him so; they have plundered all the things he has inherited from Bajee Rao. They have usurped the lovely throne of Poona. It is beyond his imagination that a woman from the land of India is supporting other land’s people. The other theme which goes simultaneously is love. Omelia, a protagonist of the play has shown in love with Stanley, a British Soldier. She loves him with utmost care. Though Stanley is from other land, she believes him.
In the very beginning of the play, Omelia is discovered on a terrace, waiting for Stanley. She has intense passion and love for him in her mind. She firmly appreciates Stanley’s generosity and trueness. When she hears the vessel, she fails to express her joy and amusement. Presence of Stanley helps her to chase away her fears and groundless doubts. Stanley also has the same feelings towards Omelia.

Omelia is shown so sacred and pious. So many people tried to seduce her but she takes utmost care to save her virginity. Her morality is appreciative. The character of Omelia comes in front of the audience through asides. Omelia is bold to fight with sepoys. She is ready to do anything for the sake of her love. Omelia is ready to fight with the people from her own land. It seems awkward that being an Indian maid she doesn’t have patriotic feelings towards India. One more character who loves Stanley is Flora. She is a cousin of Stanley. Though Flora loves Stanley, he is in love with Omelia. Alfred loves Flora; he feels that Stanley is cheating Flora. Stanley convinced him that he is faithful to Omelia. At the end of the play Flora dies in grief of his father’s death. The Playwright has used very suitable language to the historical play. Readers meet life-like characters only because of language. Readers get bold impression of Omelia. Figurative language used by playwright enhances the beauty of the play. The character of Omelia is portrayed diligently by the playwright. Though she is against Indian people, her dialogues and bold statements make her memorable in audience’s mind.

The Play opens with the main character, Omelia talking to herself about her love, Stanley. Though the title of the play gives us enough hint that this play is historical, Wadia has made it much romantic. The striking feature reader will find in this play is the language of the play. In the very opening of the play Omelia says: “My thoughts, my hopes, my wishes he has raised.” (P.2). Wadia’s language is rhythmic
and he makes ample use of verse in the play. Opening scene of the play reminds reader Shakespeare's Balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Opening scene itself indicates the forthcoming tempest. Yunadar and Omelia are at quarrel and have different outlooks about Britishers. Omelia's affection towards British people is certainly not because of her British lover but it lies in family relations with them such as Melville who tended her with all parents care and his daughter Flora has regarded her with sisterly affection. Yunadar talks about dreadful storm which shortly will sweep over tyrant enemies. He says, "Who for a century have held us slaves?" (P.8). Yunadar's long speech is nothing but a list of the reasons for the great revolt of 1857 in which he states that, "the hateful Feringee wants to convert us all by artful means! Infanticide and suttee he puts down, to wound the feelings of our Brahmin brethren, whose widows too may marry if they choose in spite of usage and religious lore. And as to us, our thrones he has despoiled, erased all traces of the Moslem power, deprived our kings e'en of their liberty and would pollute our lips with fat of swine!" (P.8). By listing all the evils in them he prophesied the storm of revolt. He is quite sure about the same as he says, "whole India's roused against the common foe, and will not rest till a'l of them are drowned." (P.9).

Omelia by her father's extreme hate for English people disinherits herself and discards her father's name. She is always shown an advocate of British in the play. Wadia in this play makes very striking and equally difficult task by making father and daughter on the contrary side. Omelia's views are something we call in favour of British Raj and Yunadar's is that of against the same. First scene of the play starts with Omelia's affectionate waiting for Stanley. Stanley joyfully meets her and he has a fear in his mind that Sepoys in Meerut have raised their voice and arm against British Government. Omelia's father Yunadar is one of the rebellious so Omelia
worries about him. But when Yunadar asks her to leave the place as well as her old friends, she refuses because her love for Stanley does not permit her to go anywhere with her father. Here again we have evidence of influence of Shakespearean play especially *Romeo and Juliet*. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Montague and Capulet are the families which are archenemies and love happens among their inheritors. Here in this play colonizer and colonized are Montague and Capulet. Omelia, a fair lady stands for Juliet and Stanley is a Romeo in this play. Yunadar explains the reasons for the common hate for Britishers. First scene has a history as merely a background and further it serves as the main concern of the play.

Yunadar and Allyghur meet in the ruins of mosque. Allyghur brings with him armed soldiers. Their planning of revolt and the discovery of Omelia’s boyfriend is discussed in scene II. Wadia simultaneously focuses on two important aspects. He digs into past and gives it a well received theme, Love. Here Yunadar reminds of his sister how Stanley’s uncle defiled her. Yunadar is in utter anger when he realises that Stanley is his daughter’s lover. They plan to destroy all age and sex of British Raj. Yunadar goes to Melville’s place and tries to kill him but his daughter, Flora beg for her parent’s life. When Yunadar tries to kill Flora, Omelia comes and prevents him from doing so. Yunadar tries to force Omelia away but with a strong effort she releases herself. Stanley comes to help Omelia, but he is not aware that Yunadar is her father and when he is about to stab Yunadar, Omelia prevents him from doing so by telling that he is her luckless father. Yunadar leaves that place with utter feeling of revenge in his mind. Omelia is shown in a crisis of duty and love. “To duty must I yield all hopes of love?” (P.15). On one hand she loves Stanley, her lover and on the other hand she loves motherland and her father i.e. family. “The world shall see that in defence of truth. A timorous girl can prove a heroine!” (P.15). This scene reminds
us of Elizabethan, especially Shakespearean heroine. Shakespearean heroines are lifelike and active for example in his *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia helps out Antonio from Shylock. The same happens in this play. Omelia decides to help Stanley from her confusion as she says, “Even should my heart in the sad effort burst, to duty must I yield all hopes of love.” (P.15).

Finally, Omelia manages to get out of confusion and decides to help Stanley and says, “The world shall see that in defence of truth. A timorous girl can prove a heroine.” (P.15). Omelia is in a sad mood and she urges for happy life. Out of grief she says, “How many suns will take their annual round, ere fate may bring me to your arms again?” (P.15). On a rock bridge, Allyghur comes and forces her to cave with him, she manages to escape from the scene and in their struggle Allyghur loses his balance and slips. Then he clings to Rock with his hands. Omelia locks gate and leaves saying, “Thus perish all that virtue’s laws defy and in misdeeds with fiends of darkness vie!” It means those who challenge the law of virtue and truth come to an end and he is to compete to devil.

Stanley’s speech is a romantic monologue in which he praises Omelia and compares himself with Cupid and thinks that he is very lucky to have beloved like Omelia. This scene reminds us Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. In Shakespeare’s play Portia disguised as Balthazar, a lawyer and saves Antonio in Act IV – scene I. Wadia’s Omelia is a brave as Portia and she too in this scene disguised as a Muslim lad and “armed with a sword, dagger and pistol” (P.17). So it can be said that Wadia has great influence of Shakespeare while composing this play. Even further, we can say that the emergence of Indian English historical drama had a Shakespearean model of historical drama in its existence. Wadia’s use of language too is poetic as we found in Shakespeare’s plays.
When Stanley asks Omelia where she had been for so long, she replies, “A hermit’s cave affords me grateful harbor. These weeds disguise me from my angry parent” (P.8). Here it seems that she is in real sense ‘the Indian Heroine’. In Act II, scene I, it seems that Omelia is only heroic person in the play she alone stands and supports herself and Stanley. At the end Stanley says to soldiers when he nears about the Meerut camp, “It is in now control. March on, March. Duty must conquer love.” (P.18). Though he is deeply in love, he prefers a duty like an English soldier.

Stanley in praise of India says, “India! Land of lovely and the grand, supremely blest by nature and by art, Land of exuberant trees and luscious fruit; Elysian flowers and brilliant plumaged birds; of gorgeous vistas, fair and sunny skies; Majestic streams and foaming cataracts; of princely palaces and stately shrines” (P.18-19) and further he repents over the present state of India. Then Flora enters and tells him that she loves him. Stanley feels pity for her and Omelia enters. Omelia embraces Flora like a loving sister and suddenly leaves. Omelia in disguise spies on Yunadar’s moves and by accident she drops her pistol. Allyghur fires towards Omelia and she falls slightly wounded, but rises immediately and manages to escape.

Melville and Flora are under the roof of fear. Melville by listening fire alarms shouts and shrinks, “When once the timid Indian is aroused, Woe to the wretch has provoked his hate. Oh, ‘tis the doing of our shallow youngsters, whose headstrong folly, senseless of the risk. Takes every means to annoy the harmless native—Harmless till injury excites his rage, and heaping wrong on wrong destroys all patience. Now every European must atone for the vile conduct of a thoughtless few!”(P.22). Melville blames young English soldiers for the present disastrous moment. Abdoo, Melville’s servant informs him that the troop of rebels led by Yunadar is destroying all English men and their property. He further tells that a young

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lad with Stanley is helping those helpless people to fort. Melville leaves his all property to Abdoo and leaves to back door.

Abdoo is killed by Yunadar and Allyghur. They attacked on Melville and Flora but suddenly Omelia, Stanley and soldiers come to save all them. Yunadar recognizes his daughter but she was in mood of avenging. Flora and Melville manage to escape from the place. Omelia takes them to safer place. Melville says to Omelia, “Thou art perfection’s self, high minded child” (P.24). Native officer in Nana Saheb’s court informs Nana Saheb that a youth is seized by soldiers on strong suspicion and brought from Delhi. Nana Saheb asks that youth’s name and place. That youth is indeed Omelia in disguise as youth. She strongly opposes Nana Saheb’s policy and feels that Indian people should not fight against English people. Nana Saheb tells his men to hang that arrogant boy, finally Omelia reveals her identity. When Nana Saheb confirms holding her hand that she is a woman, he appreciates her beauty and orders his people to bedeck her.

Captain Standford and his men in powder magazine in Delhi set fire to magazine and commit suicide before Yunadar and Sepoys kill them. Before suicide they sing, “Rule Britannia” (P.26). Omelia in Nana Saheb’s zenana consoles her mate Nazimi. Nazimi is gentle, kind and amiable girl but she is there because of Zara Singh, a son of Mars. Nazimi tells her sad story of life to Omelia and later encourages Nazimi to get out of that place by climbing walls of Mansion. Nazimi is timid girl, she opposes Omelia’s thought of daring to escape. Wadia’s Omelia is brave enough to challenge a great Nana Saheb too. Omelia is sure that “Heaven will bless our efforts with success.” (P. 28).

Yusaf praises Omelia’s beauty and reveals to audience his love for Omelia. His love is passionate and from childhood he loves her but never expressed his love to
her. Yusaf is one of the rebels and Yunadar’s comrade. When he was talking to himself Omelia appears and thinks of her own sorrowful and miserable life. She is in Chaos. Her father is engaged in foul rebellion and her lover is away from her. Her condition is like a split self, she says, “For what has now the Indian maid to live?”(P.30). She recalls the time she spent with Stanley. Suddenly Yusaf comes out of tree and tells that Stanley is wrong person she is in love with and tells her that he loves her. Omelia cursed and threatens him for his manner-less behaviour. Yusaf calls his fellow Sepoy and captures her. Meanwhile she kills one of the sepoys.

Omelia is in Yusaf’s possession, he imprisons her in a cavern. She is unconscious at the opening of the scene; she comes out of her unconscious state. Juballah, Yusaf’s mother assists and takes care of her. When Omelia becomes conscious, Juballah encourages her. When Omelia was in grief and thinks that she may not be able to meet her beloved, Stanley, Yusaf interrupts them and Omelia again becomes unconscious. Juballah plans to rescue Omelia from her own Son’s clutches. Omelia is pleased to hear Juballah’s plan. Omelia asks Juballah to accompany her but Juballah refuses her offer and tells her that she is ready to all the forthcoming thunder.

When second time Omelia comes into conscious state, Yusaf asks her to marry him for he is a wealthy man but Omelia curses him and tells her firm decision to marry Stanley. Juballah enters when Yusaf exits and tells Omelia a trick to poison all Sepoy to unconscious state the night.

Juballah poisons all the sepoys and they fall on ground unconscious and Omelia manages to escape from the place with her help. Omelia is in the Barracks of English soldiers in Lucknow. She meets Stanley there and they are pleased to see each other. Both of them thank to the spirit of heaven for their meeting. Direct fight between Sepoy and Soldiers takes place in which Alamed tries to kill Stanley but he is
struck down by Omelia. Alamed fires at Omelia and she sinks insensible into Stanley’s arms. Alamed then attacks Stanley, but is cut down by him. When Stanley is in fear for Omelia, Allyghur comes and blows down Stanley and declares that royal Nana Saheb for her capture has proclaimed reward and he seizes Omelia to Nana Saheb. An English lady comes with child in her arms and her husband with her for mercy but Nana kills that English officer and orders his men to take away an English lady and kill her. At that time Allyghur comes and tells Nana Saheb that he has brought Omelia for him from Lucknow. Nana Saheb then asks why she is on ‘their’ side being an Indian. She tells that though she is an Indian, she is on the side of truth. She then dares to curse and oppose Nana’s suit and points a pistol at him. Allyghur comes and Omelia fires a shot at him. Watching Allyghur in blood Nana Saheb orders his servants to kill her.

Nana Saheb changes his mind to give her sentence of death. Again he asks her whether she has changed her mind, she calmly replies, “To die is wiser than to live in shame” (P.42). At the time of her execution, there comes a sealed packet. Nana reads it and orders his men to bring her. Suddenly, Stanley and his soldiers enter and fight against sepoys, Omelia too takes an active part in fight. Nana and his followers escape, pursued by soldiers.

Flora is in unconscious state and Alfred Meadows assists and takes care of her. Melville is already killed. Flora wakes up from her unconsciousness and thinks that Stanley is there and says, “Stanley, dear Stanley, you do love me then? You love the lonely poor, bereaved Flora” (P.43). When she comes to know that he is not Stanley, she faints again when she hears her cousin who madly loves her. Alfred still keeps hope of possessing her because he knows that Stanley loves Omelia.
When Alfred comes she expresses her grief and says, "It was even so my dear loved father died. And cruel Stanley spurned my fervid love. The roses of this life are full of thorns; there is no lasting happiness below" (P.45). She advances towards well and is about to throw herself into it, when Alfred interposes. Despite Alfred saves her from suicide she faints again. Attack is made by the rebels. A hand to hand combat ensues. The rebels fly in all directions, pursued by Stanley, Alfred and others. Omelia remains behind and rushes into Flora’s arms that seem to have recovered her senses. An Omelia and Flora talk about the death of Melville and Omelia encourages Flora from her grief.

Alfred expresses his anger for Stanley which is heard by Stanley. Further Alfred, blames and charges Stanley of flirting with both Flora and Omelia, and challenges him for combat. Stanley denies his charges and tries to calm and befriend him but he is firm and angry. They fight, Flora rushes frantically in between them receiving the sword of Alfred in her side as he is about to strike Stanley. She falls bleeding to the earth. Flora says to Alfred and Stanley, “Alfred, and Edward, grieve not, I beseech you – Forget all that has happened. Oh now be friends!” (P.48) and she dies. Then Alfred stabs himself in repentance and dies.

Thus, Wadia’s play is a beginning to Indian English historical drama. Though we found great degree of Shakespearean influence but it is true that at the beginning such influence can not be denied. His treatment of history is very different from that of other Indian dramatists. He uses history as the background of his play. He very skillfully employs historical characters like Nana Saheb in the play and gives some remarkable reasons of the great Indian revolt. His play is very contemporary in time as it is written twenty years later to the incident. One can say that as a first Indian English historical drama The Indian Heroine marks the grand opening.
Aiyangar V.V. Srinivasa: V.V. Srinivasa Aiyangar has written a playlet, *At any Cost* (1921) which consists of only one scene about good treatment given by Akbar, the Mughal Emperor, to the wife and the sister of Rana Uday Singh after the siege of Chittor. Unable to face Akbar's forces, the cowardly Rana flees to the forest. Then his queen Veera Bai and his sister Padmini go in disguise to Akbar's tent in order to assassinate him. Akbar's suspicion is corroborated by the timely information given by one of his soldiers. Then he makes the two women disclose their identity by cleverly pronouncing a death-sentence on the Rajput captain Pratap Singh, caught in his espionage activities. The women demand a death sentence for themselves, but the Emperor admires their bravery and gives them back their kingdom.

Even in this simple dramatization of a small episode, the playwright bestows some thought on characterization. While Akbar's ever-cautious nature and nobility are well realized, the two women show their courage and presence of mind, but their scheming is most uncharacteristic of the bold and straightforward behavior of the Rajputs. Further, it looks rather ridiculous that the women with melodious feminine voices go disguise as men-singers to the enemy camp. However, the action which is brisk throughout, contributes to the stage ability of the piece. The play picks up only a single incident from history and written in a one act it can not be categorized in the genre of historical drama. Though Aiyangar's attempt of handling history is quite well he fails to develop the historical incident in dramatic form. One should keep in mind that this is the beginning of Indian historical drama so it lacks certain parameters of
the genre. The playwright is successful in employing the new model besides the existing Shakespearean model of historical play.

**ANNAYA:** Annaya's three-act play, *The Bride of God* (1931) illustrates an experiment in the direction to highlight historical theme from the history of the Mughal period. It is a dramatisation of the episode of the killing Dara by his brother Aurangzeb for the sake of throne and of the escape of his daughter Dilara from the clutches of the tyrant.

In order to ensure proper development of the plot, the playwright rightly introduces sequences like the search for Dara by Aurangzeb's men who threaten the lives of villagers at sword-point and the capturing of both father and daughter who had been given shelter in the ashram of the saint Sarmad. Further, in this play, the characterisation is adequate: the heroine Dilara the innocent bride of God who knows no other love except that towards her father; Ziab-un-nisa who, with a true sisterly heart, risks her life for the sake of Dilara; Dara, the father of Dilara who, unlike his most cruel brother Aurangzeb, is so large-hearted as to think that various religions are all petals of the one flower divine. Sarmad, a true saint highly respected by all for his compassion for the suffering; the good and sympathetic Sulaiman, the foster-brother of Dara; and Nasir Khan, whose love for Dilara is so selfless that he shows his readiness to help her without any self-interest.

Whether it is the search for Dara and Dilara, or the trial of the former, or the trial of the former, or the escape of the latter, the theme is handled in such a way that the play has suspense and stirring action throughout. Thus, excepting a few lengthy
speeches and the scene where Dara, bound hand and foot, is taken in a procession, the play can be a success on the stage.

Annaya is very particular in choosing the historical material for his three act play. His play is quite well constructed in dramatic form. He has focused on unexplored aspect of history in the play. Generally the place of women in history is kept ignorant but playwright very skillfully focuses on the particles of the history which historians kept aside considering them unimportant. Treatment given to history in the play is quite satisfactory.

MRINALINI SARABHAI: Mrinalini Sarabhai's two act play with prologue and epilogue is well attempt at handling historical theme. Her play is based on Freedom struggle and Quit India Movement, taking it as background Sarabhai in this play explores its aftermath. Prologue of the play is set in the cemetery. Police are guarding cemetery and ghostly figures appear on the stage. Through four voices in prologue she tells the state of a common Man, Child, Worker and Woman. How the whole society is affected and suffered at Soldier's hand is reflected in the prologue. First voice says, "Look my arms are stained" (P.8) Second voice of Child says, "I am but a child fourteen, they had just pronounced me woman. Look they tore my head apart" (P.8). Third voice of Worker says, "I called big meeting in the factory yard. They shot me here between eyes" (P.8). These voices stand for those who are dead and it indicates that how all the society is moved by cruel British officer's strategy. They killed harmless women and children too.

Sarabhai's play is a great source of symbols and images. She develops the main concern of the play that is decolonization process in India during the time of British Raj. The Character of Judge is symbolic representation of Law and Justice.
Judge himself proclaims that he is numb and blind. It is worthy to quote his own words he says, “My soul is numb, and my eyes are blind ... Do you imagine that our hands are uncontrolled our wish to freely act? Dispenser’s just? No! Scars are deep but we the marionettes trained and whipped and painted white” (P.13). It clearly indicates that the judge is a person who is whipped and trained to serve on behalf of British Raj. Law is merely puppet in the hands of British government. In the very opening scene, the scenario of colonial India is made clear that the whole power is in British people’s hand. Even Sarabhai is keen in observing the reality and condition during the freedom movement, as play written in 1945 when the decolonization process was at peak in India. Policemen, another servant of British government charges girls of being exposed the minds of Indians with words of fear. Sarabhai, through the characters such as the first girl, second girl ... and so on represents that how women were actively participated in freedom struggle. Women presented in Captive soil are bravely fighting queens. Second girl says, “Dear Judge resigns and let your example. Enlighten all. Lead the people. Led Greed and Rot lose all potency. Make uncivilized advancement feeble” (P.12). She urges to judge to resign and serve an example for the people. After being educated in society he must lead his own people. Another girl says, “Instrument of lawless. O Judge is this what education foresaw using prestige, in Mockery of law?” (P.12). These women dare to convince the judge in the court. She further says that “For judges died when Justice shut her face” (P.13). Sarabhai through these girl characters presents the authorities misuse of power, arresting the innocent and the murder of truth. She further says, “The side you represent is weak with evil, is in decline” (P.13). Judge and policemen are on the side of colonizers. Colonized people’s oppression and their cry and intense feeling for freedom are skillfully presented by Sarabhai in this play. Judge in his speech says, “I
am the oppressor, you oppressed” (P.14). It is rightly pointed in this play that the stand is not directly between English government or colonizer and colonized or Native people. The educational system of Macaulay aims to produce an intellectual, Indian by blood and English by Brain. Educational system of Macaulay has produced so many educated person but it changed them: into white as Judge himself says, “We the marionette trained and whipped and painted white.” (P.13). Thus, in the play the major focus of Mrinalini Sarabhai is on women’s contribution to freedom struggle movement and decolonization process.

Second scene of first act throws a light on the plight of policemen who are Indian by blood but serving for British government. It can be shown with the dialogue, first policeman says, “They hate us because we victimize the innocent. Blood we shed with truncheons all activity; forewarned officious industry. To save from revolution and eternal perdition our masers.” (P.15). All the policemen say that they are doing everything is against their will. They are uneasy to kill their own brothers, sisters and children. What they think is that they are performing their duty. Being policemen they are not much strong because honesty lies in their deep heart. They are helpless in “Killing the indigent, to protect the opulent” (P.16). The character of sixth policeman even provides an answer why they are serving their masters though such a humiliation is there. He says that it is the condition which makes him to serve for colonizer and circumstances has made him to serve opponents. He has no father and mother, being a parentless child so many responsibilities were on his shoulder. Then he was searching for a job. Here Sarabhai makes use of an imagery and symbol. He says that he got a job in mine. Sarabhai is keen in choosing the symbols and images. The reason behind it might be the colonial domination over India. Writers and artists had not enough freedom to express their thoughts in colonial
India that is why Sarabhai symbolically represents the treacherous policy of governing in symbolic way. Policeman says, “A mere ten hours a dirt and squalor of hands and faces that never seem to be clean, of bending down like a convict in a solitary cell, of going down deeper and deeper in a cage that creaks with age, of the continual prayer, ‘O God will I ever see the sunlight again?’ (P.17). Mine is a symbol of colonized India with all her dirt and unrest because of British government and all the miners are symbol of government servants who in their inner heart pray for freedom. Sunlight stand for freedom as the freedom was the major concern of that particular period. Poverty makes him to accept the job whatever given to him. Problem of poverty and hunger was the major issue worth consider during the time of colonial India. There were so many people who gave preference to fight for him rather than fight for the Nation. Sixth policeman says, “You blame us. Why us? Why not the Boss?” He has pockets filled with gold, yet asks for more” (P.18).

In scene III of act I, Boss is a symbol for colonial authority as in his speech he says, “My name is Authority! Yes Authority of the country” (P.19). This scene presents the view of colonial power about the colonization. He says that he is here because he “would be free – free to be famous, to choose his own career” (P.19-20). He further says, “All of you are my puppets” (P.20). Sarabhai seems to be mere objective in projecting the view of colonial power. In History of modern India, colonial power played very vital role in developing country’s economic and Industrial condition. On that ground British Raj was not a nightmare but a pleasant dream to India. The development of plot is very coherent and apt in this play.

Scene IV of act I throw light on the chaotic atmosphere in the Supreme Council of State. All the members of council are very much confused because there are so many problems in the state and they are unable to solve those problems. As
everyone is aware of Mahatma Gandhi’s Non-cooperation movement made British administrators mere pawn in the process of governance. Whole India roused to participate in non-cooperation. All rules were broken and laws refused. Sarabhai, in the play, very skillfully interweave history of modern India without giving direct reference to movements and events during the period. British administrators of their own government were helpless because of the Gandhiji’s strategy. At the end of scene, President of the Council proclaims that it is the time to think seriously over all native rebels because twenty percent of population of their own can be destroyed in this country. So its time to become “our national needs and then if there be room enough, let us be champions of liberty” (P.24).

Act I is named as ‘The Outside’ it means that the whole scenario presented in Act I is social and the second Act which is named as ‘The Inside’ presents the scenario of domestic life of freedom fighters and how people of all ages, class, caste and gender participated in freedom struggle and suffered at the hands of colonial power.

Sarabhai again in the second Act gives emphasis on the women’s contribution to Indian freedom struggle movement. Women depicted in this play are very bold. They do not have a conventional femininity in them but their masculine self is explored in this play. It clearly indicates that women’s empowerment in India is not a matter after Independence but before independence women were liberal and bravely fought against colonial power. There are so many examples from the first Indian struggle for freedom like Rani Laxmibai, Sarojini Naidu, Vijayalaxmi Pandit and several others these are only few names that are carved on the pages of Indian History but there are so many whose name was ‘writ on the sand’. Those unknown brave queens are imprisoned and Sarabhai herself being a woman exposes their notable
contribution. Women in jail are fearless and repent-less they have firm faith in fighting for Nation.

Scene II of Act II shows how newly wedded couple is engaged in the action and discussion of freedom struggle. Sarabhai names this couple as merely ‘He’ and ‘She’ it symbolizes the masculinity and femininity. Further masculinity is a violent and femininity prefers peaceful things. He says, “Your visions are the same as mine, but the ways are different. You talk of beauty, I of blood. How can this country be liberated from these conquerors except by red blood, shed by a million patriots?” (P.31-32). Here two streams of Indian freedom struggle are mentioned symbolically. Indian National Freedom Struggle movement has many streams. Some people prefer violent path such as Bhagat Singh and his followers, Lokmanya Tilak, Savarkar, Agarkar and many more. They are rebels. He says, “Hearts of pity for a race that has yet to learn the meaning of freedom. As they now give every effort to the attainment of war, so shall we give our lives for the attainment of peace” (P.32). It seems that the process of decolonization in India is like the situation described by Frantz Fanon about the National liberation. Fanon says that freedom can only be achieved through the means of violence. Even this play reflects the peaceful way of decolonization as advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, his truth force, non-violence and non-cooperation movements. Sarabhai rightly points out both the streams in Indian National Freedom Struggle. The Playwright focuses on the domestic scene in second act.

Typical village women are talking about the fighting but they are unable to understand why it is one-sided fighting. One of women says, “I do not understand this fighting, when just one side does all the shooting, and men go smiling to their death” (P.37). Village women being minority in the society are always kept away from both literature and history. Guha and Gayatri Spivak have written so many things about it
in modern criticism. Sarabhai has taken cognizance of those oppressed women. Even in the history focus is always on the kings and knights but Sarabhai skillfully succeeds in portraying village women’s contribution in Indian freedom struggle. Though men took active part in freedom struggle, history never focused on their family members. Women’s contribution cannot be denied because when their husbands or sons were absent in home, how they managed to run their house. Women at such condition were supposed to bear their children and educate them and all other domestic matters. Village people during the decolonization period help one another and supported all freedom fighters in feeding and providing shelter to them. Their faith was “For it is not and you or me, nor perhaps this generation that will be spared the torture of slavery, but a new country to come, and we will be but vague memories to the future. But freedom will be real, and that freedom will be our immortality – not our bodies that even now are valueless in their bondage”(P.39-40). Anti-colonial stance in the history of modern India was at the peak when Sarabhai composed this play. All the whirl wind of anti-colonial movement is ubiquitous in this play.

One of the villagers tells what happened in public meeting. When a boy was addressing audience, policemen came and beat them all and even “Their batons fell, they did not spare man, woman or child. They slashed them till they lay, in rivulets of blood, and like savages they beat them even as they swooned” (P.40). This picture was very common during the time of National Freedom Movement. Boy is not repenting his deed because he and thousands like him fight for their country. He says, “All we asked for was that our country should rightly be our own!”(P.41). Husband and wife discuss about the future, not of their own but of country. “Can there not be any plan, any program for the future?”(P.42). Sarabhai seems to concentrate on the issue of anti-colonial stance in India during the British Raj. Her observation of the
freedom movement is studious and her presentation of contemporary social scenario is outstanding and admirable. Though Indian English Historical Drama was in its infancy at that time, Sarabhai’s attempt proves to be an utter success on that way. She is very particular especially in handling dramatic form, characterization and language of the play. She has focused not only on freedom movement but she had ability to think of the coming future. After the play published in 1945, India gains her Independence in 1947.

The Boy in the scene further states that, rousing awareness among our people is the major task they need to complete. He is also against the violent mean of decolonization. It seems that the Gandhian philosophy and ways of fighting by non-violent means had a great influence in that period. As Gandhiji said somewhere that, if we get freedom by violent mean then the same violence might continue after Independence, which could be disastrous for the future of India. Next dialogue of the worth quoting here as it justifies the way of non-violent struggle he says, “Till all of us are dead, perhaps, and children grow up and fight again. It will be endless till freedom comes, and these men will be despised on earth, for they shoot on the unarmed, and kill the children. And a great curse will fall on their land, and they too will be slaves, not of any other power, but to themselves” (P.43). This is how Gandhiji’s strategy of Truth Force, Non-violence, and Non-cooperation is justified. Sarabhai being choreographer and a celebrated dancer was social worker and social reformer. Even in her journalistic writing she has focused on the Gandhian philosophy. She was one of the followers of Gandhiji while writing a play in that period she was well aware of the thing that “There is a price for freedom, and no man can escape it”(P.44). The Boy further says, “And the more we fight, the more we suffer, but nearer shall we be to our freedom. The barriers of creed will be knocked
down, the walls of racialism destroyed, the cardboard frontiers of superiority smashed! And the people of the future will honour us who gave them their freedom and the right to inherit the earth” (P.44).

Thus, at the end of the play, Sarabhai dreams of coming bright future in the history of modern India. Epilogue of the play is hair rising because the freedom movement depicted by Sarabhai is at its peak. She has shown in the epilogue that next generation takes the charge in their hands. The never ending process of fighting for freedom marks the end of play. While treating very contemporary history of India, Sarabhai gives justice both to history and dramatic form. Her language in the play is a best example of language of historical drama. In the characterization she uses a new technique by creating abstract characters. By such characterization she generalizes the feeling and thoughts of all Indian citizens. Her is the best example in creating historical drama.