CHAPTER IV

LAKSHMI NARAYAN MISHRA'S PROBLEM PLAYS

Like Bernard Shaw, an eminent problem-playwright who brought this new dramatic genre to its intellectual pinnacle in English, Lakshmi Narayan Mishra is commonly hailed as the pioneer\(^1\) of 'Samasya-Natak' (problem plays), who professed a great interest in writing problem plays in Hindi literature. Mishra brought about an evolutionary change in the subject-matter and the technique of the existing Hindi drama. He dwelt upon the philosophy of life which emerged out of his discussion of the problems of the society. The plot with three acts without any divisions of scenes was devised and songs and asides were abandoned in order to suit the technique of the Hindi problem plays. Some critics tried to discover the source

of this drama in the western counterparts, others took this new genre to the tradition of Kalidas and Shudrak.

Describing the influence of English literature on his problem plays in particular, and on Hindi drama in general, Mishra has noted that Catherine's *Rather India* was out at the end of the first world war. Many writers from America and Europe were issuing warning to the white to beware of the black, the brown and the yellow who were looked down. The literature on such subjects was pouring in the library of Kashi Hindu University where Mishra got an opportunity to study it. The reaction which took place in his mind resulted in the creation of his first problem play *Samvati*. Furthermore, he observed loss of racial life and national culture in Hindi romantic poetry which bore the impact of its western counterpart. The pride for the Indian race and faith in the cultural heritage of the country turned the poet of *Antarjat* into a problem-


3(i) Lakhmi Narayan Mishra, Preface to *Garuda dhwaj* (Allahabad : Sahitya Bhavan, 1976), pp. 10-11. (ii) Krishna Narayan Prasad 'Magadh', *Hindi Sahitya : Yuva Aur Novee* (Patna : Bhatti Bhavan, Sambat, 2022), pp. 331-333. (iii) In the first act of *Abhiyan Shakuntal*, Dushyant is worried to decide whether Shakuntala is socially acceptable by a Kshatriya in marriage. Similarly, the problems of Charudutta and Vasantasena, Sharvilek and Madanika in *Brihkhakatik* are the instances of social problems. Mishra asserts that the noted problem plays in Hindi have been written in this tradition. (Preface to *Garudaghvaj*, p. 11).

playwright in order to enable him to present the natural and real picture of life.3

The conditions of the contemporary Indian society were also exerting emphatic demands upon the Hindi playwrights to explore the possibility of the depiction of the problems of life in their plays.6 The national movement sought for and obtained the assistance of the theatre for the necessary propaganda. India was moving fast for the attainment of independence.7 To removing the existing alien rule, the Indians wanted to restore such conditions which would guarantee self-dependence and independence for ever. Mishra expressed his anxiety whether the power of self-administration or the unlimited power over the nation's resources would be the base for the independent country. He expressed that until the whole nation moved towards peace and prosperity, the pleasure of the achievement of independence would not be shared by all. In order to move the life of the whole nation, he said, the whole life of man must be illuminated; and the goal of future art and drama ought to be this illumination of the mass.8

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3Ibid.
6Snatak, op.cit., p. 3HA.
7L.N. Mishra, Raksha Ke Mangir, (Varanasi: 1978), p. 6. (Preface). All references to this play are to this edition only.
8Ibid., p. 6.
Dharatendu had already written a number of social plays which displayed his displeasure and dissatisfaction about the deplorable conditions of the contemporary Indian society. He asserted that India and the Hindu society would meet their ruin if the prevalent social evils were not nipped in the bud. He undertook writing plays in order to preserve the cultural heritage of India and present the evils of the existing society before the people. Following his lead, a number of playwrights depicted the problems of the contemporary life. Dharatendu infused new consciousness among the contemporary playwrights by writing a number of plays like Vidya-Sunder, which was described as the first play with well-organised plot on the social question of marriage. The problem dealt with was whether the parents alone should decide the marriage of their children or they should take the consent of the bride and the groom-to-be.

The playwrights were trying to bring about reform in the contemporary society but it is Mishra who began to write effectively about the problems of individuals. The contemporaries of Dharatendu were reformers, and they tried to effect social reform.

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10 Ojha, op.cit., p. 135.
11 Ibid., 156.
change by depicting didactic scenes. But Mishra made intellect
and argument his weapons and endeavoured to go deep into the
problems in order to seek their causes and solutions. He
laughed at the illusory ideals and assumptions of the
individuals and inflicted a hard attack on the social customs.

Explaining the role of a philosopher-artist in the society,
Mishra states that the creator presents in his creations what
he receives from the society in a way which opens the eyes
of his readers about the life they lead. The experiences
of the playwright, so presented, bring about changes in the
soul of his readers. Mishra goes on further to assert that
art, confined to individual limits, does not create communion
with the world. An artist remains firm like a Pole star while
presenting the realities of life, and becomes his own
conqueror. Art, to Mishra, dispels darkness of life and
illuminates the whole of it, because it is what it is as

12 Gupta, op. cit., p. 217.
13 Lakshmi Narayan Mishra, Sanyasi (Allahabad: Sahitya Bhaban,
1929), p. 3 (Preface). All references to this book are to this
dition only.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 L.N. Mishra, Rakshas Ka Mandir (Varanasi: Sanjay, 1978),
p. 3. Pref.
17 Lakshmi Narayan Mishra, Mukti Ke Rahasya (Varanasi: Hindi
Pracharsk, 1979), p. 6. All references to this book are to this
dition only.
18 Ibid., p. 3 (“Yah vah hai, jo hai.”).
well as it is the spring of life. The success of art lies in having a complete touch with life, in becoming one with it and not in causing an antagonism against it. The greatest virtue of the artist is his sincerity in art. The responsibility of an artist is identical with God's. A great art explains the mystery, "what is the food of God inside us", and this is the greatest and eternal contribution of art.

The advent of realism in Hindi literature was greeted in order to lay bare the realities of life. Mishra exhorts the people to arouse intellect, which is itself an eternal faith, and capable of removing the external veils of life. There is no room for illusion and falsehood in it, because it is an eternal force and light of life.

The contact of the Hindi playwrights with the western culture and English literature had led them to a critical attitude towards the old social order. Their spirit of enquiry

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19 Ibid., p. 6. ("Kala to Jeswan Ka vasant hai").
20 Ibid., p. 7.
21 Ibid., p. 18 (Kulakar Ki sabse bari vibhuti uski imandari hai").
22 Ibid., p. 17 ("Rachaita Ka Uttardaitva Ishwar Ka Uttardaitva hai").
23 Rakshas Ka Mandir, p. 4 (Preface).
24 Rukti Ka Rahasya, p. 2 (Preface).
25 Ibid., p. 4.
compelled them to analyse and look into the existing institutions of society. The realistic consciousness in Hindi drama was, to a great extent, due to the impact of western culture, civilization and education. A number of Hindi playwrights wrote plays in which the realistic consciousness was present. Some of them wrote about the problems of individuals; others, about those of society; some again, about those of the nation. Being influenced by their western counterparts, they also displayed their reaction against romance and emotions. In lieu of eulogizing the glory of the golden past, they presented the problems from day-to-day life with the technique of psycho-analysis and discussion. Ibsen had already discussed the problems of society in his dramas, and Shaw had led the same to intellectual revolution. Both of them had opposed irrational customs and traditions and presented a true picture of society in their plays.

But Uvijendra Lal Roy continued writing romantic plays in Bengali literature which, on being translated, kept on influencing Hindi drama. His influence was so deep that no other ideals, except those propounded in his dramas, were dwelt upon.26 Joy Shankar Prasad created historical and mythological plays with a view to bring about the revival of the regard for Indian ancient culture.

When Mishra began writing plays, it was the age of romanticism and he had already written a poem, *Antarjat*, also. But, very soon, he developed distaste for romance and emotions. He reacted against the romantic dramas of D.L. Roy and J.S. Prasad; and gave prominence to ideas in his plays without neglecting the emotive content of the contemporary life. It is obvious that the plays of Ibsen and Bernard Shaw played a significant role in deciding the technique of Mishra's plays. As the subject-matter of his plays, he took up the social questions for the intellectual and psychological discussion by the characters, and gave up sentimentality and emotions of the existing romantic plays.

Lakshmi Narayan Mishra presented his intellectualism in revolt against the romantic and emotional plays of D.L. Roy and J.S. Prasad. He stated that drama lies in the realities of life; not in the impracticality of imagination, and the codification of the events of history. Therefore, he gave

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27 Snatak, op.cit., p. CHMA.


29 Ibid., pp. 1-24. (Preface entitled "Main Buddhivodi Keon Hun ?").


31 *Sanvati*, p. 6. (Preface).

32 Ibid., p. 2.
an objective analysis of the problems with intellect and logic. The main purpose of the Hindi Samasya Natak, as practised by Mishra, became an effective lashing on conservatism and conventionalism. Prose became the medium of problem plays which added to the forcefulness of ideas and thoughts.

A Hindi Samasya-Natak is, thus, a play with a purpose. The purpose of such plays is to present the society mostly as it really is, raise the problems of life; and, if possible, to indicate the form of solutions also. The knotty and complex problems of our personal, social and political life find intellectual discussion in problem plays. It is appropriate also that Hindi drama should remain in direct touch with life. Thus, problem playwright is a complex philosopher or thinker artist who proves the hollowness of conventionally established ideas through witty, startling and satirical arguments. The central purpose of a problem play is to inspire the audience to think about a particular basic problem. The technique of the problem plays has new attributes. Every character is good

35 Nand Lalare Bajpai, Aadhunik Sahitya, p. 250. Quoted by Vinay Kumar, op.cit., p. 98.
36 Mandhata Ojha, "Hindi Samasya-Natak", in Hindi Sahitya Ka Urinac Itihas, Vol. 11 (Varanasi: Sambat 2029), p. 120.
and bad and his merit or demerit is revealed through his behaviour.

Lakshmi Narayan Mishra holds top position among the Hindi problem-playwrights but he has been alleged to bring this new form of Hindi drama from Europe. Mishra, in fact, considers the plays of B.L. Roy as the blind imitation of Shakespeare in which characterization is unreal, and the dramatist has no connection with the life of actuality. Romance and emotions have been rejected as old things in front of intellectual and psychological discussion. Mishra's plays give expression to Indian philosophy, culture and ideals but they exhibit the impact of their English counterparts on their exterior techniques. Idealism of the East remains as a great fascination for him.

In the following pages, the themes and problems, characterization, and the style followed in the problem plays of Lakshmi Narayan Mishra discussed to judge their respective merits and demerits and examine the native and foreign forces which went a long way for their success as a new dramatic genre in Hindi literature.

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37 Purohit, op.cit., p. 211.
39 Mukti Ka Rahasya, p. 20. (Preface).
SANYASI
(A HERMIT)

SANYASI, written in 1928 and published in 1929, is regarded as the first 'Samanya natak' not only of Lakshmi Narayan Mishra but in Hindi literature also. It presents a dashing direct encounter with the problems of woman, protection of the race, and co-education, in the mood and manner of a problem play. Delineating the purpose of writing this play, Mishra has stated in the Preface to this play ('Apne Aaloehak Nitra') that the environment and social conditions of the existing Indian society were not nourishing for both heart and mind, and what he had experienced he produced in this play with full sincerity, when he was a student of B.A. Having forgotten the golden glory of the past national

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41 Chaddha, op.cit., p. 65.


43 (i) D. Ojha, op.cit., pp. 344-43. (ii) 'As a result of these circumstances and tendencies, a new kind of play came into vogue about 1930; of these, the salient features were the naturalistic presentation of life, analysis of the individual's inner difficulties lying at the root of social problems and contempt for superficial idealism. Perhaps the first play of this kind was Kripinath Mishra's Muni-Qoswami, published as early as 1929. J.C. Mathur, Indian Drama, Hindi Drama and Theatre, p. 30. Quoted by Vinay Kumar, op.cit., p. 391. The word 'Perhaps' indicates uncertainty about Muni-Qoswami as the first problem play in Hindi.

44 SANYASI, p. 5. (Preface).

45 Chaddha, op.cit., p. 6.
Ilfs* th8 Indian youths and students had fallen victims to blind imitation of West and a variety of mental diseases. His play Sanyasi presents a naked picture of these conditions.

Mishra has further stated that the creation of problem plays is due to compulsion of his revolt against the romance and emotions overflowing in the contemporary literature. However, he has not written the play to bring about any social revolution or political upheaval, but for the independence of coming generation. He looks forward to a better future which will be moulded by a number of such plays that he plans to write, in which the characters are exactly as they are in real life.

The title of the play Sanyasi is not in keeping with the problems presented in the play. However, its importance is individualistic in the sense that Vishwakant, the hero of the play, becomes sanyasi in order to rise up of personal love and give it the form of national pride. This is the victory of human consciousness, which, in spiritual sense, is the victory of Indian culture over material attainments.

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46 Ibid. (Quotation from Radna Singh Sharma 'Kamalash', Mein Inse Mila, p. 141.).
47 Sanyasi, p. 5. (Preface).
48 Ibid., p. 8.
49 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
50 Ibid., p. 7.
31 Bhati, op.cit., p. 38.
The centre of the action of the play is a college which provides for co-education. The play opens in a class-room where Ramashankar, a professor of tender age, is presented to have more interest in a female student Malti, who has already developed a close relationship with her classmate Vishwakant, of which Ramashankar is jealous. Ramashankar's jealousy flourishes with the help of his pet student Sudhakar with whom he discusses that he has to attend the wedding party of his colleague Professor Dinanath.

As Reena hides Bluntschli in order to protect him from his enemies in Shaw's *Arms and The Man*, Vishwakant hides Malti in his bed when Rata Prasad and Shuklaji, fathers of Vishwakant and Malti respectively, enter the hero's room. Sudhakar appears suddenly and uncovers Malti who blushes out of shame. Being outraged to see the scene, Rata Prasad gives an oath to his son Vishwakant not to touch his corpse. Shuklaji pardons his daughter Malti on the promise that she would not meet Vishwakant again. Thus, Vishwakant, having lost his mother earlier, becomes liberated from his father and girl-friend also. But Murlidhar, the editor of the *Surniva Granth*, infuses courage in the dejected heart of Vishwakant.

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32 See the discussion of the play in the third chapter.

33 *Sanyasi*, p. 20 ("Meri Laash na cha bane.")

34 Ibid., p. 18 ("Vishwakant se phir kabhi na milne").
because the former knows fully well that the latter has a great power of writing good articles and delivering invigorating lectures. Vishwakant decides to forget his love and marriage, and to put himself in the service of Mother India as advised by Murdickar.

The second scene of the first act reveals Professor Linanath who has married a very young girl, Kiranmoyee who is reminded of her old father when she sees her husband. Being unhappy with the sexy nature of her husband, she asks him to fix up some time when she would present her body for his service. The scene also reveals the hatred of Malti for Ramashankar and Kiranmoyee’s prior love with Murdickar. The third scene of the first act moves the action forward, and informs the audience that Moti is the illegitimate son of Umanath Shukla, Malti’s father, and he likes to give him equal share in his property. Umanath Shukla proposes for the marriage of Malti with Vishwakant who does not agree to it, and makes up his mind to join non-co-operation movement instead, and Moti also decides to join him.

In the second act of the play, Ramashankar is seen stealing Vishwakant’s letter to Malti from her room and achieving success

33Ibid., p. 37 (“Koi samay niyat ker lo, Main apne shurir ko lekar tumhari saav man hajir hojaya karungi.”)
in getting Vishwakant expelled from the college for two years. Malt! criticises this act of Ramashankar, and threatens him to get two of his love-letters, written to her, published, and re-affirms her love for Vishwakant. Having learnt about his wife’s prior love with Murlichar, Professor Umanath decides to live with her like two friends.36

Murlichar is to be arrested by the police on the charge of publishing an anti-government editorial, which was, in fact, written by Vishwakant in the former’s absence.

In the third act of the play, an impression about the establishment of the Asiatic Organisation is given with its headquarters in Afghanistan where Ahmed, an Afghan youth, is at the beck and call of Vishwakant. A letter from Malti about the settlement of her marriage with Ramashankar is received by Vishwakant and he becomes perturbed. Malti appears with the information that Murlichar has been suffering from tuberculosis in the jail. He informs Vishwakant that he is the illegitimate son of Malti’s father and decides to serve the organisation along with Vishwakant who sends a letter soon to Murlichar.

The last act presents a room in a jail where ailing Murlichar is seen talking to Mr. Roy, the district magistrate, who thinks to resign his office. Kiranmayee appears and removes

36Ibid., p. 94. (“Ao ham tum mitra ban ker rahen – isteri purush nahin”).
blood from Murlidhar's mouth with the end of her Sari. When Murlidhar dies, Ramashankar and Dinanath enter the room. Dinanath comes to realise his mistake of marrying with Kiranmayee and Ramashankar undergoes a heart-change. Malti marries Ramashankar on realistic lines but maintains her love for Vishwakant as Kiranmayee does for Murlidhar.

When Murlidhar wavers from his duties, Malti appears and requests him not to go back from his responsibility, upon which he undergoes a heart-change. Malti does not like to return to Malti's house. Ahmed announces that Vishwakant would look after the functions of the Organisation as a sanyasi. At the end of the play, Vishwakant appears as a sanyasi and Malti indicates her achievement of the eternal life of a woman. In her words - "Ab tum mere devta ban sakte ho ... is rup men.mere Sharir ki mukti to tumse mil gai, Lekin meri aatma ? Kaan jane ...".

In the delineation of the characters of Malti, Kiranmayee, and Dinanath, Ramashankar, Vishwakant and Murlidhar, woman questions like "What rights should be given to women to build up their individual personality, to settle their marriage, to

57 Ibid., p. 150. ("Hemlog prem nahin karange-Vivah Karange - Samajhdaari ke saath ek-dusare ka kheyal karenge".)

58 Ibid., p. 165. (Trans. "Yes, now you can be my God - in this form. My body got liberated from you, but my soul? who knows...").
move freely in the society and how? What rights should men have upon them and why? have been enlightened. Emotionalism has been criticised as an obstacle to the success in life.
The problem of the protection of race has been displayed in the establishment of the Asiatic Organisation for which both Vishwakant and Ahmed have made strenuous efforts.

The problem of co-education and allied problems engendered by unrestrained movement of the women have also found suitable discussion in the characters of Malti, Vishwakant and Ramsheanker. The problem of unequal marriage has been discussed in the satirical setting of the characters of Kiranmayee and Dinanath.

The problems of love and marriage have been discussed on intellectual level. Both Kiranmayee and Malti do not marry the men they love but they maintain their love to their men till the end of life, and hope to continue it in future life also, which may not be possible in the conjugal life of the Indian youths.

The problem of illegitimate son is raised in the character of Moti but it has not been adequately discussed. However, this is not only an individual problem but it is the problem of

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39U.C. Mishra, op.cit., p. 103.
60Shati, op.cit., p. 47.
61Ibid.
many illegitimate issues like Moti also. In the midst of a number of problems raised in this play, woman-problem, however, remains the basic one.

The characters in this play mostly hail from the educated middle class of Indian society. Vishwakant, a leading character in the play, renounces his love and marriage for the welfare of the Asiatic Organisation which works for the development of humanity. He has the talent of both writing and speech-making but he suffers from human weakness of feeling off and on. He is the source of inspiration for Malti but it is she who inspires him, at the end of the play, to go on serving the Organisation. His character is, thus, one of the common youths who fight constantly against the circumstances.

Rameshanker, a professor in a college, feels attracted towards one of his female taughts, Malti who is already in love with her class-mate Vishwakant. Rameshanker forgets all moral and social laws in his love for Malti, and develops jealousy for her lover whom he gets expelled from the college simply to frustrate his marriage with Malti. He behaves too low throughout the play except at the end when he undergoes

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62 Kumar, op.cit., p. 149.
64 U.C. Mishra, op.cit., p. 105.
a heart-change.

Murlidhar is an ideal character who sacrifices his life for the service of the people. He moulds his prior love for Kiranmayee in a shape that brings about a heart-change in Dinanath. He rouses the people through his journal, the Purviya Sansar, and prepares Vishwakant for the service of the nation and the humanity.

Dinanath, a professor, is very old but too sexy to remain unmarried or too clever to marry a widow of his age. In course of living his conjugal life with Kiranmayee, he comes to realise the curses of unequal marriage. He becomes suspicious of his wife but when he comes to know about her earlier love with Murlidhar, he is reconciled to live like two friends.

Malti has attraction for the virtues of man but repulsion for his vices at the same time. She approves Vishwakant’s firmness in his duty towards the humanity at large but loathes his wavering also. She is inspired by him and she inspires him simultaneously. She has a feeling for the well-being of her love but she does not like romantic love with him. She makes an adjustable compromise in her life and marries Ramashankar, but she does not cease in her love for Vishwakant to enable him to discharge his duties of life. She is, thus, able to solve her problem of love and marriage on intellectual plans.
Kiranmayee, the tender-aged wife of the old professor Dinanath, has keen interest in art, and gives more importance to heart than to body. She keeps her earlier love for Murlidhar always alive but she is ready to serve her husband with her body also. Since she has to lead a life, she effects a compromise with her husband. She meets her love off and on and is present in the jail at the time of his death also. Her character displays the vices of unequal marriage and the way to adjustment with life.

Among all the characters of the play, Malti displays the influence of western intellectualism when she discards romantic love and goes for practical life by marrying Ramashankar.

The dialogue in the play is remarkably simple, precise and terse. It is seldom poetical, rhetorical or literary. It consists of such talks which are broken and fragmentary as found in real life. At certain places, it is as good as a living conversation:

"Malti : Ab ja kahan rahe ho?
Vishwakant : Kya karen?
Malti : Pitaji jo kah rahe hain, saske ker do - Main sab sun rahi thi ...
Vishwakant : Lekin Murlidharji ...?
Malti : Ve rokenge?
Vishwakant : Umhna vivah na karne ke liye mujha shapath li hai.

Vishwanath Mishra, op.cit., p. 278."
In his enthusiasm for realism, the playwright has avoided the frequent use of asides, soliloquies and impassioned rhetorical passages. He has passed brilliant and deeper reflections on life.

Dialogues give movement to the action of the play and help characterization but they are lacking maturity of perfect dialogues. However, they are suited to the various types of characters in the play. For instance, the maid-servant speaks in local dialect which is natural as well as effective. But where philosophical arguments have been advanced by the educated characters, dialogue has become longer and argumentative.

66. _Sanvaal_, pp. 51-52 (Translation):-

"Malti - Now, where are you going?
Vishwakant - What should I do?
Malti - Agree to what father was telling - I was all listening to that.
Vishwakant - But Murlidharji ...
Malti - Will he prevent?
V - He has taken an oath from me not to marry.
M - Whose oath?
V - Yours.
M - Then will you break the oath? Being a man?
V - My heart ...
M - Nothing doing, control over it. So long I loved You ... Now, your worship ...

67. _Sanvaal_, p. 116 ("Dekha Babu ee tohar ghar nahin han; bigyarat kaha habe?")
The educated characters like Malti and Kiranmayee discuss the questions of life with intellect, wit and humour. The last speech of Malti elucidates that love is the function of soul and marriage is that of body. But she is not completely free from emotions. Her mind and heart have been fused to discuss the issues of life realistically. Murliidhar and Vishwakant are the critics of alien rule. Naturally, their dialogues are satirical and pinching and capable of lashing the bureaucrats to think for the welfare of the country. The speech of the maid-servant "Gandhi Baba ke chela aayel" - is humorous. The situation in which the policemen come to arrest Murliidhar is also full of fun and laughter. The use of certain English terms and phrases in the melodramatic scene creates humour.

_Sanyasi_ is a problem play because of intellectual discussion of contemporary questions of life and the new technique. The first act consists of three scenes, and the rest three acts have only one scene each. The silent acting has been used to intensify the effect of speech. But too many problems included in the play have impeded the total unity of the effect of the theme. Prominence has been given to individual

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68 Ibid., p. 111.
69 Chaddha, op.cit., p. 77.
70 Dr. Nagendra, op.cit., p. 41.
characters. However, political maturity has been shown in the idea of the formation of the Asiatic Organisation.

**RAKSHA KA MANDIR**

*(THE TEMPLE OF A MONSTER)*

*Rakshas ka Mandir*, written in 1930 and published in 1932, is the second problem play of Lakshmi Narayan Mishra, which discusses the problems of sex, love and marriage. He had decided that he would write a number of plays like *Sanvasi* for the liberation of posterity, he wrote his second play with a similar purpose. He announces that his future plays also will be based on these ideas. Commenting on the purpose of writing this play, he has further stated that he would seek for the liberation of those whose mode of behaviour on the road is one, but that in the room is another, and arouse the conscious instinct in the individuals, which he is confident of achieving through this play.

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72 Ibid.
73 Chaddha, op.cit., p. 63.
74 Khanna 'Vimal', op.cit., p. 230.
75 *Sanvasi*, p. 3 (Preface); *Rakshas ka Mandir*, p. 3 (Preface).
76 *Rakshas ka Mandir*, p. 6 (Preface).
77 Ibid., p. 7.
78 Ibid., p. 8.
The title of the play is meaningful. A monster has no temple of his own. So he makes the abode of God his home.

In this play, Munishwar is the monsterly person, who enters into the house of the godly pleader Ramlal, and establishes a Matri-Mandir therein with the wealth of Ramlal in order to satisfy his own violent passion and passionate violence in the name of the protection of women. 79

The action of the play rotates around the central character of Ashkeri, daughter of a prostitute kept by the pleader Ramlal for offering him wine, and presents a detailed depiction of her personal and social problems. The play opens with the conversation between Ashkeri and Raghunath, Ramlal’s son, in the late hours at night. She tries to win his love but he does not return her love. She levels false charges against him for which Ramlal expels him from his house. Raghunath becomes liberated to develop his independent personality outside his father’s house.

Ramlal’s life has two parts one is Ashkery, whose sexual urge he cannot satisfy, 80 and the other is wine, 81 which is offered by Ashkery to him.

79 Bhati, op. cit., p. 33.
80 Rakshanka Mandir, p. 3 ("Siva sherab pilane ke aur mein kis kam ki?"). "Except giving you wine what else am I for?"
81 Ibid.
From the conversation between Ramlal and Munishwar, who is really Manohar, it is made obvious that Ramlal has ousted his son to prevent the latter from falling in evil ways. In the meantime, Mr. Banerjee, the father of Munishwar as well as C.I.D. inspector, arrives to make a search of Ramlal's house where he meets Munishwar and becomes surprised to see that Munishwar is his own son because he thought that his son was put to death by a revolutionary named Manohar. When Mr. Banerjee retires from the scene, Gurjarati, the devoted wife of Munishwar and model of the conventional Indian wife, appears with her son, and finds her husband in the embrace of Ashkari but she does not feel embarrassed, on the contrary, she gives due regard to him. Ashkari begs apology from Raghunath and requests for giving her a copy of his poetical work.

With the opening of the second act, action is seen moving faster. Ashkari and Lalita, beloved of Raghunath, are talking together when Raghunath is informed by Munishwar that Ramlal has donated his whole property towards his scheme for the reformation of prostitutes. Munishwar wants to take Ashkari to Matri-Mandir. Ashkari has become a purely Hindu woman and undergone a heart-change. She encourages Raghunath to struggle for life and have a compromise with the world.  

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82 Ibid., p. 73.
of Ashkari by Lalita from the latter's house, Raghunath feels much and he says to Lalita that he is not fit for her and she is not fit for him. 83

When the third act opens, Matri-Mandir is going to be inaugurated as the symbol of the greatest sacrifice of Munishwar. Raghunath is informed by certain youths about the deplorable life of the prostitutes in the Matri-Mandir. He is also given this information that Lalita has donated a sum of Rupees ten thousand to the Matri-Mandir. Raghunath alleges that Munishwar has deprived him of his parental property by instigating his father to donate whole property for the Matri-Mandir. Moreover, he shows Munishwar a letter from his father in which Ramal has expressed his will to appoint Ashkari as the directress of Matri-Mandir. Munishwar undergoes heart-change and wants Raghunath to take over the management of the Matri-Mandir but Ashkari advises Raghunath to marry Lalita and not to enter upon the management of the Mandir. Lalita has noticed suspicion in Raghunath. So she is not going to accept his love and be his wife. She wants friendship with him. 84 By this time, Ashkari has taken over the management of the Ashram and declared that Munishwar has no connection with the Ashram. She has decided, moreover, to read out the report of

83 Ibid., p. 76.
84 Rakshaan Ka Mandir, p. 109.
the Ashram herself. 83

The play lays bare the hollowness of the conventional institutions of society and satirizes its hypocrisy and evil traditions. The hollowness of the existing life is expressed clearly through the dialogues of the last act. But the main problem of the play is the sex of Ashkeri. She is compelled to take up prostitution as a means of her livelihood, like Mrs. Warren, 86 due to purely economic reasons. It is the curse of extreme poverty that has made her a 'kept' in the house of Ramlal. On the other hand, there is Ramlal whose monthly income is rupees ten thousand. This satirizes the vicious distribution of income in our society that breeds a number of evils. With the physical growth of Ashkeri, her sexual urge also grows stronger, but there is none in Ramlal's house to quench her thirst. So she comes in the grip of Munishwar who is adept in this vicious practice. Later on, the same Ashkeri realizes that she was brought from heaven down into hell 87 by Munishwar. This feeling of repentance brings about a change in her heart, and she becomes a pious woman.

Lalita gives an intellectual interpretation of the problems

83 Ibid., p. 110.
86 See chapter III for the discussion of Shaw's play, Mrs. Warren's Profession.
87 Rakehes Ke Mandir, p. 37.
of love and marriage. She is a woman who makes distinction between the ideals of marriage and those of romance to adopt realistic and practical viewpoints about them.

The problem of education has been discussed by a few students in the first act of the play. It is commented that teachers are neither competent to teach nor interested in the welfare of the students. There is yet another professor who has hatred for Gandhism.

Commenting upon the problem discussed in the play, the playwright also has indicated that the conflict between intellect and instinct, seen in Munishwar, is the greatest problem of the educated community of to-day. Man's instincts pull him in one direction and his intellect another. This divine and demonic conflict continues in the educated man. Therefore, the monstrosity attitude of Munishwar has been moulded to better vocation in the play.

The character of Munishwar is representative of the modern educated unemployed youth, who is losing moral values and gaining in selfishness of the brute. Having once fallen a prey to social vices, it becomes very difficult for such persons to get rid of them. Ultimately, they become revolutionary in destructive sense. Munishwar of this play also gives more

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89. J.C. Mishra, op.cit., p. 114.
importance to intellect and logic than to human values.\textsuperscript{90}

He is an expert schemer and lover of unrestrained freedom to the extent that he opposes all kinds of administration. Ramlal calls him Rakshas and he confesses it. Munishwar deserts his wife and child, dramatises his love to Ashkery, creates conditions to enable Ramlal to donate all his property, and, ultimately, makes an attempt to become the owner of Ramlal's entire property by establishing a Matri-Mandir. Gradually, his secrets are revealed and his vicious efforts are foiled by Ashkeri with the help of Shambhunath and Lalita.

Munishwar has another aspect of character\textsuperscript{91} which proves him less condemned. He says that he should be judged on the basis of the fact that Ramlal's property, which could be used by him only for his individual gains, is now being properly utilised for the benefit of a number of the poor and the needy persons.

Ramlal is a pleader whose life has two parts - Ashkery and wine.\textsuperscript{92} He turns his son out of his house but keeps Ashkery without whom, he feels, his life would be impossible. He is blind to Ashkeri's natural urge for sex; so Munishwar exploits


\textsuperscript{91}V. Kumar, op.cit., p. 132.

\textsuperscript{92}Rakshas Ka Mandir, p. 5.
both of them. He is presented as a man of godly nature who
performs even Munishwar who cheats him in many ways. He knows
that in order to receive something in the next life, one
should go on giving away everything. Ultimately, he renounces
his property for the welfare of the poor and makes Ashkery
the directoress of the Matri-Mandir.

The character of Raghunath is that of an introvert who
remains overpowerd by the conflicts rising in his mind about
the rights and duties. He is a poet and lover of literature.
He remains unmoved even when Ashkery expresses her fancy for
him. Having cultural refinement, he feels attracted to Lalita,
but he fails to win her love due to his hesitant nature. When
his emotions are changed towards Ashkery, he finds her also
changed. His inefficiency, however, takes the form of his
greatness when he forgives Munishwar.

Ashkery is Ramlal's concubine who can enjoy herself of
everything in his house but sex. Getting no return of love
from Raghunath she turns to Munishwar who exploits her.
Later on, she becomes a pious Hindu woman and begs forgiveness
of Raghunath for getting him ousted from his own house out of
jealousy caused due to non-fulfilment of sexual urge. She
undergoes a heart-change and develops control over her
emotions and passions. Being aware of demon in Munishwar, she
appears at the time of the inauguration of the Matri-Mandir
to foil his efforts for becoming the sole proprietor of
Ramlal's entire property. She succeeds in becoming the directorress of the Ashram and developing a mutual understanding between Raghunath and Lalita.

Gurgavati is Munishwar's devoted wife who considers him as great as God. She represents the most conservative Hindu wife of the contemporary period of time. She does not lose her anger or exhibit any jealousy even when she finds her husband in the embrace of Ashkeri, on the contrary, she washes his feet and plays him her highest regard.

The character of Lalita is that of an educated lady who falls in love at first sight with Raghunath. Suffering from communal feelings, she turns Ashkeri, a Muslim woman, out of her house. She is a sentimental character who donates a sum of rupees ten thousand to Matri-Mandir, and agrees to inaugurate it. Her communal behaviour touches Raghunath and he turns down her proposal of marriage with him. This produces strange reactions in her and she proposes to maintain a lifelong true friendship with him.

It is noted that all the characters in Hakeha Ka Mundir lead a life of reality. They have merits and demerits, and grow naturally with sorrows and joys of their lives. They use the dialogues that are very much characteristic of them. The emotive as well as intellectual contents of the play have been dealt with in the languages of heart and mind respectively. The dialogue used by Munishwar can elucidate this truth. However,
at certain places, dialogues have become longer but they do not create any impediment in understanding or acting. Small and broken sentences, as are used in conversation, have been used to produce the desired effect.

"Munishwar : Yahan kahan rahoge ? raat ko ...
Raghunath : Tumse matlab ...
Munishwar : Main tumhari walaai ch-ahta hun ...
Raghunath : Apne shikar ki ?
Munishwar : Tum jo samjho ...
Raghunath : Ab Tum mujhe keya samjaoge ?"93

In this dialogue, the language used is simple, natural and realistic. Sukhia, a rustic character, uses the local dialect like the maid-servant to Kiranmayee in Sanyasi. This produces natural and realistic effect. A number of expressions from English and Urdu have been used to add forcefulness to dialogues. There are, however, paradoxical and witty statements also.

"Ramlal - Muhabbut se pakra nahin jata, Aahkery ! Muhabbat se chhara jata hai".94
"Munishwar : You have won over life and life has won over me".95

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93Rakahaa Ke Mandir, p. 30.
94Ibid., p. 5.
95Ibid., p. 33 ("Munishwar : Aapne juan ko jeeet liya hai our mujhe juan nen jite liya hai").
In fine, the play conforms to the norms of a problem play in technique and treatment of theme. It has three acts and no scenes. The uncercurrent of Indian dramatic tradition can be seen in the victory of good over evil. It also shows a tinge of sentimentality in the art of the dramatist. The use of symbolical technique in this play is so central and vivid that one is tempted to call it a symbolic play. However, the play is capable of arousing alert consciousness in its readers and audiences. It remains a powerful, natural and startling play which gives a meaningful expression to the conditions of the age.

**HUKTI KA HAHASYA**

(The Secret of Salvation)

with *Hukti Ka Rahasya*, Mishra's third problem play,* written in 1930, and published in 1932,* the dramatic experiment, which the playwright began with *Sunyasi* and *Rakeshia Ka Mandir*, has come to completion,* as a consequence of which a link of similar dramatic purpose among the three

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96 Chadha, op.cit., p. 90.
97 Hekshia Ka Mandir, p. 9 (Preface: Artalis Varsa Vaad.).
98 Unati, op.cit., p. 70
99 Chadha, op.cit., p. 65.
100 L.N. Mishra, *Hukti Ka Rahasya*, (Varanasi, 1979), p. 22 (Preface) (All subsequent textual references to this book are made to this edition only).
plays has been established. In the preface to *Sanvāni*, he had made a promise to write a few more plays of the type for which he made a reference to it in the Preface to *Rakṣas Ka Mandir* also. After *Rakṣas Ka Mandir*, the creation of *Mukti Ka Rahasya* had become essential, because Mishra's previous plays had caused misunderstanding among critics that he had been scheming to harm the society by giving intellectual interpretations of the things of private life. Moreover, after writing two plays, the playwright felt mentally inclined to create some more plays of the type which, based on intellectualism, would harm neither society nor literature, because intellectualism was considered as an eternal enlightenment and force of life that discussed the truths of life.

Among the problem plays which were written during the period of J.S. Prasad, *Mukti Ka Rahasya* holds a significant position on account of its successful use of the matter and technique of the type of drama it is. The title of the

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101 *Sanvāni*, p. 8 (Preface).
102 *Rakṣas Ka Mandir*, pp. 3–6 (Preface).
104 Ibid., p. 4.
105 Ibid., p. 13.
Play is also suitable. Umashankar liberates Aashadevi and Doctor Tribhuvan Nath by accepting their monoene relationship to enable them to enjoy themselves of their conjugal and social life. This manifests greatness of Umashankar's character in the sense that he himself is also liberated by it. The problem of the play, thus, begins in the materialistic love of west and ends in the liberation as divined in the field of Indian spiritualism.

The action of the play begins in the conversation between Aashadevi and Umashankar Sharma, who has resigned the office of a deputy collector in order to uphold the cause of the non-co-operation movement for which he has suffered two years' imprisonment also. Bereft of his wife, Umashankar has been living with Manohar, his eight-year son, and Aashadevi, an educated, cultured, free and frank lady of modern age. While Aashadevi is conversing with Manohar, Doctor Tribhuvan Nath appears and informs her that he has been preserving that letter which she had written to him for obtaining poison to kill Manohar's mother in order to catch the fancy of Umashankar freely. Doctor Tribhuvan Nath attempts to blackmail her but she reacts and refuses to agree to his proposal. However, she succumbs at last and goes to cinema with him, leaving Manohar alone in the house.

Umashankar is contesting for election to the office of the municipal chairman. Samanajit, a pleader and friend of
Umashankar, criticises him for keeping Aashadevi in his house but the latter pays no heed to the former's criticism, on the contrary, he feels that humanity is not growing along with the growth of civilization. Umashankar is grateful to Aashadevi for the sacrifice she has made for him. Kashinath, his uncle, is also angry with him because of Aashadevi but Umashankar does not get angry, on the contrary, he sacrifices all his share in the parental property in favour of his uncle and obtains liberation from family. Aashadevi returns, in the meantime, in grievous mood, and she is informed about what Umashankar has done with his parental property.

Aashadevi is shown making preparations for leaving Umashankar's house at the opening of the second act. Doctor Trishuwan Nath declares that by establishing physical relation with Aashadevi, he feels repentance and himself liberated from the previous evil ways of his life.

Murari Singh, the headmaster of the town high school, is canvassing in favour of Umashankar with purely selfish ends.

107 *Aukti Ke Rahasye*, p. 65 ("Sharmaji - Humari Sabhyata to bahn rahi hai ... Lekin humari manusyata ..."

108 Ibid., p. 78. ("Umashankar - Ghar ki sampatti mai apne liye chhor raha hun. Apni mukti ke liye")

109 Ibid., p. 83.

110 Ibid., p. 84 ("Doctor - Mera joowan bahut bigur chuka tha ... Per ab nahin digrega. Min sab raha tha ... Apne mujhe bacha liya").
Aashadevi is bent upon leaving Umashankar's house. So the latter wants to pay her money off by borrowing from the doctor but Aashadevi does not like this idea. She has no courage to relate the truth before Umashankar. Therefore, she takes poison. Doctor Tribhuvan Nath understands the whole situation, and saves her life by means of suitable medical treatment.

With the opening of the third act, it is informed that Umashankar is elected chairman. The conversation between Aashadevi and Doctor Tribhuvan Nath reveals that the latter has turned on a new life. He seeks apology from Aashadevi, who can do it only when she has herself done the same from Umashankar because this alone will make her a woman again.

She informs Umashankar about her love for Doctor Tribhuvan Nath who is the first man in her life. She makes a clean breast of the fact that she poisoned the wife of Umashankar to death in order to enjoy his love freely but when she was expectant of getting his love, he never expressed any feeling of love for her. Umashankar is so godly that he pardons Aashadevi. But when she informs him about what Doctor Tribhuvan Nath had done with her sexual purity, he becomes ready to shoot the doctor for breach of faith. Aashadevi objects to it and Umashankar throws away the pistol. She says to him that he is

111 Ibid., p. 132 ("Bahut dinon ki burei nikal gai. Ab main manu se hoon ... Mujhe khoama kar dijiye").

112 Ibid., p. 132.
to be worshipped as God whereas the doctor is her lover and first man in her life. Since she is unmarried, the question of breaking the married woman's chastity does not arise. She has decided to be the wife of the doctor and lead her conjugal life with him. At this climactic moment, Umashanker expresses his love for her but it is too late. She wishes to obtain him in her next life. He blesses her, and while kissing his son's face, announces his liberation.

Aishra has presented the woman problem in *Rakhaas Ka Kendir* and *Fukti Ka Rasaya*. Initiating the discussion of sex-problems in his plays, he has raised his voice against the holy institution of marriage in *Fukti Ka Rasaya* in which Aashadevi and Umashanker both love each other, but there are social barriers in their natural meeting. Umashanker sublimates his sexual urge but Aashadevi undergoes such a violent reaction due to suppression of this urge that she

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113 Ibid., p. 143. (*Tum mere upasaya dev ho .....(aur doctor) mere liye voh pahla purush*).
114 Ibid., p. 143. (*Aaj se mere bechohe ki tumhi Man ho ...*).
115 Ibid. (*Us Yagya Mai ab nahin hun ...*).
116 Ibid., p. 148 (*Ah ! To yah meri mukti ...*).
118 Ibid., p. 248.
turns into a criminal and poisons Umashankar's wife to death. 120

A fine conjugation of both the reformation and deformation of the problem of sex has been presented in this play through the characters of Umashankar and Tribhuvan Nath respectively. 121 Aashadovi has committed two crimes—murder of Umashankar's wife and sexual corruption with Tribhuvan Nath. Therefore, she repents at last but wants to keep her love for Umashankar alive up to the next life, which suggests the residue of the inheritance of Hinduism.

Sex and marriage are the basic problems 122 which find discussion in Mukt Ki Rehaya. The question of sex-morality has been looked into in a novel way in the sex-relations of Aashadovi, Umashankar and Doctor Tribhuvan Nath. Being a modern woman with new education, she lives with Umashankar as a social worker, and develops sexual passion for him. But Umashankar, being a Gandhian social reformer, gives more importance to individual morality. Thus, in living together with Aashadovi, he seems to be the supporter of a revolutionary idea of the relation between man and woman. Aashadovi wants to obtain him as her husband but, due to prevalent sexual morality,

120 G. M. Singh, op.cit., p. 128.
121 G. D. Gaur, op.cit., p. 199.
122 N. Ojha, Hindi Samaye-Natak, p. 190.
she does not propose it to him because he is a widower. The suppression of her sex-inclination makes her poison Umeshankar's wife to death. Under the compulsion of circumstances, she offers her body to Doctor Tribhuvan Nath. With her physical contact with the doctor, she solves the bodily aspect of her sex problem. Then she takes the help of intellect to get herself liberated from the burden of breach of faith committed with Umeshankar.123

The problem of love, raised on the plane of the instinct of romance, has been solved by both Indian spiritual tradition and western realistic mentality. Intellectual approach to romance and ideals124 has been displayed for success in life.

In addition to above, the problem of partition of the family property has been depicted in the characters of Kashinath and Umeshankar, and teachers' participation in party-politics at the cost of normal duty has been presented in the character of Murari Singh.

The characters in this play are seen growing under the stress of circumstances in the context of certain problems they face.123 They incorporate both weaknesses and strength in them which make them true representatives of the common

123 N. Ojha, Hindi Samsaya-Natak, p. 192.
124 Bhati, op.cit., p. 76.
123 N. Ojha, Hindi Samsaya-Natak, p. 197.
Umashankar is a Gandhian hero whose character is modelled on Indian idealism. He is the fighter for the independence of the country, and plays his active role in the freedom movement. He leads a life of sacrifice. He has resigned the office of the deputy collector for which he has suffered imprisonment for two years. He loves the realities of life and hates flattery. He has sublimated his sex instinct while living together with Aashadevi in his house.

Umashankar has ideal feelings for his wife and son. He looks attentively at the picture of his wife and gives all parental care to his son. In the final act also, he lets his emotions down with Aashadevi but very soon he exercises an austere check on them. He is seen kissing his son at the close of the play. He finds himself liberated from the materialistic world when he has lost his wife, sacrificed his share in parental property and Aashadevi married with Doctor Tribhuvan Nath.

Doctor Tribhuvan Nath is a character whose goals of life are unrestricted freedom and unrestrained behaviour.

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126 Rukti Ke Rahasya, p. 14. (Preface). ("Sauri aur bhalsi ke mal se hi to jindagi bani hai.")
127 Ojha, Hindi Sahasya-Natak, p. 198.
128 Ibid.
129 Shati, op.cit., p. 70.
maintains his faith in the materialistic civilization but does not have any faith in religion, morality or God. He moulds the circumstances to force Aashadevi to offer him her chaste body but when she takes poison to free herself from this sin, he begins to repent for what he had done with her. This repentance effects a change in his heart. He begs apology from her and proposes for his marriage on the ground that he is the first man in her life. Aashadevi also makes her mind to marry him and lead a conjugal life with him. It is she who brings about a change in his usual way of life.

Kashinath, the uncle of Umashankar, is enamoured of the social customs and traditions. He represents such characters who are immune to change in view of their old traditional beliefs. But Benimadhav is yet another character who can dramatise even a relationship like friendship. He is an opportunist who is always working out of selfish ends.

Aashadevi is the only female character in this play. There is a spring of filial feeling in her heart which is revealed through her conversation with Manohar whom she always asks to address her as his mother. She is a modern lady with new education who comes to live as a social worker in the house of Umashankar, but develops such a sexual passion for him that she does not hesitate in poisoning his wife to death in order

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130 Bhati, op.cit., p. 78.
to enjoy his full and free love. Circumstances do not favour her and she is blackmailed by Doctor Tribhuvan Nath, who forces her to offer him her chaste body. After having physical contact with the doctor, she poisons herself to free herself from her sins but she is saved by the doctor, who, on undergoing a heart-change, begs for her apology, and marries with her. Aashadevi wishes to attain godly Uma Shankar in her next life.

Dialogues in this play advance the action of the play and help characterization. The use of most commonly used words creates an impression of a living conversation. The language is adjusted as per the refinement of characters and their circumstances.

The playwright has abstained from the use of asides, soliloquies and songs. This has made dialogues natural and effective. Silent acting and broken sentences have been used in psychological situations. A deeper meaning is suggested through the following simple dialogues:

"Aashadevi - Manusya keval manusya hogu?
Uma Shankar - Han ...
Aashadevi - Lekin mai samajh nahin saki?
Uma Shankar - Jo beat ab tak hui nahin; samjhi nahin ja sakti."

131 Chaddha, op.cit., 104.
132 Rakti Ke Rahasya, p. 23 (Preface).
133 Ibid.
134 Ibid., pp. 79-80.
The conversation between Aashaddevi and Nanohar exhibits the playwright's extra-ordinary skill in analysing the child-psychology. The dialogues of Nanohar and servant are in keeping with their respective mental levels. Their dialogues have a kind of natural flow. However, in order to propound the principles of life, dialogues have become longer also at certain points in the play.

The use of wit and humour has made the dialogues pointed and forceful. The characters use witty and satirical language which produces the effect of realistic conversation. For example,

"Benimadhav - (Hansker) Jee han, aap to vohi na kehte hain ... jo collector saheb kehte hain. Kashinath - Kya pata karta hun ... Mer saheb bhi barabar haath milati hai. Benimadhav - Kabhi mere saheb ne aapko chaye pilaya hai ya nahin - sach kahiyega. Kashinath - Aap bhi diliagi karte hain ..."135

Aashaddevi, an educated lady, speaks witty dialogues, but Nanohar, an eight-year child speaks the language of heart, which has the element of humour for adults. Benimadhav, a hypocrite, always indulges in satirical language which makes

Translation.
Benimadhav - (Laughing) Yes, you do say what the collector saheb says.
Kashinath - What wrong I do ... Madam also always shakes hands with me.
Benimadhav - Has the madam ever offered tea to you? Tell the truth please!.
Kashinath - You are also cutting jokes ..."
his scheme obvious to the listeners.

Aukti Ke Rahasya uses the technique of the problem play. It has three acts, all undivided into scenes. There is neither any song nor any soliloquy nor any rhetorical outburst of language. Leading roles are very few. Stage-directions have become longer at certain places. The play, in a nutshell, has presented the two aspects of life romanticism, which is represented in Aashadevi, and idealism, which is represented in Umashankar Sharma. This has made it a progressive creation and the best and the most effective play of Mishra.

RAJYOG
(ALUAL PRACTICE OF YOGA)

RAJYOG is the fourth problem play of Lakshmi Narayan Mishra which was completed within three days of the year 1932 and published at the end of the same year. Its plot,

137Rakshas Ka Mandir, p. 10 (Preface).
138Ibid.
139(i) Rakshas Ka Mandir, p. 10. (Preface) (ii) “Rajyog Mishraji Ka Pancham Samasya natak hai”. Bhakti, op.cit., p. 101. Bhakti’s this remark and that the play was written in 1934 seems to be far from the playwright’s own declaration. Chaddha has also erroneously noted the year 1934 as the year of the publication of this play.
140Rakshas Ka Mandir, p. 10. (Preface).
characterization, dialogue and technique are inspired so
much by psychology that it has become a successful
psychological play. It propounded the psychological principle
that the sinner must give expression to his sinful conscience
in order to escape the formation of complexes in his mind
because these mental complexes deter the progress of life and
obstruct its natural growth at the same time. The elucidation
of this psychological principle is the main theme of this
play. Nandna, the Rajyogi in this play, also has stated
that suppression of truth is a sin, and in order to devise
a solution to the problem of love, he has taken up the rigorous
regal practice of meditation, which points to the appropriateness
and relevance of the title of the play.

The first act of the play opens with a detailed description
of the bungalow of Shatrudan Singh, who is the prince of
Hetanpur Estate. He is about thirty. He is conversing with
Gajraj, his servant, about Raghuvans, the diwan (a chief
minister) in the royal court. It is revealed that Nandna,
the son of Raghuvans, has been living in some unknown place.

141 Gaur, op.cit., p. 280.
142 Chaddna, op.cit., p. 106.
144 Ibid., p. 10.
for the last five years. Shatrushudan wants to release Raghuvane from the service of the court on the ground of old age but the latter does not like it till he has traced the whereabouts of his missing son, because he knows that the office of diwan will go to his son under the customary law of its inheritance.

Then Shatrushudan takes conversation with Champa, who is his second wife, when she shows interest in the case of Raghuvane, Shatrushudan narrates the field of woman's work, but he is opposed by her for having a romantic view of a woman's life. She says that he married with her only by exerting his princely force on her father, Dhirari Singh, as a consequence of which her lover, Narendra, has escaped somewhere for five years, but she regards the conventional idea that the husband is a god for the wife. Thus, a fine compromise between Indian culture and western knowledge has been represented in the character of Champa.

The second act opens with a conversation between Gujraj and Champa which reveals that Narendra and Champa were in love with each other when they were classmates. This also reveals that Gujraj has been suffering from some mental

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145 Majyo, p. 22 ("shatrushudan to Champa - Tumhare kaam hai meri kalpand ko rang kar sahaaramukhi bana dene..."

146 Ibid., p. 23 (Stri ke liye pati issar hai".)
complexes for the last twenty-four years, and he does not want to untie that mental knot. He suffers from agony whenever any reference is made to Champa's parents. He further confesses that he is the root centre of everybody's affliction.

In the meanwhile, it is informed that a sadhu has come, who is conversing with Shatrasuudan. Champa wants to talk to that sadhu but Shatrasuudan objects to it whereupon she remarks that man has always been nurturing suspicion against women but she cannot be his trusted property. She opines that the rights of an educated woman cannot be suppressed because she will argue and fight for them.

Learning about the mysterious acts of sadhu, Gajraj wants to leave the place but Shatrasuudan does not permit him. When Narenura, in the guise of sadhu or Hajyogi, finds Gajraj in a fit of unconsciousness, he becomes interested in divulging Gajraj's mental complexes through his regal practice of meditation and yoga. When the Yoga is practised, Gajraj reveals the secret of his heart that Champa is the fruit of his illicit sexual relation with the wife of Thakur Dhurri.

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147 Ibid., p. 39 ("Gajraj - Choodis maar bheet gaya, lekin yah aag na oujhi .... ab to mere marno per ... ")

148 Ibid., p. 40 ("Gajraj - ... aur sabke oukh ka karan main hun ... main ..").

149 Ibid., p. 43.

150 Ibid., p. 45 ("Champa - Ab to stri tark karegi, prativad karegi aur jarurat paregi to yucho na karegi ...").
Singh, which is confirmed also by the latter that is obtained from him. On this revelation, Shatrusudan’s relation with Champa seems to waver but Narendra explains his problem intellectually and advises to effect a new practical compromise in order to turn over a new life. By and by, he introduces himself as Narendra, and explains the purpose behind it. He wants that Champa should forget her previous love and surrender herself to Shatrusudan. He makes it clear that he had become Rajyogi in order that he should persuade Champa to have love for Shatrusudan; and ultimately, he should go away from her path.

Narendra opines that the solution to the woman problem lies in the change of heart because no solution can be imposed from outside. Having effected change in Champa’s heart, Narendra requests Shatrusudan also to bring about a change in his attitude to her. Shatrusudan forgives Champa, and thus starts a new life with her. A compromise is also effected between Narendra and Shatrusudan. Narendra announces his plan to relinquish rajyog and take up Karmayog in

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131 Ibid., p. 92 ("Narendra - Nari - sudhar aur nari-samasya ke nam per stri purush na hain banai ja sakhi ...")

152 Hegai meditation as a device for salvation.

133 The philosophy of the discipline of detached action, unminful of result.
order to move towards the attainment of gyanyog. At the end of the third act, Narendra becomes Karmayogi, and goes away accompanied by Gajraj. Shatrusudan accepts Uivan Raghuvans as his father and, thus, the problem of Champa gets a solution.

The main problem discussed in the play is the presentation of the oddities and incongruities of the conjugal life. A similar problem has been depicted by Jainendra Kumar in his famous short-story entitled Patni in which he has given a realistic depiction of the neglectful attitude of the husband, Kalindisharan, towards his wife, Sunanda. In the play Rajyog, Champa has been presented as a modern woman with new education. Due to the provision of co-education, she fell in love with Narendra in her college life, but Shatrusudan forced her father to get her married to him. Narendra becomes frustrated and goes out to learn rajyog. When Narendra appears as a Rajyogi, he effects a compromise between Shatrusudan and Champa, and solves the mental problem of Gajraj also.

The main point in the plot is love between Champa and Narendra which, being frustrated, turns into the problem of the conjugal life of Shatrusudan. Narendra becomes a Rajyogi

134 Pursuit of knowledge and inner vision.

and brings about intellectual solutions to the problems of the play.

Besides this, the problem of co-education also has been raised as it was done in Sanvati and Rakshas Ke Mardir. Champa very frankly confesses that her heart had got entangled with Narendra in her college life. The playwright has expressed his ideas about art and literature, and condemned romanticism in them. Cinema has been criticised as a kind of corruption prevailing in the name of art. The rights of diwan and the problem of illegitimate issues have been presented in the characters of Raghuvans and Champa respectively. Thus, like a thinker-artist, Hishra has given his ideas about life while discussing the problems in this play.

Shatrusudan Singh is a character who applies his princely force on Champa's father and gets himself married with Champa, knowing fully well that she is in love with Narendra and that his first wife is still living. When, frustrated in love, Narendra goes out to some unknown place, Shatrusudan schemes to oust diwan Raghuvans. His colour is seen changing when it is revealed that Champa is the illegitimate daughter of Gajraj, his servant. Being the prince of the Estate, he does not pay

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136 Rajvyo, p. 81 ("Champa ... Vivah hone ke pahle hi mera jiwana bighar chuka tha ... Parhai ke dinon mein hi hriday ulajh gaya ...")

137 Ibid., p. 23 ("Kala ke nam par yah byabhichar chal raha hai ... ").
any attention to the welfare of his subjects. When he fails to win the heart of Champa, Narendra comes as a Rajyogi to effect a compromise between the husband and the wife. He is the prince but he is weak in heart, selfish in attitude and tries to frame principles as per his selfish ends. 138

Narendra, the son of diwan Raghuvane, is a character who falls in love with Champa during their college-life, but Shatrusudan Singh deprives him of Champa. Being frustrated, he practises Rajyag and returns after five years to effect a compromise between Shatrusudan and Champa and relieve Gajraj of his mental complexes. His character is, thus, of such a lover who goes away for the welfare of his beloved and her husband, and when returns, solves their problems also. He is educated, wise and intellectually efficient. Love, to him, is a thing of sacrifice which turns hatred into love.

In the life of Raghuvane, the character of a faithful and devoted diwan has been presented. Knowing well that Shatrusudan is responsible for his son’s frustration, he does not express any hatred for him. When he is asked to relinquish diwanhood, he does it as if he has sacrificed even his wants and expectations for the welfare of the state.

Gajraj is a very simple and innocent servant who has been serving the estate of Ratanpur for the last twenty-four years.

138Chaddha, op.cit., p. 110.
Having committed physical contact with Thakur Bihari Singh's wife, he goes on repenting all alone but he does not bring any disgrace to the estate he serves. The suppression of truth causes mental complexes in him which are relieved only when he speaks out the secrets of his heart before Narendra's rajyog.

The character of Champa is that of an educated Indian woman who wants a beautiful synthesis between higher education she has got and the old ideals which are maintaining the culture of India, beginning as a conventional Indian wife, she gradually goes on changing, and ultimately, she becomes ready to argue and fight for the rights of women. She finds herself in agreement with Narendra when he says that the poor women of this country will have to take courage, and become Shagwati, otherwise their afflictions are not going to come to an end.

The playwright's maturity in the art of dialogue-writing has added liveliness and effectiveness to the dialogues of this play, which are capable of expressing both the emotive and intellectual contents of the play. Though longer at certain places, they maintain dramatic interest. Dialogues are free from intellectual riddles and suited to the

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159 Ibid., p. 110.
160 Ibid., p. 66.
characters. For example, Narendra as a Rajyogi speaks a dialogue for his father which is appropriate in that context:—

"Narendra — (Raghuvans ki oar sanket kar)
Dekho, ese nabbe versus ke buddhe ki
Oar dekho, iski duniya tumne ujaar di. Iske hriday se puchho, keya kah raha hai?" ¹⁶¹

Moreover, when art, literature, and co-education are discussed, dialogues are made suited to discussion.

Maxims, idioms, and a few words from English have been used to make the language of the play witty and effective. Maximum of sense has been condensed in the following expressions:—

"Narendra — Sachai ko dabana hi to peap hai.
Paap ki paribhasha vohi hai jo asatya ki hai" ¹⁶²
"Shatru Sudan — Manusya jo baat chhipakar rakhta hai, voh vish se bhi bhayanker aur chhuri se bhi tej hoti hai" ¹⁶³

A serious humorous effect is suggested by intermixing the things of spirituality with those of materialism in the following expression of Narendra:—
"Atme ka rog manusya nahin samajhta; Jiske liya bhi sherizik aushdhiyan Khata hai" ¹⁶⁴

The method of psychological enchantment has been used to psychoanalyse the mental complexes of Gajraj. Moreover, the play has become an actual play also on account of the dramatic skill put in by the playwright.

¹⁶¹Hajiro, p. 66.
¹⁶²Ibid., p. 62.
¹⁶³Ibid., p. 11.
¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 57.
SINDOOR Ki HOLI
(HOLI OF VERMILLION)

Sindoar Ki Holi is considered as the most important
creation among Mishra's all problem plays. Having written the three acts of
Rajyag in the first three days, Mishra wrote the other three
acts of Sindoar Ki Holi in the next three days of 1932, and
both plays were published simultaneously at the end of the
same year.

The title of this play is the expression of the very soul
of its action. Sindoar Ki Holi has a direct link with Chandra-
kala's personal relation with Rajanikant, being distracted
from Anoj, and even knowing the fact that Rajanikant is a
married man, she makes a complete personal sacrifice of her
soul for him, and without having any experience of her youthful
life, and remaining unmarried socially or practically, she
becomes a widow. The widowhood of Manorama is that of her post-
marrige period, which is recognized by the society, but, in

165 V. Kumar, op.cit., p. 181.
166 Bhati, op.cit., p. 83.
167 Rakehes Ka Mandir, p. 10. (Preface). Mishra has written
that Roy Krishnadas, after going through the former's first three
plays, inspired him to write a few more plays for publication by
Bharti-Bhandar. Bhati, in his book referred to in this thesis, and
D. Ojha, in his book entitled Hindi Natak Rupay Aur Vikas, (p.486),
have taken 1934 as the year of the creation of Sindoar Ki Holi,
whereas Mishra himself has written that both Rajyag and Sindoar
Ki Holi were written and published in 1932.
the context of society, the widowhood of Chandrakala is that of an unmarried woman. The end of the play in the throw of vermillion on the head of Chandrakala with the dying hand of Rajanikant, in a hospital, also points aptly to the appropriateness of the title of the play.

The first act opens with the scene of the bungalow of deputy collector Murarilal, who shows his anxiety in his conversation with his clerk, Manir Ali, to arrange the amount of expenses to be incurred on Manoj’s going abroad for higher study, from some client. The clerk informs him that Roy Sahab Bhagwant Singh wants to kill Rajanikant in order to usurp his share in the parental property by bribing a sum of rupees ten thousand to Murarilal. Another fact is also revealed that some ten years back, Murarilal was instrumental in killing Manoj Shankar’s father but, out of repentance for this sin, Murarilal has been taking care of health, happiness and education of Manoj so that Manoj knows that his father had committed suicide but remains worried to know the reason why his father did so. Gradually, Manoj develops mental complexes, and the conversation between Murarilal and his daughter Chandrakala reveals that Manoj has been ill at Lucknow. By and by, the amount of the bribe reaches Murarilal, who alerts Bhagwant Singh not to kill Rajanikant, but, in case he is killed, Murarilal would like to extract four-times of the bribed amount but he demands for this heavy amount with a
view to safeguard the life of Rajanikant. Murarilal gives middle-class logic that even if he had not accepted the bribe, Bhagwant Singh must have escaped unconvicted by bribing the witnesses to force the judgement in his favour because laws do not safeguard human rights. 168

Chandrakala has sympathy for Rajanikant, who has won her heart at first sight. Manorma, who is a widow from her childhood, appears with a picture of Rajanikant, painted by her. Though she was married at eight and her husband died only after two years from marriage, she does not feel the pangs of widowhood, because she did not experience the thing and the experience of such an unexperienced thing cannot cause any agony. 169 The conversation between Chandrakala and Manorma gives vent to the former's deep-seated love for Rajanikant. Having seen his father in the dream and received the full salary of Murarilal, Manoj develops mental agony and does not appear at the examination. He comes straightway to Murarilal. He earnestly tries to know why his father is

168 Lakshmi Narayan Mishra, Sindoor Ki Holi, (Allahabad: Bhojpur Anand, 1973), p. 28. ("Murarilal - hamlog shunyaya aur uske adhikar ki rakeha ke liye kursi per nahn bhi te... Manologen ka to koi hai keval kanoon ki raka kehna ...") All later references to this book have been made to this edition only.

169 Ibid., p. 32. ("Manorma - jis vaste ka anumay hua hi nahn ... us abhav ka dukh kaya ?").
alleged to commit suicide. In the meanwhile, Rajanikant, with severe head injury, is brought by a few men. He looks at Chandrakala.

The conversation between Manoj and Manorma, at the opening of the second act informs that she feels attracted to him, whereas Murarilal is attracted to her.\textsuperscript{170} Manorma has love for Manojshankar and hatred for Murarilal.\textsuperscript{171} She wants to come in real life along with Manoj but with new ideals. She prefers spiritual relation to physical relation with him. She sees even the social problems in the context of spirituality. In the meanwhile, Murarilal informs that the condition of Chandrakala is worsening, but Manoj remains deeply absorbed in knowing the reasons for his father's alleged suicide. When Manoj's relation with Manorma is criticised by Murarilal, Manoj says that he has got the hand of Manorma in order to remain unmarried for ever. Murarilal is getting frustrated in every way, and Manojshankar, now, begins to hold himself responsible for Rajanikant's murder, because the bribe taken by Murarilal was to meet the expenses of Manoj's proposed educational journey to abroad. Manoj,

\textsuperscript{170}Ibid., p. 50. ("Manorma ...Main tumhe chahti hun ... Tumhara saath ek prakar ki atmiyata ka anubhay mein karti hun ..., xxx Tumhara saheb bhi mujhe prem karne lage hain...").

\textsuperscript{171}Ibid., p. 51. ("Manorma - Main to unhe ji bhar kar ghrina karna chahti hun aur tumhe ji bhar kar prem ... Main tumhe apna dulha to nahin bana sakti lekin premi bane lungi...").
therefore, feels acute pangs of agony. He goes to Chandrakala and requests her to walk along in order to get rid of her inner suffering. Ranorma considers widowhood a kind of great philosophy and poetry. She opines that widow marriage cannot annihilate the problem of widowhood,172 and that man's movement for the upliftment of widows is the movement for his own upliftment. Manoj and Chandrakala go for a walk, and Murariilal decides to accept rupees forty thousand as further amount of bride.

From the very beginning of the scene in the third act, a death-inducing atmosphere has been presented by the playwright. Mahir Ali considers that night to be the night of total annihilation. Chandrakala is restless to see the worsening condition of Rajanikant. Manoj comes to know from Mahir Ali how his father was killed. Chandrakala appears in a wedding dress, and informs that she has also become a widow. She says that 'chirantan naritva' (eternal feminine) has taken rise in her, and with this consciousness, she makes up her mind to immortalise her widowhood. She had kept vermilion with the dying hand of Rajanikant on her head, in the hospital. She

172 Ibid., p. 90 ("Ranorma ... Vaidhabya to mitga nahin ... Talak ka aagman hoga ...").
wants to attain liberation through her widowhood. She has played holi of vermillion. Both Chandrakala and Manorma talk on widowhood from their own different points of view. Hurarilal informs about the death of Rajanikant, and feels dejected from all sides. At last, he proposes for the marriage between Chandrakala and Manojshankar but she turns down the proposal on the plea that Manoj has been taking revenge from her due to his father's murder at the hands of Murarilal. She has expressed her repentance for rupees fifty thousand by putting vermillion on her head. At the end of the play, Murarilal is left alone because all others make up their mind to go away from him.

A number of problems have found their intellectual discussion in the play Sindoor Ki Holi, but they are so inter-related that they donot impede the general comprehension of the theme of the play. The problem of protection by means of laws has been presented in the characters of deputy collector Murarilal and Roy Sahab Bhagwant Singh. Both of them get an innocent man like Rajanikant killed only because he happens to be the share-holder in the parental property with Bhagwant Singh, and Murarilal has to arrange the amount of

173 Ibid., p. 103 ("Chandrakala ... Mere bhitar aaj chhirantan naritva ka uday hue hai ... Main aaj apne pairon per khari ho rehi hun ... xxx Mere purush mujhe gulami man na rakh saka ... Mujhe sadaiv ke liye suatantra kar gaya ..." (pp. 104-105).
expenses for the proposed foreign journey of Anoj, with the oribe to be taken from some clients.

The problem of widows has been presented in the character of Ranorma, who, being herself a widow from the age of ten, does not speak in favour of widow-marriage, which, to her, will cause the another problem of divorce, and give a new opportunity to men to play with the life of widows. She wants intellectual solution to the problems of widows.174

The problem of 'ohirantan naritva' (eternal feminine), which is an eternal problem of the life of an Indian woman, has been discussed in the characters of Chandrakala and Ranorma. The question is whether woman should be allowed to make unrestrained love, for which woman emancipation is exhorted, or disciplined marriage under which a woman has to surrender as per the social ideals. Chandrakala has attained the 'ohirantan naritva' because she feels free from the slavery of man, and independent to take up any vocation of her choice. Moreover, she has adopted such widowhood that no one can keep her under his control.

The other problem, which has found a logical discussion in this play, is the problem of widow-marriage. This problem has been analysed in the conversation between Ranorma and Ranojshankar. Ranorma considers widow-marriage against the

174 Ibid., p. 52 (Ranorma's statements).
nature of woman and detrimental to the welfare of society. To her, widow-marriage gives emphasis on physical enjoyment whereas she considers widowhood a kind of Indian philosophy as well as poetry, which teaches the great virtues of service and sacrifice.

The problem of medical treatment has been raised when Chandrakala suffers from mental agony and she is prescribed the treatment for the bodily diseases. Manoj ridicules this unsuccessful treatment and treats Chandrakala psychologically by taking her to a walk along with him. This tells about the incompleteness of the allopathic system of treatment which requires psychological treatment for its completion.

In fine, the play discusses the problems of corrupted legal system, bribery and temptation for money among the officers' class, the personal relations between man and woman and the incomplete system of allopathic medical treatment. The impact of Freudian psychology is seen in the depiction of the mental disorderliness of Manoj, Mahir Ali, and Chandrakala.

The problem of partition of the parental property has been raised in the character of Bhagwant Singh, who gets his innocent nephew-partner, Rajanikant, killed by bribing the deputy collector. The problem of justice is related to this problem.

A hint to sex problem also has been given in the play. Chandrakala falls in love with Rajanikant at first sight. Manorma likes Manoj but with different ideals. Murari Lal feels attracted to Manorma. Manorma criticises the sexy nature of man.

There are four main characters in this play - Manorma, Chandrakala, Manoj, Shankar, and Murari Lal. But the female characters are more revolutionary and intellectual in the discussion of problems.

Manorma is a widow from the age of ten but immune to the pangs of widowhood, on the contrary, widowhood, to her is a kind of philosophy and poetry. Therefore, she does not favour widow-marriage, which, according to her, would worsen the widows' conditions by creating another problem of divorce and giving new opportunities to man to play with widows. She wants intellectual solution to the problem of widowhood for which she gives logical and intelligent arguments. She can accept Manoj as her lover but not as her bridegroom.

Chandrakala is an Indian woman who has received a fair share of westernised education. Believing in free love, she falls in love with Rajanikant at first sight and does not bother for the fact that he is already married. Rajanikant always behaves under the limitation of a married man but

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Chandrakala goes beyond the social law and receives Vermillion on her head from the hand of Rajanikant, when he is breathing his last in the hospital, and declares herself to be his widow. She feels that 'chirantan naritva' has awakened in her and no man would be able to subjugate her in the bond of marriage. She likes to lead an independent life of her own likes and dislikes.

The character of Nanojankar is that of a young man who develops mental disorderliness in absence of the caring affection of parents, and whose ailments go on worsening till he comes to know the truth about his father's death. Nanoj's father was put to death by Murarilal for the greed of a sum of rupees eight thousand only with which Murarilal had bought a car and got a bungalow constructed, but Nanoj was given wrong information that his father had committed suicide. Therefore, he suffers more and considers himself as the son of a father who committed suicide. Out of his repentance for murdering Nanoj's father, Murarilal has been providing for all the necessities including education of Nanoj. But Nanoj's mental agony goes on aggravating so much that he gives up his studies and frustrates the design of Murarilal for getting his daughter Chandrakala married with him. He finds himself responsible for the murder of Rajanikant because for this murder Dhaugant Singh had given bribe to Murarilal with which he was to be sent abroad.
for study. Knowing the truth about his father's death from Mahir Ali, he feels relief, and decides to lead an independent life.

Mutarilal is a realistic portrait of the 'contractor of modern legal system' who feels that his duty is to protect laws and not the human rights. He is greedy of collecting more and more money. He has forgotten common morality in amassing wealth by hook or by crook. He got Manojshankar's father killed for eight thousand rupees and Rajunikant for fifty thousand rupees. But he has some sense of repentance for the crime of the first murder. Therefore, he goes on providing everything to Manoj but, here also, for getting his daughter married to him, ultimately. But Manoj develops mental complexes, because the truth about his father's death is kept as secret by Mutarilal, and frustrates Mutarilal at the end. Mutarilal interprets everything from his own selfish and logical points of view, but, at last, everybody even his daughter, leaves him alone. He has to reap what he had sown.

A minor character, like Mahir Ali, also plays his important role in the development of the action of the play. He is sensitive to the danger in which he lives. So he suffers mental agony but does not tell the truth about Manoj's father's death. But, at last, he is relieved when he unites his mental knot. Shaguant Singh is a typical partner in Indian family system who keeps his eye on suppressing his partners in the joint property.
The dialogues in the play *Sindoor Ki Holi* are dramatic and they help the movement of the action of the play and portrayal of characters. Dialogues comprise both ideas and language. Ideas further the action of the play, portray characterization and suggest the theme of the play. Being suited to the characters, language maintains naturalness in the dialogues. The use of broken sentences by Chhurukala, Manorma, and Manojshankar indicates that they have the power of both mind and heart, and can give intellectual discussion of problems without their complete freedom from emotions.

The following dialogue is simple but it divulges startling cause of an action that amounts to inversion:

"Muralilal: Manoj, tum kahan? Pariksha nahin dee?
Manojshankar: Jee Nahin....
Muralilal: Kayon?
Manojshankar: Koi labh nahin.
Muralilal: Rupaya nahin mila kaya?
Manojshankar: Mila to.
Muralilal: Tab?
Manojshankar: Rupaya mila... isiliye pariksha chhorkar chala aaya...."181

Certain dialogues have become a bit longer where intellectual content has required logical and thorough discussion. Educated characters express maximum of sense in minimum of words.

178 Ibid., p. 209.
179 Bhati, op.cit., p. 97.
180 Chaodha, op.cit., p. 134.
181 *Sindoor Ki Holi*, p. 45.
The importance of wit and humour is seen in the language the characters use in their dialogues. The conversation between Manoj and Manorma in the second act satirizes the incompleteness of the medical treatment:

"Manojshankar: Doctor sahab, fess jo kahiya dila di jaye, lekin use byarthe man kaste na dijiya".183

The element of humour is noticed in the following short conversation between Manorma and Manoj, who talk about what the doctor is doing to Chandrakala to diagnose her disease:

Manojshankar: Doctor gaye?

Manorma: Abhi nahin... Manojshankar: Keya ker raha hain?

Manorma: Ker keya raha hain, deh dabi raha hain...?

Manojshankar: Us daga raha hain? (laughing)

Manorma: Parihas samajh raha ho? Chikar dekh le! Kabhi sir par haath rakhta hain, kabhi chhati par, kabhi bann par, kabhi jangh par, mein to samajhti hun ki voh khilwar kar rehen hain".184

At the same place, wit is apparently used by Manoj in reply to Manorma's dialogue:

"Manojshankar: Voh unke saath khilwar kar raha hain aur tum mere saath khilwar kar rahi ho? (Manorma dharti ki or dekhne lagi hai) Keyon, eedhar dekho ....... 185"

A simple expression by Bhagwant Singh, like the following, tells a world of things about his character: "Pattiuw aur

182 M. Ojha, Manu Samay-Natak, p. 209.
183 Sindoor Ki Holi, p. 71.
184 Ibid., p. 49.
185 Ibid.
In a nutshell, the play marks an improvement in both the dramatic art, technique and content. The action of the play is inspired by the principles of psychology in relation to sex, mental complexes, and suspicion. The characterization is also done on realistic plane through the intellectual discussion of the problems by the characters.

AADHI RAAT
(MID-NIGHT)

Aadhi Raat is Mishra's sixth problem play which was written in 1934. It exhibits the dramatic skill of the playwright in respect of its selection of plot and its organisation. There are two leading characters - Prakash Chandra and Mayavati. Prakash Chandra has his own problem but in order to bring completeness in the discussion of his problem, the character of Mayavati has been created. On the other hand, Mayavati has also her own problem in which Prakash Chandra's contribution is essential to enable her to carry out the experiments. Thus, a fine blend in both the characters has been effected to discuss their problem thoroughly.

186 Ibid., p. 16.
187 Gaur, op.cit., p. 287.
The title of the play is meaningful. The mid-night is the time for the flow of men's passionate designs as well as for the creation of imaginative works of art. Moreover, ghosts also find convenience in their free movement at this time. Almost all the incidents of the plot are also related to the mid-night.

The first act of the play introduces a mid-night scene which is illuminated by the rising full-moon. Prakashchandra, basically a poet who considers art as the expression of the experiences of soul, is seen talking with Raghaveharan, who criticises the former's approach to art, and considers the imaginative expressions of emotions as unreal and impractical for life. Raghaveharan throws light on the past life of the woman with whom Prakashchandra has been living, and he criticises the latter for the same, but the latter has his own logic to defend his actions. It is further informed that the woman had been to England, and returned to India, after her father's death, with her two barrister friends who kept on loving her in European way. Ultimately, both became jealous of each other, and one was shot dead by the other.

Lakshmi Narayan Mishra, Aadhi Raat (Allahabad: Bharati Bhandar, Vikram Sambat, 1993), pp. 12-13. "Usne ek hi saath do purushon se prem kiya aur ant mendono ke naam ka karan bani ... Ek to mera gaya, aur duare ko kalapani ki saja hui - bise vara ki". (All other references to this book have been made to this edition only).
who was sent* to Kalapani as a punishment, but on the occasion of the coronation of the emperor, has been released, and, now, he lives like a lunatic near the bank of the river, whereas the former lover lives on the tree as a ghost.

Prakashchandra suffers from mental agony when he learns that the house in which he lives with the woman belongs to her former lover, who, now, lives near the bank of the river, and plays on pipe which is audible to Prakashchandra also. The woman is Mayavati, who does not like that Raghavsharan should shock the tender heart of Prakash Chandra by relating the past stories of her life. She says that Prakashchandra has been adopted by her as a friend, and not as a husband. She has married with him because, being a man also, he is not a man in whose company she has any fear of physical pleasure. 190 Therefore, she is making an experiment regarding the services by a woman to a man while living in his company. 191 She has all her best wishes for Prakashchandra, and wishes to remain a simple Hindu woman. 192 She does not oppose woman education, but she does talk against its system. 193 When Prakashchandra complains against her for breach of faith, she says that she

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190 Aadhi Rast, p. 33.
191 Ibid., "Seva karna main chahi thi, kar rahi hun. Stri ko avsar mil sake ki voh purush ki seva kare..."
192 Ibid., p. 35.
193 Ibid., p. 36.
has been serving him for the last five years, and she has obtained happiness and satisfaction in it.

The second act opens with the conversation between Raghavsharan and Mayavati, which informs that Prakashchandra has been suffering from certain mental complexes. Mayavati expresses her faith in the existence of ghost, and feels the impact of the ghost, which lives on the nearby tree, on the mind of Prakashchandra, who, very often, sees that ghost in his dream. Kalicharan, who has come back from Kalapani, is also seen talking with that ghost. Both Prakashchandra and Mayavati talk about how they lived together in service of each other for five years. The former moves towards the life of suspicion; whereas the latter, towards Indian spiritualism. Prakashchandra informs that he was also married, but since his wife, who is still living, was not of his imagination, he left her, and tied himself with Mayavati, who further says that since she was the woman of his imagination, he liked to live with her.

Now, Prakashchandra suffers from turbulent passion for which Mayavati becomes frustrated in her experiment. She criticises him for this, and explains the conclusions of her experiment. He comes to realise that all his creations done so far have been unreal. Radhaacharan feels for the sufferings of Prakashchandra, who has done no harm to the ghost, but is oppressed most. Mayavati feels sorry for the trouble to
Prakashchandra, who suffered for her sake, and relates a dream to him in which she says that there was a lotus flower in water where a woman was drowned to death. The king moved forward to get hold of the flower, which moved on to deep water, and she was drowned to death, as a consequence of which there appeared two flowers in place of one. It is, thus, clear that she wishes to obtain Prakashchandra in her next life, as Aashadovi, in Rukti Ka Kahaana, wishes to obtain Uma Shankar Sharma in her next life. She explains the causes of woman problem and says that since all the rights, even the right to serve man, have been denied to woman, woman-problem has cropped up. She informs that Raghavshanran is also having a fancy to her.

Prakashchandra feels a kind of detachment from life in a state of trance, and whatever he speaks is penned down by Mayavati. Radhacharan makes a reference to four persons - Prakashchandra, Radhacharan, ghost and Mayavati - as the members of a family. He says that man should get victory over his weaknesses; and that Mayavati developed her ideals of womanhood by marrying and serving Prakashchandra with the sense of service and sacrifice. Mayavati commits suicide by drowning herself to death. Prakashchandra sets all his imaginative creations on fire, thinking it to be unreal and imaginary. And here, the play comes to an end.

Mishra has made two important problems as the subject of logical discussion in this play - the ideal of woman emancipation.
(chirantan naritva), and the artist's responsibility towards society. Both are eternal problems, but Mishra has propounded them, as in his play Singhur Ki Holi, in the context of the conflicting ideas of India and west, for which they acquire contemporary significance in Indian life also.

Under the problem of 'chirantan naritva', a comparative depiction of woman-independence and disciplined marriage has been presented in the character of Mayavati, who is an Indian lady brought up in westernized education. In the name of woman emancipation, she loved two men, who became rivals of each other and met their doom. Having received a blow to her westernized ideals of love, she gave up her attachment to free love and woman emancipation, and became prepared for disciplined and unified sacrifice and service to man. Making a comparative study of the ideals of west and those of India, she says that the ideal of marriage in India involves no bondage. Besides this, the ideals of woman's life have also been further intensified by the experiment of Mayavati, who serves Prakashchandra, who has deserted his wife because she is uneducated and rustic, for five years, living together as married husband and wife, so cautiously that there is no smell of physical passion. This experiment is devised to prove

194 Aadh Rast, p. 34. "Stri purush ki mangal-kamna aas vrat rakhti hai ... Iska adhystamik aur manovaligyanik prashav purus per perta hai ..."
that the protection of a man lies in the hands of a woman. Rayavati says clearly that all cautiousness is for a woman, not for a man, because his cautiousness causes revolt.

The problem of the artist's responsibility in creating his art has been represented in the character of Prakashchandra. The playwright remarks that the artist should see the problems in the universal perspective, and forget his individual limitations while writing a book. Having fallen in the grip of individual desires, Prakashchandra deserts his rustic wife, and maintains a tie with Rayavati, who also deserts him ultimately after undertaking an experiment with him to tell him the true ideals of life and art. He has been presented as suffering from not only certain mental disorderliness but also as becoming a prey to the impact of ghost, which also indicates that what he has been creating, has been the mere creation of a perverted mind.

Turbulent passion has been criticised in the play. A woman like Rayavati, who has four lovers in her life, has no alternative but to commit suicide. 196

193 Ibid., p. 85. "Dahan kahin purushatva ka patan hogi, uski jismedari kisi na, kisi rup men stri par hogi ..."

196 Aadhi Raat, p. 133. "Din stree ke jiwun men ek, do, tin, char - itne prem he uthe - aiva aatmhatya ke voh aur ker hi keya sakegi? ..."
There are three male characters and only one female character in this play. The character of Raghavasharan has been portrayed as the friend of Prakashchandra, who is a poet and lives with Mayavati, but he always tries to separate his friend from the woman because, to him, Mayavati is his friend's problem, and advises his friend Prakashchandra to take his art to the height of universality after crossing the boundaries of individual limitations. He informs Prakashchandra that Mayavati is a woman of bad past, and has already become the cause of the doom of her two lovers. He develops a fancy to Mayavati himself for which he scolds him.

Radhacharan is an educated man who has love for Mayavati, but when another man falls in love with her, out of sheer rivalry, he shoots the other lover dead, who becomes a ghost and lives on a nearby tree, and he himself undergoes the punishment of Kalapani for the murder of his rival. On the occasion of the emperor's coronation, his punishment is made light and he is released with other prisoners. Now, he lives near the bank of the river and has learnt the method of controlling ghosts. When he comes to know that a ghost is troubling Prakashchandra, he comes to his rescue. He scolds the ghost and asks it not to trouble the innocent man. With the help of his knowledge, he talks with the ghost and asks it to go away.
Prakashchandra is a poet who has deserted his wife simply because she is not of his imagination, but has tied himself with Mayavati, who, after making an experiment with him, deserts him by committing suicide. He has been living with Mayavati for five years and creating poetry about the experiences of his soul. After the completion of five years, when he comes to know that he has failed to understand even Mayavati, he comes to realise that all his creations have been unreal. Therefore, at the end of the play, he is setting his creations on fire. Raghavsharan criticises his art as unreal and Radhacharan comes to help him from the trouble of ghost.

The character of Mayavati is that of an Indian lady who has received westernised education as well as the impact of western ideals. When she returns to India, she is accompanied by two lovers. One is shot dead by the other. The dead lover becomes a ghost and the living one is sent to Kaliapani as punishment. Having seen this spectacle, Mayavati wants to make an experiment in the duty of a woman as service to man. She does this for five years with Prakashchandra. She marries him, lives with him, serves him but does not have any experience of passion. But when Prakashchandra comes to know about her experiment, he feels passion for her. Raghavsharan also develops a fancy for her. After completing her experiment and having a wish to obtain Prakashchandra, she commits suicide by drowning herself in the river.
The dialogues in this play display the playwright's maturity in the art of dialogue writing. They are suited to both the characters and the content of the play. A new experiment has been carried out in the dialogues between the ghost and Radhacharan. The conversation between Mayavati and Prakashchandra on one hand, and that between the ghost and Radhacharan, on the other, have been organised simultaneously, which cause a little inconvenience in getting at the content at the first reading.

The playwright has made use of the symbolic technique in the conversation between Mayavati and Prakashchandra in which she relates a story of the love of the king and the queen with the help of a lotus flower in water. With the use of this symbolic dialogue, Mayavati has conveyed her wish for obtaining Prakashchandra in her next life.

The elements of wit and humour have made the dialogues more effective and dramatic. In the conversation between the ghost and Radhacharan, some elements of humour may be discerned but that humour is of different kind. It is not like the open laughter of a healthy character.

There are certain expressions which are witty as well as humorous:

197 *Aaghi Rast*, p. 103.
"Mayawati ... Apne ghar men jinhe jagah nahin hoti, ve hi dueron ke prabandhak hote hain". 198

"Radhacharan ... Gyan ki baaten karmal nahin rok sakti". 199

"Mayavati ... Savdhani stri ke liye hai, purus ke liye nahin ..." 200

Unlike other five problem plays discussed before, this play has only two acts which are not divided further into scenes. Time of the action of the play is limited to the title of the play. Intellectually also, the incidents of the plot as well as the portrayal of characters cannot be said unnatural. The play is not voluminous but contains certain matured ideas of the playwright. The victory of the Indian ideals over western ideals of life indicates the temperament of an Indian playwright like Mishra.

In order to make the discussion of Mishra's problem plays complete, it is deemed indispensable to have an inkling of his such one-act plays also which present the social questions of the contemporary life and elucidate the ideas and the issues contained in the problem plays. Pralay Ke Pankh Par is Mishra's compilation of six one-act plays which deal with the problems of woman, peasants and family life. All the one-act plays have organised plots and effective dialogues.

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198 Ibid., p. 119.
199 Agni Raat, p. 95.
200 Ibid., p. 89.
Pratap Ke Pankh Par is a one-act play which depicts the oddities caused by the difference in the opinions of the father Keshep Chandra, who professes old ideals of life, and the son Dayaram, who is a youth coloured in communist stream of thoughts. Manjula and Dayaram are the members of the same revolutionary party. Naturally, they sit together even at late hours at night to discuss their plans and programmes, which the old father of Dayaram does not like. When Dayaram leaves the house in the darkness of the night, rain and storm begin at a time. The father's heart melts and he goes out in search of his son but a tree falls on him. Dayaram and Manjula reach there with a torch and the father is rescued, who allows them to live together after their marriage. The problem depicted here is the conflict between the old and the new ideals of life, and the playwright has affected a compromise between the two.

Belop Se Jali tells the story of two brothers - Jagadish and Bholanath. Bholanath has been picking up squabbles on account of misunderstanding and differences of opinions. Jagadish inspires his wife Vimla to have all the good wishes for his younger brother Bholanath. The old mother and Bholanath's wife Kishori walk on foot to console the death of the only son of Jagadish. The old mother faints and is nursed by both daughters-in-law. A happy compromise is effected between two brothers when Bholanath begs apology of Jagadish.
Her Tor see is another one-act play which shows that the main cause for the quarrel in the villages is the breaking of the boundary lines of the plots of land. Raghunath, physically stronger and quarrelsome, breaks the boundary line of the field of Bhola Chaudhury who does not object to it but his young son Banwari reacts against Raghunath for which the young man is beaten severely. The case is brought in the law court. All the villagers condemn Raghunath and support Banwari. So Raghunath begs apology and he is forgiven. This play has presented the problems of the peasants' life, and the bribe prevailing among the police men, the doctors and other officers.

Ganga Ki Laharan presents the problem as to under which conditions the wife should get a right to relinquish her husband. Shrichand takes away Yamuna to protect her from torturous husband. Yamuna wants physical pleasure with Shrichand who declines. Yamuna becomes revengeful and alleges against Shrichand of her abduction. In absence of evidence, Shrichand is sent to prison for seven years. Yamuna is married to the same drunkard. When Shrichand returns from prison, she earnestly begs for his apology and appeals him to rescue her from the torturous husband who has not made any physical contact with her so far. Shrichand is to marry her under compulsion.
_Bharti Ke Niche_ presents the social oddities which have been caused by the love-affair between Mohini, the daughter of Pleader Hajaram, and Kripashankar.

The problem of growing population in the country has been presented in the one-act play, _Chakachaonoh_. A conflict between the older and the new streams of thoughts has also been depicted in the action of this play. The leading character of the play is Manohar who argues against his grandfather's remarriage.

_Ek Din_ is yet another important one-act play by Lakshmi Narayan Mishra. This was included in the collection prepared for the greeting of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on his sixtieth birth anniversary.

In this play, the problem of the maintenance of the old convention of witnessing the girl before her marriage has been presented successfully. Rajnath, a firm believer in old ideas of life, has a son Mohan and a daughter Shila. Mohan wants to get his sister married to Niranjan, who is a well-off youth and wants to witness the girl himself before his marriage. Ultimately, Rajnath is persuaded by his son Mohan to allow Niranjan to witness Shila. When Niranjan comes to witness Shila, she argues that when a young man like him goes to witness a young girl like Shila, he becomes blind with feelings of love, and in that blindness, he cannot
exercise his judgement correctly. Being defeated, Niranjan says that he has understood his whole life in one day (ek din).

The analysis of Mishra's problem plays shows that they are the results of his reaction against the depiction of emotion and romance in the contemporary Hindi drama. Therefore, they give an intellectual and psychological discussion of the realities of life, like their English counterparts. They deal with the problems of sex, love, marriage, co-education, prostitution, corruption in law-courts and partition of family property. Out of the discussion of these problems, Mishra's philosophy of life emerges clearly. The characters are mostly educated and taken from middle-class. They live a real life like any common man and woman. None of them are entirely good or entirely bad. The language they use is very near to common speech. It is neither like the sanskritized language used by the characters of Joy Shankar Prasad nor like the rhetorical and romantic one used by those of D.L. Roy. The use of silent acting and broken sentences has added to the psychological meaning of the plays. Stage-directions

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201 Dr. Nagendra, op.cit., p. 35.
202 Mukti Ke Rahanva, p. 19. (Pref.).
203 Shashishekhar Naithani, op.cit., p. 31.
204 Ranvani, p. 3 (Pref.).
are apt and suggestive of real-life situation. The use of asides, soliloquies and songs has been done away with. However, since the country was struggling for independence at the time these problem plays were written, a reference to Gandhi and freedom movement has been made in them. In order to free the country and the people from the prevailing vices, solutions to the problems have also been indicated unlike the problem plays of Ibsen and Shaw. Mishra wants to bring about reform in the Indian society in unison with Indian philosophy of idealism. Moreover, he shows his relationship with the traditional Hindi drama. Therefore, his intellectualism is diluted in sentimentalism and idealism, and the discussion made by his characters is not of that intellectual standard as that of Shaw's characters. Having faith in the re-birth and God, Mishra's characters very often indulge in melodrama. Thus, the influence of Shaw is there on the technique of Mishra's plays but the spirit of the latter's plays remains Indian.