CHAPTER IV

The Development of Hindi Drama
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The Indian tradition of the Origin of the Drama

The Indian tradition, preserved in Bharat Muni's Natyasastra, the oldest of the texts of the theory of drama, claims for the drama a divine origin, and a close connection with the sacred Vedas themselves.¹

Origin and forms of folk drama

The branch of Drama in Hindi literature has been comparatively modern. Long before the literary Hindi plays came into existence, the folk dramas in regional languages were enacted. These were Jatra and Kirtaniya dramas of Bengali, Rāś, Nautanki, Swang, Bhand in Khadi Boli, Ras, Jumar, Dolamaru in Rajasthani,² Laditha and Tamasha in Maharastri etc. In all these forms songs were the most important feature and prose was nearly absent. Dress, make up and the stage had no importance in the folk dramas. Other elements of drama like characterisation, conflict, and action had no scope in these plays. A study of the origin and development of Hindi drama will not be complete without a peep into the folk tradition.

1. The Sanskrit Drama - A.B.Keith, P.12
2. हिन्दी नाटक उद्भव और विकास-डायरेक्ट भौगोलिक राजपाल शेख सन्थ, दिल्ली - ५, संगीतिक और परिचक्तिक द्वितीय संकरण, पृ-33-34.
The Tradition of Swang

Among the various forms of folk dramas Swang has an important place. Swang might have developed as a form of enjoyment along with the origin of Hindi language. Siddha poet Kanhapa who belonged to the nineth century of Vikrama era has mentioned about Swang in a summoning song.¹

Swang is played by a tribe called 'dome' even today in North India. The Sufi poet Malik Muhammed Jayasi has written about Swang in his 'Padmavat'. In 'Padmavat' the character Alauddin chose a brothel who used to play the swang of a yogini successfully, as a messenger to be sent to Chittoor.²

In the days of Sant Kabir swang and Tamasha were so widely appreciated that people did not care to listen to the advice of wise people. Kabir remarks ironically that when the spiritual teachers tell mythological stories the

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¹ 'नगर बाहिरे डॉमबी तौहारी खुदिया एक बौढ़ बाघ से ब्राह्मण नांदिया ||
बाहरी डॉमबी ! तोढ़ू छं केतीब व तांग निधिण छंछ कपाली जौढ़ लाग ||।
खु छो पदमा चोख दिठ पातुंडि तासिह बड़ि नाचब डॉमबी बापुड़ी ||।
हिंदी नाटक: उद्भव और विकास-वश्यक बोक्ता, पु-34.

² 'पातुरि एक हृदि जौगि सहौंङरी ! तीत लुंग रहत बोहिं मांगँि री जौगिनि में वियौगिनिर कीन्हा !
भागी सबव मूच तत लीन्हा || पदमीनि पर फट्टे करि जौगिनि ! बांकिरे चिमर वियौगिनि ||
बाबाब्रह्मणे गुरुण बाजरी, दुर रामचन्द्र जुका, नागरी प्रचारिणी समा, काशी, सं २००६चि०, पु. र०३५, वादशाह-वृहत संह, दौला -१
listeners begin to sleep. But when there is a performance of swang and Tamasha sleep never disturbs them. Nautanki, Nihal De, Hir-Ranjha, Naval-De are the various forms of 'Swang' which prevail to the present day.

Besides Swang, the rural folk enact Bhand on the occasion of Holi. Some writers are of the opinion that Bhand is the changed form of Bhan of the Sanskrit literature. The subject of these is love and Hasya Rasa is the main rasa of these plays.

Main source of Hindi Drama

The main source of Hindi drama is the folk drama. Gradually one branch of these folk dramas developed and gained a literary form. Accidentally the Sanskrit plays also came in contact with these plays in course of time. The union of Sanskrit plays and folk dramas has made the Hindi drama more beautiful and moving. So it can be concluded that Hindi dramas are original and not copies from other languages.
Professional Theatre

The professional theatre in the form of Parsi dramatic companies had begun to function in the days of Bharatendu. Hemedranath Das Gupta has written that the first drama was staged in the professional theatre in 1868 A.D. But he has not mentioned about the theatrical company which enacted the first play nor has he given the name of the play. Perhaps the original 'Theatrical company' might have been the first Parsi theatrical company the existence of which till 1870 A.D. is undoubtable. There were two Muslim dramatists in this theatrical company; namely, Mohammed Miya 'Rounak' and Hussain Miya 'Jareef'. Jareef has written thirty plays. In 1877 A.D. Kurshed Ballivala established the 'Victoria Theatrical company' and Munshi Vineyak Prasad wrote many plays like Gopichand, Harischandra, Ramayan, Kanakatara etc. for it. The language of these dramas resembled Hindi. 'Victoria Parsi Opera Company' had enacted many plays in the Korinthiyan stage at Calcutta.

1. Indian stage - Volume Four. P.227

2. हिन्दी नाट्य साहित्य का इतिहास - डा हौमनाथ गुप्त, पु १०० - १०१.
In 1877 A.D. Kavasji Katau established Parsi Alfred Company which became well-known owing to the efforts of Syed Mehadi Hasan and Pandit Narayan Prasad 'Betab'. Mahabharat, Ramayan, Gorakhdandha, Patni-Pratap, Krishna Sudama etc. were generally viewed as the most successful plays of the professional theatre.

From the point of view of Hindi dramatic writing, New Alfred Company is the most noteworthy among Parsi theatrical companies. Aga Mohammed 'Haer' Kashmiri and Pandit Radheshyam Kathavachak were the important dramatists of this company. Haer has written about nine plays in Hindi besides his plays in Urdu. Radheshyam Kathavachak has written a couple of Hindi plays. His stories are mythological. Credit goes to him for propagating Hindi and giving refined thoughts through the Parsi theatre. The staging of 'Vir Abhimanyu' written by him is a memorable event, because no other play of the Parsi theatre gave such an importance to Hindi as is seen in this play. Besides the companies mentioned already, there were other companies like the Shakespeare Theatrical company, Old Parsi Theatrical Company, Jubilee company, Alexandria company etc.

The defects of the plays of Parsi Dramatic Companies

The plays written for the Parsi theatrical company had no definite dramatic style. At first they chose romantic stories for the plays, imitating Shakespeare. Those who used to see the dramas of Parsi theatre were mostly from the lower strata. So their taste was also
uncultured. They appreciated vulgarity. The plays were written to suit the taste of the audience as a consequence of which the dramatic art could not develop.

The audience of those days gave priority to unbelievable themes. Those plays, the stories of which were capable of thrilling the audience were the most appreciated. The plays written for the Parsi theatre contained verses in inappropriate places and their meaning was vulgar. Characterisation had no place in such plays.

**Contributions of the Parsi theatre**

In spite of its defects, the Parsi theatre has helped the progress of Hindi literature in two ways. One of these is the propagation of Hindi and the other is the introduction of beautiful stage settings. The art of scenic grandeur is accepted as an important thing in the development of Hindi stage.

The year 1850 A.D. which saw the birth of Bharatendu marks the beginning of a cultural revolution in Indian Society. It was at this time that the impact of western ideas reached its zenith and the reaction was already beginning to be felt. Indian conventions, traditions and culture were being gradually undermined by the effect of English education. *At the same time English education*

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also brought Indians into contact with the scientific and industrial revolution that was taking place in Europe.

This was the time when the seeds of revolutionary thoughts were sown by great Indian thinkers. They had an educated section of the society to back them. For, at about this time a new middle class of educated Indians was coming into being. Credit goes to this class for creating a new political revival. The revolutionary role of guidance to people, who were caught in the web of old conventions, which this class undertook cannot be forgotten.

Among the educated people some adored the western culture and detested the Indian culture. On the other hand there were other people who worshipped the old Indian conventions and who were not ready to receive anything new. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his friends tried to assimilate these two extremities and this gave birth to 'Brahmasamaj'. Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society and Ramakrishna Mission had also a great hand in such cultural revival.

Bharatendu wished to mould a new ideal of drama in which the ideals of East and West are intertwined. He understood the needs of his day and wrote plays with the aim of reforming people. He wrote many original plays

as well as translated plays from Bengal, Sanskrit etc.

About the translation of Ratnavali he wrote — 'Excepting Shakuntala, Ratnavali is the best and most pleasant of the plays.' So he translated it from Sanskrit. But when he understood that the old method is unsuitable for the present age he translated 'Mudrarakshasa' which is very prominent among Sanskrit plays and which is in tune with the present day attitude. As it went beyond the accepted traditions and principles, it did not rise high in the eyes of Sanskrit scholars. Even then Bharatendu thought that the venture was suited to the modern age. This shows his bent towards realism. After Ratnavali he translated Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice'. The Bengali play 'Vidya Sunder' greatly appealed to Bharatendu. So he translated it also to Hindi.

Bharatendu throws light on the falsehoods of society through the medium of his plays on the one hand, and on the other he advises people to lead virtuous lives. Hence he wrote the play 'Satya Harischandra' (Truthful Harischandra) which is full of praise for the goodness of a truthful man.

At the time when Vidyasunder was written young ladies used to meet their lovers secretly and then ask their parents for permission of marriage. But the prevailing custom had opposed this system. The gardener Hira in this Drama says about the prevailing custom, "How can I show you first? If anybody knows about it what would happen?" We can infer from this that public opinion was against love-marriage. But a group of young ladies and gentlemen opposed the old custom.
Vidyasundar is the first play in Hindi to deal with the social problem concerning marriage in such a refined way.\(^1\) The problem here is whether marriages should be arranged merely according to the opinion of well-wishers or have the bride-groom and bride any right to choose their life partner. In this play Sunder and Vidya marry according to modern idea, but as their act went against the existing traditions they were frustrated. The playwright has shown their mental struggle in an artistic style. The conflict between old and modern marriage systems as depicted in the play befits the age and is according to the reformist attitude of Bharatendu.

Two methods for solving the problem of marriage are given in this play. The first is that as the individuals involved repent after entering into love marriage they have to think twice before committing the act. The second is that their elders should also be so generous that even if their children enter into love marriage they should support it. He chose the play because it showed the conflict between old and new views. The greatest quality of this play is that no unnatural incident, unmanly mystery or incredible speeches are included in this play.

After Ratnavali and Vidya Sunder, Bharatendu translated the third act of 'Prabhoda Chandrodaya'. In Krishna

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1. हिन्दी नाटक: उद्मन और विक्रम - दशरथ जैनका, पृ १५५.
Misra's 'Prabodha Chandrodaya' mental attitudes are depicted as characters. The main characters of this play are ignorance, discrimination, faith, mercy, peace etc. Along with the conflict of emotions Bharatendu has pictured devotion of Vishnu in its climax.

Bharatendu translated 'Dhanamjaya Vijay' written by poet Kanchan. This is a one-act play giving importance to Roudra Rasa. The story is based on an incident in the Mahabharata. When the cattle of King Virata was stolen by Duryodhana, Arjuna in the company of Virata's son Uttara fought with Duryodhana's army and recovered the cattle. Pleased with this, Virata gave his daughter in marriage to Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu. On translating this play, Nandi, Prsthavana, Sutradhar and Bharat Vakya etc. also got

1. 'Nandi' means the introductory benediction at the beginning of every play. Nandi consists in homage paid to the Deity, Brahmins, Kings or the like, coupled with an invocation for blessing. Sahityadarpan defines it as follows:

\[ \text{शत्रुशील \ संस्कृतम् \ स्त्रियाम् \ प्रवेज्ये} \]
\[ \text{देवक्षेत्सूर्यम् \ तस्मीनांख्य्रिति \ लक्षिता} \]

2. In the prasthavana, the stage-director is expected to converse wittily with the actress or an assistant actor or a clown for the purpose of introducing the play to the spectators.
translated. The hero Arjuna is a courageous and calm man. In villain Duryodhana we see the incarnation of pride and arrogance. 'Vira Rasa' is the main 'rasa' of this play. The battle scene and the atmosphere of conversation etc. give importance to Vira Rasa.

Vaidiki Himsa Himsa Na Bhavati

This is a Prahasan – another dramatic form. In this the enthusiasm of meat-eating priests to perform yajnas and the great desire shown by Shaivas and Vaishnavas to eat meat are ridiculed. When the Raja who performs Yajnas involving violence is brought to the presence of Yama, Chitrragupta opens the account book. This scene is one of the most attractive in this play. Some people do cruel deeds in the name of righteousness. To gain such material benefits as wealth and fame they do not hesitate to cut the throat of innocent animals. In this play Bharatendu chastises such people.

Karpura Manjari

This is the translation of Rajashekhar's play. In this sattak there are four acts. Acts are not divided into

Sutradhara means the stage-manager.

1. नाट्योपकारणादीनि भ्रमित्यमित्रियति ।
   दूर भावकृतित्य दुध्धार निग्रिः ॥

2. महाराज गुरूर्विष, यह राजा जन्म शे पाप मे रूस रहा, इत्थे घर्म को भर्म
   भागा और अर्ध को घर्म माना, जो की चाहा किया और उसकी विध भागा
   पढ़ाता है ठी, लातौं की पी गया, पर बाह लगा घर्म की रकी।
   बाह जीन का इत्थे नाज़ खिया और हजारों बड़े मदिरा की पी गया, पर लगा
   घर्म की रकी।
Garbank or scenes. There is mangalacharan (benediction), Bharath Vakya etc. in this play. The conversation in this play causes irony and laughter.

Bharatendu has clearly stated the aim of this translation in the Bharata-vakya. He writes that by reading this play may the Aryas' mind be broadened, let them love each other and let them act honestly discarding false behaviour.

Bharath Janani

This is a one-act play, Bharatendu has called this as 'opera.' This is a translation of a Bengali play named Bharathmata. In this play Bharatendu tries to awaken his motherland from deep slumber. He entreats the people to improve the country and to reorganise it. Bharatendu's great love for his motherland is clearly seen in the play. His soul is greatly shaken, seeing the pathetic state of Bharat.

Satya Harischandra

After comparing Kshemeswar's sanskrit play 'Chanda Kausik' with Bharatendu's Satya Harischandra, Somnath Gupta comes to the conclusion that taking the whole play into consideration Satya Harischandra is neither original nor translated. If we call it remodelled, no room for discussion remains. There is more originality than translation in this...
play. He has not slavishly imitated the original throughout. This play conforms to the rules of the Sanskrit Natyasastra.

Satya Harischandra is a refined dramatic piece. In this play consisting of four acts the playwright's wonderful imagination has created several beautiful situations. Giving away everything in dream, the decision of Indra, Narada and Viswamithra to test Harischandra at the beginning of the play, and the good description of the cremation ground at the climax of the play are examples of Bharatendu's skill.

_Fremayogini_

This is an incomplete 'Natika' consisting of four garbancas (inner acts). The real condition of Kashi is depicted in four sarcastic pictures in this play. This incomplete Natika portrays the different aspects of life. In this natika he criticises severely the inactive life of his society.

_Chandravali Natika_

This contains four acts. The main incidents of the
story, revolve round Chandravali and her friends. The love depicted in this play is noble and divine unlike the love in the sanskrit plays. Nanda Dulare Vajpeyi’s opinion about the love depicted in the Chandravali Natika deserves mention. He says that the old sanskrit dramas depicted only worldly love whereas Chandravali’s love is sweet and noble. Even though Chandravali may appear to be outwardly obeying ancient dramatic tradition its inner meaning is different from that of the old drama.¹ Dr. Shyamasunderdas says that the love depicted in ‘Chandravali Natika’ is a reflection of Bharatendu’s feeling of devotion.² Chandravali, the whole-hearted devotee of Krishna becomes restless and sad in his absence. After her sufferings she is united with her lord and thus the natika ends happily.

Bharath Durdase

This play is full of Bharatendu’s patriotic feelings. The miserable state of contemporary society is pictured

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¹ भारतेन्दु हरिशचन्द्र ने ‘चन्द्रावली नाटिका’ में मातृभूमि नौटव परम्परा का ऊपरी शाखा तो ज्यों का त्यों बना हुआ है, पर उसकी मित्री बसु नाटककार की माहस्त्या बुझ - कुछ बड़ी हुई है। (लाइफ्साइकल - *बालौचना* पुणायि २५, जनवरी १९५६। भारतेन्दु भ कृष्णी हिन्दी नाट्य - साहित्य - हृ. मानवेश शुल्ल - पृ १५१ में उड़ा।)

² ‘इस नाटिका में बिभ ब्रह्म का बिंदु जोड़ति किया गया है, वह भारतेन्दु के पतिमान का प्रतिविर्ति है।’ भारतेन्दु का नाट्य साहित्य - हृ. बीरेन्द्र कुमार शुल्ल. पृ. २६०.
symbolically in this play. The characters of this play represent the feelings of the dramatist. At the time of Bharatendu there were signs of the downfall of India on the one hand, and on the other there were people who worked hard for the betterment of their fellowmen. Seeing the downfall of ancient Indian culture and glory, people became very sad and anxious. Some people were caught in the web of western influence.

We can get a clear picture of the Indian life of that age from the characters of this play. We catch a glimpse of the reasons for the decay of Indian Society from the actions of Bharath Durdaiv and his friends.

This being a symbolic play, characters are not sufficiently developed. Many characters do not get the opportunity to come to the stage for a second time.

This is a tragedy. So the main ras is "Karuna". Seeing the pathetic state of India and not obtaining any grace from God, Bharath Bagya (the destiny of India) commits suicide.

There is no heroine in this play. The hero is 'Bharath' and the villain is 'Bharath Durdaiv'. The playwright has given stage directions on occasions. Excess of poetry in the conversation has also created hindrance in the dramatic movement.

This play proves that the problems of his time have made Bharatendu a full humanist. He tries to advise people to move towards progress.

Andher Nagari

This is a 'Prahasan'. The hero of this play is an ascetic and this prahasan is full of wit. This is a prahasan
of medium type. The story is of common type. In certain contexts it gives us a glimpse of our Country's state of affairs.

Historical Plays of Bharatendu's Yuga

Before Bharatendu's time no historical play was written. The prevailing ethical plays were an intermixture of history and imagination. Pure historical plays came into being only from the time of Bharatendu. Playwrights mainly wrote plays based on the biography of courageous Hindu youths and maidens and scorned the Muslim rulers, soldiers and servants. They have depicted their love for Hindustan, their motherland. In the/

1. This prahasan contains six acts. He shows in this play that where there is no difference between merits and defects there the people will be afraid of being caught in the King's foolishness. Because if a king does not have intelligence enough to distinguish between a good man and a thief, the good man may have to suffer as a result of the King's foolishness. Bharatendu had written this prahasana to improve the behaviour of a Zamindar of Bihar.

2. समय के बदल जाने पर कार्य - ऽैली भी बदल दी जाय, यह वे नीलाभ कै चरित्र भारा प्रफत करते है। भारतेन्दु कालीन नाटक साहित्य - गौरीनाथ तिवारी, पृ २२७.
plays importance is given to Vira rasa and along with this the Hero's love for his sweet heart is also pictured. Most of these historical plays are tragedies. There are two ways of writing historical plays. In the first method the playwright is inspired by a historical situation or character. In the second method the dramatist has a particular view in his mind and to prove it he searches for a historical incident or character. The playwrights of Bharatendu's time adopted the second method.

Plays in which importance was given to the heroine.

Historical plays of this period can be broadly divided into two groups. The first group consists of those plays in which importance was given to the heroine and the second group consists of those plays in which importance is given to the hero.

Bharatendu's play 'Nildevi' is a tragedy. The hero is killed and heroine immolates herself in fire with the dead body of her husband. This is a lyrical play too. Bharatendu wrote two lyrical plays - Nildevi and Sati Pratap - In both of these he depicts the courage of the ideal wife. If 'Sati Pratap' had been completed he would surely have shown the resurrection of Satyavan by Savithri. Savithri was an innocent ideal wife like Seeta. The style may be modernised according to changing times; he showed this by the character of Nildevi. Nildevi tells Bharath-Ramani - "Be brave, give tit for tat." The dramatist desires that the Indian woman
be as courageous, self-confident & practical like the British woman.

Radhakrishnadadas wrote 'Padmavathi' which has many similarities with Nildevi. In this play also the hero is murdered by the villain and the heroine commits self-immolation.

Radhacharan Goswami's "Sati Chandravali" is a tragedy like Nildevi and Padmavathi. But unlike the above two the heroine of this play is from the middle class.

Sri Kashinath Katri wrote two historical plays 'Sindhu Desh Ki Rajakumariyam' (1884) and 'Gunnour Ki Rani'. In both of these the heroine teaches the muslim villain a good lesson. In 'Sindhu Desh Ki Rajakumariyam' Deval deva cuts the throat of the murderer of her father through Khalifa and dies courageously. The queen of Gunnour kills the murderer of her husband by giving him a poisonous garment. Both of these plays are tragedies. We get the nucleus of modern one act plays in these two plays.

Two heroine-dominated plays Viravama and Mirabai are different from the above plays. In Viravama (1893) Sri

1. नाटककार बाबू ने कि उसके देश की स्त्रियाँ भी क्षेत्र रमणियों की मांति आदिकों, वात्स - निर्माण और व्यवहार - कूल बन जाय। (OP, C12)

2. काशिनाथ लड्ड के दोनों नाटक गणात्मक लघु लेख हैं। आमूलिक एकांकों के लक्षण इनमें मिलते हैं। मातृत्वकृतान्त नाटक – वात्सित्व-गौपीनाथ तिबारी पु – २२८.
Baijnath has shown the courage and valour of the heroine but this play is a comedy. Viravama defeats Kamalkam, the enemy of her husband with the help of her soldiers.

Baldev Prasad's 'Mirabai' is totally different from the other plays of that age. In heroine-dominated plays this is against true history. In this play Akbar and Rana Kumbha are shown to be of the same age. The incidents like the breaking of the sword, the revival of Mira from the well, disappearance of Mira with Lord Krishna - all these make this play ethical more than historical.

**Hero-predominant plays**

In Radhacharan Goswami's Amrasingh Rattahour (1895) the hero Amarsingh is a great patriot and enemy of the muslims. This is a tragedy because the hero dies in the battle.

Among this group Radhakrishnadas's 'Maharana Pratapsingh' (1897) was very famous and in this play 'Veera is the main rasa'. Unlike the above plays in Srinivas Das's Samyogita Swayamvar the enemy of Prithviraj, the hero is another Hindu king Jayachandra.

The central idea in the social plays of this period revolves round the problem of women. They are not the psychological and economical problems of the present age because these are outside the limits of that age. The problems depicted in the plays of that age were of a reformist nature. The dramatists wrote plays about the inhuman treatment accorded to women of that age and they also tried to give solutions to

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1. इस काल के सामाजिक नाटकों का केन्द्र बिन्दु "नारी-समस्या" है। हिन्दी नाटक - डा. बच्चन सिंह, पू. ६५.
these problems. According to the ancient ideal the dramatists of Bharatendu's age stressed the need for the devotion of a woman to her husband. Influenced by modern ideas they opposed the customs of child marriage and purdah and supported re-marriage of widows and education of women. Balakrishna Bhat's 'Jaisa Kaam Vaisa Parinam' (as the action so the result) and Radhakrishnadas's Dukhini Bala (Sad maiden) are such plays.

In Balakrishna Bhat's 'Jaisa Kaam Vaisa Parinam' devotion of a woman to her husband is shown on the one hand and the defect of the evil of prostitution is also depicted at the same time. Along with this, some other aspects in the life of a woman are also introduced in this play.

The thoughts of Malathi, a character of this play throw light on the difficulties of the women of that age. She says - "A woman's life is the worst possible. Those who had committed grave sins in the previous birth are born as women. Although dependent they have to bear many hardships as if they are birds in a cage. The woman who never goes outside her home, whose face is never seen by the sun and whose limbs are never touched by the wind, is looked upon as the gem among women. Owing to the false notion that by learning how to read and write woman's character is spoiled, they are never educated. We are married at the age of eight and that too to such a person that our life itself is lost."¹ In these words the opposition to the evils of purdah, child marriage and the denial of education to women can be clearly seen. But women

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¹ मालती - नारी के समान चिमोना जन्म फिरों का न होगा, जिसने पुकारे । के बड़े बड़े पाप कर रहे हैं वही मानने स्त्री का जन्म पातें । पराधीन, लिंग पर भी कोई यातना नै हैं, मिर्ज़े में बन्द पतें ।
of that time had not grown so strong as to throw away the barriers of social customs openly.

The Indian woman's mute surrender to things as they had been ordained became synonymous with the highest manifestation of feminine virtue and the glory attached to it. Nilima Devi agrees with the Bharatendu's views about the condition of women in India at that time.

She writes - 'The more she bore injustice and wrong without murmur, the more she subjugated her personal life to the dictates of primitive proprietary tribalism, the more woman-like and virtuous did she become.' For centuries, the woman was regarded as a living article that should belong to some man, so she was married off at the earliest possible opportunity. Once married, she spent her life as man's possession - never as a play-mate; not even a play-thing, but just a possession.

Bharatendu's age was that of social awakening. Many revolutions were taking place in the life of Hândus. The dramatists of that age were aware of this fact. They tried to draw the attention of the public to the prevailing social problems of women, through the medium of their plays. The following social problems attract at their attention.

1. Problem of child marriage which included:
   a. too much waste of money during marriage
   b. child-widows
   c. ill-matched couples

2. Problems in married life:
   a. immoral husband

b. immoral wife

c. ideal wife

3. Superstition

4. Other evil customs.

The attention of the dramatists was mainly drawn towards the problem of marriage. Seeing the waste of money on the occasion of marriages they grew sad.

Sri Totaram Vakil wrote 'Vivah Vidamban' in 1889 in which he shows the bad effects of prodigality during marriages. The father of the bride in this play borrows money and spends it lavishly because he is eager for praise. As a result of this he is locked up in jail. In 'Sarafi' Natak Pandit Gouridath has tackled the same problem. 'Sett of Bareli' was not able to remit the debt and became a beggar.

(b) Child Marriage

In 'Vivah Vidamban' due to greed for money the priest prepares a new horoscope and says that the two horoscopes agree with each other. The boy is deaf but the priest deceives the bride's party saying that he is beautiful. In this way the charming bride finds life unbearable. Kashinath Khatri's 'Bala Vidhava Santap' also deals with the problem of child widows.

In the introduction of 'Vidyavilas and Sukhabandani' the dramatist Sree Krishna Takaru says that he would show the ill-effects of child marriage and waste of money on the occasion of marriage. But he does not show the defects of wasteful expenditure during marriage. In this play though the horoscopes match well both the heroines become widows because their husbands are supposed to be drowned. But after some years both the heroes
return to their village. In this way the play is forcefully made a comedy.

Unsuitable marriage.

We come across three types of unsuitable marriages in the plays at the time of Bharatendu.

(1) Husband is a small boy, but wife is a young lady. The wife cannot satisfy her sexual desires with the small boy. To satisfy her passion she runs away with a wretch who pretends that he loves her. Such incidents are described in the play 'Balya Vivah Dushak' written by Devadatt Misr.

(2) Second type of unsuitable marriage is that where a charming young lady is wedded to an old man. Sreeghanshyam Das in his play 'Vriddhavasthav Vivad' has shown the ill effects of this bad custom. Kurupchandra -- a rich old man married a young lady. But the heroine began to meet her lover secretly. Her aged husband's grief knew no bounds on finding out her crime and he decided to put an end to his life. His friend made him understand that he should not have married in old age. He was reaping what he had sown.

The same problem of marriage in old age is seen in Gopalram Galhri's 'Vidya Vinod'. The heroine of this play Vidya loves a royal youth; but she is wedded to an old king. On the first day itself the heroine calls her husband 'father'. She is sent out of the house by her husband and she joins her lover.

(3) The third type of unsuitable marriage is when an uneducated person weds an educated lady or vice versa. In such conditions life becomes unbearable. This problem is
depicted in Devidatt Sharma's 'Balya Vivah'. The hero of this drama Mittu is educated while he gets an uneducated wife. The wife thinks that she would get a child by honouring Lakayi Babu. Her husband advises her not to fall into the hands of unreliable persons. But instead of heeding the timely advice of her husband she starts crying and decides to commit suicide. Mittu curses his fate and his parents. For they had eyes only for her wealth and thought nothing of her character. In the same play the life of another couple is also shown. Biharilal is uneducated and his wife is well educated. Biharilal does not obey his parents and causes grief to them. His wife advises him that it is the duty of a son to obey his parents and that he must not waver. Biharilal, the fool that he is, beats his virtuous wife brutally. The poor wife also begins to curse her fate and her parents. To show their misery more clearly the dramatist brings in another couple, where both of the partners are well educated. This couple lead a happy married life and praise their fortune. Here the wife devotes all her time to the care and well-being of her husband and the husband pours all his love on his wife.

Child marriage obstructs the growth of education; it is clearly shown in the play that child marriage obstructs education. The play is written to show the defects of child marriage.

Immoral husband.

Hindu society has been able to bear polygamy, but it

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1. बाल विवाह के खिलाफ भारतीय मान्यता में बाधा पड़ी है, इसलिए स्पष्ट किया गया है। भारतीय नाटक साहित्य-पीढ़ी-भाषाएँ, गुरु. १९८८

2. बाल-विवाह के दौरान लिये लिये ही लिये नाटक का निर्माण किया गया है। प्रस्तावना में नटी का काम।
has detested the habit of loving another's wife. It has always ordained that one should look upon another's wife as one's mother. Those men who look upon another's wife with bad intentions will have to remember the destiny of Ravana, Indra and Nahusha. But such immoral fellows have existed from time immemorial. When the playwrights of Bharatendu's age saw the sufferings of the wife of an immoral fellow they felt sad and wrote plays to guide people along the right path.

Pandit Balakrishna Bhat in his Shiksadan (1877) has pictured the sad plight of a woman whose husband is immoral. This immoral person forgets that his wife has also a loving heart and that she would be feeling sad, seeing his bad act in the same way as he would have felt if he sees her loving another man.

The hero of this play Rasiklal indulges in an immoral act. To teach him a lesson his wife plays with a woman in man's attire. Rasiklal thought that his wife was playing with a man and so he began to scold her. Then she also drew his attention to his own misdeeds. Hearing this he asks if she would act in the same way as he does.

Malathi replies - 'Why not - have we no minds? Have we no senses? We are not insensible objects and are you treating me very well?' She asks. Hearing these words Rasiklal opens his eyes to reality. The playwright shows the miserable state of the wife in this play. She grows weak day by day. The husband beats her. She bears all this and still she remains a devoted wife.
In 'Vivahita Vilap' Midhilal pictures the same problem in a realistic way. In the whole play the heroine's cry is pictured. He has not shown whether the hero gets punished for his misdeeds. He merely wishes to picture the sad plight of the wife whose husband is immoral.

Radhacharan Goswami's 'Bude Muh Muhase', Badri Narayan Choudhari Premagan's 'Varangana Rahasya', Krishnabihari Misra's 'Anandodhbbhav', Jagannath Prasad Sharma's 'Kundakali' etc. depict the same problem of an immoral husband.

Immoral Woman.

Pandit Pratapnarayan Misra has unfolded the problem of the immoral woman in 'Kali Koutuk Rupak' written in 1886. The hero of this play, Kishoridas returns home late at night saying that he attended a Rasalila. His wife spends the time in the company of her lover. On her husband's return, she hides her lover somewhere and invites her husband to dinner. He asks her to eat and says that he does not want food. Then Shyama replies - 'Without you how can I eat' as if she loves her husband very dearly. But there are not many plays which deals with this subject.

Ideal wife

Kuvan Hanumant Singh Baghavamsi wrote 'Sati Charithra' in 1890 which pictures the life of a devoted wife. The playwright has written in the introduction, 'In writing this play, I have taken particular care that each act may present a good social moral lesson for the readers.' But there is no dramatic art in this play. This play is purely didactic.

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1. श्रीकृष्ण चन्द्रेश्वर बटले - सती चरित्र नाटक, उपभाष
In Kuwar Raghuvir Singh Varma's 'Manoranjani', the heroine Manoranjani is devoted to her husband. She is decoyed by two fellows in the garb of ascetics. But her servant Chotte Singh rescues her when she is about to be abducted by the villains.

In Kishorilal Ghoswami's 'Chupet Chapet' written in 1891, some fellows tell Abhaya Kumar, the hero of the play that his wife is unfaithful to him. Abhaya Kumar wears the attire of an ascetic and tastes her. Being satisfied with her fidelity he asks for her pardon and their life moves happily afterwards. This is a prahasan. We get a good picture of the heroine Champaklata's mental struggle when she sees the young ascetic.

In the plays depicting the ideal wife, Sri Durgaprasad Misra's Saraswati is quite enjoyable. The centre of attraction in this play is the heroine Saraswathi who is good-natured and devoted to her husband. This play presents a scene of joint family in which her husband's elder brother's wife Lakshmi ill-treats Saraswathi.

Saraswathi is the embodiment of love, modesty and forbearance. Lakshmi's character stands boldly in comparison to this by which Saraswathi's character shines gloriously. We cannot know the true value of good people unless there are bad people in the world. The most attractive and impressive character in this play is 'Daya'. Even though she is a servant she lends a helping hand to her mistress in times of distress. In the absence of Daya, this play would have ended in a different way.
opposition to this Pandayin's conduct is shown. All these characters have stood the stern test of psychology and their outer and inner conflicts are artistically interwoven. ¹

Devaki Nandan Tripati depicted the evil effect of superstition in his play 'Jai Narsingh Ki.' Shyama was the illiterate wife of an educated person called Motilal. She throws away medicine and treats her only son who is ill with fanning by leaf. (There is a superstitious belief that shaking leaves before the face of a patient will ward off evil effects.) As a result the patient dies and Motilal kicks the man who had prescribed the remedy.

The evil effect of intoxication is shown in Shivaram Vaidya's 'Holika Darpan'. In Devadutt Sharma's 'Diwari Jivari', the ill effects of gambling on the occasion of Diwali (festival of lights) are shown.

Hindus had a law that undertaking a sea voyage is an unpardonable offence. Sri Jagannath opposed this law in his play 'Samudra Yatra Varnan'. Jagannath Bharathiya's 'Vama Vyavastha' criticises the communal feeling prevalent among the Hindus.

Characterisation

In translated plays Bharatendu could not create his own characters, but by coincidence the characters of his translated and original plays belong to the upper class; either they are of royal birth or they are of the educated cultured group. From the beginning they are depicted as hailing from the higher echelons of society so that they do not rise from their original

¹. यदि चारीन मननिविष्टान की पूर्वि पर लैहे हैं, और उनके जीवन में बाह्य वा बाह्यात्मक दृष्टि के तात्वी बाने हुए गहरे हैं। (भारतेन्दुहरिजीन नाटक साहित्य-गौरीनाथ तिवारी पु - 85)
position. They are static characters. King Harischandra, Sree Krishna and Chandravali are such characters. Harischandra remains firm on the altar of truth from the beginning till the end and to Chandravali love for Krishna is the be all and end all. In the absence of a mental struggle their characterisation is not attractive.

According to the old dramatic tradition his characters are of three types - main, subsidiary and incidental. King Harischandra, Rishi Viswemitra, Sree Krishna and Chandravali are the main characters. Shaibya, Rohitashva, Indra, Narada, Lalitha, Madhuri and Kamini etc. are subsidiary characters. Bhatare, Pishach, Sukadev, Vanadevata, Varaha and Sandhya are incidental characters.

In Vidyasunder the characters Vidya and Sunder, Arjuna in Dhananjay Vijay, Kumar, Chandrapal etc. in 'Karpur Manjari', Chenakya, Chandragupta, Rakshasa and Malayaketu in 'Mudrarekshasa' Chandravali in Chandravali Natika, all are kings, queens, princes, princesses, Rishis or Devates. In 'Andher Nagar' also Mahant and Raja are having an honourable position in society. Besides these main characters according to the needs of his time and country, he has given importance to characters of common class. From this phase also he excels the old tradition of India. But

1. भारतेन्दु के नाटकों में प्रमुख पात्र प्रायः उच्च किंग के संबन्धित हैं। ये आमतौर पर ही उच्चपर रूप से स्थित होने के कारण नीचे के ऊपर नहीं उठते। "भारतेन्दु और नर्मद का आकर्षक अवधारण हैं बारिश्नु कुमार देखाई पृ २३५.

2. Ibid
although there are many characters in his plays the story revolves round a main character. His characters lack individuality. They are the representatives of any local or group just as Harischandra is the representative of truth, Chandravali is the personification of devotion to Krishna and Neela Devi the embodiment of womanly courage. They belong to different groups. In the beginning they have a bent towards some ideal and by the time the play reaches its climax this inclination becomes more intense. In the introduction or early parts of Satya Harischandra, Chandravali, Bharath Durdasa, Nildevi etc. we get a picture of some virtues and in the end these virtues reach their zenith. It is true that the dramatist adopts a certain angle of vision and pictures it in his plays but still their characterisation has not become perfect. And the peculiarity of all that is that we are impressed by the activities of the character. Owing to their dignity they attain success in the end. Excepting the deplorable condition of India in 'Bharath Durdasa', the heroes and heroines of other plays are not defeated. Really speaking, Bharatendu created his characters more or less on Indian tradition. Through his characters he gives his readers an idea of the glorious side of life.

We bow our head in reverence to the divine nobility and greatness of his heroes and heroines. Taking into account all these facts we can call his plays character-dominated, because no importance is given to the incidents. In Satya Harischandra

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1. वै कै बल भाव के आदर्श या कोई के प्रतिनिधि पत्र हैं, व्यक्ति नहीं, जैसे हरिश्चन्द्र हत्याकारिता के, चन्द्राकी पत्नी की बौद्धिक पत्नी-बीता की प्रतिनिधि है

2. भारतेन्दु हरिश्चन्द्र - डा. लक्ष्मीनारायण बाणायिनी, पृ. १३२.

पु. १३२, भारतेन्दु हरिश्चन्द्र - डा. लक्ष्मीनारायण बाणायिनी, पृ. १३२.
and Nildevi there are some incidents, but in Chandravali, Bharath Durdasa, Vaidiki Himsa Himsa Na Bhavati and Andher Nagari, the importance given to incidents is very meagre. In all these plays and prahansans he has mainly devoted his attention to characterisation. His main ambition was to picture the firm stand of Harischandra, the courage of Nildevi, Chandravali's devotion to Krishna and the grievous condition of India. Besides this, his characterisation is simple. It has no psychological complexity. He did not want to delve into the hearts of his characters. Bharatendu chose stories to match his characters and these characters fit in very well with the stories. Therefore his characters are natural.

So Bharatendu's characterisation has peculiarities of his own which are related to the human heart. They create purity and nobility in the hearts of the readers. We cannot come across such divine characters in our everyday life.

1. Bharatendu Harischandra वे अपने पात्रों के अनुकूल कथानक भी बुने हैं ले तैर उन कथानकों में उनके पात्र पूर्णतः लप जाते हैं। इसलिए उनके पात्रों में स्वामाक्षिता है।

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In the Hindi plays of Bharatendu's age we get divine, demonical and human characters according to the plot. In the dharmik and ethical plays we get all the three types of characters, but in other plays we get only human characters.

According to ancient Indian tradition no place was given to the common people in the plays. They were only accepted as part of the audience. The main characters of the play were extraordinary people. Even before the advent of Bharatendu's age in the first awakening the zest for gaining new knowledge increased the common man's worth and made him the basis of art. In Europe also after the renaissance in the 15th century man's work was recognised. The interest in human welfare decreased the love for the supernatural and importance began to be attached to the common folk and his feelings. As a result of this, extraordinary characters became fewer in plays and in the end they became extinct. The spread of realistic vision decreased the divine aspect in plays and in the absence of divine incidents, divine characters also decreased in the field of drama.

According to Sanskrit Natyasastra the hero of the play should be of noble birth having noble virtues. In the ethical and predominantly romantic plays of Bharatendu's age, the hero is not from the common folk. Rama, Krishna, Prahlada, Abhimanyu, Nala, Viswamitra, Satyavan, Harischandra, Lakshman, Dhruba, Sita,
Radha, Anjana, Rukmini, Damayanthi, Savitri etc. are the characters of ethical plays. Even great sorrow cannot sadden them and if they are shown to have weakness of heart it is only for obeying tradition. If Rama is grieved over the kidnapping of Sita, it is not due to his mental weakness, it is only his game. After the death of Abhimanyu, Arjun's sorrow is necessary because this sorrow impels to take the vow to kill Jayadrath. On this occasion Abhimanyu's maternal uncle who is an incarnation of God and who is beyond mental weaknesses, guides them all for further action. In Lala Shaligram Vaisya's "Abhimanyu Vadh" the sorrow of Abhimanyu's mother Subadra is the most pathetic scene.

In love-predominant plays only princes and princesses had a place. This is according to the sanskrit dramatic tradition. Among these the hero of Rajputra's play 'Randhir Premmohini', Ranadhir has a peculiar personality. Even though he is a prince he is the supporter of human principles. The thought that leaving aside the wealth and power, all men are equal, found place in literature for the first time.¹

According to Sanskrit Natyasastra Vidusak is the foolhardy and talkative friend of the hero. Vidushak found a place in Hindi Drama but unlike the Vidhushak in Sanskrit Drama he came as an independent person like the clown in English Drama, and very quickly became useful for promoting the plot of the play. In Sanskrit drama Vidhushak's activities were independent of the

¹. शिखित कर्म कल्पना के परे क्ष क्षय भाया राजा कर्क निर्विशेष अंशित - समान हैं, यह भाइन शाहिद्ध्य में प्रथम बार प्रकट हुई।

मार्तेङ्जु शाहिद्ध नाट्य - शाहिद्ध - ता मानकेश हनुमु ॥ २३० ॥
plot. In Bharatendu's age Vidhushak got a place only in very few plays. In Babu Kanhaiyalal's ethical plays 'Sheel Savithri' and 'Anjana Sundari', the Vidhushak is a skilful, serious old adviser who is not meant to create laughter. About Vidhushak in Krishna Baldev Verma's 'Bhartrhrari Rajatyag' it can be said that even though he creates laughter he is a very understanding and educated person. On the one hand he creates laughter and on the other he defeats great pandits in debate. In Pandit Ambikadatt Vyasa's 'Gosankat', Choubeji's activities create laughter but on other occasions he gains an honourable position in the minds of the audience due to his intelligence.

In symbolic plays the characters are either man's mental feelings like anger, hate, intelligence, compassion etc. or they are representatives of good and bad aspects like Kaliyug, Bharath Saubhagya, Bharat Durdasa, disease, darkness, editor, Rati, Kusumayudh (God of love) Kundkali, Madhukar (honey bee) Keer (parrot) etc. We can understand the nature and action of the characters from their name itself.

In the plays which are torn from the Sanskrit tradition the characters are mainly. The main characters in the historical plays like Maharana Pratapsingh, Akbar, Saleem, Alaudin, Maharani Padmavati, Samyogita, Prthviraj, Jayachand, Chand, Amarsing Rathor, Shahjahan, Hakikatrai etc. are historical characters. The character Chandraveli is given such an honourable place in Radhacharan Goswami's historical play 'Sati Chandravali' that she does not appear as imaginative.

In problem plays the characters are taken from the common folk. They have no peculiarities of their own; usually they re-
present any group or a particular thought. In the social plays
the characters are from the civilised middle class. In praharas
the characters are from the backward class and on several occasions
they are village folk. In most of the praharas of Devakinandan
Tripathi the characters are either superstitious illiterate foolish
villagers or those who deceive these foolish people. In Kaliyugi
Janevu, Kaliyugi Vivah, the purhitis (preceptor) cannot pronounce
correctly even a single mantra. The characters of social plays
represent their class more or less successfully.

From the above discussion it is clear that the characters
in Hindi plays gradually began to represent the life of common
people clearly. The number of divine characters dwindled in
Hindi plays, compared to the characters in Sanskrit plays.

Jayasanker Prasad.

The arrival of Jayashankar Prasad has been considered as a
historical event in the history of Hindi Drama. His period has
been honoured with the name of Prasad-Yug. Prasad was a born
poet. He was a resident of Benaras and Benaras represents almost
all the cross-sections of Indian culture. It continues to
represent them even to this day. Sanatani Brahmins, strictly
living according to the canons of Vedas, Bhrahmacherins and
sadhus of the different schools like Advaitavadis Dwaitavadis,
Vishistadvaitis, saktas, saivas, avadhutas, and quite a number
of Boudha as well as Jaina Bhikshus stayed there.

Prasad could attend the scholarly sastrarthta among the
scholars and witness the stream of devotees worshipping at the
temple of Bholanath. He was living in the days of social and political awakening of India and Bengal was the centre of the new reforms. Benaras is geographically so close to Bengal that every new event or idea of Bengal would pass on to Benaras immediately. As Vivekananda, and Tagore had great influence on the entire elite of North India, the gentle-hearted poet of Benaras had great veneration for both these sons of Bengal.

Prasad could observe the new styles in Bengal in many fields of literature too. Dramas were written on the lines of Shakespearean plays and were enacted in the theatres of Calcutta. Traditions and customs were questioned in the literary pieces. A description of the approach of the Bengali dramatists will not be out of place.

Early days of the Bengali Drama

From 1853 Bengali playwrights followed two distinct patterns; (1) the translation and adaptation of English plays, specially those of Shakespeare, and (2) the translation and adaptation of the better known Sanskrit dramas. The works based on English originals were futile attempts, none of them were ever staged nor were they accepted as good reading matter. The adaptations from Sanskrit were more acceptable, and the stage performance of one of them, namely Ratnavali may be said to have started the Bengali drama on its popular career. Later adaptations of some plays of Shakespeare like Cymbeline, Hamlet, Othello etc. were staged with success in private and public theatres in the middle and late seventies of the century.

It was the spirit of social reform that appeared as the first and strongest urge produced by the impact of western education and culture. This urge was stronger in young Bengalees mainly educated in Sanskrit than those who received English education.¹

Ramnarayan Tamkaratna's 'Kulin Kulaservaswa' published in 1854, was the first dramatic composition directed against social backwardness of the better class of the Brahman caste.

Widow re-marriage was the most popular subject on which scores of books and pamphlets called drama were written. The first man to write in support of the Widow Remarriage Act was Rowmesh Chandra Mitra. His Vidhavavivaha Natak (1856) in spite

1. Tarkaratna's Navanatak published in 1866, is an elaborate and more pretentious work. The tragic ending of the plot is after the finale of Nil-darpan by Dinabandhu Mitra. A running didactive note disturbs the dramatic interest. The plot is trivial and centres round the persecution of the senior wife and son of a rich zamindar by his junior and favourite wife. Ramnarayan's other dramatic works comprise adaptations of Sanskrit plays: Venisamhara, Ratnavali, Abhijnana Sakuntala and Malathimadhava; three plays on purana stories; Rukminiharan, Kamsavadh and Dharmavijay and one on a folk-tale: Svapnadhan — History of Bengali Literature P. 195-196.
of the dreary soliloquies and a few vulgar touches of the Vidyasunder sort, was successful on the stage. Mitra organised a yatra, party in South Calcutta where the yatra version of his 'Siter vanavas' was repeatedly performed with uniform success.

The success of Mitra's play on widow remarriage was responsible for the first modern drama written in Assamese. Gunabhiram Berua's Ramanavami Natak, written in 1857 was directly inspired by Mitra's play. Samuel Pir Baksh's Vidhavavivaha Natak is also written in support of widow re-marriage.

The orthodox opposition to widow remarriage was not silent. But their attempts in the dramatic field were a total misfire. None of their work is worth mentioning.

In the field of drama Prasad was greatly inspired by Dwijendralal Roy. Dwijendralal Roy gave new rational interpretation of puranic events in his plays like Pashani and Siter Vanavas.

Girishchandra Ghosh was of the view that theatre must suit the taste of the people. The plays of Rabindranath Tagore were modern in their outlook. He understood that dramas must

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1. In the Purana Ahalya mistakes Indra for her husband Goutama and turns into stone as a result of the curse of her husband. But in the play 'Pashani' Ahalya plays with Indra to satisfy her lust. Her guilty conscience makes her immovable like a stone. In 'Siter Vanavas' Sita herself goes to the forest to help Rama keep his word. But in Valmiki Ramayana Rama orders Laxmana to take Sita with him and abandon her in the forest.
not be a far cry from real life.  

The above said movements and new lines of thought had their impact on free-thinking persons like Prasad. He had no blind belief in the traditions and his views were more humanitarian than religious. The doctrines of love, sympathy and non-violence of Buddhism had appealed to him more than the traditional and rigorous orders of the Sramitis and Vedas.
It is evident that though Prasad was no great scholar in English, the new reformist thoughts expounded by the reformers had appealed to him. Unfortunately he has not written any satisfactory autobiographical notes. But his remarks through the words of his characters in the plays bear testimony to his thoughts. His views about contemporary social situation is more clearly expressed in the novels and short stories. Though his dramas are purely historical, his personal views and ideals are reflected in the words of his historical characters.

Prasad was a great creative artist of the modern literature. He was sympathetic to his characters and pictured their inner and outer conflict in an impressive manner. In some places the lines of his picture are broad by which he indicates the character's subtlest feelings. In other places by giving simple outlines he is able to disclose all their feelings in a skilful way.

Characters of Prasad

In Bharatmuni's Natyasastra it is written that the hero of the play should be born in a higher class and must be virtuous. He is called Dhirodatt. Besides Dhirodath there are other heroes like Dhiralalith, and Dhiraprasanth in the classification of heroes in Natyasastra. But Prasad's characters cross the boundaries of this law. They cannot be kept in the narrow limits

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1. महाकाव्यानिमित्तं: जानकारान्तिक्तञ: भासम- 114।

स्थिरी निम्नांकाणां धीरौदात्तौ दृढ़तः।

नाम्यास्मि के भारतीय परम्परा और दक्कन-दक्कनी प्रहाद खिलाड़ी, पृथ्वीनाथ खिलाड़ी, राजकमल प्रकाशन प्रथम संपर्क १६६३ यु १४१।
of Manav (human beings) and Danav (demonish). Keeping in mind their common factors Prasad's characters can be broadly divided in the following groups.

1. Ambitious groups
2. Those who sacrifice everything for the unity and independence of their nation.
3. Priests who live by adopting crooked ways.
4. Rishis and Mahatmas who are the symbol of Indian spirituality.
5. Great women who live according to the ideal of Indian womanhood.
6. Women who are the creation of circumstances.
7. Lyrical women characters.

Ambitious Characters.

Shantidev in 'Rajyasri', Ajathasatru and Viruddak in 'Ajatha-satru', Bhatare in 'Skandagupta' are all ambitious characters. All of them desire wealth, power and fame in their life. No relation

1. Shantidev is admitted in a monastery in his childhood. Finding that he cannot fulfill his worldly desires from the monastery he runs away and becomes a dacoit. His greed and boundless ambition transforms him into a devil.

Ajathasatru, the prince of Magadha is very cruel by nature. On attaining the crown he sends his father and step-mother to prison. But later he repents for his mis-deeds.

Viruddhak, son of Prasenajit, the King of Kosala is deprived of his status as a prince because his mother Shaktimati is the daughter of a slave girl. His mother teaches him to jump into the blazing pit of ambition. Dishonour makes him lead the life of a dacoit.

Bhatare is a born ambitious man. When his request for appointment as a commander was turned down with a deaf ear he joins hands with Kumaragupta's wife Ananthadevi to spread violence. But later he realizes his mistake.
or law comes in the way of their fulfilling these desires. Ambition is the sole motto of their life. To gain it they employ almost anything. Psychologically they are not ego-centric. Their ambition leads them to commit dangerous deeds.

**Ambitious women characters**

Besides men Prasad has given place to ambitious women characters in his plays. Examples, are Chalna in 'Ajathasatru, Surma' in 'Rajyasri, Ananthadevi and Vijaya' in Skandagupt.

**Chalna**

Emperor Bimbisara's younger wife Chalna is a selfish, narrow-minded, cruel woman. She misinterprets the feelings of her co-wife Vasavi and ill-treats her. She asks her husband to crown her son Ajathasatru as emperor. When Ajathasatru is caught prisoner she puts the blame on Vasavi and orders her servant to kill her. Chalna is humbled at the climax of the play 'Ajathasatru.' Prasad by showing the downfall and rise of Chalna has pictured the victory of mercy over cruelty.

**Surma** is a beautiful woman. But she lacks reasoning power. She gives satisfaction to Vikatagosh and sees the dream of becoming a queen. But on Vikatagosh's disgrace she joins hands with Devagupt Her ambition takes her nowhere.

The cycle of incidents and development of the play Skandagupt revolve round the ambition of Kumaragupta's wife Ananthadevi. She is a typical ambitious character of this play.

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1. Surma is a garden-keeper in Rajyasri's palace-garden.
2. Vijaya is the daughter of a rich man.
To satisfy her ambition she moves according to the circumstances. Kumaragupt dances to the tune of youthful Ananthadevi. She very easily makes Bhatark ready for the forthcoming struggle. She was an insoluble problem in Bhatark’s eyes. He says about her - "The seed of a world revolution is deposited in the inaccessible heart of a woman. Oh! What a brave woman! Let me see whither she drives the empire of Gupta."

Ananthadevi knows very well that to win Bhatark on to her side is quite necessary. Sometimes she reminds him of her services done on his behalf and at other times she keeps him wonderstruck by the mysterious activities of Prapanchbuddhi. She has full faith in her tears which is nature’s gift to women. She astounds Vijaya on the basis of her own power and status. She was aware of the weakness of Bhatark and Skandagupt and attains what she wishes from their weakness. No other woman character of Prasad is as cruel as Ananthdevi.¹ There is not even a drop of compassion in her mind towards her aged husband Kumaradithya.

A study of the mental attitude, angle of vision and desires of Vijaya proves her to be an ambitious character. She is rewarded with such a beauty and youth that is able to attract even the detached great patriot like Skandagupt. Nature has endowed her with matchless beauty and her father has given her immense wealth. By using these two she wishes to gain her ambition. This self-possessed woman tries to make Skandagupt her own, keeping Devasena as an instrument in the matter. But she passes away as a result of her own misdeeds.

¹ प्रशाद के नारी पाठियों में उत्तम चढ़वन्नकारी और बूढ़ जन्य कोई पाठ नहीं है। हिन्दी, नाटक-बच्चन सिंह, पृ. ७४.
Psychologically she is a weak sentimental woman. This weakness has become an inseparable part of her personality. Her marriage with Bhatare and her attempt to sell Skandagupt are the results of her mental weakness. So far as the question of security of money is concerned she represents the Vaisya class fully.

2. Patriotic characters

Simharan and Alaka in 'Chandragupt', Skandagupt and Bandhuvarma are in Skandagupta examples of patriotic characters. They are ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of their motherland. All of them are brave and intelligent. Unhesitatingly they throw themselves at the service of their motherland.

1. Love for his country is the life-blood of Malava Rashtrapati's son Simharan. Whenever occasion arises he shows his valour.

The princess of Thakshasila, Alaka, is an exemplary character. She is ready to sacrifice herself at the altar of patriotism. Her love towards Simharan is pure and spotless.

The prince of Magadha, Skandagupt, though of a detached mentality proves his courage in the battle with Huns.

Bandhuvarma, the king of Malwa is a selfless patriot. When Skandagupt defeats the foreigners and protects Malwa, Bandhuvarma out of gratitude gives away his crown to Skandagupt and determines to lead the life of a soldier.
3. Treacherous priests

Devadutt in Ajathasatru, Satyasheel in Vishakh etc. are men of wicked minds in the garb of priests. They are very selfish. Though they appear as priests in the eyes of common people they are devils incarnate. Their minds are not detached from worldly pleasures. They crave for wealth and prestige.

4. Rishis and Mahatmas

Dandyayan in Chandragupt, Gautama in Ajathasatru, Premanand in Vishak are all true monks. They have risen above Raga and Dvesha. They are sages whose minds remain unperturbed in adversity. Their thirst for pleasure has altogether disappeared. They are stable of mind; i.e. free from passion, fear and anger. With constant penance they have attained tranquillity of mind. With their experience and wisdom they strive for the welfare of mankind.

5. Characters representing ideal Indian women

Prasad was more a romantic author than a realist. Being emotional and having great regard for aesthetic values he had a feeling of veneration for virtuous women. He picturises the ideal woman of India as the embodiment of sacrifice, love, forbearance and many other qualities.

Mallika

Among Prasad's woman characters that represent the ideal of
Indian womanhood, Mallika's name comes first. She is a very virtuous lady. She is the living embodiment of sympathy, duty and courage. Prasenajit, Ajathasatru and Viruddhak bow their heads in reverence to her.

Even Karayan who is despondent with vengeance, says seeing the extraordinary conduct of Mallika, "She is divine. She can think about the things of that higher world which is different from the solar region and which is firm on the basis of imagination. She does not hesitate to look after Viruddhak, the murderer of her husband properly. By this action her abundant love for humanity is revealed. To know about her true worth one will have to rise above the material world.

Mallika's mind is one pointed in performing her duties. She welcomes life as it comes. Such people are very rare in this world. Jayashankar Prasad's love for perfection might have led him to depict this character in such a noble manner.

Vasavi

Another character that belongs to this group is emperor Bimbisara's first wife Vasavi. She wishes to spread the message of love and mercy among the members of her family. Though chalna, her step-wife conspires against her and makes her a prisoner.

1. कारागरण- जाप देखी हैं | धर-मंडल है जिस जौ कैसी क्यूना के बाहर पर रखिया है, उस उच्च ज्ञान की बात घोंच कहती है |

ब्याहकाल - जयशंकर प्रसाद

2. बालबी क्या कभी बह भी दिन आकृति, जब निरंतर में एक कुटुंब स्थापित है जाकर, और मानवमान स्वयं से अपनी गुणस्वी समझले हैं (कविश्व-पृ १२४)
along with her husband she does not retort. Though Vasavi suffers a lot at the hands of Chalna she in turn wishes only for the well-being of Chalna's son Ajathasatru.

**Padmavathi**

Another character in Ajathasatru is Padmavathi, who is very tender-hearted. She thinks that the purpose of the creation of human beings is to spread the message of love and mercy. She respects Mahatma Gautama greatly. Her co-wife Magandhi spreads rumours about the conduct of Padmavathi. Without a second thought Padmavathi's husband Udayan believes Magandhi and becomes ready to kill Padmavathi. The devoted wife happily accepts punishment at the hands of her husband. But ultimately the radiance of her personality makes him accept defeat.

6. Woman character crushed by fate

Prasad was a great sympathiser of sorrowing people. So along with ideal women characters he has given place to women who were playthings at the hands of fate. King Nanda's daughter Kalyani in Chandragupt is such a character. Though she is a bold woman¹ and blessed with many good qualities of love, patience and forbearance nobody was there to appreciate these.

Kalyani keeps her sorrow in her heart and bids adieu to this world mutely. There is nobody in this world, not even her lover Chandragupt to show sympathy for her even in words. Magadha Empire was forcefully taken from Nanda's hands, her father was sentenced to death, nothing remained in life. Magadha's palaces

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¹ कल्याणी - क्षिताजी, मैं पवित्र सर के गर्व की परिवार लूंगी। उस चात्रिय की यह क्षिता लूंगी कि राजकुम्या कल्याणी किषी चात्रिणी है कम नहीं।
(बन्धुकुम्भ - वृंदक)
remained in their old abode, the turmoil of the city went on as before. Losing all hope Kalyani commits suicide. Even after her death Chanakya cannot bear the little sympathy shown to her dead body by Chandragupta. He draws Chandragupta’s attention to political matters. His cruel words as if crushes her dead body.¹

7. Lyrical women characters

Devasena in 'Skandagupt', Malavika in 'Chandragupt' and Koma in 'Dhruvaswamini' are all lyrical women characters. Songs are an inseparable part of their personality. The pain of love sent a shiver through these women’s bodies which did not leave them. Throughout the melody of their life an echo of their affliction due to love can be heard. They are the living embodiments of love. Their pessimism has made them philosophic. Even then they are ready to co-operate for the welfare of the lot.

In general there seems to be close resemblance between these lyrical characters. But they have differences also. In the words of Bacchan Singh, Devasena who is like the last wavy and helpless tone of the concert, Malavika who is like a blossom which gives away honey and withers, and Koma who is like a flower blossomed on a stalk which is unable to laugh gaily, have distinct personalities.²

¹. चाणक्य - चन्द्रगुप्त। काज पून निष्ठर बुल। चन्द्रगुप्त - पु १९६९।
². संविधान की बौद्धिक लहरातार और जातिविद्या तांत्रिक की दैवीका, लिख हुए पुष्प-शा करन्द मुट्टर मुर्दा बेसी कान्हा मलाविका और कुंज पर कुलक्षेत्र किन्नू लिख लिखकर हमने सबसे पूर्व ती कौमा के लिए आज व्यक्ति है। हिन्दी नाटक बल्लोस लिख। पु - १५।
Devasena

Malava princess Devasena is an imaginative character of Prasad. She loves Skandagupt. But when she knows that Skandagupt is attracted towards Vijaya she becomes ready to sacrifice her love for Vijaya’s sake. Devasena gives her body, mind and wealth for the welfare of others. In return she gets only pain. She gives vent to her feelings through songs. Patriotism, sacrifice, endurance etc. are the different aspects of her lovable nature.

Malavika

Malavika hails from Sindhu area. She has no relatives. She determines to help those people who were wounded in the battle between India and Greece. Unlike Devasena she hates war. She builds an intimate relationship with every one. She has made the service of the distressed her duty. Malavika sacrifices her life for the sake of Chandragupt. She gets supreme peace and satisfaction in her sacrifice.

Koma

Koma is the adopted daughter of Acharya Mihiradev. In choosing her lover her reasoning power fails her. So she falls in love with Shakaraj who is cruel and arrogant. Even though Koma loves Shakaraj she does not co-operate with his cruel deeds. When Shakaraj kidnaps Dhruvaswamini she clearly shows her resentment. She does not know how to hide her feelings.

Among Devesna, Malavika and Kma, Koma’s tragedy is the most touching. Her springing youth, her love’s madness, the golden world of her dreams were all silenced in the terrible red flames of fire once for all. She gets the corpse of her
lover after disgrace. She leaves her mortal frame with her lover's dead body. Her supreme sacrifice is indeed praiseworthy.

Prasad's character Dhruvaswamini does not belong to the above groups of women characters. She divorces her husband Ramgupt and marries Chandragupt to whom she was formerly betrothed. This incident, though given in the context of a historical play is a modern view of the author. It explains the urge on the part of the modern society to give more and more freedom to the women.

Conclusion.

A study of Prasad's dramas throws light on the fact that he was a great thinker and wonderful onlooker of life. His unbreakable bend towards Indian culture does not make him stagnant but gives him movement fit for his age. On the one hand he pictures such ideal Indian women like the venerable Mallika and on the other Dhruvaswamini who keeps modern views. In this way Prasad pictures life and its problems; sometimes giving them a light sentimental touch and at other times taking them in a serious philosophic way. His deep vision of life and love of virtue made the otherwise difficult life of his time enjoyable.

Significance of the age of Prasad

Jayashankar Prasad has represented the glorious ancient culture of India and the modern urge for the fundamental rights of women. It is because of the spirit of the age. It was the age of reforms in every field of society. Efforts for the emancipation and uplift of women were in progress in India. The same trend of thought or revolting against age-old customs and
introducing reforms are seen in the plays of contemporary
dramatists like Harikrishna Premi, Lekshminarayan Misr.

Harikrishna Premi apparently followed the lines of Sri
Dwijendra Lal Rai in trying to portray the life of Rajasthani
princes and princesses through the medium of drama. The
internal rivalry and false prestige of the family were mainly
responsible for the downfall of the Rajputs. But along with
that there were the age-old customs of Sati etc.¹

Literary works always reflect the personal views of the
writer. A study of Sri Harikrishna Premi’s plays will reveal
the personal views of Premi. The historic persons of Rajasthan
belonging to the particular period could not have been as much
revolting as they have been portrayed by the playwright.

In the play ‘Raksha Bandhan’, Vikramaditya calls the Bhil
as low-born. Vikramaditya’s mother cannot tolerate this. So
she advises her son that by calling the Bhil by a bad word he
has invited the curse of Gods upon him. People of low castes
are the boon of Almighty.²

Premi is very loyal to his friends. He advocates the
view that a true friend should help his friend in times of
adversity.³ In the play Raksha Bandhan, Vikramaditya becomes
ready for battle to protect his muslim friend Chandkhan. In the

¹ केमला के पद्मनाथी की चौहान बंगली बेटी की जिंदगी में वैवाहिक हो ज्ञात रहने
के लिए उनके कोर बाले के साथ जोड़कर की ज्वाला के प्रवेश किया था।
वृद्धार - हरिकृष्ण प्रेमी, पृ. १६
² रक्षाबंधन - हरिकृष्ण प्रेमी, पृ. ६-१०
³ विलम दोस्तों के दिनों में गए में साध हस्तक्षेप रहने के लिए की नहीं है, विपत्ति
के साथ स्क द्वारे के दुःख को अपना समक्ष के लिए की है।
पृ. २०-२१.
same play Maharani Karmavathi, the widow of Rana Sangha sends Rakhi¹ to Mughal Emperor Humayun. Though these incidents are historical, the idea of Hindu Muslim unity² in them is the one which prompted Harikrishna Premi to write this play.

In Premi's play 'Uddhar' he advises people to revolt against the custom of child-marriage. The hero of this play Hameer marries a child-widow Kamala. Kamala fears that society may blame her for breaking its rules. But Hameer tells her that the custom of child-marriage and ill-treatment of child-widows is a grave offence. They must revolt against the evil customs of society.³

In the eyes of Premi all human beings are the children of God. According to him the feeling of high and low may pave the way for India's destruction. He wishes to put an end to such a feeling.⁴ This view is reflected in the words of

1. राक्षी या राजा-बिश्राण लबध घर पर माँ की कलह दर पर बलिन द्वारा बांधा जाने - बाल और कपाह का सूल मारतीय हिन्दी कौसं, पू. कविता भारत हिन्दी प्रचार समा मद्रास १६५६.
2. चंद्रमा-हिंदू और मुसलमान दोनों की हिन्दुस्तानी है और रहने । दोनों को स्कू होकर रहना पड़ा। राजा बनने - पू २२।
3. हमीर - समाज की मायादा। भ्रष्टकृति बच्चों का विदाह कर पैना और अन्तः विश्वा है जाने पर उन्हें वदन के समीप मुला के बनकिए रहना, इसे तुम समाज की मायादा कहते हों? नहीं कहला, वह और बल्लाचार है। (उदाहर - पू )
4. As a result of his revolt against caste-distinctions Premi was forsaken even by his father.

नाटकार हरिकृष्ण प्रेमी-व्यक्तित्व और कृतित्व विषयों प्रकाश दीनशित बुद्ध, पू २१५ के बांध पर।
Maharana in the play 'Uddhar'.

In 'Swapna Bhang' Premiji has drawn people's attention towards the evil custom of purdah. Foshan Ara, a lady character of this play is seen sorrowing over her fate of remaining in purdah. She yearns to see the outer world.

In conclusion it can be said that Premiji who is a lover of humanity has pictured the contemporary social problems like untouchability, child-marriage, purdah etc. effectively in his historical plays. He instructs people to put an end to all malpractices and to rise above petty struggles. By showing the evil effects of war he advises people to strive for peace.

The age of Prasad and Harikrishna Premi marks the close of a transitional period. Their period witnesses the new human and romantic outlook of the writers. The revolting attitude of the authors on any aspect of the social conventions start in the succeeding periods. Detailed study of such revolt and Hindi plays based on revolting outlook is attempted in the following chapter.

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1. महाराणा - उद्धर की भावना की मैबाउंड के ही नहीं, समूह भारत के विषय का कारण है। में इस भावना का अन्त चाहता हूँ। (उद्धर पृ 42-43)