CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
(THE WESTERN CONCEPT OF DRAMATURGY)

All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
(As You Like It, William Shakespeare)

I.i. Introduction:
Drama is one of the vibrant genres of literary expression which orders human experience and it is basically designed for the theatrical performance. It is a story that people act out on a stage before the audience and intend to represent human life usually involving desires, longings, emotions, thoughts and experiences through action, dialogue and other verbal and non-verbal aspects. Drama is not an alienated entity for society as well as the dramatist; instead, it is a composite art in which the author, actor and director combine to produce the total effect. To the audience, it necessitates the know-how in terms of diverse dramatic techniques to elaborate the significance of the play and to achieve a unique correspondence between the forms and content. According to Martin Esslin:

Drama is a mimetic representation of life combining in itself the real and the fictional art and reality and presenting the events and characters within a dimension of space and time. It combines the qualities of narrative poetry with those of visual arts. It is a narrative made visible.

(Esslin 45)

The roots and genesis of drama may be traced back to the great nations and cultures like Greece, Rome, England and India. It is known fact that the drama and dramatic art have always been an inherent element of culture which focus and evaluate wide range of elements of human existence where drama involves philosophical approaches, moral commitments, religious convictions, social and political happenings, etc. The basic element which drama includes is that it is a mimetic representation of life brings in artistically the real and fictional, art and reality and demonstrates the events and characters within a proportion of space and
time. Drama is basically all inclusive as it blends widely the qualities ranging from narrative poetry with those of visual form of an art.

The present thesis entitled **Reconstructing Dramatics: Dramaturgy in Contemporary Experimental Plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar** investigates the dramaturgy in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar. All these playwrights belong to the experimental theatre and they honestly present specific Dramaturgy in their plays. The aim of this thesis is also to enter into the world of the Contemporary Experimental Plays; however, as a matter of convenience, only selected plays of the playwrights have been included for the study and explored in the thesis. The main purpose has been to analyse and interpret of the dramatic techniques and devices used in the Contemporary Experimental plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar.

Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar are the creative playwrights whose names are proudly included in the list of prolific Indian playwrights. They have been conferred with various awards and prizes as their plays converse about their life and experience. These playwrights have enriched the Indian drama and particularly the Marathi Experimental Theatre by picturising the social and cultural life in Maharashtra. They take up typically Indian themes and the plays are deeply rooted in the Indian cultures which imbibe music, theatre, religion and philosophy. These are all ground-breaking writers with a fine sensibility and at the same time a contemplative and controversial dramatists. Because of their highly individual outlook and vision of life and independent style of writing, they have made powerful impression in the field drama to give a new idiom to the post-independent drama.

**I.i. Scope and Limitations:**

The present research work focuses on dramaturgy of the contemporary Marathi translated plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar. Two plays of each dramatist have been selected for the research.

**Vijay Tendulkar:**  
*Silence! The Court is in Session* (1967),  
*Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972)
Satish Alekar:  
*The Dread Departure* (1974)  
*Begum Barve* (1979)  

Mahesh Elkunchwar:  
*Garbo* (1973)  
*Desire in the Rocks* (1974),

This research attempts to study experimentation employed in these plays. It also focuses on thematic aspects and the strategies in which these plays are performed on the stage.

**I.iii. Significance:**

The Contemporary experimental playwrights adopted various dramaturgy, practiced and strengthened it to give a new direction and direction to the Marathi Experimental Theatre. They followed not only Eastern but also Western conceptions of plays and stand significantly on the global level to prove themselves as prolific writers. The present research work is undertaken to explore the basic themes, patterns, crafts and the artistry of the Contemporary Experimental plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar, which is useful to the research community and research institutions so as to provide novel insights for budding creative writers of the plays, script writers of the films, directors and producers of performance theatre, critics and experts of films.

**I.iv. Aims and Objectives:**

The present research work has been carried out with specific aim and objectives:

1. To analyze prerequisite qualities and basic constituent part of contemporary experimental theatre with reference to Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar.
2. To reveal the scope, limitations and functions of experimental plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar.
3. To provide studies of theatrical skills and principles of experimental Plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar.
4. To interpret the use of dramaturgy of the experimental plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar.
5. To find out kaleidoscopic ways of dramatics used in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar.
I.v. Hypothesis:

1. The Contemporary Experimental Plays trace back to Greek and Indian classical drama and their conception of dramaturgy. The plays owe much to modern Experimental plays of Bertolt Brecht, Luigi Pirandello, and Anton Chekhov.
2. The Contemporary Experimental plays also approve to folklore of India.
3. The Contemporary Experimental Plays also subvert traditional theatrical conceptions and dramaturgy.
4. The Contemporary Experimental plays make a ground-breaking culmination in stage craft, dialogues, division of plays, props, light effects, stylistic devices and thematic concerns, etc.
5. The Contemporary Experimental plays have some common threads in dealing with subject matter and dramaturgy.

I.vi. Review of Literature:

Dr. Anand Patil who has submitted his thesis entitled ‘Western Influence on Marathi Drama: A Case Study’ attempts to study the overall changes in theatrical representation of Marathi plays. The thesis highlights on movements of Marathi Theatre in general. The research tends to show the Western Dramatic influence on the Marathi plays. The research highlights the survey of Marathi plays; and how these plays employed various concepts of Western plays. This research is restricted to study general aspects of plays. It does not attempt to highlight on new dramaturgy in Experimental plays.

Terra Norberg has submitted the thesis entitled ‘The Dramaturgy’s Role’ in May 1997, A Thesis in Theatre Arts concentrates on the basic concept of dramaturgy by considering the Western plays. This topic is restricted to the western plays particularly Christopher Isherwood. It does not focus on Contemporary Indian plays.

Emsile B. has submitted his thesis on ‘Bertolt Brecht and The Problem of Marxist Dramaturgy’. It attempts to show how Bertolt Brecht subverted conventional concepts of dramaturgy who disapproved Aristotelian concept of Catharsis. He proposed a theory of alienation effect (Verfremdungseffect) in theatrical representation. However, thesis is restricted to Brecht only. It did not consider the Marathi Experimental Plays.
The above research works on dramaturgy are not very much similar to the proposed research topic. The proposed research focuses on the above subject with different angle of perception.

I.vii. Research Methodology:

The present study intended to analyze and evaluate the primary texts by using various ideological and technical concepts of dramaturgy. The topic of the research being thematic, it has claimed various research methods and techniques that have been applied to analyze the selected plays and brought out the real value of the research. Hence, the research is analytical, descriptive and interpretative in nature.

As such, the present research work aims to analyse and interpret of the dramatic techniques and devices used in the Contemporary Experimental Marathi translated plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar, thus it is essential to define and understand certain concepts in better light and to look at the Dramatics, Dramaturgy and Western concepts of Dramaturgy which consists the prominent dramatists and their dramaturgy from the classical Greek to the contemporary period. It briefly mentions major trends and movements that dominated dramatic world during last two centuries such as Realism, Naturalism, Surrealism, Symbolism, Expressionism, Existentialism, Epic Theatre, Theatre of Cruelty, and Absurd Theatre. It also talks about the dramaturgy proposed by Henrik Ibsen, Antonio Artude, Bertolt Brecht, Anton Chekhov and Samuel Beckett and many others. The review of the Western dramaturgy is needed to be discussed and explored for the present research work to study and understand the Contemporary experimental playwrights whose dramaturgy refers and correlates with traditional Greek, Roman, English, German, French and American Theatre and Theories.

I.viii. Dramatics:

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines the term ‘Dramatics’ as:

*The Study or practice of acting in and producing plays.*

(Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 434)

The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines the term ‘Dramatics’ as follows:

*The study or practice of theatrical arts (as acting and stagecraft).*

(http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/dramatics)
Dramaturgy:

Dramaturgy is the art of dramatic composition and the representation of the main elements of drama on the stage. It explores various dramatic techniques and devices, which comprises dramatic structure, stage craft, set designs and entire textual composition. The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines the term ‘Dramaturgy’ as:

Dramaturgy, the art or technique of dramatic composition or theatrical representation. In this sense English dramaturgy and French dramaturgy are both borrowed from German Dramaturgy, a word used by the German dramatist and critic Gotthold Lessing in an influential series of essays entitled Hamburgische Dramaturgie (“The Hamburg Dramaturgy”), published from 1767 to 1769. The word is from the Greek dramatourgìa, “a dramatic composition” or “action of a play.

(http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/171026/dramaturgy)

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines the term ‘dramaturgy’ as:

The theory and practice of dramatic composition.

(Concise Oxford English Dictionary 434)

The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines the term ‘dramaturgy’ as:

The art or technique of dramatic composition and theatrical representation.

(www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dramaturgy)

J. A. Cuddon defines ‘dramaturgy’ in his book The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory as follows:

The term denotes the principles of dramatic composition and theatrical art, and a dramaturge or dramaturgist is a playwright. In German a Dramaturg is a member of a theatrical company who selects the
reertoire and may help in the arrangement and 
production of plays; a kind of literary adviser.

(Cuddon 241)

Dramaturgy is the study and interpretation of plays for performance on stage.

I.x. Greek Concepts of Drama:

Dramatic literature originated and flourished from Greece in the sixth century B.C.. During the period, Athens was one of the largest city states in Greece and was a prominent political and military power. The first form of drama known as tragedy originated in the Athens. Tragedy, Comedy and Satyr plays were the earliest theatrical forms of Athens to emerge in the world. Aristotle states that the Greek tragedy developed from Dithyrambs and Choral hymns in honour of the God Dionysus which not only praised the God but also often told a story. According to the legend, Thespis, a poet of the sixth century B.C. created drama with a new style where he assumed the part of leading solo character performed the narrative speeches in a dithyrambic story; he recited and the chorus responded. During the century, more than one thousand plays were written by the playwrights; however only thirty one tragedies remain by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides till the date. Among these thirty one plays, the best known tragedies are the Orestian Trilogy by Aeschylus, Oedipus Rex and Antigone by Sophocles and Hippolytus by Euripides. The plays were presented at the festivals in the honour of Dionysus. A competition of dramas was held at these festivals and three plays of different playwrights were selected for the stage performance. Along with the tragedies and satyr plays, comedies were also included in the stage performance. The oldest comedies were written by Aristophanes; the comedies are full of humour along with a mixture of satirical attacks on contemporary public figures, bawdy, scatological jokes and seemingly sacrilegious parodies of the Gods.

The Greek theatre has its own concepts of dramaturgy; playwrights experimented in the form, content and elements. They had used various devices like chorus, music, dance etc.
I.x.i. Principal Elements of Greek Tragedy:
A Greek tragedy normally contained the following parts:

I.x.i.i. The Prologue:
The part before the entrance of the chorus is in monologue or dialogue, setting forth the subject of the drama and the situation from which it starts. Chris Baldick explains the prologue:

An introductory section of a play, speech, or other literary work. The term is also sometimes applied to the performer who makes an introductory speech in a play.

(Baldcik 206)

I.x.i.ii. The Episodes:
The episode is an incident in a narrative action which consists of a dialogue between two characters, a particular scene or longer action. These episodes have a continuous flow so as to produce a single story with a beginning, middle and end. In Greek tragedy, episodes were parts between choral odes. A tragedy is divided into the following parts; the prologue, episode and exode. An episode is all that comes in between two whole choral songs; it is similar to an act and contains lyrical passages, lamentations, incidental songs by the chorus, etc.

I.x.i.iii. The Dithyramb or Choral Songs:
Dithyramb means a form of hymn or choral lyric. The Greek tragedy contained two elements, choral and satyr plays. The choral was expressed in a variety of lyric meters, arranged in strophes and antistrophes, occasionally with added epodes. The chorus was drawn up in a rectangular form; its movements were based on this arrangement and the same was accompanied on the flute. Its principal dance was of a dignified character. According to Chris Baldick:

Ode, an elaborately formal Lyric poem, often in the form of a lengthy ceremonious address to a person or abstract entity, always serious and elevated in tone. There are two different classical models: Pindar's Greek Choral Odes devoted to public praise of athletes (5th century BCE) and Horace's more privately reflective odes in Latin (c.23-13BCE). Pindar composed his odes for performance by a
chorus, using lines of varying length in a complex three-part structure of Strophe, Antistrophe and Epode corresponding to the chorus's dancing movements.

(Baldick 177)

I.x.i.iv. Chorus:

The word ‘Chorus’ was originally used in ancient Greece to mean a place for dancing and singing. M. H. Abrams describes Chorus as:

Among the ancient Greeks the chorus was a group of people, wearing masks; who sang or chanted verses while performing dance like manoeuvres at religious festivals. A similar chorus played a part in Greek tragedies where they served mainly as commentators on the dramatic actions and events.

(Abrams 35)

At the festival of Dionysus, the function of the chorus consisted of singing the praises of the God and his achievements. Later, a separate actor was introduced with whom the leader of the chorus carried on a conversation instead of, as before, with fellow members. The function of chorus in the plays was very significant. They may expound the past comment on the present forebode the future. Chorus was a mouthpiece of the dramatist and the audience with a counterpart of himself. Chorus creates the atmosphere of contrast, of escape and relief, the Greek chorus in the hands of its masters was consummately used.

In the Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex, Chorus holds the balance between Oedipus and his antagonists marks the progress of their struggles and restates the main theme and its new variation after each dialogue.

I.x.i.v. Dance:

The unique feature of Greek drama was pure song, dance and mime with a flute player also playing and dancing. The Greek plays began with a prologue, recited by a single character or sometimes two. After a prologue, the chorus entered the stage from the right side singing and dancing. The song was always accompanied with dance. Bharat Gupt says:
The chorus presented a dramatic response in continuation of the dramatic action, to the episode, making it an expression of hope, sorrow, despair or happiness through song and dance.

(Gupt 146)

I.xi. Major Playwrights of Greek Tragedy:
Tragedy as a genre or a literary form began in Greece. Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were early masters of the tragedy who made Greek tragedy immortal through various experimentations in their plays.

I.xi.i. Aeschylus:
Aeschylus was the creator of tragedy who wrote more than ninety plays, of which only seven are extant. These plays are The Persians, The Seven Against Theobs, The Eumenides, The Woman of Etna, Orestia, Promtheus Bound, Chepohoroi and Agamemnon.

Aeschylus is a tragic playwright who introduced the element of grandeur in the plays, grandeur in themes, as well as in language. Nietzsche in his Birth of Tragedy has rightly comments:

Aeschylus that in his tragedies there is a bold reaffirmation of the will to live in the face of death and the joy of its inexhaustibility when so reaffirmed.

(Nietzsche 13)

Aeschylus completely transformed the structure of the play. Before him in the plays of Thespis and Phrynichus one actor was introduced in the plays. The introduction of the second actor by Aeschylus made drama worthwhile. Before Aeschylus, there was no conflict in drama. Aeschylus was a man of theatre who was a stage manager, actor and playwright; he supervised each of his plays and watched, with interest, if there was any scope for improvement.

I.xi.ii. Sophocles:
Sophocles was a pioneer of Greek drama. Basavraj Tallur explains his talent in the dramatic traditions in the following words:
Sophocles was a pioneer of Greek drama. But as the Shakespeare of Greek drama he had a Marlowe in Aeschylus.

(Tallur 25)

Sophocles was known for his wide accomplishments with athletics, dance, music and an ideal perfection. Sophocles wrote one hundred and twenty plays; only seven of which are extant. They are: Antigone, Oedipus Tyrannus, Electra, Ajax, Trachiniae, Philoctetes and Oedipus at Colonus. Aristotle warmly praises Sophocles ideal tragedy in his Poetics:

Oedipus Tyrannus is an ideal tragedy, which illustrate the problem of fate.

(Aristotle 10)

The major contribution of Sophocles is that he increased the number of actors from two to three. Chorus was predominant in the Greek plays however on the introducing the third actor, the attention of the audience was drawn to acting. In the plays of Aeschylus, there were two actors. Sophocles had various reasons for introducing the third actor. He sought to throw light on the hero from different points of view. Aeschylus depicted relatively simple characters, characters with single traits. Sophocles on the other hand, made the characters complex. Music was necessity to the ancient Greeks. Through the chorus, Sophocles offered a new form and spirit of music to his audience, which had an irresistible appeal to them. Another contribution of Sophocles was that he attired his actors in gorgeous dresses, robes of saffron and purple, garlands and lovely girdles. This had no doubt, a spectacular effect and the audience who were lovers of colour and beauty that were feasted upon the words and colours.

I.xi.iii. Euripides:

Euripides is one of the greatest tragic playwrights of ancient Greece. Basavraj Tallur writes:

If Sophocles reminds us Shakespeare, Euripides with his intelligence and disillusionment reminds us George Bernard Shaw.

(Tallur 27)
Euripides wrote about ninety tragic plays, of which eighteen are extent. The surviving plays are: Alcestis, Medea, Hippolytus, Trojan Woman, Helen, Orestes, Iphigenia at aulis, Bacchae andromache, children of Heracles, Hecuba, suppliants, Electra, Madness of Heracles, Iphigenia in Tauris, Ion, Phoenissae, Cylops and Rhesus. Euripides used real and ordinary characters for presenting philosophical events on the stage. Chorus’ role was minimized; lyrics were used which were sung by the characters; he also used prologues to speak of the background of plot.

I.xi.iv. Aristophanes:


I.xi.v. Menander:

Menander was the Greek dramatist and well-known representative of Athenian comedy who wrote more than hundred comedies. His famous plays are: Apsis, Dyskolos, Samia, Sikyonioi, Epitrepontes and Perikeiromene.

In short, the Greek playwrights Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes and Menander are well-known playwrights of tragedy and comedy. They used various dramatic techniques like plots, music, dance, chorus, songs, etc. to enrich their plays which became popular in the upcoming centuries.

I.xii. Aristotle’s Theory of Drama:

It is significant to note that unlike modern theatre, ancient Greek theatre was religious in nature. Plays were performed only during festivals; a time when society was involved in religious rituals of the ancestors and Gods. For instance, the Greek theatre not only grew out of dance, it also retained dance and music as major activities. The strong emotions generated while worshipping the gods and the ancestors; also provided aesthetics of emotional arousal which is found at its core. Aristotle knew how the Greek playwrights experimented with all forms.

Aristotle’s Poetics (330 B.C.) is an immortal work in the world of literature; it is encyclopaedic in the range of their ideas on all possible subjects of dramaturgy. Poetics is about the discussion of dramatic theory which is prepared on a few extent
Greek plays. He discussed about tragedy, epic and theory of drama and the three elements of tragedy: plot, character and diction with greater depth and detail; remaining three elements thought, song and spectacle discussed with in a brief evaluation.

I.xii.i. Six Ingredients of Tragedy:

Aristotle’s *Poetics*, which is based on the dramatic theory and comprises of four principles of the ancient classificatory system. First, the concept of mimesis, which is common to all fine arts; second, the treatment of the various genres of poetry, namely epic, tragedy and comedy; third, the division of tragedy into six elements- plot (*mythos*), character (*ethos*), thought (*dianoia*), diction (*lexis*), music (*melopoiia*) and spectacle (*opsis*); and fourth, cryptic statement about catharsis upheld by Western critical tradition as a principle of Aristotelian aesthetics. Aristotle defines Tragedy in his *Poetics*:

Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions.

(Aristotle 10)

The six elements of tragedy are to be seen separately only for the sake of analysis. They form a unity on the stage. They have been defined by Aristotle as inner and outer ingredients. Plot, character and thought are subjective, hence internal. They are not as obvious as the visual and auditory content of theatre such as diction, music and spectacle. Aristotle calls myth as 'the soul of tragedy'; however, he does not mean that other elements are dispensable or less essential. The myth only holds structurally together the other elements of the play. In terms of the total performance, a play has a very complicated structure, which consists of speaking, gesturing, dancing, singing and moving that goes on in the performing area. Yet, the series of episodes or the story has been regarded as the basic structure of a play even though it is merely the ground upon which many complex patterns are raised.
I.xii.i.i. Plot (Mythos):

Aristotle’s *mythos* is regarded as plot, fable or story. The term *mythos* is related to the word ‘myth’. ‘Plot’ implies complex turn of events, full of surprise and suspense. Myth is the passage of episodes or action. The structure of the myth or plot is seen by Aristotle as an organic whole; almost like the body structure of a living animal. This is indicated in his definition of tragedy; a whole is that which has a beginning, middle and end. These three parts of a complete plot should not be allowed to overlap each other.

According to Aristotle’s definition, the plot of a tragedy must be of a certain magnitude. As such magnitude and order make another essential attribute of a good plot. By magnitude, Aristotle means that the action should have a considerable length or expanse, but it should not exceed the normal limits of memory or comprehension at one time. The proper magnitude is comprised within such limits that the sequence of events, according to the law of probability or necessity will admit of a change from a bad fortune to good or from good fortune to bad.

Aristotle defines two kinds of plots: the simple and complex. The first is without reversal of fortune (*Peripety*) and recognition of a past act or identity or person (*Anagnorisis*) and the second has both. The analysis of the myth is not applicable to tragedy alone. Just as magnitude and unity of action would be required in any myth, tragic or comic, *peripety* and *anagnorisis* are not for tragedy only. *Peripety* can be useful in comedy too and so can *anagnorisis*. *Peripety* is defined as a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet to face good or bad fortune. *Peripety* is a change by which action turns to its opposite, subject always to the rule of probability or necessity. *Peripety* produces the great ironical effect. On the whole, the system may be employed both for tragic and comic myths and for the tragic comic ones like Euripides’ Helen, where *peripety* and *anagnorisis* clearly work together towards a happy ending.

I.xii.i.ii. Character (Ethos):

A character or ethos generally means, a role played by an actor or the personality or the part an actor represents in a play. Aristotle’s description of character, especially the character of the hero, occurs in chapter XV of his *Poetics*. Explaining as to what character is:
By character I mean that in virtue of which we ascribe certain qualities to the agents.

(Aristotle 10)

Broadly speaking, characters in a tragedy had to be 'good men' and those in comedy and satire, were 'mean persons.' So, all characters fall into the category of either admirable people or ludicrous folks. Aristotle mentions the qualities of the protagonist of a tragedy as follows.

First and most important, it must be good. Now any speech or action that manifests moral purpose of any kind will be expressive of character: the character will be good if the purpose is good. This rule is relative to each class. Even a woman may be good and also a slave, though the woman may be said to be an inferior being and the slave quite worthless.

(Aristotle 20)

Aristotle lays down four essential qualities of character. First, the character must be good; second, character must be appropriate; third, character must have likeness; and fourth, characters must have consistency. The basic requirement of tragedy is that the character especially the hero or tragic hero. He should be good but without the goodness or he should not too good or perfect.

I.xii.i.iii. Thought (Dianoia):

Aristotle says little about thought and most of what he has to say is associated with how speeches should reveal character. Defining Dianoia, Aristotle says:

Third in order is the faculty of saying what is possible and pertinent in given circumstances. In the case of oratory, this is the function of political art and the art of rhetoric: and so indeed the older poets make their characters speak the language of civic life: the poets of our time, the, language of the rhetoricians. Character is that which reveals moral purpose, showing what kind of things a man chooses or avoids. Speeches, therefore, which do not make this manifest, or in which the speaker does not choose or avoid something, are not expressive of ethos/character.
Thought on the other hand, is found where something is proved to be or not to be, or a general maxim is enunciated.

(Aristotle 11)

I.xii.i.iv. Diction (Lexis):

Aristotle considers diction to be one of the basic elements of tragedy. Aristotle defines diction as:

*The Expression of the meaning in words; and its essence is the same both in verse and prose.*

(Aristotle 12)

Reflecting the importance of diction, Aristotle in his famous definition of tragedy says:

*Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play;...........

(Aristotle 10)

By ‘language embellished’, Aristotle means the language that assimilates rhythm, harmony and song together. By the several kinds in separate parts; he means that some parts are rendered through the medium of verse alone; others are rendered with the help of the song. Language is one the important means of producing the effect upon the audience.

I.xii.i.v. Music (Melopoïia):

In the classical plays, dance and music were closely associated with *melopoïia*. Music becomes its organic part. Greek plays have extremely stylized dance drama with musical accompaniment. Music has been organic ingredient of dramatic performances and Aristotle had considered *melos/melopoïia* or music as one of the six elements of drama.
I.xii.i.vi. Spectacle (*Opsis*):

It has been repeatedly pointed out that *opsis* has not only the last but the least place in the Aristotelian scheme because Aristotle relates it with only stage scenery. Aristotle defines Spectacle:

*The Spectacle has, indeed, an emotional attraction of its own, but, of all the parts, it is the least artistic and connected least with the art of poetry. For the power of Tragedy, we may be sure, is felt even apart from representation and actors. Besides, the production of spectacular effects depends more on the art of the stage machinist than on that of the poet.*

(Aristotle 12)

Although, *opsis* should be taken to mean everything visual in theatre such as formation of dancers in the chorus, costumes, movements, gestures and hand signs (*cheironomia*) of the actors, still it is commonly believed that Aristotle had limited the sense of the word to stage scenery. Any study in this area should not underestimate its richness and function on account of Aristotle's negligence in describing these aspects of performance. Even though, Aristotle has not written at length on the subject of gestures, references were; however, made to it by other classical authors like Athenaeus and Lucian in the context of dance in ancient Greece.

I.xii.ii. Hamartia:

Hamartia is the Greek term for ‘error of Judgement’. Aristotle discussed it in his *Poetics* as the downfall of the protagonist in a tragedy. J. A. Cuddon defines:

*An error of judgement, which may arise from ignorance or some moral short coming. Discussing tragedy and the tragic hero in Poetics, Aristotle points out that the tragic hero ought to be a man whose misfortune comes to him, not through vice or depravity, but by some error. For example Oedipus kills his father from impulse, and marries his mother out of ignorance. Antigone resists the law of the state from stubbornness and defiance. Phedre is consumed by her passion for Hippolyte.*

(Cuddon 373)
Hamartia is a single defect or tragic flaw of a character in a good and reasonable man. Hamartia is a characteristic moral failing in a predominantly good man.

I.xii.iii. Catharsis:

‘Catharsis’ is a term used by Aristotle in his Poetics. In Greek, ‘Katharsis’ means ‘purification’ denoting purgation through tragic play. According to Aristotle, tragedy should succeed in arousing pity and fear in such a way as to accomplish a catharsis of such emotion.

I.xiii. Roman Concepts of Dramaturgy:

The Romans had taste for the theatre and drama. Similar to the Greek drama, Roman drama also owes its origin to dance. The Romans started to write and produce plays with a very different sense of the religious tradition, they introduced theatre into festivals to provide entertainment for the Romans. The Romans were not interested in the competitions like Greeks and there was not a single effort to award playwrights or actors with prizes. Theatre was strictly on the basis of commercial entertainment for the populace. In Greek, the dramas were written by Greek upper class to discover ideas of the significance to the society. In Rome, plays were written by slaves and emancipated slaves to create an earnings and construct a prolific career. Actors in Greek were privileged by the state, employed as ambassadors and revered as members of a religious guild. Actors of the Roman plays were generally slaves. They had no status in a society in which, by and large, they were not even citizens. During the harvest, the people with care free minds, indulged in dance, music and revelries. There were two types of revelries: one was a solemn ritual and the other was indecent. The Romans were also interested in other kind of public spectacles, known as Ludi, i.e. games which consisted of the theatrical performances, beast-fights, gladiatorial contests and the circus races.

There was no permanent theatre in Rome until Pompey built one. L. Corenelius Balbus built a stone theatre. Emperor Augustus erected a theatre known as theatre of Marcellus. The Roman drama divided both tragedy and comedy into five acts. The Greek dramatist sought to divide acts by means of the chorus.
I.xiii.i. Major Playwrights of Roman Theatre:

The Greek drama passed over to Rome as the former lost its hold to the latter. The Romans combined the Greek’s auditorium; stage and orchestra into one and their drama become an indoor affair. They used variety of scenes and curtains in their plays to enrich the effect. There are three major playwrights of Roman Theatre. They are as follows.

I.xiii.i.i. Titus Maccius Plautus:

Titus Maccius Plautus was a well known playwright of the Roman theatre. He used Greek and Atellan Sources. His plots were romantic with intrigues and dramatic irony. In Roman plays, unlike the Greeks the central character was a common citizen. Plautus’ *Miles Gloriosus* is about a braggart soldier. His *Menaechmi* influenced Shakespeare’s *Comedy of Errors*. *Asinaria, Pseudolus Trinumm* and *Aulularia* depicted the theme of man woman relationships. His other comedies are *The Persian, The Churl* and *The Ghost*.

I.xiii.i.ii. Terence:

Terence is another Roman comedian. His six comedies are: *Andria, Hecyra, Heautontimorumenos, Eunuchus, Phorimo* and *Adelphi*. Some of them are problem plays.

I. xiii.i.iii. Seneca:

The master of closet drama, especially tragedy in classical Rome was Seneca, the stoic philosopher who had a very colourful and strange career as a scholar and politician. His tragedies are adaptations of Greek tragedies. Tom McAlindon comments on Seneca’s themes that:

> Seneca’s tragedies are characterized by a preoccupation with horrific crimes and the tyrannical abuse of power.

> His protagonists are driven to murder by inordinate passions such as vengeful rage, lust, and sexual jealousy.

(McAlindon 4)

The plays of Seneca are full of violence, political intrigue and cruelty. Acts of vengeance, ghosts, ruthless treatment of captives, murders, banishments and women
sufferings helplessly characterize his tragedies. His famous plays are: *Thyestes, The Trojan Women, Phaedra, Oedipus or Octavia.*

**I.xiv. Renaissance Period:**

The French Historian Jules Michelet coined the term ‘Renaissance’ in his book *Historie de France* (1855). Renaissance means ‘the rebirth’ of modern world out of ashes of the dark ages, as discovery of the world, discovery of man and discovery of new era. M. H. Abrams describes Renaissance as follows:

*Renaissance is the name commonly applied to the period of European history following the Middle Ages, it is usually said to have began in Italy in the late fourteen centaury and to have continued, both Italy and other countries of Western Europe, through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.*

(Abrams 264)

In the Renaissance period, the European arts of paintings, sculpture, architecture and literature reached an eminence not exceeded in any age.

The rebirth of the theatre took place in Europe into two directions during the Renaissance period. The first direction was the recreation of the past is called Neoclassicism. The other direction of the theatre concentrated on the situations of the Elizabethans. The theatre of England was mainly creative in the works of University wits, Shakespeare, Jonson and others.

**I.xv. Elizabethan Drama (The Age of Shakespeare):**

The age of Shakespeare or the Elizabethan age witnessed one of the richest periods in dramatic literary history of England. The age witnessed the rise and growth of drama. During the Elizabethan age, drama made a swift and wonderful leap into maturity. The drama reached the splendid consummation in the hands of University Wits, Shakespeare and Ben Jonson though in the concluding part of the age, particularly during the Jacobean period there was a decline in dramatic standards.

**I.xv.i. Dramaturgy of University Wits:**

The creation of the Elizabethan drama was the works of number of dramatists who are together known as the University Wits. John Lyly, Robert Green, George
Peel, Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlow and Thomas Lodge are known as the University Wits. They knew well, both, the stage and audience and their one care was to please the people.

Just before the university wits, there were two dramatic traditions; one was the classic tradition and the tradition of the popular theatre. The basic principles of classic drama are, the observance of the unity of tone and action i.e. keeping apart of tragic and the comic. The action must either be entirely tragic or comic; there must be no mingling of the two.

The credit for evolving a suitable dramatic medium must go to the university wits. John Lyly was the first important dramatist to write wholly prose comedies. He refined the language of comedy and excelled in the use of puns, conceits, witty dialogues and all sorts of word play.

I.xv.i.i. Art of Characterization:

The contribution of the university wits to the art of characterization is significant. Robert Green’s Margaret in Frior Bacon and Frior Bungey, a pure English country girl has no precedent in English literary history. In Thomas Kyd' The Spanish Tragedy, Hieronimo is the hesitative type of hero, the first sketch of Hamlet. Marlowe’s tragic figures are full of life and reality; they are not puppets but full of life and vigour, living their own life and capturing the imagination by the intensity of their passion.

I.xv.i.ii. Plot Construction:

The university wits also made definite improvements in the art of plot construction. In Frior Bacon and Frior Bungey of Robert Green there are various elements such as courtly, rural, magical, romantic and idyllic and they have all been harmonized with great skill.

I.xv.i.iii. The concept of Tragedy:

The university wits especially, Marlowe, brought about a change in the medieval concept of tragedy. The medieval concept of tragedy implied the fall of some great man, a king or prince, as a result of the operation of fate. But with Marlowe, tragedy is not a thing of kings and princes alone; it is a matter of individual heroes. Marlowe’s tragic heroes are not all born great: they achieve greatness by their
own capacity for heroic action. They are endowed with almost superhuman will power and capacity for heroic action which lead them to greatness. They are ultimately cruel fate but they remain unconquered up to the very end. Thus, Marlowe introduced the elements of struggle and conflict into English tragedy.

I.xv.i.iv. Poetic Grace and Refinement:

The university wits imparted poetic grace and refinement to the English drama. Peele and Lyly decorated it with a wealth to poetic imagery. Marlowe imparted fire, intensity, lyrical eloquence, poetic grandeur and passion to the English drama. His grandiloquent heroic treatment is suitable to his heroic themes.

I.xv.ii. Shakespearean Dramaturgy:

William Shakespeare is one of the greatest playwrights in the dramatic world of literature. In his thirty seven plays, he experimented with forms and content. He used various dramatic techniques in his plays. He made various changes in the concept of tragedy, in the concept of comedy, in the unities and plots etc.

I.xv.ii.i. Dramaturgy in Shakespearean Tragedies:

Shakespearean tragedies are plays, which are full of suffering and ends with death. *Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth* and *King Lear* etc. are the greatest creations of Shakespeare and they rank among the greatest tragedies of the world. Shakespeare’s tragedies have certain common features which are as follows.

I.xv.ii.i.i. A High Ranked Hero:

Shakespeare’s tragic heroes are conspicuous persons who stand in a high degree. They are either kings or princes, or great personalities of the state. Hamlet is a prince, Lear is a king, Macbeth belongs to royal family and Othello is a great warrior. Shakespeare’s tragic hero is not like classical Greek Heroes or like Modern Hero (common man) who suffers from the fate, sorrows and sufferings.

I.xv.ii.i.ii. Tragic Flaw:

The Shakespearean hero suffers from a defect or shortcoming. It brings his tragic end which is called tragic flaw. It is this dominant tendency to act in a particular way which brings about his downfall. E.g. Macbeth is over ambitious, Lear
has the folly and fondness of old age, Othello is suspicious, Hamlet is noble inaction. In the Shakespeare’s tragedy character is destiny. The hero is responsible for his own tragedy because of his action.

I.xv.ii.iii. Comic Relief:

The comic relief helps the reader to get relief from the tragic tensions in the tragedy. Shakespeare uses the fools to suffice this purpose. Roland Mushat Frye points out that:

Shakespeare’s comic element functions as a safety valve
forestalling the kind of inappropriate laughter that scenes
of great tension and high passion are likely to provoke.

(Frye 116)

In some plays, certain comic scenes are inserted for the purpose, e.g. The Grave digger’s scene in Hamlet and the Porter’s scene in Macbeth.

I.xv.ii.iv. Lack of Poetic Justice:

There is no poetic justice in a Shakespearean tragedy. Poetic justice means the guilty should be punished and the innocent should be rewarded. This not found in Shakespeare’s tragedy. A. C. Bradley points out:

Poetic justice' means that prosperity and adversity are
distributed in proportion to the merits of the agents. Such
'poetic justice' is in flagrant contradiction with the facts of
life, and it is absent from Shakespeare's tragic picture of
life

(Bradley 10)

Thus, Shakespearean tragedy has typical features. They make resemble the Aristotelian concept of tragedy. It is thus, classical in Nature and Modern tragedy is in its complete contrast.

I.xv.ii.v. Supernatural Element:

One of the outstanding characteristics of the Shakespearean tragedy is use of supernatural element. A. C. Bradley comments on the supernatural element as follows:
Shakespeare introduces the supernatural into some of his tragedies; he introduces ghosts and witches who have supernatural knowledge. This supernatural element certainly cannot in most cases, if in any, be explained away as an illusion in the mind of one of the characters.

(Bradley 10)

Shakespeare uses ghosts or witches to form the supernatural element in his tragedies, for example, three witches in *Macbeth*.

**I.xv.ii.ii. Dramaturgy in Shakespearean Comedies:**

A comedy is a play which deals with the light and trivial everyday occurrences of life which are treated in such a manner that the comic element predominates. Shakespeare’s famous comedies are *As You Like It*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Winter’s Tale*, *Love’s Labour Lost* and *The Midsummer’s Night Dream* etc. The Shakespearean comedy has following features.

**I.xv.ii.ii.i. Blending or Realism and Romanticism:**

The Shakespearean comedy is romantic; thus, it does not observe the classical rules of dramatic composition. The world of romantic comedy is touched with realism and characters are realistic.

**I.xv.ii.ii.ii. Music and Songs:**

The most remarkable feature of the Shakespearean comedy is that it is intensely musical. Love is the main theme of the Shakespearean comedy and music is the food of love. Songs also are used by Shakespeare in his comedies. For example, ‘Under the Green Wood Tree’ and ‘Blow Blow thou Winter Wind’ these songs are used in *As You Like It*.

**I.xv.ii.ii.iii. The Fool and Clownish Character:**

Shakespeare has introduced the fool and clownish character in his comedy and tragedy. They form most of the mirth in the comedy. Bottom, Feste Andrew, Sir Toby and Touchstone, etc. are the memorable comic characters in comedies. The fools interlink the main plot and the sub plot.
I.xv.ii.ii.iv. Plot and Characterization:

The Shakespearean comedy has a typical plot and its characters too have certain traits. The plots of the Shakespearean Comedy are not original but are borrowed from other sources. Disguise, deceits and mistaken identities are the stock devices used by Shakespeare. These are the important dramaturgy are used by Shakespeare in his comedies.

I.xv.iii. The Comedy of Humours by Ben Jonson:

Critical tradition places Ben Jonson is next only to Shakespeare for the artistic perfection he achieved in presenting a devastating vision of human nature. His best known comedies are Everyman in his Humour, Everyman out of his Humour, Epicoene, The Alchemist and Volpone.

Ben Jonson’s comedy is known as the Comedy of Humour which is based upon the medieval concept of physiological ‘humours’ or ‘fluids’ in the body. Charles Baldik explains:

*The bodily fluids to which medieval medicine attributed the various types of human temperament, according to the predominance of each within the body. Thus a preponderance of blood would make a person 'sanguine', while excess of phlegm would make him or her 'phlegmatic' ; too much choler (or yellow bile) would give rise to a 'choleric' disposition, while an excess of black bile would produce a 'melancholic' one.*

(Baldick 118)

It is remarkable how Ben Jonson detained upon this explanation and taking ‘humours’ to suggest certain abnormal degree of the strangeness of character and depicts personages that are absurdities personified. Thus, Knowball, Brainworm, Kitely, Bobadill, Eugenie, Volpone, Mosca, Morose, Subtle and Epicone embody certain ‘humours’ to the point of exaggerated absurdity carrying on these tell- tale names. Ben Jonson’s comedies display the dramatist’s extraordinary command over satire and the comic vision that relies mainly on exaggeration and distortion.
I.xvi. Restoration Drama:

The period from 1660 to 1700 is designated as the age of Restoration. The year 1660 is most significant year because Charles II was brought to the throne. With coming back of Charles II to England a great change came in the social, political and literature. The Comedy of Manners is a peculiar product of the Restoration period.

I.xvi.i. Dramaturgy in the Comedy of Manners:

The Comedy of Manners was developed during the age of Restoration. It was modelled on the realistic comedy of Ben Jonson. The various types of dramaturgy had been used by the playwrights of the Comedy of Manners.

The setting of these plays are always provided by the public parks, such as Hyde Park, St. James Park, Mulberry Garden and fashionable clubs, coffee houses, taverns and the houses and the drawing rooms of the aristocratic and leisured classes of the time. The plots are the mostly love and intrigues, which were often borrowed from the French.

The Comedy of Manners has been criticized for its licentiousness, obscenity and immortality. It is also satiric in spirit. Characters of the comedy of manners are from aristocratic families. The Restoration Comedy of Manners is realistic in character and focuses our attention on the life, manners, ways, love intrigues and foppery of the upper class of society.

Several dramatists of the comedy of manners have contributed in the development of the form. George Etherege’s *Love in Tub*; William Congreve’s *The Way of the World, The Old Bachelor*; George Farquhar’s *The Recruiting Officer* are the fine comedies. The comedy of manners contributed a great deal to the field of comedy. The dramatist of the comedy of the manners made various changes in the dramatic techniques.

I.xvii. Drama in Eighteenth Century:

Drama steadily declined in the eighteenth century. Only remarkable dramatists shine out during this age. Oliver Goldsmith was one of the prominent playwrights who enriched the dramatic literature by his production. During this period, few literary dramatic forms began to gain popularity the literary world, these are Opera, Pantomime, Burlesque and Farce.
Opera in the Italian style was originated during this period. The best example of the ballad opera is John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera*. In the *The Beggar’s Opera* the time of action is contemporary; the characters are rogues and vagabonds.

I.xvii.i. Dramaturgy in Sentimental Comedy and Anti Sentimental Comedy:

The Sentimental comedy of the eighteenth century was a reaction against the comedy of manners. In the sentimental comedy, laughter and humour were completely driven out and in place of comedy pathos, pathetic situation were introduced. The characters of this comedy introduced form the middle class family. Major dramatists of the Sentimental Comedies are Colley Cibber, Richard Steele and Richard Cumberland and others, who enriched Sentimental comedy during the eighteenth century.

Anti-Sentimental comedy was reaction to Sentimental comedy cultivated by Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Sheridan. The first reaction against the comedy of Sentiment was made by Goldsmith in his *Essay on the Theatre or A Comparison between Laughting and Sentimental Comedy* (1772). Goldsmith started with classical formula that tragedy represents the misfortunes of the great and the comedy frailties of the humbler people.

I.xviii. Drama in Twentieth Century (Modern Drama):

The Dramatic world in the twentieth century is one of great complexities. It ushered as the new drama or modern drama with the introduction of array of complex and bewildering trends. The trends of drama in twentieth century are as follows: Drama of Ideas, Poetic Plays and The Irish Movement, etc.

I.xviii.i. Dramaturgy in the Drama of Ideas or Problem Plays:

The Modern drama or drama of twentieth century is essentially known as the drama of ideas instead of the drama of action. Dramas of the age are employed by the dramatists gave the expression to certain ideas which they seek to propagate in society. The modern drama dealing with the problem of life has become more intellectual. The themes of the modern dramas dealt in to the problem of religion, problem of youth, the problem of marriages, etc. The problem play is the presentation of a contemporary question through realistic technique. The term ‘The Problem Play’ was coined by Sydney Grundy’, who used it in a disparaging sense for the intellectual
drama of the nineties. Problem play means, ‘the presentation in parable of the conflict between man’s will and his environment. In the problem play playwright convey the ideas and do not tell a story. The characters introduced in problem play have also acquired critical censure. The playwrights of the problem play often portray men and women who flout the dictates of conventional morality and delight in social heresy.

I.xviii.ii. The Dramatic Art of George Bernard Shaw

G. B. Shaw is the well known dramatist of the twentieth century whose major plays are *Arms and Man*, *Man and Superman*, *Saint Jone*, *Candida*, *Ceaser and Clopatra*, *Mrs Warren’s Profession*, *Widower’s House* and *Major Barbara*. He made various changes in to the form, content, characterization, plot and dialogues. Wilbur D. Dunkeli comments in his essay *The Essence of Shaw's Dramaturgy* as follows:

> Shaw's rebellion against the lack of ideas in the fashionable theatres in London has led to the assumption that he rejected the technique of the French well-made play along with its sterility of thought, for, in plays dominated by the exigencies of contriving an exciting plot, ideas and characterization inevitably become sacrificed.

(Wilbur 307-308)

Shavian plays are known as drama of ideas or problem plays. His ideas are his original thoughts, which are based on the contemporary social problems as well as problems affecting humanity at large. He depicted some social problems such as, landlordism, prostitution, natural, Christianity, husband hunting, professional delusions and impostures, marriage history paradoxes of conventional society, question of conscience, Darwinian evolution and Life force. Shaw was essentially a satirist like Ben Jonson, iconoclast, propagandist and social reformer.

G. B. Shaw did not borrow his plots like Shakespeare. But he paid little attention to the story or the systematic development of plot in his plays eschewing irrelevancies from the dramatic point of view. His plots are loose and he introduces scenes in his plays which do not seem to have any vital link with the main thread of the story. He has enriched dramatic literature by creating a variety of characters drawn from all classes of the society. Shavian characters represent certain ideas which dramatist seeks to propound through them. Some of his characters are the mouthpieces of his theories.
Dialogues in the plays of Shaw are flashy, sparkling, brilliant and spontaneous. Shaw is a master of dramatic dialogue who excelled in brief, witty exchanges and in the handling of extremely long speeches when his characters put forward their carefully responds arguments. He had the art of making the long discourse as interesting and dramatic action and this was something new to the stage.

I.xviii.iii. The Dramatic Art of John Galsworthy:

In the twentieth century, dramatic world John Galsworthy is another important literary figure. His major plays are as follows: The Silver Box, Strife, The Show, The Skin Game, The Forest, The Joy and Justice etc. He was one of the significant dramatists of the school of realism and naturalism in drama.

The plots of the plays written by Galsworthy’s are based on ideas and hang on characters. Galsworthy’s plays are famous because the plots are interwoven in to the characters and the ideas. The plot construction is based on a situation and incident and the reaction of a few characters to that situation. The plot of Galsworthy’s plays are real, pleasant, climaxes and surprises, they keep up the interest of the play and save them from being sophomoric and tedious. Another special feature of Galsworthy’s plot construction is the employment of the technique of parallelism. Galsworty’s characters are drawn from common life; they are from middle class family. These characters are evolved from the impact of situations. The advanced and grow as the drama unfolds the idea underlying each play. There are such fine characters in Galsworthy as John Anthony in Sirif, Jones in The Silver Box and Falderin The Silver Box.

In Galsworty’s dramatic art, Dramatic Irony as well as Irony of Life presented with great care and astuteness. There is note of Irony on all his plays. Irony becomes the part of Galsworthy’s dramatic art. For example, in Justice the machinery which the Law has devised of dispensing justice, results in producing untold suffering and wastage to all concerned.

I.xviii.iv. The Poetic Drama and Dramatists:

Poetic drama is verse drama in which dialogue in part or whole is material and sometimes rhyming. Usually, it is written in blank verse and may be written in prose as well, but it read like poetry.
T.S. Eliot was largely responsible for a new orientation in England towards poetic plays and its rebirth. He is great poet in the poetry, but certainly he is a major force in the poetic drama of the 20th century. His famous poetic plays are: *Murder in Cathedral, Family Reunion, Cocktail Party and Confidential Clerk*. T.S. Eliot is a name to conjure with in modern drama. He dealt with religious, secular and psychological themes in his plays in a poetic style, varying his verse according to the theme of plays. Others who attempted the genre include Lascelles Abercrombie, Gordon Bottomley, John Drinkwater and Lord Dunsaney. W. H. Auden wrote in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood three verse plays, namely, *The Dog Beneath the Skin, The Ascent of F6 and On the Frontier*. Synge’s *Rider to the Sea* is a poetic drama written in prose.

**I.xix. Major Dramatic Movements in the 19th and 20th Century:**

The turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century is known with the various trends and movements in the literary world. The Indian theatre has also been quite receptive to many the Western art movements such as Symbolism, Expressionism, Epic Theatre, Naturalism, Absurdism and Theatre of the Absurd which have been some of the major art movements that influenced the Indian theatre. Brecht has influenced the writing, acting and the presentation of the plays. His theatre forms have contributed a lot of to Indian theatre. The Absurd theatre has been quite dominant even in India since the sixth decade of 20th century. To focus on these various movements is very significance of the present research work. These movements, trends and playwrights are as follows.

**I.xix.i. Realism and Naturalism:**

Realism is a term applied to the representation of life and facts as it is and an attempt to describe human behaviour and surroundings as there as. It is generally described to movement began in the mid-nineteenth century first developed in France and soon spreading to England, Russia and the United States, in reaction against the romanticism. Realism in literature represented by the writers, including many works widely regarded to be among the greatest works ever written in the literature. Realist writers attempted to portray their novel, drama from an objective, unbiased perspective that simply and clearly represented the factual elements of the story. These writers became masters in to depict of detailed descriptions of day today life,
dialogues that capture the idioms of natural speech and the psychological characterization. A. J. Sebastian and N. Chandra aptly explain:

Realism in theatre aims to present people in their daily life situations with their setting and costumes. The language of spoken speech is used in the dialogues on stage.

(Sebastian & Chandra 211)

The major realist dramatists handled issues of middle-class family life in everyday and contemporary society. Emile Zola was the first writer whose realist play staged on the stage. Ira Mark Milne said that in his book Literary Movements writes:

Zola inaugurated the development of realist theatre throughout Europe when, in 1867, he declared the need for new types of theatrical production that eliminated artificiality and sought to accurately reproduce the details of daily life. His play Therese Raquin (1867), a stage performance of his novel, was staged in 1873 and marks the beginning of Realist Theatre.

(Ira Mark Milne 668)

The realist movement started into the dramatic world with major changes in the plays written by playwrights and the style in which actors expressed their dialogue. Mostly dramatists started to write dialogues in natural style that reflected the everyday communication of informal conversation rather than the artificial, formal speech of traditional plays. These dramatists presented crucial dramatic themes with plays set in society of the contemporary period and related to the characters from day today life. The playwrights of the realism often depicted populace disputation by dealing with taboo issues of the society, such as conjugal unfaithfulness and venereal infection. The greatest realistic dramatists are Anton Chekhov from Russia, August Strindberg from Sweden and Henrik Ibsen from Norway.

Naturalism is a more conscious form of realism, when applied to theatre; it is often used interchangeably with Realism. Naturalism developed out of realism. In literature Naturalism calls for an objective and empirical presentation of human beings. M. H. Abrams explains Naturalism as follows:

Naturalism not only like realism, A special selection of subject matter and a special way or rendering those
materials; it was developed by a school of writers in accordance with a particular philosophical thesis. This is, a product of the biological theory of post-Darwinian, Comte's application of scientific ideas to the study of society, and Taine's application of deterministic theories to literature.

(Abrams 261)

Naturalists refused the free will of man and believe that human behaviour is controlled by instinct, emotion, or social and economic factors. Man is passive victim of natural forces. Naturalist writers rejected to idealise experiences as all human experiences are subject to natural law. Naturalism was first introduced by French authors Antoine de Goncourt, Edmond Louis, Jules Alfred Huot de Goncourt and Emilie Zola in Nineteenth century. Emile Zola tried to apply methods of scientific observation to the depiction of pathological human character. In his essay, The Experimental Novel (1880) he examines that his theory of literary naturalism. Other naturalists are Frank Norris, Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, George Gissing, Theodore Dreiser, James T. Farrell and George Moore.

In the theatrical world, naturalistic plays became popular in the late nineteenth century, which attempted to presentation of life as it is. It began from the theory of naturalism which was developed by Emilie Zola. It went beyond the realism of Ibsen. The naturalistic movement started in France and spread to Germany, England, Russia and America. The well known playwrights of the naturalistic plays are Anton Chekhov from Russia, August Strindberg from Sweden and Henrik Ibsen from Norway and others.

In the naturalistic play playwrights concentrated on set design, acting and costume in order to eliminate artificiality as much as possible. They attempted to break down hurdles between the audience and the stage performance. They gave more importance to the characterization as the best measurement of the play’s truthfulness. The characters of the naturalistic plays are the ordinary people in their natural setting and the play examines the physical and social influences that made them what they were.
I.xix.i. Henrik Ibsen’s Contribution to Realism and Naturalism:

Henrik Ibsen is described as the father of the modern theatre of ideas, laid the foundations of dramatic realism and naturalism with his plays like, *A Doll’s House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881). His other famous plays are *The Pillers of Society, An Enemy of the People, The Wild Duck, Rosmersholm* and *Heda Gabler* etc. G. J. Watson expresses his view on the Henrik Ibsen’s realism as follows:

*Ibsen as a social realist concerned with specific problems or issues topical to his day and age. The problems are-small town corruption, women’s rights, venereal disease-brought a revolutionary new kind of social reality on to the European stage.*

(Watson 112-113)

*A Doll’s House* is a superb example of a naturalistic play which is entirely different from a romantic play. It is dealt with a theme of love in an original manner. In this play, Ibsen rejected such plot devices as coincidence and sensationalism. The characters in this play show a strange blending of the good and bad elements in them. The dialogue in a naturalistic play is free from the frills and embellishments of a romantic play.

*Ghosts* is Ibsen’s third play, which represents the problems of venereal disease and incestuous marriage. These problems depicted as ghosts. His other plays *The Pillers of Society* and *An Enemy of the People* are the problem plays. These plays describe as belonging to the theatre of ideas and in them the problems of contemporary life have been depicted.

Ibsen’s plays present bleak atmosphere and protests against the forces that destroy the individual. Ibsen in fact was also trying to examine how social conventions and false respectability accorded to them and thwart the liberation of the individual. The real problem that naturalism attempts to define has to do with the conflict and tension between human will and environment, natural as well as social forces that condition the course of human action.

I.xix.i.ii. Anton Chekhov’s Contribution to Realism and Naturalism:

Anton Chekhov (1860–1904) was the foremost Russian realist playwright of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century’s. Chekhov wrote in naturalistic detail about the uneventful lives of the Russian landed gentry in an era of economic and
social decline. His play *The Seagull* was first performed in 1896, when it was so unfavourably received that it was nearly hissed off the stage. However, when the Moscow Art Theatre performed *The Seagull* two years later, applying newly developed principles of realist acting and staging to their production, it was an immediate success. Chekhov’s other major realist plays include *Uncle Vanya* (1896), *Three Sisters* (1901) and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904), the latter two written specifically for the Moscow Art Theatre. Maxim Gorky (1868–1936) was another major Russian realist playwright. His most celebrated play, *The Lower Depths* (1902), concerns a character from the lower echelons of Russian society. Rose Whyman expresses his views on Chekhov’s theatre writing:

> Chekhov’s theatre writing forced reconsiderations of what ‘drama’ is as well as new ideas about acting. One of his methods was to take conventional forms and subvert them, aiming to challenge the audience’s expectations.

(Whyman 34)

Chekhov was a progressive and democratic thinker, committed to equality and human rights. In his stories and plays, he exposes the problems of an authoritarian society and considers how people react within it, surveying the dominant ideas and ideals of the Russian intelligentsia utilitarianism, utopianism, nihilism and, also, scepticism and pessimism resulting from disillusionment when ideals fail to become reality. Chekhov saw living life on the basis of false beliefs as a kind of enslavement. The ideological solutions to the problems propounded by political thinkers and artists in his time have, as he predicted, to some extent been superseded; however, his outlook on life, his deep insight into human beings, together with his humorous and compassionate approach as expressed in his art, continue to prompt audience and readers into new considerations of the questions he asked about life.

I.xix.i.iii. August Strindberg’s Contribution to Realism and Naturalism:

The Swedish playwright Strindberg is equally celebrated for his works of realist drama. In his plays, Strindberg attacked conventional society in harsh terms of biting social commentary. He is also noted for his stark psychological Realism and mastery of naturalistic dialogue. Strindberg’s major realist plays include *The Father* (1887), *Miss Julie* (1888), *Marriage, Comrades and Creditors* (1888) etc.
Strindberg wrote dramas based on intense psychological conflict in which the figure of the possessive woman dominates. Critics have pointed out that he was suspicious of the female sex in his life and perhaps it seems to account for his anti-feminism. But the most respected of his plays was Miss Julia in which Strindberg attained a level of realistic depiction that was powerful and extraordinary. The conflict at the centre of the play unifies two different levels: the battle of the sexes and the battle between the upper and lower classes. His analysis of the situation of the classes and their viewpoints are at the best that naturalism ever achieved.

I.xix.ii. Expressionism:

Expressionism is a movement, before and after World War I, which came as a reaction against the academic standard like realism, naturalism etc. especially in France and Germany.

Expressionism is a visionary distortion in the art, literature and performing arts to express subjective feelings and emotions rather than to depict reality objectively. Expressionism depicts the human being in a state of extremity, confronted with feverish dream states or ecstatic in nightmare. Its mannerisms are sometimes garish and shrill its tone lurid. A.J. Sebastian describes the art of expressionist artist as follows:

\[\text{The expressionist artist deals with reality in its inner nature and the emotions aroused than with its outward appearance. In order to stress the emotional experience, expressionists exaggerate with distortions and caricatures.}\]

(Sebastian 88)

Expressionism in literature, Central and Northern Europe produced a number of important expressionist visual artists: Edward Munch, Kathe Kollwitz, Emil Nolde, George Grosz and Oskar Kokoschka. In fiction, Franz Kafka embodied expressionist themes and styles in stories such as The Metamorphosis (1915), which tells of a travelling salesman who wakes to find himself transformed into a giant insect.

Expressionism dominated the theatre during the 1920s. In the world of drama, it was a reaction against realism, naturalism and symbolism; aimed to show inner psychological realities. Expressionist dramatists include Georg Kaiser, Frank Wedekind, Ernst Toller, August Strindberg and often referred to as the “Father of
Expressionism.’ Strindberg’s play To Damascus (1902) is the first true expressionist play; his another play is A Dream Play (1907), Frank Wedekind’s Lulu plays (1895-1902), Henrik Ibsen’s When We Dead Awaken (1899), Brecht’s Baal (1923) and In the Jungle of Cities (1923), Walter Sokel, The Writer in Extremis (1959) and Eugene O’Neill from America provides an overview of expressionism in literature. The Expressionistic plays have particular characteristics about setting, the plot and structure, characters, the dialogue, atmosphere, music and light and its style of acting.

The plot and structure of the expressionistic plays tended to be disjointed and broken episodes, incidents and tableaus, each, making a point its own. Setting of these plays is non-realistic or partly realistic. It avoided reproducing the detail of naturalistic drama and created only those basically simplified images the theme of the play called for. Characters are non realistic, abstract and even non-human. They lost their identity, individuality and merely identified by nameless designation like the man, the father, the son. The Dialogue, unlike conversation, was poetical, febrile and rhapsodic. The atmosphere was often dreamlike and nightmarish. This mood was aided by shadowy, unrealistic, lightening. The supposed time may be past and present or future and the action may flow without interruption from one time period to another. The style of writing is deliberately departure from realism and naturalism.

I.xix.iii. Symbolism:

Symbolist movement or a new trend flourished in France in the poetry during 1885 to 1900. The main proponents of the symbolism were the poets Charles Baudelaire, Stephane Mallarmé and Paul Verlaine and the most gifted and erratic between them all Arthur Rimbaud. David Mikics explains:

Anna Balakian characterizes Symbolism as proclaiming a “semantic transcendentalism,” based on the near magical potency of the words that the poet has divorced from their everyday, utilitarian purposes. The Symbolists defended the obscure and the resonant in literary style and argued against didacticism and clear objective description.

(Mikics 293)

The school of symbolist poetry was to have a strong impact on the poets like, W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Rainer Maria Eilke and Stephan George.
The tone of these symbolist poets was often one of composed beauty, airy moodiness and abstraction: sensuality refined and made musical.

Symbolist drama was an outcome of the late nineteenth century symbolist movement. It was reaction against the dominant realism and naturalism in the dramatic world. The former playwright of the symbolist movement was Maurice Maeterlinck and the greatest Belgian playwright of the nineteenth and twentieth century's. Other playwrights were T. S. Eliot, Christopher Fry, W. B. Yeats and August Strindberg. These playwrights attempted to evoke private moods of the audience and the readers through the material and the spiritual worlds presented. Symbolist playwrights attempted to explore the musical qualities of language through sound relationships. The stage or the theatre itself considered as a symbol of life. Costumes, make- up, the using masks like animal in the stage performances are symbolized many things.

Maeterlinck was a simplistic dramatist. His major plays are *La Princesse Maleine* (The Princess Maleine), *L’Intruse* (The Intruder), *Les aveugles* (The Blind), *Pelleas et Melisande* (Pelleas and Melisande), *La vie des abeilles* (The Life of the Bee) and *L’Oiseau bleu* (The Blue Bird). His plays has been called a drama of silence, composed of bloodless, shadowy characters, an immobile scene, a disconnected, allusive and repetitive prose dialogue broken by long pauses and smothered in symbols which turned up in everything from forests to footsteps.

As a dramatic movement symbolism could not last long. But symbolism, in drama is a feature that dramatists the worked over have thankfully inherited. It happens to be horizons of meaning for the readers and combines with the highly developed elements of the theatre and gives the audience rich memorable experiences.

**I.xix.iv. Dadaism and Surrealism:**

Dadaism an international movement of nihilistic in art and literature originated in Zurich and New York in 1916 to 1920s by a Romanian, Tristan Tzara, an Alsatian, Hans Arp, and two Germans, Hugo Ball and Richard Huelsenbeck, the two leaders in New York Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia.

Dadaism became popular in Paris immediately after the First World War. The basic word in the Dadaist’s vocabulary was 'nothing'. The term was meant to signify everything and nothing, or total freedom, anti rules, ideals and traditions. Dadaism constructed artistic work as action and demanded an end to the isolation of
art from life. In art and literature manifestations of this 'aesthetic' were mostly
collage effects: the arrangement of unrelated objects and words in a random
fashion. The movement was avant-garde in tenor, issuing proclamations that voiced
protests against reason and logic and demands for the freeing of the individual.
Dadaism was a forerunner of the theatre of cruelty and the theatre of the absurd. Tom
Stoppard’s *Travesties* is a dada comedy. In 1921 Dadaism as a movement was
subsumed by surrealism.

Surrealism was an artistic movement extending from the late 1920 through the
late 1940s, mostly centred in the visual arts but with repercussions in literature.
Influenced by Futurism, Dadaism and Freud’s notion of the unconscious, the
Surrealists explored bizarre, fantastic, hallucinatory juxtapositions of objects,
intended to disconcert and enthral the audience. The movement’s founder André
Breton wrote in his *Surrealist Manifesto* (1924) that Surrealism is based in the belief
in the superior reality of certain previously neglected associations, in the disinterested
play of thought, in the omnipotence of dreams. J. L. Styan writes:

>Berton demanded that a work of surrealist art should be a
window through which the viewer could look upon some
inner landscape of the mind.

(Styan 53)

Surrealist artists included Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, Wilfredo
Lam and Joan Miró. In literature two of the main practitioners of Surrealism were the
poet Robert Desnos and Breton himself, particularly in his novel *Nadja* (1928). The
Surrealists were influential on the ‘deep image’ poets of the American. Surrealist
connections with the stage are necessarily somewhat uncertain, illogical, which is
static rather than dramatic, can play no final part, needless to say, in good drama.
Alfred Jarry was the first French playwright, his *Ubu Roi*, is the first play which
attempt surrealism in drama. *Ubu Roi* derides traditional views of authority by
presenting the rise to power of a grotesque and pompous king Ubu. He is
personification of greed, ignorance and the bourgeois attitudes. The farce is
considered the first work of the theatre of the absurd. Jean Cocteau, the French
writer, was a leading member of the surrealist movement, which emphasized the role
of the unconscious in artistic creation. He was not only versatile in trying his hand at
every artistic medium, but he also experimented endlessly in the media he chose; it is
understandable if the criticism that he was a showman has clung. His works *Orpheus,*
adaptation of the Greek myth of Orpheus and *The Infernal Machine* are excellent surrealist plays. Sam Sheppard was American playwright is known for his oblique story lines with images of popular culture. His well known plays are *Buried Child, Operation Sodewinder, Fool for Love True West, A lie of the Mind, Simpatico and Curse of the Starving Class.* *Les Mamelles de Tiresias* by Guillaume Apollinaire was a surrealist play written verse, in two acts and fourteen scenes. It is a burlesque of a problem play about women’s liberation.

**I.xix.v. Existentialism:**

Existentialism, as a philosophical approach developed during and after the Second World War. It is a modern school of philosophy, with its roots in the nineteenth century thinkers Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche and developing in the twentieth century in works by Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Sartre was the first to call himself an existentialist and he is more closely associated with existentialism than any other philosopher. The existentialism of Sartre as different from the Christian existentialism derived from Kierkegaard is an atheist philosophy of human freedom conceived in terms of individual responsibility and authenticity. Its fundamental premise, that ‘existence precedes essence’, implies that we as human beings have no given essence or nature but must forge our own values and meanings in an inherently meaningless or Absurd world of existence. Tallur explains:

> According to Sartre, consciousness of our own freedom is the sign of ‘authentic experience’, as opposed to ‘bad faith’.

(Tallur 55)

The investigation of this freedom involves investigation of the nature of being and this caused existentialism to form two, main streams: First, aesthetic, which interprets the free individual existence as self-created and the second, religious, which interprets individual existence as dependent on transcendent being, means God.

Existentialism is a modern school of philosophy, which influenced the literary world. Irish Murdoch has termed modern British empiricists as existentialists. Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus and Simon de Beauvoir are authors belonging to France. Sartre’s trilogy of novels, *Roads to Freedom* and his famous play *No Exit* presented existential philosophy. Albert Camus’ world famous novel *The Outsider* is about
existential approach. The doctrines of Existentialism have influenced a number of experimental dramatists with continental affinity. For example, Samuel Beckett, Edward Albee, Harold Pinter, Tom Stafford have depicted existential dilemmas in their absurd plays.

There are various themes of existential philosophy that occur again and again in art, literature, movies and other fields these are: Absurdity, Alienation, Rejection of meaning-giving narratives, Anxiety, Responsibility, Authenticity, Individuality, Passion/engagement, Forlornness and Death.

I.xix.vi. The Theatre of the Absurd:

Absurd is a term derived from the existentialism of Albert Camus presented in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) and it was applied to human situation in his novel *The Outsider* (1943). The term Absurd is used originally to describe the violation of the rules of logic and often applied to the modern sense of human purposelessness in a universe without meaning and value.

The absurd originally means ‘out of harmony’ in a musical sense. The dictionary meaning of absurd is ‘out of harmony with reason or property; incongruous, unreasonable, illogical’. Generally absurd means ‘ridiculous’ but this is not the sense in which Camus uses the word. In an essay on Kafka, Ionesco defined the term as follows:

\[
\text{Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose... cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions becomes senseless, absurd, useless.}
\]

(Esslin 23)

The Theatre of the Absurd is used for a group of dramatists of 1950s by Martin Esslin in his book *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1961), who identified common features of a new style of drama that seemed to ignore theatrical conventions and thwart audience expectations. Styan describes it:

\[
\text{Absurdist plays fall within the symbolist tradition and they have no logical plot or characterization in any conventional sense. There characters lack the motivation found in realistic drama and so emphasize their purposelessness. The absence of plot serves to reinforce to monotony and repetitiveness of time in human affairs. The}
\]


dialogue is commonly no more than a series of inconsequential clichés, which not discuss the human condition.

(Styan 126)

The characteristics of the Absurd drama are life is essentially meaningless, purposeless and miserable. It presents the absurdity of the human condition itself in a world. There is no hope because of the inevitable futility of human efforts. Reality is unbearable unless relieved by dreams and illusions. Man is fascinated by death, which permanently replace dream and illusions. The absurd drama is not purposeful and specific, as it does not solve any problem. It is like abstract painting, which is supposed not to convey a definite meaning.

Major plays and playwrights of the absurd theatre are Waiting for Godot, Endgame, Krapp’s Last Tape and Murphy by Samuel Beckett; Eugene Ioneso’s well known plays are The Baluk Prima Donna, The Lesson and The Chairs. Harold Pinter is known for his famous plays The Birthday Party, The Caretaker, The Dumb Waiter and The Homecoming etc. Edward Albee’s famous plays are The American Dream, Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf and The Zoo Story etc.

I.xix.vii. The Epic Theatre:

The Epic Theatre is a revolutionary form of drama developed by the German playwright Bertolt Brecht from the late 1920s under the influence of Erwin Piscator, who involved rejecting the Aristotelian models of dramatic unity in favours of a detached narrative. Walter Benjamin in his book Understanding Brecht points out:

Brecht opposes his epic theatre to the theatre which is dramatic in the narrow sense and whose theory was formulated by Aristotle. This is why Brecht introduces the dramaturgy of his theatre as a 'non-Aristotelian'.

(Benjamin 18)

Presentation in a succession of loosely related episodes interspersed with songs and commentary by a chorus or narrator.

The Epic Theatre is a type of drama that Brecht has created; the audience could view the plays with complete detachment. He coined this term as alienation effect (Verfremdungseffect) to create an emotional distance between the audience and the performance on stage. The Brechtian audience is meant to remain conscious of the
distance between the actors and the characters they present: this is Brecht’s proposed way of securing the audience’s evaluative wariness. Alienation effects are short, self-reliant scenes that maintain the play from constructing to a cathartic climax; songs that comment on the action; and techniques of acting that prevent the actor from developing an emotional identity with his role. A. J. Sebastian explains:

To detach the audience with the plot of the play, playwright use episodic, structure, exaggerated social comments, caricatures, movies clips and slides, tableaus, etc.

(Sebastian 85)

The best examples of this plays are Brecht's plays The Three penny Opera (1928), Mother Courage and Her Children (1941) and The Good Womanof Setzuan (1943).

I.xix.viii. The Theatre of Cruelty:

A term used to refer a group of dramatic techniques that are intended to reduce the emotional and psychological distance between actors and audience. It is developed by the French actor and writer Antonin Artaud, chiefly in The Theatre and Its Double (1938). Jack Vaughan points out that:

The Theatre of Cruelty was to be spectacular and mythic
in scope, drawing upon subjects violent, passionate and occasionally bloody.

(Vaughan 195)

The Theatre of Cruelty is ‘like dreams, is bloody and inhuman’, ‘a spasm in which life is continually lacerated and in which order and hierarchy are disturbed. The cruelty to which the movement name refers is not aggression or violence, but rather the heightened actor/audience involvement in the dramatic event. Artaud who had previously been aligned with the surrealist movement, conceived of a theatre so radical in its departure from established conventions that it would rewrite the rules for what theatre is thought to be. His movement was short lived, considered by some to be an attempt to accomplish the impossible. Ataud’s experimental play Les Cenci, produced in 1932, is considered a fine example of the Theatre of Cruelty, though the influence of his theories also clearly shows in the plays of Jean Genet, Arthur Adamov, Jerzy Grotowski and Jean Vilar etc.
Artaud gave revolutionary idea about the basic principles of the ‘Theatre of Cruelty’. He laid stress on the fact that in human psyche, the desire for crime, sexuality and savagery is always latent. He also says that a play must first disturb our peace of mind and release our repressed and subdued subconscious so that the audience would go away purged of the desire to inflict cruelty and tyranny on others.

I.xx. American Theatre:

In the 18th and 19th centuries, American writers were not preoccupied with the drama producing task. Whatever success previous generations of native playwrights might have achieved in the popular theatre, their work had little interest outside of it. No doubt, the early years of the 20th century had produced such popular playwrights as Clyde Fitch and Langdon Mitchell whose works showed some advancement in literally refinement and also more serious writers especially Edward Sheldon, W.V. Moody and Augusts Thomas who attempted to interpret contemporary life.

After 1910, many talented Americans felt that the commercial theatre in New England was unsatisfactory as it no longer provided ‘road shows’ spreading the lore of drama to the remote parts of the country. Several young Americans travelling abroad 1900 to 1916 found European theatres highly appealing and stimulating. All the European theatres were experimenting with the dramatic form and content.

When these travellers returned to the United States, they preached their newly acquired gospel and won over many converts. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, several community play houses or workshops were established throughout the country- from Boston, where Toy Theatre produced plays, to Palo Alto, California, where the Stanford University was quite active. At the same time, a member of colleges offered courses in play writing and production under such eminent scholars as George Pierce Baker of Harvard, Thomas Wood Stevens of Carnegie Institute of Technology, A. M. Drummond of Cornell, E. C. Mabie of Iowa and Fredrick Henry Koch of North several radical experiments which no commercial theatre could ever do.

The new dramatic movement which started at the time influenced even the commercial theatre. It definitely changed the taste of the audience by supplying producers, actors and dramatists who had learned their trade in community playhouses and college classrooms. At least three theatre groups became leading commercial producers- The Washington Square Players (1915) which became the Theatre Guild
in 1919. The Provincetown Players was founded in 1915 and the Group Theatre, which became professionally active in 1931.

I.xx.i. The New American Theatre:

This theatre was merely a theatre in the beginning which hoped to find an audience for various kinds of play, native or foreign, which the conventional Broadway managers believed to be unacceptable to their public. But the little theatre did not keep its monopoly of the new drama for the simple reason that a larger audience awaited it than any except the most enthusiastic had ever supposed. But after a short span of time any sharp distinction between the writer for the new theatre and writer for the general public ceased to exist.

Between 1951 until the time of Arthur Miller, a good number of ‘insurgent groups’ performed plays which could not have ordinarily found any place in the commercial theatre. The new playwrights group, operating for a time up town and then in Cherry Lane, bewildered a diminishing public with imitation of Russian Expressionism. The Theatre Union struggled for a few years with aggressively leftwing dramas, but there was apparently, no considerable audience for the wares of either the new playwrights of Theatre union, or the influence of neither is demonstrably important.

I.xx.ii. Experimentation in American Theatre:

The American theatre in the 1920s experimented in multi directions. It tried to represent life more concretely through abstractions, tried to moralize, satirize, lyricism in terms of new manipulations, of space and movement, new concepts and sequences of dialogue, new versions of characterisation. It also experimented brilliantly in the matter of stage design; the setting in many cases proved more revealing of them and motivation than the characters themselves. The newness was not exclusively a matter of techniques, but part of the general stir of experimentalism desire to avoid chinches of plot, characterization, dialogue, acting and staging, which had hitherto tended to make the theatre dull and lifeless.

I.xx.iii. Expressionism in American Theatre:

Expressionism was imported to America from Europe. It influenced all the fields of arts, especially in German films and architecture. Likewise, it demonstrated
the artist’s dissatisfaction with naturalism or realism. The expressionists rejected naturalism as it had a limited scope and was grossly involved with surface reality. They wanted to project in outer symbols the state of mind, an inner crisis, a psychological condition. This also involved expressions of the dream state. The form and the purpose of an expressionistic play could be summarized in what Strindberg wrote in his prologue to his *Dream Play*.

Expressionism made positive contribution to the American theatrical spirit. It encouraged a remarkable variety of experiments, large and small. Some of its most successful effects were found in comedy, where its exaggeration and arrangements of abstractions in motion were especially useful. Elmer Rice’s *Adding Machine* was the most remarkable illustration of expressionist comedy. Stereotypes of character and setting illustrated the native stereotypes which the comedy satirized. At the same time, there was a tendency, evident in the work of Rice and Lawson, to move from comedy to social tragedy.

**I.xx.iv. Eugene O’Neill’s Contribution to American Theatre:**

Eugene O’Neill is the foremost American dramatist, whose plays read and enjoys the entire world over. He is not only the creator of the serious American drama, but he ranks with the greatest European dramatists of the 20th century. His major plays are: *Beyond the Horizon, Anna Christie, The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape, Desire Under the Elms, Mourning Becomes Electra and The Iceman Cometh* etc.

O’Neill used naturalistic detail with symbolist mood, suggestiveness and symbol. He deliberately violated the sacred right of the play for to discharge his obligations to the stage in two hours and half of theatre attendance. His plays are of epic dimensions and through these O’Neill brought to the American theatre a spaciousness that was known only on the Greek stage where an Aeschylean trilogy kept the people spell bond for hours.

**I.xx.v. American Drama after the Thirties:**

The major playwrights of the period are Maxwell Anderson, S.N. Behraman, Robert E. Sherwood, Philip Barry, Clifford Odets and Lillian Hellman.

Post war dramatic scene was dominated by Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller. Both these playwrights began to shine before the Second World War. *The Glass Menagerie* by Williams and *All My Sons* by Arthur Miller are plays of family
tensions in which the authors champion the right of youth to rebel against the muddled world of their parents.

Tennessee Williams is very much influenced by the contemporary concern with psychological problems. Williams’ important plays are *The Glass Menagarie, A Street Car Named Desire and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Williams’ *The Glass Menagarie* is a memory play, a subdued nostalgic family portrait. In this play he has used Expressionism, all other unconventional techniques in drama have only on valid aim, and that is a closer approach to truth.

Arthur Miller moved American audience profoundly by such heart rendering plays as *Death of Salesman, All My Sons* and *The Crucible*. Miller’s plays like the plays of most of his contemporaries focus on a small segment of human conflict. According to G. J. Watson:

*Miller’s plays focus on the clash between the individual and society, and on the grip of the past on the present.*

(Watson 125)

The next important playwright is Edward Albee, who is very much in the limelight. His famous plays are *The Zoo Story, The Death of Bessie Smith, The American Dream* and *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* He has explored a great variety of subjects and he has been strikingly inventive in his experiments with form. His main concern, however, have not changed. Complacency about human suffering the destructive passion to dominate, loneliness and the difficulties of communication-these are the themes he continues to dramatize. The picture he paints of marriage, with its dismal lack of understanding among people, the sexes and society, with its dismal lack of understanding among people, owes much to such predecessors as August Strindberg and Tennessee Williams.

I.xxi. Conclusion:

The present chapter attempted survey of the Western dramaturgy and theatre with its remarkable growth and development. It explored the Theoretical concepts of dramaturgy which are classified in to various phases such as, Classical Greek theatre, Roman theatre, Aristotle’s theory of Tragedy, Shakespearean Age, Restoration Period, Eighteenth Century Drama, Various movements and -ism in 19th and 20th century such as Realism, Naturalism, symbolism, Surrealism, Expressionism, Existentialism, the Theatre of Absurd, the Theatre of Cruelty, the Epic theatre and so
on. The Western Theatre has a rich tradition in its concepts and various forms related to the theatre and dramaturgy. The indepth analysis of these concepts and forms are the concrete background for the study of exploration of dramaturgy in the plays of the Marathi Experimental plays.

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CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES
(THE INDIAN CONCEPTS OF DRAMATURGY)

The present chapter aims to give theoretical concepts of the Indian dramaturgy. It highlights the Classical Indian dramaturgy which consists, Bharata’s *Rasa Theory*, Indian Folk Forms, Classical Sanskrit Plays, Pre-Independent and Post-Independent Indian Drama, Indian Modern Drama, Post Modern Indian Drama, Indian Drama in English Translation, Origin and Development of the Marathi drama, Professional Marathi Theatre, Marathi Experimental Plays, Characteristics of Marathi Experimental Plays and the contribution of Theatrical Groups in the Growth and Development of the Marathi Experimental Theatre.

II.i Indian Dramaturgy:

Ancient Sanskrit literature is perhaps the oldest literature in the world. Sanskrit poetics is Indian poetics; it is an epitome of theories and laws related to poetry and drama. Like Aristotle’s *Poetics*, Sanskrit poetics also focuses on the drama. Bharata’s *Natyashastra* is a milestone in ancient Sanskrit poetics. *Mahakavi Kalidasa* occupies a unique place not only in Sanskrit but also on World drama. *Bhasa, Bhavbhuti, Harsha, Shudrak* and *Ashvaghosha* are some of the noted dramatist.

II.ii. Bharata’s *Natyashastra*: The Indian Poetics:

Bharata’s *Natyashastra* is the first treatise on the subject in the history of Indian dramatic theory and the principles of the production on stage. It is considered to be an encyclopaedia of Indian dramaturgy. It provides the guidelines to the playwrights, director, actor, audience and critic also.

II.iii. Bharata’s Dramaturgy: The *Rasa* Theory:

*Rasa* is the vital ingredient in Sanskrit plays. According to Indian poetics *Rasa* is a type of pleasure. The word *rasa* has been translated etymologically by terms ‘flavour’, ‘relish’, ‘gestation’, ‘taste’, ‘essence’ or ‘sap’ however, here it may be taken as aesthetic pleasure, poetic delight or poetic relish. The term *rasa* express various
meanings in diverse context. In the dramaturgy rasa is considered as an aesthetic experience enjoyed at the time of witnessing a play. Bharata, the great rhetorician tried to explain how this aesthetic pleasure takes place. He tried to give the theory of Rasa in one aphorism.

Bharata described rasa as the soul of drama. Rasa constitutes an important component of Sanskrit drama. Rasa develops from the blending of vibhava, anubhava and vyabhichari. It manifests itself when the shtayibhava, the emotion of the reader is correlated with the following three aspects presented in a piece of creative literature: (i) excitement (ii) ensuing response and (iii) transitory feelings. These three should be combined into one. Many theoreticians have tried to explain the above mentioned aphorism in different way. Before understand the structure of Rasa in detail, must understand the following four terms in some detail. These are as follows.

I) Sthayibhava: Permanent emotions or feelings.
II) Vyabhicharibhavas: Transitory (fleeting) emotions.
III) Vibhava: Excitement or stimulating determinants.
IV) Anbahava: Consequent or ensuing response.

II.iii.i. Sthayibhava:

Sthayibhava means permanent emotions inherent in all human beings. They are dormant, inborn and innate emotions that are acquired by training or education. They are permanent feelings deeply embedded in human psyche. They are eight in number but some rhetoricians have added three more. Major Sthayibhavas are as follows,

1) Rati (love)
2) Hasa (merriment, laughter)
3) Soka (sorrow, grief)
4) Krodha (anger, fury)
5) Utsaha (enthusiasm)
6) Bhaya (terror, fear)
7) Jugupsa (disgust)
8) Vismaya (Astonishment)
9) Nirveda (indifference/ renunciation)

(Bharatmuni 71)
These *Sthayibhavas* are represents the following *Rasas*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sthayibhava</th>
<th>Rasa</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) <em>Rati</em> (love)</td>
<td><em>Sringara</em> (Erotic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) <em>Hasa</em> (merriment, laughter)</td>
<td><em>Hasya</em> (Comic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) <em>Soka</em> (sorrow, grief)</td>
<td><em>Karuna</em> (Compassionate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) <em>Krodha</em> (anger, fury)</td>
<td><em>Rudra</em> (Warthful)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) <em>Utsaha</em> (enthusiasm)</td>
<td><em>Vir</em> (Heroic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) <em>Bhaya</em> (tremor, fear)</td>
<td><em>Bhayanaka</em> (Terrifying)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) <em>Jugupsa</em> (disgust)</td>
<td><em>Bibhatsa</em> (Odious)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) <em>Vismaya</em> (Astonishment)</td>
<td><em>Asbhuta</em> (Marvellous)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) <em>Nirveda</em> (indifference)</td>
<td><em>Santa</em> (Tranquil)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Bharatamuni 71)

*Sthayibhavas* are comparatively stable and last longer. They are frequent and more powerful. Generally, all human beings experience now and then. *Sancharibhavas* contain ancillary emotions. The *Sancharibhavas* or *Vyabhicharibhavas* are said to be 33 in number. They are as follows.

**II.iii.ii. Sancharibhavas or Vyabhicharibhavas:**

1) *Nirveda* (Despondency or indifference)
2) *Glani* (Weakness, languishing)
3) *Sanka* (Apprehension)
4) *Asura* (Envy or Jealousy)
5) *Mada* (Intoxication)
6) *Srama* (Fatigue)
7) *Alasya* (Indolence)
8) *Dainya* (Depression)
9) *Chinta* (Anxiety)
10) *Moha* (Delusion)
11) *Smrti* (Recollection, memory)
12) *Dhrti* (Contentment)
13) *Vrida* (Shame)
14) *Capalata* (Inconstancy)
15) *Harsa* (Joy)
16) *Avega* (Agitation)
17) Gaiva (Arrogance)
18) Jadata (Stupor)
19) Visada (Despair)
20) Antsukya (Longing)
21) Nidra (Sleep)
22) Apasmara (Epilepsy)
23) Supta (Dreaming)
24) Vibodha (Awakening)
25) Amarasa (Indignation)
26) Avahitta (Dissimulation)
27) Ugrata (Ferocity)
28) Mati (Resolve)
29) Vyadhi (Sickness)
30) Unmada (Insanity)
31) Marana (Death)
32) Trasa (Terror)
33) Vitaraka (Trepidation)

(Bharatmuni 72)

II.iii.iii. Sattvikabhavas:

There are Sattvikabhavas or involuntary states or inbuilt body responses besides other bhavas. They are eight in numbers.
1) Stambha (Paralysis)
2) Pralaya (Fainting)
3) Romanca (Horriplation)
4) Sveda (Perspiration)
5) Asru (Tears)
6) Vairarnya (Change of color)
7) Vipathu (Trembling)
8) Vaisvarya or svarahbanga (Change in voice/ breaking of the voice)

(Bharatmuni 72)

II.iii.iv. Vibhava:

The vibhavas or determinants help in development of a feeling in sentiment. These vibhavas are of two kinds: alambana (supporting) and uddipana (excitant).
II.iii.v. **Anubhava:**

Anubhavas are the consequents or reactions to these determinants. Thus according to Bharata, rasa is manifested through the union of vibhava, anubhava and sancharibhava.

According to Bharata, each Rasa has three subtypes based on the three gunas, these are sattva, rajas, and tamasa. The quality of vibhava, the source of Sthayibhava determines the types of correlated rasa. Even Karuna rasa may be sattvika, rajasika, or tamsika depending on the cause of grief. Grief caused by destruction of righteousness is sattvika, grief caused by loss of worldly reputation or wealth is rajasika and grief caused by the personal loss of one’s own is tamsika. Thus, the theory of Rasa is related with yoga as well as vedantic philosophy.

II.iii.vi. **Sringara Rasa (Erotic Sentiment):**

Sringara rasa originates from the Sthayibhava of Rati (love). In all rasas Shringara rasa is supreme rasa. Bharata said that:

> Whatever is clean, pure, and worth looking at is connected with the sentiment Sringara.

(Bharatamuni 75)

Sringara rasa produces the highest kind of pleasure. It is the sentiment that permits all human beings. It is the synonym of self and ego. Sringara creates an attachment of a person to himself. His personality is expanded because of his self love and self attachment. It is not false pride or arrogance but self respect self consciousness and self confidence. When a beautiful woman looks at a person with love, he feels gratified for his existence. His existence is justified. He regards himself fortunate. This kind of self love is rasa. The word ‘Sringara’ suggests that it is the pinnacle of all rasas.

Sringara is of two types: Sambhoga and Vipralambha. Sambhoga sringara means love in union while Vipralambha means love in separation. Sambhoga sringara shows lovers in union. The union brings joy and bliss. Conflict is not found here because lovers are blissfully united. Vipralambha sringara is a separation of the lovers who love each other intensely but are not able to be united in love. The separation of lovers may have many reasons. It is because of the absence of one of the two lovers. It may because of misunderstanding; there arise jealousy, doubt, grief, despair and sorrow.
Thus, Sringara rasa is universal and eternal. It is often the cause of conflict which is the soul of poetry. It is therefore called rasaraja or rasapati.

II.iii.vii. Karuna Rasa (The Pathetic Sentiment):

Karuna means pathos. The outcome of Karuna rasa is from the soka (sorrow), which is the sthayibhava. Karuna rasa is both painful and pleasing. Bharata said Karun rasa originated from:

*The Karuna Rasa takes its origin through different Bhavas either at the sight of the death (or murder) of the dear one or when unpleasant words have an adverse impact.*

(Bharatamuni 80)

Karuna rasa requires great skill and literary power to successfully depict it. According to Natyashastra, karunrasa stems from sorrow or grief. Soka is permanent state. The Vibhaas required for this sentiment are curse, death, loss of some nearer or dear one, loss of wealth, disaster etc.

II.iii.viii. Raudra Rasa (Impetuous Anger of Wrath):

Raudra rassa shows the sentiments of anger or fury, krodh; is the sthayibhava. The permanent state for Raudra rasa is anger. According to Bharata:

*It takes its origin in the Raksasas, Danavas and very haughty human beings with a regular battle as its immediate cause.*

(Bharatamuni 80)

The depiction of Raudra rasa requires action of full of wrath and fury. It concerns arrogant, angry people. It takes the shape of cruel deeds. The vibhavas that accompany Raudra rasa are insult, envy, offence, injuries, false speech etc.

II.iii.ix. Vira Rasa (The Heroic):

Vira rasa is produced out of energy and enthusiasm (utsaha), with the person of high rank as the basis. The vibhavas of Vira rasa are discipline, prowess, courage, might, valour etc. The transient feelings of the vira rasa are fortitude (patience), remembrance, arrogance, dignity etc. The commentary of Dasarupaka divides heroic
into three types. The classification is according to cause of the heroism shown. Bharat said about Vira rasa:

\[
\text{Vira rasa is produced through enthusiasm, perseverance, absence of grief, absence of surprise and freedom from delusion. The vira rasa should be depicted perfectly on the stage through statements scolding and censuring, display of bravery, vigour, heroism, enthusiasms, aggressiveness and exploits.}
\]

(Bharatamuni 81)

II.iii.x. Hasya Rasa (The Comic):

Hasya or humour is an important sentiment in drama as well as in other literary genres. Laughter is the Sthayibhava in the Hasya rasa. In drama, we find it in abundance in Sanskrit drama, and even in ancient Greek drama, and English drama as source of comic relief.

The vibhavas of Hasya rasa are unseemly dress, vulgarity, awkward gestures etc. Vyabhicharibhavas for Hasya rasa are dissimulation, indolence, sleep, jealousy etc. humour can be produced by funny dresses, queue movements, humorous action and speech, bombastic language, smattering and stuttering of speech also cause of laughter. According to Bharata, Hasya is of two kinds;

\[
\text{Atmastha (self based), Parastha (Based in others). When the actor laughs to himself it is called Atmastha or when he makes another laugh it is called Parastha.}
\]

(Bharatamuni 78)

II.iii.xi. Adbhuta Rasa (The Marvellous)

The Adbhuta rasa has as its Sthayibhava, Vismaya or astonishment. Its alambana (supporting) vibhava is something that is astonishing. Its uddipana vibhava is description of such astonishing things. When such objects or things are described with portrayal of its colour, size, shape etc. these rasas evoked. Its satvikbhavas are perspiration, trembling, thrill, chocking of voice etc. Its sancharibhavas are uneasiness, excitement. Anubhavas or consequent reactions are dilation of eyes, horrification, tears etc. The sense of wonder may be accompanied by a sense of pleasure or a sense of fear or sorrow at the sight of some unpleasant object or events.
II.iii.xii. *Bhayanaka Rasa* (The Terrible):

The Bhayanaka excites the emotion of horror or fear. The *sthayibhava* of *Bhayanak rasa* is *bhaya* (fright). It is born out of terror and horror sense or violent incidents involving hideous or dangerous elements.

Aristotle in his definition of tragedy says that it purgates the feeling of pity and fear. The feeling of pity needs to be aroused and then sublimated.

II.iii.xiii. *Bibhatsa Rasa* (The Odious):

*Bibhatsa Rasa* evokes the sentiment of disgust. It depicts disgusting and repulsive scenes. The permanent mood is disgust or repulsiveness. According to Bharata:

The *bibhatsa rasa* arises through many things causing disgust such as seeing what is not desirable, defects and abnormality in tests, smells and sound.

(Bharatamuni 83)

The *vibhavas* for *bibhatsa rasa* are hearing of something repulsive or bad omens. The *sancharibhavas* involved in it are epilepsy, delusion, pangs of death, illness, agitation etc.

II.iv. Bharata’s Views on *Itivrtta* (The Plot):

In chapter XXI, Bharata describes plot as the body of drama. If the *rasa* is soul of drama, plot is definitely the body of the drama. According to Bharata there are two types of plots one is Principal, main plot (*Adhikarika*) and the other one is subsidiary, sub plot (*Prasangik*). The Principal actions revolve around the protagonist while sub plot concerns about subordinate characters. There are five stages of plot according to Bharata.

They are: *Prarambha* (The Beginning), *Prayatna* (The Effort), *Praptisambhava* (Possibility of Attainment), *Niyata Phalaprapti* (Certainty of Attainment), and *Phalayoga* (Attainment of Object).

(Bharatamuni 291)

Bharata also discusses the five component parts plot, called *Arthaprakritis*. They help the dramatist in maintaining the proper and harmonious development of the drama.
The five elements of plot are: The Seed (Bija), Vital Drop (Bindu), Episode (Pataka), Episodica incident (Prakari), and Action (Karya).

(Bharatamuni 293)

The three elements of the plot – the Germ (Bija), the Prominent Point (Bindu), and the Development (Karya) are essential features of every plot or the Principal plot; whereas the other two elements of the plot- the Episode (Pataka) and the Episodical Incident (Prakari) are needed only when the dramatist has to introduce a Sub plot. Seed expands in various ways and ends in fruition. Its functions are to restore continuity. Pataka is an episode, not directly connected with the fate of the hero but ultimately helps him in attaining his object. Prakai on the other hand is an episodical incident of the play. Karya refer to the efforts made by the various characters for the furtherance of the principal object.

There are five Segments (Sandhis) in a play for the development. They correspond to the five stages of the play as follows.

1) Mukha (Opening): It deals with the creation of the seed. It is the source of many objects and sentiments.
2) Pratimukha (Progression): Uncovering of the seed placed at opening after it has sometimes been perceptible and sometimes not perceptible.
3) Garbha (Development): The sprouting of the seed, its attainment or non attainment and search for it.
4) Vimarsa (Pause): One’s pause over the seed that has sprouted in the development on account of some temptation, anger or distress.
5) Nirvahana (Conclusion): Bringing together the objects of segments such as opening along with the seed when they have attained fruition. It is logical end to the play.

Bharata feels that there are certain incidents such as the portrayl of a battle, loss of kingdom, death, the siege of a city, a marriage ceremony or any other religious ritual and so many pieces of information which are essential for the development of story but they don’t a part of the plot.

These explanatory devices (Arthopaksepakas) are Viskambhaka (The Supporting Scene), Culika (The Intimating Speech), Pravesaka (Introductory Speech), Ankavatara (Transititional Scene) and Ankamukha (Anticipatory Scene). In addition to these five explanatory devices there are a few other parts of the drama
which have been mentioned by Bharata. They are – **Purvaranga** (Preliminaries), **Nandi** (Bendiction), **Prastavana** (Prologue), and **Bharata Vakyama** (Prayer). This Bharata Vakyama is used by Sanskrit playwrights at the end of their plays, and it expresses their expectations for better future.

II.v. **Praveshika (Introductory Speech by Sutradhara):**

Sanskrit plays usually begin with a prayer and *praveshika* by *sutradhara*. *Sutradhara* establishes a link between the dramatic world and the audience. *Sutradhara* is responsible mainly for the introduction to, however, be supposed that the responsibility of the *sutradhara* ended then and there. As a stage manager he is responsible for the whole show.

II.vi. **Bharata’s Views on the Prakrtis (The Hero):**

Bharata discusses the whole chapter XXXIV to the characteristics of the hero as well as main characters in drama. According to him:

*Characteristics of the various Prakrtis and the four types of Heros (Nayakas). The three main types are Uttama (Superior), Madhyama (Middiling), and Adhama (Inferior).*

(Bharatamuni 514)

1) **Uttama:** The superior character is self controlled, wise, honest, skilled in arts and well-versed in shastras. He is an expert in enjoyment and the same type grave, patient, liberal and munificent.

2) **Madhyama:** He is well mannered, proficient in arts well versed in shastras sweet and courteous.

3) **Adhama:** He is harsh, ill mannered, low spirited criminally inclined, mean, haughty, unfruitful, indolent, expert in insulting honourable persons, lustful towards women, fond of quarrel, and treacherous.

According to Bharata there are four types of *Nayakas*. Usually, they belong to *Uttama* or *Madhyama* categories. These types are as follows:

1) **Dhirodatta:** Self controlled and exalted.

2) **Dhira-Prasanna:** Self controlled and calm.

3) **Dhira- Lalita:** Self controlled and light hearted.

4) **Dhiroddhata:** Self controlled but haughty.
This type of characters is normally used in Pakarna. So the hero may be dhirodata, dhiraprasanna, dhiralalita, and dhiroddata in different stages in his life.

II.vii. Bharata’s Views on Bhasavidhanam (Language /Diction):

Bharata in his Natyashastra has discusses about language in drama in detail. He has devoted four chapters for diction (Vagabhinaya), rules regarding the use of language (Bhasavidhanam), modes of address and intonation (Kakusvaravyanjakah) and style (Vrttivikalpah). He favours the use of verse in drama. He says that the prose can be used here and there particularly in introductory scenes etc., but the major important dialogues must be in verse only. He also discusses metre. He says that different metres must be used to express sentiments. Bharata enumerates thirty six points of excellence of dramatic composition of boldness and courage. G. K. Bhat says that:

Bharata was thinking of beautiful turns of expression which would adorn the dramatic dialogue, as well as of an exquisite rendering of emotional states through suggestive words or actions; naturally both sure to heighten the reader’s and spectator’s feeling of enjoyment.

(Bhat 25)

The thirty six excellent points beautify and embellish the play if used properly according to the sentiment introduced in it.

According to Bharata the following four figures of speech are available to the dramatist. Dramatist should use them appropriately suits to the occasion and status of personages. Bharata recommends the use of the following four alamkaras: Upama (Simile), Rupaka (Metaphor), Dipaka (Condensed Expression), and Yamaka (Alliteration).

In chapter XXII Bharata mentions four stylistic modes (Vrittis) of dramatic representations. A good drama depends upon the successful and beautiful representation of action as well as on these styles. These four styles are as follows: Bharati (Verbal), Sattvati (Grand), Kaisiki (Graceful), and Arabhati (Energetic). Bharata recommends that a suitable style must be used to express various sentiments i.e. Verbal style for pathetic and marvellous rasas; Grand style for heroic and the marvellous rasas; Graceful style for erotic and comic sentiments, and Energetic style for the terrible, the odious and the Furious sentiments.
Bharata shows concern mainly with Rasas and therefore his Natyashastra is Rasa Shastra. Bharata believes that without Rasa, art has no meaning. Bharata also gives the importance of language. Language should be used according to the status or rank of the character, circumstances, etc.

Aristotle and Bharat are the pioneers in the field of a systematic study of dramatic theory. Aristotle’s Poetics and Bharata’s Natyashastra are seminal works of dramaturgy. Their works are still very useful and fundamental to understanding the true nature of drama. Modern plays still trace back to the classical plays. The criticism of the contemporary period is still based on the theory of Aristotle and Bharata. Aristotle’s theory is too limited in its scope where as Bharata’s theory of drama is at certain points too techniqual and exhaustive to be practically useful to the modern writers.

II.viii. The Dramatic Art of Major Sanskrit Playwrights:

The origin of the Classical Sanskrit drama on the one hand, the playwrights like Kalidasa, Bhavbhuti, Sudraka, Harsha and Vishakadatta; on the other hand the exponents of dramatic art like Bharata, Bhatta, Abhinavagupta, Dhananjaya, Ramchandra and Ashvaghosha etc. All these are the pioneers of the Classical Sanskrit drama in India.

Bhasa is a well recognized dramatist. Thirteenth plays are attributed to Bhasa. The Svapnavasavadattam by common consent is regarded as the most excellent play of Bhasa. His Urubhanagam and Karnabharam, two plays are based on The Mahabharata depict tragic aspects of Karna and Duryodhana.

Kalidasa is the Sanskrit dramatist of three Sanskrit plays Vikramorvasiyam, The Malavikagnimitram, and The Abhijnana Shakuntalam. These plays deal with the theme of love in its different aspects.

Bhavabhuti and Sudrak stand out in the history of ancient Sanskrit drama. Bhavabhuti has three plays to his credit. These plays are Mahaviracharita, Uttararamacharita, and Malatimadhava. Bhavabhuti is considered as a dramatist who excels in the portrayal of pathos. Sudraka’s Mruchhakatikam is monumental play. In short, ancient Sanskrit plays predominantly deals theme of love and depends on mythology. The influence of the principles of Natyashastra dominates the dramatic world.
II.ix. Folk Forms:

The Contemporary Experimental plays in English translation have made emphatic innovations and fruitful experiments in terms of both thematic and technical virtuosities. The Contemporary experimental playwrights accepted various dramaturgies, practiced it and strengthened them to give a new direction to the Experimental Theatre. They followed not only the Western but also Indian conception of plays. The Indian conception of the folk forms and various dramaturgies are used by the playwrights in their plays. According to P. Obula Reddy in his essay Cultural Heterogeneity in Indian Drama explains:

*During recent years Indian dramatists are increasingly turning to folk forms and tapping their vitality with wonderful results. Girish Karnad’s use of the Yakshagana in the Kannada play Hayavadana, and Vijay Tendulkar’s use of Lavani in the Marathi play Ghashiram Kotwal; the adaptation of Bhavai in two Gujarati plays- Dina Gandhi’s Meena Gurjar and Bakul Tripathi’s Leela; the employment of Jatra motif in Utpal Dutt’s Jokumaraswara and Badal Sircar’s Evam Indrajit are some examples.*

(Reddy 32)

The impact of the traditional folk forms on the modern Indian theatre is more profound, compared to their Sanskrit counterparts. These folk forms are the *Jatras* of Bengal, the Folk Plays of Tamilnadu, *Yakshaganas* of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, the *Kathakali* of Kerala, *Bharud, Keertan* and *Tamash* of Maharashtra, the *Kirtaniya* of Mithila, the *Bhavai* of Gujarat, and the *Ramlila* plays of North India and *Dashavatatar* of Konkan. B.V. Karant, Vijay Tendulkar, Jabbar Patel, and Satish Alekar etc. have creatively incorporated aspects of traditional folk forms into their plays. B. V. Karant successfully staged Barnam Van (based on Shakespeare's Macbeth) by using title yakshagan form. Vijaya Mehta, Ajitesh Bandyopadhyay and M. K. Raina have made experiments in presenting western plays in a folk form.

The Contemporary Marathi Experimental plays trace back to these traditional folk forms like, *tamasha, keertan, bharud,* and *yakshagana* etc. Satish Alekar used Keertan in his Mahanirvan and some poetic lines in his play *Begum Barve* from traditional *Sangeetnatak*. Vijay Tendulkar has used *Tamasha* in his famous play *Ghashiram Kotwal*. The traditional folk theatrical forms have kept alive the diversities
and the specificities of India's socio-cultural life. These forms have still a lot to offer to the Indian theatre in terms of the methods, conventions and the traditions followed.

II.ix.i. Tamasha:

Tamasha is a principal form of a traditional folk theatre of Maharashtra. It is originated from the folk forms like, Jagran- Gondhal, and Keertan.

Tamasha is a form of theatre, which came into existence in the early 16th century in Maharashtra, which includes the love songs i.e. 'Lavanis' due to which, this folk art, was very popular among the common people. Not only during its inception, but even today Tamasha happen to be one of the most awaited folk performances in the Indian state of Maharashtra. Tamasha includes songs and dance along with the musical instruments like the Dholki (drum), Tuntuni (a single string instrument), Manjira cymbals, Daf, Halgi, the Lejim, and Ghunghroos (ankle bells).

(http://www.indianetzone.com/1/tamasha.htm)

Tamasha provided bawdy lascivious diversion for both Marathas and Moghul army. The female actress is the main exponent of the dance movements known as Murki in the play of Tamasha. Footwork at lightning speed, Classical music and vivid body gesture make it possible to portray all the emotions through dance. There are two kinds of modern Tamasha groups, first one song-dance group and second one is folk drama group. The main purpose of these tamasha is the aesthetic and philosophical incorporates following basic elements like; the entertainment tradition, the more serious propagandist tradition and the devotional tradition.

II.ix.ii. Keertan:

Marathi Kirtan or Keertan is an art of storytelling with spiritual teaching. The performance of the Keertan by one or two performers called Keertankars accompanied with music of harmonium and tabala. Keertan involved with music, singing, acting, dancing and storytelling. The main purpose of these keertans is the pure glorification of god and Godly acts.
II.ix.iii. *Bharud*:

In Maharashtra, *Bharud* is one of the important folk forms, which is next favorite form of folk art after the *tamasha* in the rural areas. *Bharud* is an important part of annual fairs, *Dnyaneshwari Parayan* or the recital of *Tukaram Gatha*. This is an art form which is educative and entertaining among the people. Its main purpose is to advocate spirituality through drama, elocution and music. The originator of this form is Saint Eknath.

II.ix.iv. *Dashavatar*:

A theatre form of the Konkan and Goan people, *Dashavatar* involves enactment of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu. The performers were masks of wood and papier mache and apply stylised make-up.

These folk forms have used by the various playwrights in the Contemporary Marathi Experimental plays. These playwrights like Satish Alekar, Vijay Tendulkar and many more.

II.x. *Pre-Independent Indian English Drama*:

The rise of the modern drama dates back to the Eighteenth century in the era of British Empire in India. With the impact of Western culture on Indian life, a new renaissance began in Indian arts including drama. Furthermore, English education gave an impetus and a momentum to the critical study of not only the Western theatre, but the classical Indian theatre. English and Italian dramatic troupes toured India and performed many English plays, like Shakespeare’s plays, in cities like Mumbai and Madras. In to the West coast the Portuguese brought a form of dance drama.

The newly aroused creative efforts first took the form of translations and adaptations from Sanskrit and English drama. Kalidas’s *Shakuntala* was translated into English and other regional languages. *Mrichahakatika* was translated into Maithili by Ishanatha Jha and *Ratnavali* into Sindhi by Dewan Kauromal.

The Indian English Drama saw the first light of the day when Krishna Mohan Banerjee wrote *The Presecuted* in 1831. However, the journey of Indian English Drama begins with Michel Madhusudhan Dutta’s *Is this Called Civilization* in 1871, which appears in the literary world, though it was not followed by a sustainable artistic attempt for decades together. After a long hiatus of few decades, it was only by the early 20th century that Indian English Drama gathered momentum under the
influence of British Drama. The pre-independent era saw stalwarts like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Harindranath Chattopdhyay, A. S. P. Ayyar, T. P. Kailasam, Bharati Sarabhai and J. M. Lobo Prabhu etc. who contributed substantially to the evolution and development of Indian English Drama. Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, the two great sage poets of India were the first Indian dramatists in English worth considering.

II.x.i. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941):

Rabindranath Tagore was honoured by Nobel Prize for literature in 1913 and an epitome of Indian spiritual heritage wrote primarily in Bengali but almost all his Bengali plays were translated into English. Nand Kumar in his book *Indian English Drama: a Study in Myths* writes:

> Rabindranath Tagore, a unique figure in the history of Indian English drama, was well-versed in the classics of Indian drama, and was alive to the European dramatic tradition. The dramatic form which he evolved influenced the Bengali theatre at the outset of this century.

(Nand Kumar 21)

Rabindranath Tagore’s best known plays are: *Chitra, Sacrifice, The Post Office, Mukta Dhara, The Cycle of Spring, The King of Dark Chamber, Red Oleanders, Chandalika, Natir Paja, Sanyasi,* and *The Mother’s Prayer.* These plays are firmly rooted in the Indian ethos and ethics in their themes, characters and treatment. He displays a unique blend of simplicity and complexity as also conventionality and modernity. Tagore was the first playwright who invested Indian English drama with symbolic overtones and allegorical significance, lyrical excellence. Rabindranath Tagore served his fellowmen fruitfully by being an interpreter and mediator between the civilization of the East and the West. Tagore combined the Indian and Western literary traditions to bring synthesis between the East and The West. Rabindranath Tagore, writer, teacher, and the philosopher who set out to unify Indian and European traditions creating plays which have been described as a mixture of the Bengali folk drama and the Western medieval mystery plays.
II.x.ii. Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950):

Sri Aurobindo is one of the foremost Indian English playwrights and an accomplished craftsman in verse. His writings bear testimony to his profound knowledge of Eastern or Western thought. His plays are mostly constructed on the Elizabethan poetic drama of Marlowe and Shakespeare revived by Robert Bridges and Stephen Phillips in Victorian era. Some of his plays have flavour of Sanskrit drama also. Nand Kumar in his book *Indian English Drama: a Study in Myths* writes:

*Sri Aurobindo strongly influenced by the Elizabethan drama (as perfected by Shakespeare), he infused his style with elements of classical Sanskrit literature. He found an affinity between the ancient Sanskrit drama and the Elizabethan plays.*

(Nand Kumar 52)

Sri Aurobindo’s dramatic genius is revealed through his five complete blank verse plays and six incomplete plays. His complete plays are *Perseus the Deliverer*, *Vasavadutta*, *Rodogune*, *The Viziers of Bassor* and *Eric* and each of these plays is written in five acts. His incomplete plays are *The Birth of sin*, *The Witch of Ilinik*, *Achab and Esarhaddon*, *The House of Brut Prince of Edur*, and *The Maid and the Mill*. These incomplete plays vary the length from one scene of fifty-two lines to three acts. The most striking feature of Sri Aurobindo’s plays is that they deal with a variety of characters, moods and sentiments and also ringing with the different cultures and countries in different epochs. Romance, heroic play, tragedy, comedy and farce find representation of the scale in large and the themes are various there is almost a universal exposure in the total content of Sri Aurobindo’s dramatic literature.

II.x.iii. Harindranath Chattopadhyay (1898-1990):

Another playwright who has made significant contribution in the growth of Indian English drama is Harindranath Chattopadhyay. With his leftist leanings and revolutionary zeal added a new dimension to Indian English drama. He started his career as a playwright with *Abu Hassan*. There are seven verse plays to his credit published under the title of *Poems and Plays* and all the seven plays are based on the lives of Indian saints, e.g. *Raidas*, *Chokha Mela*, *Pundalik*, *Saku Bai*, *Jayadeva* and *Tukaram*. His *Five Plays* are written in prose where the writer’s Socialist bent of mind is quite palpable these are, *The window*, *The Parrot*, *The Sentry’s Lantern*, *The Coffin*,

65
and *The Evening Lamp*. A minute study of his plays reveals that they hardly contain dramatic qualities which make the plays stage worthy. K.R.S. Iyengar in his book *Indian Writing in English* writes:

> Harindranath Chattopadhyay’s plays are all products of an earnest commitment to certain values and ideas and above all the manifestoes of the new realism.

(Iyengar 195)

**II.x.iv. A. S. P. Ayyar:**

A. S. P. Ayyar wrote six plays: *In the clutch of the Devil* is his first play and the last one is *The Trial of Science for the Murder of Humanity*. Ayyar used drama as a mode of apprehension of reality pertaining to contemporary life. The plot and characterization of his plays are subordinated to the massage.

**II.x.v. T. P. Kailasam (1885-1946):**

Tyagaraja Paramasiva Kailasam wrote in English and Kannada also. Kailasam is considered as the father of modern Kannada drama; his intelligence finds it’s full of verbal expression in his English plays such as *The Burden, Fulfillment, The Purpose, The Curse* or *Karna, A Monologue* and *Keechaka*. A blending of vision and stagecraft is found in his plays in general, though his ready wit and subtle humor are found solely in his Kannada plays in particular. G.S. Amur has a very high opinion of T.P. Kailasam and he says:

> A talented actor who appeared in the amateur as well as the professional theatre, he brought to the writing of play an intimate knowledge of the theatre. It is for this cause that his plays whether in Kannada or English have a uniform technical excellence.

(Amur 186)

T.P. Kailasam’s English plays display his quest for greatness and his bold, original approach to characters in the epics. With many imperfections in the art of characterization and the use of dramatic style, most of the plays of Kailsam are a great success on the stage.
II.x.vi. Bharati Sarabhai:

Bharati Sarabhai is the first woman playwright during the colonial era of Indian English Drama who gave Gandhian touch to Indian Drama in English. She has written two plays: *The Well People* and *The Women* with considerable measure of success. Her *The Well People* is symbolic, poetic and significant contribution to traditional womanhood and the Gandhian social doctrines are the themes of the play. *The Women* is realistic, written in prose and examines the personal world of a sensitive nature of modern sophisticated woman and her private world are presented in the play. Bharati Sarabhai presented different facets of Indian womanhood representing the best in the Indian feminine mind in her plays.

II.x.vii. J. M. Lobo Prabhu:

J. M. Lobo Prabhu is the last great name in pre-Independence Indian English Drama. He has written over a dozen plays but only two plays: *Mother of New India: A Play of the Indian Village in Three Acts* and *Death Abdicates* appeared before Independence. His *Collected Plays* was published in 1956. Lobo Prabhu is proficient in writing dialogues with felicity; his creation of the situation is also admirable but his characters do not appear day today life like, soothing and convincing to the audience.

II.x.viii. Miscellaneous:

In addition to the prominent playwrights some of the important writers who tried their hand at drama are Sudindra Nath Ghosh, R.K. Narayan, K.R.S. Iyengar, Balwant Gargi, and Mrinalini Sarabhai. Sudindra Nath Ghosh’s *Colours of a Great City*; R.K. Narayan’s *The Watchman of the Lake*; K.R.S. Iyengar’s *The Storm in a Tea-Cup* and *The Battle of the Optionals*; Balwant Gargi’s *The Vulture* and *Other Plays*; and Mrinalini Sarabhai’s *The Captive Soil*.

The pre-Independence Indian English drama so far as the themes are concerned, the plays dealing with social themes occupy the first place in output, those on legendary and historical themes come only next to them and allegory plays a small role among them. Pre-Independence Indian English drama is noteworthy for its poetic superiority, technical virtuosity, thematic diversity, symbolic significance and its obligation to human and moral ethics; it was by and large not geared for actual stage production.
II.xi. Post-Independent Indian English Drama:

In the post Independence era, Indian English drama does not make a noteworthy presence unlike poetry and fiction. A prime factor for this is that “drama essentially a composite art involving the dramatists, players and the audience in a shared experience of the stage performance has its own problems of which the other literary forms like poetry and novel are free. However, the Indian English drama after the Independence was benefitted by the rising the interest of the foreign countries in Indian literature in English, in general and Indian drama English, in particular. A good number of dramas by Indian dramatists like, Asif Currimbhoy, Gurucharan Das and Pratap Sharma were successfully staged in U.S.A. and England. However, the predicament of Indian English drama is that no regular association and school of Indian English drama was started in our country. This was mainly because the encouragement drama received from several quarters immediately after India got freedom but it was monopolized by the theatre in the Indian regional languages while Indian English drama continued to feed on crumbs fallen from its rich cousins’ table. The plays have been written in poetic and prose style but at the same time poetic plays also survive in the post colonial era.

Manjeri Ishwaran’s *Yama and Yami* is a dialogue in poetic prose with a prologue and epilogue dealing with the incestuous love of Yami for her brother. G. V. Desani’s *Hali*, is much more complex work. It is a different kind of play received high admire for its uniqueness, symbolism and affluent imagery. Lakhan Deb’s *Tiger Claw* is a historical play in three acts, dealing with the encounter between Shivaji and Bijapur general Afzal Khan. His two other plays are *Vivekanand* and *Murder at the Prayer Meeting* are chronicle plays, the later dealing with the murder of Mahatma Gandhi. The use of blank verse is flawless and the last play compels us to remind of T.S. Eliot’s *Murder in the Cathedral*.

Other verse plays of the period include P.A. Krishnaswami’s *The Flute of Krishna*. M. Krishnamuti’s *The Cloth of Gold*; S.D. Rawoot’s *Immortal Song, Karn, and The Killers*; Satya Dev Jaggi’s *The Point of Light*; Pritish Nandy’s *Rites for a Plebeian Statue*; Hushmat Sozorokashme’s *Vikramjeet*; Sree Devi Singh’s *The Purple Braided People*; P.S. Vasudev’s *The Sunflower* and S. Raman’s *Karna*.

The number of prose playwrights is larger in comparison to verse playwrights. The most creative playwrights are Asif Currimbhoy, Pratap Sharma, Geive Patel, Nissim Ezekiel, Gurucharan Das and Girish Karnard.
II.xi.i. Asif Currimbhoy:

Asif Currimbhoy is the prolific playwright who is known today for his presentation of interesting situations and atmosphere in a play. He wrote and published more than thirty plays on a wide range and variety of subject matter. Some of his best plays are: The Doldrummers, The Dumb Dancer, The Tourist, The Clock, Om, Darjeeling Tea, The Captives, Gao, The Refugee, An Experiment with Truth, Sonar Bangala, and The Dissident M. L. A. etc. Currimbhoy is a playwright with a social purpose. He wrote on the several issues like History and Contemporary Politics, Social and Economic problems, the East-West encounter, Religion, Philosophy, and Art and so on. K. R. S. Iyengar in his own critical framework appreciates the creative calibre of Currimbhoy as follows:

*Farce, comedy, melodrama, tragedy, history, and fantasy:*

_Currimbhoy handles them all with praiseworthy ease._

(Iyengar 732)

II.xi.ii. Pratap Sharma:

Pratap Sharma wrote two prose plays which were staged on two continents abroad successfully; however, banned in Bombay for some time and they could not be staged in the country. These plays are _A Touch of Brightness_ and _The Professor Has a Warcry_. Sex is one of the important themes of his plays. In his plays, Pratap Sharma shows keen sense of situations and his dialogues are often effective. The first play is a realistic portrayal of the red light area in Bombay and the second play brings out the mental anguish of Virendra who becomes aware of his illegitimacy. These plays have been commended for their thematic boldness, character delineation and technical triumph. Pratap Sharma has carved out a niche for himself among contemporary playwrights by handling the theme of sex in his above two plays.

II.xi.iii. Gieve Patel:

Gieve Patel is another contemporary dramatist. His first play _Princes_ is based on the semi-urban Parsi sub-culture of the Sanjan-Nargol area of South Gujarat, concentrating on two Parsi families and their savage conflict for the possession of a sole male child. It is significant for its experiments with language and its brilliant success in handling situation, characters and dialogues. It creates a situation, the
obsession with male children that most Indians can identify with and creates a language of sub cultures that characters can speak without straining our credulity.

II.xi.iv. Nissim Ezekiel:

Nissim Ezekiel also enriched Indian English Drama in his own characteristic way. Being an excellent craftsman his plays reveal and portray his observations of the oddities in human life and behaviour, providing glimpses of a cross-section of contemporary society. His *Three Plays* includes *The Sleepwalkers: An Indo-American Farce, Marriage Poem: A Tragi Comedy* and *Nalini: A Comedy* are considered to be a welcome addition to the dramaturgy of Indian English drama. *Song of Deprivation* is also a short play by Ezekiel. These plays reflect a skilful use of ironical fantasy. However, he is best remembered for his poetic creation and not for his dramatic craftsmanship.

Gurucharan Das’s *Larnis Sahib* is a historical play dealing with Henry Lawrence of the Panjab. Das Mira has not appeared in print, while only Act I of his Karna was published in 1974. Some plays of interest may be mentioned: V.K. Gokak’s *The Goddess Speaks*; B.S. Mardhekar’s *Prometheus Rebound*; K. Nagarajan’s *Chidambaram: A Chronicle Play*; M. Majeeb’s *Ordeal*; V.D. Trivdi’s *My Forest*; Santha Rama Rau’s *A Passage to India*, a dramatisation of Forster’s novel; M.V. Rama Sharma’s *Towards Marriage, The Carnival, Sakuntala and The Mahatma*; Manohar Malgonkar’s *Lines of Mars*; Shiv K. Kumars’s *The Last Wedding Anniversary*; Ahmed Akhtar’s *Anar Kali*; Dina Mehata’s *The Myth Makers*; Husenali chagla’s *The Mussulman* and *The Director General*; K.S. Rangappa’s *Gandhiji’s Sadhana*; M.D. Melwani’s *Deep Roots*; Dilip Hero’s *To Anchor a Cloud* and two one act plays: *Apply, Apply, No Reply* and *A Clean Break*; P. Vasudev’s *Lord Ravan of Lanika*; Syed Amanuddin’s *The King Who Sold His Wife*; Mrinalini Sarabhai’s *Vichaar*; Kamala Das’s *A Mini Trilogy*; Madhu Rye’s *I am a Butterfly*; Snehalata Reddy’s *Sita* and B. Narayan’s *The Onlookers*.

In comparison to the pre-Independence period, post Independence playwrights have failed to tap fully the rich sources of our ancient literature, scriptures, epics, legends, varied Indian dramatic traditions, Indian myth and history of our country for their themes. There are various reasons have been attributed to the paucity of Indian drama. The important reason given for stunted growth of Indian drama in English is its unsuitability for production on the stage. K. R. S Iyengar says:
Of course we have had highly talented and enterprising Indians who seriously attempted drama in English, but seldom for actual stage production. (Iyengar 226)

Indian English drama has also suffered for want of a real theatre and a live audience in India. As M.K. Naik puts it:

\[ \text{A play, in order to communicate fully and become a living dramatic experience, needs a real theatre and alive audience. It is precisely the lack of these essentials that has hamstrung Indian drama in English all along.} \]

\[ \text{(Naik 181)} \]

The major hurdle for the flourishing Indian English drama is the lack of a executable language as suitable medium for its expression. However, in this phase, some have succeeded rather well in the use of spoken language for their dialogues; and the mini-plays and the brief presentation of a single situation are new experiments. On the whole, the previous one, so far as the stage ability of plays neither is concerned, nor is there any striking developments as far as the dramatic art are concerned.

II.xii. Indian English Drama in Post Modern Era:

The post-modern era seems to be productive for Indian English Drama, as it has received fresh impetus from young writers like Mahesh Dattani, Manjula Padmanabhan, Mahasweta Devi, Vera Sharma, Shashi Tharoor, Dina Mehta, Uma Parmaswaran, Khushwant Singh and many others.

II.xii.i. Mahesh Dattani:

Mahesh Dattani, a versatile playwright is the first Indian dramatist to be honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1998 for his collection of plays Final Solutions and Other Plays. In 1994 appeared his Final Solutions and Other Plays comprising of four full length plays entitled respectively: Where There is a Will, Dance Like a Man, Bravely Fought the Queen and Final Solutions. His The Collected Plays, published in 2000 including six full length plays. His other famous plays are Tara, On a Muggy Night in Mumbai, two radio plays are Do the Needful and Seven Steps Around the Fire.
For the sake of promoting both types of plays, written originally in English and translations of contemporary plays into regional languages, Dattani established a performing arts theatre group called PLAYPEN in 1984 and successfully directed plays for the group ranging from classical Greek to contemporary plays. Dattani puts drama on a very high pedestal. Dattani’s plays are known for their technical virtuosity. He relished experimenting with several dramatic devices.

II.xii.ii. Manjula Padmanabhan:

Manjula Padmanabhan was honoured with the Onassis Award for her pioneering play *Harvest*, which is acclaimed internationally. She portrays a mean and moribund world where mothers sell their children for the ‘price of rice’. *Harvest* deals with a miserable family living in a single room in a ‘Chawl’ in Mumbai. Padmanabhan’s other plays are *Light Out, Body Blows: Women, Violence and Survival: Three Plays*.

II.xii.iii. Mahasweta Devi:

Mahasweta Devi is a well-known Indian woman dramatist in the post modern era. Her writings represent the hunger, poverty, subjugation and corruption in the society.

Mahasweta Devi emerged as a dramatist having a quest to explore something challenging and new. Her five plays are *Aajir, Mother of 1084, Byen, Water* and *Urvashi O’ Johnny*. In *Aajir*, Mahasweta Devi deals with the subject of the fast deterioration of values and their effects on society, particularly on illiterate people. The play *Mother of 1084* is a representation of the anguish of an a political mother who had witnessed the horrors of Naxalite Movement. The play *Bayen* represents a moving account of harsh reality of a woman’s life in rural India. *Urvashi O’ Johnny* is a play depiction of the emergency through the love affair of Johnny with Urvashi, a talking doll. The story of a play *Water* is professional water-diviner, Maghai Done who is an untouchable boy. Her plays are about the representation of a profound concern for human being’s predicament and genuine hope for the better future of mankind.

There are numerous playwrights who have written one or two play each. Derek Antao has written as many plays, of which only two have been published these are, *Acushala* and *Give Us This Day Our Black Sheep*. Shashi Tharoor’s Twenty-two
Months in the Life of a Dog: A Farce in Two Acts is a diverting tale off on the Emergency of 1975. The plot is based on Mikhail Bulgakov’s novella, Dog’s Heart. Khushwant Singh, is a novelist, has written a play Tyger Tyger includes in his Not a Nice Man to Know: The Best of Khushwant Singh. Dina Mehta’s two plays are Are Not for Burning and Getting Away with Murder. First one is on a subject of urgent contemporary relevance: dowry, deaths and second one is about woman question. Uma Parameswaran, the critic, has also been active in the theatre in Canada, where she teaches. Her plays are Sons Must Die and Other Plays, Dear Deedi, Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees and Sita’s Promise is a dance play.

II.xiii. The Contemporary Indian Drama Translation in English:

The Contemporary Indian dramas in English translation have registered a great name and fame not only in India but also all over the world. These translation works are gaining ground day by day and some of them have made bold innovations, fruitful experiments, and positive responses in terms of both thematic concerns and technical virtuosities. They are increasingly diving deep into the rich sea of history, legend, myth and folklore, tapping their springs of vitality and vocal cords of popularity with splendid results. Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sarkar, Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar are the most representative of the contemporary Indian drama not only in Hindi, Bengali, Kannada and Marathi respectively but also on the pan-Indian level.

II.xiii.i. Mohan Rakesh:

Mohan Rakesh is today known for his well known Hindi plays are Adhe Adhure, Ashadh Ka Ek Din, Leharon Ke Rajhansa, and Pair Tale Ki Zamin. The play Pair Tale Ki Zamin was completed by Kamleshwar after his death and published in 1974.

Adhe Adhure which is translated into English under the title Half Way Waves. The play presents a very gloomy and dismal picture of family life. Every character in the play is misplaced and nobody is in order. Savitri, a disgruntled woman is not happy with her husband, Mhendra and her son Ashoke and her two daughters Kinni and Binni. The other full length plays of Mohan Rakesh which attract our attention these are: One Day in Ashadh and The Great Swans of the Waves. These plays dramatize the suffering of men and women who fall victims to socio-economic
hierarchy and cultural hegemony. Mohan Rakesh was greatly influenced by Marxism. He seems to wage a relentless fight against the traditional views of Hindi drama and always endeavored to project something new and challenging. He tries his best to create something new and innovative in theme and technique.

II.xiii.ii. Badal Sircar:

Badal Sircar is popularly known as ‘barefoot playwright’. He is a writer of new theatrical movement in India. While Mohan Rakesh has mostly used historical characters to portray the moral and social breakdown of modern society, Badal Sircar uses contemporary situation in to project the existential realism of modern life. He has to his credit the creation of a ‘Third Theatre’ (street theatre) a theatre which is supported, created by the people, and not merely performed by the people. The Third Theatre shows “a composite of a four way flow of influences actor to actor, audience to actor, actor to audience and audience to audience. It is essentially a flexible, portable and inexpensive Theatre, aiming at not simply enlightening the people on socio-economic and political problems, but leading them to constructive action with a view to bringing about social change. Neeta Jain comments:

*Street theatre is a feneric term for all manner of performance conducted where people are on the street or in the marketplace. Performances can be short and impromptu, developing with interaction eith the watching crowd, or they can be slightly extended and carefully scripted and rehearsed.*

(Jain 99)

Badal Sircar’s earlier plays are Evan Inderjit, That Other History, There Is No End, Pary Konodin, Jadi Aur Ek Baar, Palap, and Pagla Ghoda. Most of the plays of Badal Sircar particularly his well known plays like Procession, Bhoma, and Stale News are based on the concept of ‘Third Theatre’. Through his three typical street plays one can see the realization of Sircar’s philosophy and vision of making people aware of their social responsibility. He makes theatre a medium of expressing individual responsibility of the people towards the society. Procession, the most popular among the plays of Sircar, deals with the theme of a ‘real home’ or a real way of living in this world of various sorts of deviations and corruptions. The playwright imagines a new ideal world in which man does not live by exploiting others. There are
two main characters in this play- the old man and khoka who represent the old and new generations respectively. Bhoma is based on the miserable plight of an average Indian peasant who is generally seen socially and economically exploited. Stale News is equally very beautiful in both matter and manner. It deals with the theme of revolution. It centers on a young man who is bombarded with shattering information full of contradictions and contrasts which come to him as ‘stale news’.

The audience and readers assume a protagonist’s role in the theatre of Badal Sircar, making the theatrical incident experimental, in determinative and open-ended. Badal Sircar experimented with themes, archetype and stereotypes instead of plots and characters.

II.xiii.ii. Girish Karnad:

Girish Karnad, the prolific dramatist of the contemporary Indian stage, has enriched this genre with his talent as an actor, director, writer and producer. He has represented India in foreign lands as an emissary of art and culture. He is a Kannada writer yet he has translated his plays in English so as to reach a larger audience. Girish Karnad along with other playwrights Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar and Vijay Tendulkar revived the vogue of theatre. As well known playwright trace back to myths and legends of our golden past and tries his best to make these characters of legends the vehicle of a new vision of life. By exploiting the diverse myths, he shows the absurdity of modern life with all its elemental passions and conflicts, and man’s eternal struggle to accomplish precision even amidst the evils of the world. N. M. Nigam comments:

*Karnard introduces existentialist issues like identity, split personality, ideological break-ups and dichotomy of life in his plays.*

(Nigam 35)

Girish Karnad’s first play *Yayati* was written in Kannada, the language of childhood, and later publication of *Tughlaq* established Karnad as a master dramatist. Subsequently he published *Hayavadana, Angumalige, Hattina Hunja, Naga-Mandala, Tale Danda* and *Agni Mattu Male*. Girish Karnad wrote all his eight plays in Kannada, these have been translated into major Indian languages including Hindi. Five of his plays, *Hayavadana, Tughlaq, Tale-Danda, Naga-Mandala, and The Fire and the Rain*
have been translated into English. Besides his own plays, Karnad has also translated Badal Sircar’s *Evan Indrajit* which was well-received in literary circles.

Girish Karnad’s plays have received an international recognition. They have been widely performed in Europe and America. Karnas has received wide recognition for his plays. He got Mysore State Award for *Yayati* in 1962, Kamaladevi Award of Bhartiya Natya Sangh for the Best Indian Play of the year for *Haysavadana* in 1972, for *Tale –Danda*, he won a number of awards; B. H. Sridhar Award in 1992, Karnataka Natak Akademi Award for the best play of 1990-1991 in 1993 and Sahitya Akademi Award in 1994. He has also received Govt. of Mysore Rajyotsava Award in 1972. He has been conferred by the President of India, the prestigious award ‘Padamshree’ in 1974 and ‘Padambhushan’ in 1992. Girish Karnad has given the Indian theatre richness that could probably be equated only with his talents not only as an actor but also director. His contribution goes beyond theatre: he has directed documentaries, television serials and feature films. He has represented India in the all world as an emissary of art and culture.

The Contemporary Indian drama in English Translation has registered a remarkable growth and maturity through English translation of Hindi, Bengali, Marathi and Kannada plays in the 1980s and 1990s. A study of Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad amply reveals that they have added a new dimension to Indian drama through their substantial contributions. R. K. Dhawan explains in his book *Recent Indian Drama in English* that:

*It clearly shows that these playwrights are the symbols of the new resurgence in their own areas and have made bold innovations, fruitful experiments and given new directions which go in the history of Indian drama as a significant mark of achievement.*

(Dhawan 16)

**II.xiv. Origin and Development of Marathi Drama:**

The Marathi Theatre has been alive now for over one hundred fifty years. Marathi drama may be said to have made a definite beginning at Sangali in the year 1843, Vishnudas Bhave being its true pioneer. *Seetaswaymwar*, written by Vishnudas Bhave in 1843, is the first non-traditional, non-folk and non-ritualistic dramatic
performance in Marathi. At the same time, it must be conceded that two separate
dramatic strains have preceded the advent of Vishnudas Bhave, viz. Folk Drama and
the Tanjor School of Drama.

The various folk forms of theatre such as Keertan, Tamasha, Powada, Dashavat, Lalit, Gondhal, Naman and Bharud originated from different regions of Maharashtra. All these folk forms are accompanied with music, dance and mimic action. There is simplicity in language, costumes and staging. Tamasha and Powada may be called the folk dance forms of Maharashtra. Tamasha has full of music and
well-liked entertainment of song, dance, satire, narrative; created for titillation and
amusement of the Peshwa armies in the eighteenth century is performed all over
Maharashtra. Powadas are presented in a ballad form the stories of exploits and rare
qualities of a heroic figure. The Dashavat, performed post-harvest between October
and March in the Konkan region on the western cost of Maharashtra, is based on
mythological stories about the ten avatars of Lord Vishnu. The germs of Marathi
drama lay in these folk forms and have influenced the evolution of Marathi drama.

The Tanjore School of drama began during the period of Maratha rule from
1676 to 1855. When Vyanksji Bhosale, a step brother of Shivaji, conquered the
Tanjore kingdom in Tamil Nadu, he brought with him to Tanjor men distinguished in
several disciplines, including literature and the arts. Vyankoji’s eldest son Shahaji,
the King of Tanjavar, wrote twenty two plays in Marathi, twenty in Telegu, three in
Hindi and each in Tamil and Sanskrit, towards the end of the Seventeenth century.
Pratapsingh’s grandson Sarfojiraje was a playwright, and also a generous patron of
the arts, literature and the theatre. He has nine plays to his credit. They bear the
influence of the classical Sanskrit plays as well as the Yakshagana, one of the famous
folk forms of South India.

II.xiv.i. Vishnudas Bhave:

The theatrical activity began in Maharashtra with Vishnudas Amrut Bhave's
Sanglikar Natak Mandalii’s stage performance of Sitaswayamvar on Fifth November
1843 in the court of Chintamanrao Patwardhan the King of Sangli. Amrut Vitthal was
Vishnudass’s father, who was an officer in the king’s army. The Maharaja of Sangli
Chintamanrao Appa Saheb Patwardhan gave his patronage and much encouragement
to Vishnudas Bhave and his drama company. The drama company was influenced by
the Western plays. Vishnudas Bhave was an exceptionally gifted scholar who was
well known dramatist, director and organizer. A drama school was started in Sangli. Bhave staged his "Khel-Akhyan" (play-narrations in verse) and plays in the wada of Shri Vishvanath Shimpi in the Girgaon, Mumbai in 1853. The stories of his plays were based on Sanskrit mythological and religious literature. Songs and music were strengthened of Bhave's plays. His play Sitawanyamvar became very popular and received much encomium. Bhave had extended his drama activity from Mumbai to Pune.

Bhave's ‘Sitawanyamvar’ which was an imitation of the Kannada dramaturgy proved to be a great success. Marathi drama slowly began to strike root and took a lot of inspiration from folk tales, the Bhagwat Purana, etc. There was a lot of melodrama and crudity in the earlier plays; however, the dramas went through a process of refinement and slowly but steadily developed into a progressive art form.

Besides Bhave’s company, other drama companies also came into existence, the chief drama companies were Narharbuwa’s Company, Shahunagarwasi Company, Mumbaikar Natak Mandali and Amarchand Wadikar Natak Mandali. The plays performed by these companies attracted large audience. Plenty of songs, crude actions and abundant humor characterized these early mythological plays.

As such, there was no complete play as a uniform and permanent creation. The Aryoddharak, the Maharashtra and the Shahunagarwasi Company played an important role in the development of the Marathi Theatre after the Bhave Company. These companies started giving performances throughout Maharashtra setting up temporary camps wherever they performed. These drama companies were closely associated with the newly educated middle class people. Due to their travelling characters, they had reached in various parts and corners of Maharashtra. The social thinkers like Agarkar, Kelkar and Savarkar, and political agitators like Khadilkar and Wamanrao Joshi had turned to drama. Their works had become powerful carriers of their ideals. The top-ranking political leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak had been taking keen interest in the theatre. As a result, the Marathi theatre became directly involved in the movements for social reform and political independence. The Aryoddharak and the Narharbuwa’s produced mostly prose plays. A version of Shakespeare’s ‘The Comedy of Errors’ was part of their repertory. The Aryoddharak was founded due to the efforts of G. B. Deval and his contemporaries in 1879. G. B. Deval played the hero Zunjarrao in the adaptation of Shakespeare’s ‘Othello’ by the Aryoddharak drama company. The play is still popular among Marathi audience. The
Shahunagarwasi drama company had been formed under the leadership of Ganpatrao Joshi in 1881. It mostly produced mythological and legendary plays. It became famous because Ganpatrao Joshi’s versatile and skillful performances as the poet-saint Tukaram and Balwantrao Jog’s wonderful portrayal of female parts. The company also produced the Marathi version of Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew* done by Prof. V. B. Kelkar. Ganpatrao Joshi worked histrionic miracles on the stage playing Hamlet in Gopal Ganesh Agarkar’s translation of this Shakespearean tragedy.

The Marathi theatre was dominated by the singer actors such as Bhaurao Kolhatkar, Ganpatrao Joshi, Ganpatrao Bhagwat, Keshavrao Bhonsale and Narayanrao Rajahans alias Bal Gandharva. They played a vital and significant role in bringing wide acceptance and respectability to the Marathi theatre. Many of them became legends in their life time due to their unique performances in female roles. Bhaurao Kolhatkar, a heavenly singer, played the female parts in Kirloskar Natak Mandali’s mythological adaptations. Keshavrao Bhonsale memorized the role of the eponymous character of G. B. Deval’s play *Sharada*. Sharada is a young girl, forced by her greedy father to marry a rich old man in this play.

The names of two playwrights, Madhavrao Patankar and Babajirao Rane deserve mention for writing plays with an eye to the ordinary villager. They used simple plots with a straightforward message to draw the ignorant masses away from their favourite pastime, the local Tamasha. Rane used to carry a generating set with him and staged plays literally in bright light in the farthest villages of Maharashtra.

With the passage of a decade or so, the audience started growing weary of the Bhave style of drama. The introduction of English education in India by the British administration also contributed to the decline of early mythological drama. The young men studying in the colleges were introduced to Western literature and Shakespearean plays. They also influenced by the Sanskrit plays of Kalidasa, Sudraka, Bhasa, Bhavabhuti, etc. They yearned for a new kind of Marathi drama and began translating Sanskrit and Shakespearean plays into Marathi. Thus, the newly awakened sensibility took the form of translations and adaptations from Sanskrit and English drama. Dnyaneshwar Nadkarni comments:

*The foundations of the ‘prose’ school of Marathi drama were laid by these Shakespearean translations.*

(Nadkarni 11)
Mahadeoshastri Kolhatkar translated Shakespeare’s ‘Othello’ in 1867. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar brought ‘Hamlet’ into Marathi. The scholarly men produced adaptations of the plays of Shakespeare one after another. K. G. Natu’s Vijaysingh was based on ‘Julius Caesar’ whereas V. M. Mahajani’s Tara was based on ‘Cymbeline’. Prof. Vasudeo B. Kelkar produced a Marathi version of ‘The Taming of the Shrew’ for the Shahunagarwasi touring company. B. R. Pradhan adapted ‘Comedy of Errors’ as Bhrantikrut Chamatkar. The classical Sanskrit plays were also translated a great deal. Krushnashastri Rajwade who translated Sanskrit plays, like Vikromorvarshiya, Malatimadhav and Mudrarakshas. Ganeshshastri Lele brought Janakiparinay and Malavikagnimitra into Marathi. All these translations contributed to the development of the Marathi theatre.

II.xiv.ii. Vinayak Janardan Kirtane:

Vinayak Janardan Kirtane’s Thorle Madhavrao Peshwe written in 1857 had no songs or musical recitals. The whole drama was acted with dialogues which were totally in prose. Kirtane used history rather than mythology as his material and drew upon the conventions of both the Sanskrit and the Shakespearean plays for its structure. The newly educated class was dissatisfied with the stuffing of songs and dances just for their entertainment value in the early Marathi plays. The adaptations of his plays from a diverse culture could not retain the interest of the masses in large numbers. Kirtane’s Thorle Madhavrao Peshwe was a sort of experiment to deal with the history of the glorious Maratha Empire which had disappeared only half a century ago. It catered to the contemporary needs and aspirations by trying to correct the wrong impressions of the Marathas created by the British historians. Shanta Gokhale explains that:

This play was a landmark in history of Marathi theatre, begetting a whole body of dramatic writing comprising what came to be known as ‘prose play’, means ‘a play without songs’.

(Gokhale 13)

The genre ran parallel to the Sangeetnatak (verse play) in the period from 1890 to 1920. After the decline of the Sangeetnatak in post First World War period, the writers of modern drama received impetus from this tradition to chart their own course.
II.xiv.iii. Annasaheb Kirloskar:

After Vishnudas Bhave, the next important actor-playwright in the Marathi theatre is Balwant Pandurang alias Annasaheb Kirloskar. He began his career with mythological Bhave-type plays. Shankar-Digvijay (The Conquest of Shankara) may be cited as an example. His other famous plays are Shakuntal, Soubhadra, and Ramarajya Viyog. Of these, Shakuntal, and Soubhadra have now become classics. He followed the traditional dramaturgy like clown, sutradhara and worship of lord Ganapati before enacting the play. According to Kapila Vatsyayan:

Kirloskar continued to follow the conventions of the Sutradhar, clown, the invocation of Lord Ganapati etc. in his earlier plays.

(Vatsyayan 176)

Annasaheb Kirloskar gave the Marathi theatre a new turn by the incorporation of classical ragas for the singing of all parts in his later plays adapted from Sanskrit classics such as Shakuntalam and Mrichakatikam. Kirloskar formed his own drama company, which known as the Kirloskar Natak Mandali in 1880. His adaptation of the Sanskrit classic Abhijnanshakuntala by Kalidas was the finest production of the company.

In 1870, Kirloskar came across Kannad translation of Abhijnanshakuntala by Turamari Sheshgiri Rao. Rao gave his own renderings of the Sanskrit verses as footnotes in addition to the translation of the original verses. Adya Rangacharya comments:

Kirloskar saw the significance of this innovation and in his own Shakuntala he introduced songs in simple Marathi at appropriate places. The final result was a combination of prose and music, the former keeping up the dramatic narration and the latter adding to the enjoyment of the audience. This pattern started a tradition which till now is popular on the Marathi stage. Plays of the type were called ‘Sangeet’ (musical) plays.

(Adya Rangacharya 115)

Annasaheb Kirloska was not merely a dramatist; he was a ‘Man of the Theatre’ in the fullest sense, being the owner of a dramatic company, a producer, a
director and an actor as well. And he discharged all these responsibilities with equal expertise and success.

II.xiv.iv. Govind Ballal Deval:

Govind Ballal Deval was a student of Annasaheb Kirloskar. Most of his plays were translated and adapted from both Sanskrit on the one hand and English and French on the other. Of his seven plays, three are translations from Sanskrit, two from English, one is adaptation of a French play done in English, and only one is an independent play, which is easily his best: *Sharada*. This play dealt with a burning social problem of the period, i.e., the custom of marrying young girls to old men.

The translation from English include *Durga*, based on Thomas Southerne’s *The Fatal Marriage*, and *Zunzarrao* in which the tragedy of Shakespeare’s *Othello* was presented in an Indian setting. Daval’s other famous play is *Samshaykallo*. Thus, Deval is a forerunner to the modern Marathi playwrights like Tendulkar, Alekar and Elkunchwar who displayed social realism in their works. Like Kirloskar, Deval too was more than merely a playwright; he had a thorough knowledge of the various aspects of the theatre, and was an able stage director.

II.xiv.v. Shripad Krishna Kolhatkar:

Shripad Krishna Kolhatkar wrote a dozen plays who was the most popular playwright in the first decade of the twentieth century. He plays include *Veertanaya*, *Mooknayak*, *Guptamanjusha*, *Mativilkar*, *Premashodhan*, *Wadhupariksha*, *Sahucharini*, *Pariwartan*, *Janmarahasya*, *Shiva-Pavitrya*, *Shramsaphalya* and *Mayavivaha*.

Kolhatkar revolted against all the characteristic elements of the Kirloskar’s verse plays. His plays were the influence of the Sanskrit classical plays whereas those of Kolhatkar show the influence of western plays. Chandra Bhan Gupta comments that:

*The style of the plays of Kolhatkar is in the manner of western dramatists like Shakespeare.*

(Gupta 166)

Kolhatkar tried to be free of all conventions and endeavored to stretch the audience’s disbelief as much as possible. He introduced tunes from the Urdu and Gujarati plays for his songs. A significant contribution of Kolhatkar to the Marathi
theatre was his introduction of the comic sub-plot which later expanded into pure comedies in period of the post First World War.

II.xiv.vi. Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar:

Another playwright of the early twentieth century is Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar. Khadilkar was a disciple of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, an important leader of the nationalist movement. He wrote seven prose plays and eight verse plays which were influenced by the Shakespearean plays. Nemichandra Jain comments that:

\[ \text{Khadilkar’s early mythological and historical plays show the strong influence of Shakespearean tragedy.} \]

(Jain 72)


Khadilkar’s \textit{Keechakwadh} is considered as one of the most significant political plays in Marathi when was banned by the British administration. The play dealt with an episode taken from the epic \textit{Mahabharata} in which Bhima, one of the Pandavas, slays Keechak, an evil-minded warrior, for trying to molest Draupadi. Keechak symbolised British rule as represented by the hated Lord Curzon. This intelligent and forceful allegory satirized the Curzon regime.

II.xiv.vii. Ram Ganesh Gadkari:

Ram Ganesh Gadkari was S. K. Kolhatkar’s younger contemporary, an outstanding playwright of this period who continued the tradition of Marathi verse plays. He wrote mostly social plays which were highly appreciated by the public. He wrote tragedies like \textit{Ekach Pyala} and \textit{Premsanyas} and a comedy, \textit{Bhavbandhan}. His play was \textit{Punyaprabhav. Rajasanyas}, a historical tragedy on the life of ill fated Sambhaji, son of Shivaji remained incomplete. Two lesser plays he also wrote were \textit{Vedyancha Bajar}, a farce and \textit{Garvanirvan}, a mythological drama. He gave a lot of importance to the purpose of the drama. He tried to play his part in the movements for social reform as well as freedom through his plays. His works bear the influence of both the Shakespearean as well as Sanskrit plays. According to Dnyaneshwar Nadkarni,
Gadkari’s Ekach Pyala the social tragedy was very much based on Shakespeare’s Othello.

(Nadkarni 13)

Among Marathi dramatists, Gadakari stands foremost as a stylist per excellence. Several passages in his plays with their imaginative flights, flourishes of fancy and cascades of alliteration have now become part of the literary equipment of the lover of literature in Maharashtra.

II.xiv.viii. Shankar Kashinath Garge (Diwakar):

Shankar Kashinath Garge, a contemporary of Gadkari wrote under the pen-name, ‘Diwakar’ suggests that there was something about the times and the state of the Marathi stage that encouraged dramatic experiments. He did not receive formal education in a college but was familiar with most of the important works in western literature. After trying his hand at some short plays (play-lets) and translations, he started to write dramatic monologues in prose. These short prose pieces were called as Natyachhata. Diwakar’s place in Marathi theatre is not significant but his experiment with language provided guidance to the later writers of Marathi prose drama mainly Satish Alekar. Satish Alekar accepts in his interview with Samik Bandopadhyay:

*When I look for my roots in the Marathi Theatre tradition, I think I may be closer to the playwright Diwakar.*

(Alekar 410)

II.xiv.ix. Bhargavaram Vitthal Warerkar:

From 1920 onwards, the popularity of mythological and historical drama began to ebb and the appeal of plays with songs also began to diminish. With the birth of the Sound Film in 1931, Drama was confronted with a formidable rival and appeared to lose ground rapidly.

Among those playwrights who successfully helped sustain the Marathi dramatic tradition during this different period, the name of B.V. alias Mama Warerkar ranks very high. Warerkar wrote his first play Kunjavihari, a Sangeetnatak. In Sanyashacha Sansar, Warerkar dealt with the problem of enforced conversion by Christian missionaries in India. In Haach Mulacha Baap, he satirized the evils of the system of dowry unlike Khadilkar who used to disguise the political message in his allegorical plays. Warerkar did not fear about to put forward his message in a more
straight forward manner. Having run into problems with the British administration which had banned the performance of his play *Majuracha Rajya*, he began taking certain precautions in his later plays. His play *Sonyacha Kalas*, dealt with the mill owners exploitation of labourers. The playwright suggested following the Gandhian principles of understanding, co-operation and non-violence in order to promote better industrial relations. In addition to the bad mill owner, he introduced the character of a good mill owner in order to avoid controversy. He also submitted a copy of the script to the police department before the performance of the play. Warerkar’s *Satteche Gulam*, introduced box scenes and realistic properties after western models. His next play *Turungachya Darat* was the first Marathi play to do without scenes.

Keshavrao Bhonsale, a leading singer-actor had established a drama company Lalit Kaladarsha. He invited Warerkar to write prose plays for his company. Warerkar used his medium to bring about changes in the contemporary social, political, and economic situation. Intellectual, rather than emotional, reigned supreme in his mental make-up as a writer. During the staging of Warerkar’s plays by the Lalit Kaladarsha Company, the stage design became more and more realistic. The artists like Baburao Painter and Anandrao Mistry brought about radical changes with their new approach towards stage-design. After Keshavrao Bhonsale’s death, Bapurao Pendharkar took the reins of the Lalit Kaladarsha in his hands. In his career spanning over three decades, Warerkar made a significant contribution to the job of keeping the Marathi drama alive during the uncertain years between the coming of the cinema and the end of World War II. As a member of the Rajya Sabha, he continued his efforts for the promotion of Marathi theatre after the independence. The first national level theatre festival was organized in Delhi in 1954 due to his efforts.

II.xiv.x. The *Natyamanvantar* Dramatic Organization:

In 1933, a new drama company, *Natyamanwantar* was formed by a group of intellectuals and theatre enthusiast’s conscious effort to modernize the Marathi drama. Shanta Gokhale points out:

*Natyamanwantar was formed with the specific purpose of bringing modern drama to the Marathi stage.*

(Gokhale 70)

Some pre-versioned intellectuals and theatre enthusiast are K. Narayan Kale, Anant Kanekar, Parshwanath Altekar and G. Y. Chitnis. Discarding the tradition on
mythological/historical drama, they too, like Warerkar, took Ibsen as their role model, both in themes and techniques. On the 1 July 1933, Natyamanwantar staged the first play *Andhalyanchi Shala*. It was an adaptation of the Norwegian playwright Bjornson’s ‘Gauntlet’ by Shridhar Vinayak Vartak.

Unfortunately, *Andhalyanchi Shala* proved to be a flash in the pan. The two plays, *Lapandav* and *Takshashila* produced by Natyamanwantar did not get financial success and the company was closed down within three years of its formation. The group was very short-lived phenomenon, but its importance in the history of Marathi theatre is scarcely be overemphasized.

The fate of other drama companies in Maharashtra was similar to that of the Natyamanwantar. Almost all the other major natak companies, including Kirloskar Company, Bal Gandharva Company and Lalit-Kaladarsha closed down between 1934 and 1936. The rapidly increasing popularity of the cinema and the mediocrity of the Marathi plays of the period chiefly contributed to this calamity on the Marathi drama. The first few years of the fourth decade of the twentieth century can be termed as the worst time in the history of Marathi theatre. The popularity of the cinema rose rapidly after the release of *Ayodhyecha Raja Harishchandra* in 1931 by Prabhat Films. Many actors and technicians deserted the theatre and turned towards the new medium. The well-established drama companies had kept on repeating their earlier successes. The matters were not helped by the formation of new companies by actors who had quarreled with their companies. Many of such new companies had to be closed down because of the lack of professional managers with good business acumen. Actually, other regional language theatres in the country such as the Telgu, Kannada, and Tamil theatres also faced the same fate. The Marathi drama was too deep rooted, however, to be completely destroyed. Along with Varerkar, Atre and Rangnekar’s plays continued the tradition of the Marathi drama even during the period.

**II.xiv.xi. Pralhad Keshav Atre:**

Pralhad Keshav alias Acharya Atre was a disciple of Gadkari created a tradition of social comedies in Marathi theatre. His plays were produced by Balmohan Natak Mandali. He had done a lot of preparation before entering the arena of playwriting.

In addition to Gadkari, Atre was also influenced by the comedies of Moliere and Noel Coward. A complicated plot with an emphasis on misunderstandings, witty
dialogues and farcical humour are the major characteristics of his plays. There is a blending of humour and compassion in his plays. He was a thoroughly professional playwright who clearly understood the psyche of the theatre audience. While writing in the naturalistic style, he gave importance to emotion more than thought, as he firmly believed that humor and sentiment were sure ways of winning the hearts of his audience. Some of his notable works are To Mee Navhech, Sashtang Namaskar, Jag Kay Mhanel, Udyacha Samsar and Gharabaher. He wrote two plays for children they are, Gurudakshina and Veer Vachan. He earned a place of pride for humorous plays which had earlier been looked upon as plain entertainment without a certain viewpoint about life.

II.xiv.xii. Motiram Gajanan Ranganekar:

Another contributor to the Marathi stage during the difficult years between the advent of cinema and the end of World War II is Motiram Gajanan Ranganekar. Beginning his career as a journalist, he founded his own theatre, Natyaniketan. As a professional journalist, he had come across with the drama companies and their drawbacks of setting up a residential company in which staying together all the time used to give rise to jealousy, rivalry and back biting among the actors. In the thirty-two years of Natyaniketan’s existence, he successfully avoided all these things. He tried to give the audience what they were looking for. His plots dealing with the domestic problems; creation of a pleasing atmosphere, verbal wit and humor, and clever imagination are the characteristics of his plays. Some of his noteworthy plays are Kulavadhu, Ashirwad, Kanyadan, Wahini, Ek Hota Mhatara, Bhatala Dili Osari, and Maher. His play Kulavadhu dealt with the problems faced by a working woman. There are shades of Ibsen’s ‘A Doll’s House’ in it. Rangnekar also experimented with joint presentation of his one act plays such as Satra Warshe, and Farari but did not get much success.

Among other notable dramatists of the period from 1920 to 1950 the following names and their plays are required to be mentioned: Anant Kanekar’s Gharkul, Parangachi Dori, and Nishikantahi Navari; V. B. Bhole’s Saraladevi; N. D. Tamhankar’s Usana Navara; Madhavrao Joshi’s Municipality, Paisach Paisa; and S. P. Joshi’s Khadashtka.
II.xv. The Professional Theatre:

After 1950, there was a considerable diversification of the Marathi drama. The main stream of professional theatre was joined in by several tributes like the Experimental theatre, Dalit theatre, the Street play, One Act play, Children theatre, Factory Workers theatre etc. Nevertheless, the tradition of the professional Theatre was ably sustained by several new playwrights.

II.xv.i. Vishnu Vaman Shriwadkar:

V. V. Shirwadkar is versatile dramatist, one of the Maharashtra’s senior most and best-loved poets. He writes poetry under the pseudonym, Kusumagraj and plays under his own name. His subjects range from mythology and history to social life in the present. His first play was a translation of Oscar Wild’s *An Ideal Husband*, which he did for the Sahitya Sangh Drama.

V. V. Shirwadkar is a playwright who made his debut with *Durche Dive* in 1946. He wrote eighteen plays, the most significant are: *Dusara Peshawa, Kounteya, Yayati ani Devayni, Vidushak, Veej Mhanali Dharatila*, and *Natasamrat*. His *Natasamrat* is magnum opus, a tragedy based on the Shakespeare’s *King Lear* motif. Shirwadkar says,

> Though the idea of adapting Lear had receded to the back of my mind, it would surface every now and then and I would glance through the play once more. I soon decided that I wasn’t up to handling an adaptation. The play was unquestionable great, but i didn’t like it as much as some of Shakespeare’s other tragedies.

(Shirwadkar 10)

*Natasamrat* is rightly considered to be one of the greatest tragedies on the Marathi stage, next in rank only to Gadakari’s *Ekach Pyala*.

II.xv.ii. Vasant Shankar Kanetkar:

Vasant Kanetkar is one of the dramatists in the world of Marathi Theatre. He is the author of forty one plays. Kanetkar began as a novelist and a short story writer but soon discovered that his true metier was drama. His first play is *Vedyache Ghar Unhat* is an interesting psychological study. *Prema Tuza Rang Kasa?* is one of the most pleasant comedies on the Marathi stage. His historical plays are *Matsyagandha,*
and Raygadala Jenwha Jag Yete. His other famous plays are Ashrunchi Jhali Phule, Mala Kahi Sangayachay, Himalayachi Savali, Kasturi Mrug, and Tu Tara Chaphekali.

Among his interesting dramatic experiments is his use of free verse in dialogue in moments of emotional intensity and heightened awareness in Lekure Udand Jhali and his attempt to combine the roles of protagonist of four major Shakespearian tragedies into a single figure in his play Gaganabhedi.

II.xv.iii. Purushottam Laxman Deshpande:

P. L. Deshpande is a versatile personality in the field of Marathi literature. He was an actor, a playwright, film-script writer, director of films, vocalist and instrumentalist, a humorist and a witty public speaker and the man renowned for his repartee. His famous plays are: Amaldar, Bhagyawan, Sunder Mi Honar, Ek Zunja Waryashi, Tuze ahe Tujpashi and Tuka Mhane Aata. He translated two plays, first is Raja Oyadipous, Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex and second is Pahila Raja from Hindi.

II.xv.iv. Vishram Bedekar:

Vishram Bedekar is known for his famous novel Ranagan, is considered to be a masterpiece. His autobiography, Ek Zad Ani Don Pakshi won the Sahitya Akademi award. He wrote four plays. Brahmakumari is a mythological play, while Naro Wa Kunjaro Wa presents the unusual drama of the relationship between a prisoner and his jailor. Waje Paul Apule is diverting comedy but it is an adaptation of an English play. Bedekar is famous for Tilak and Agarkar play.

II.xv.v. Jayawant Dalvi:

Jaywant Dalvi is next important playwright, humorist and novelist. He wrote seventeen plays, many of his plays are based on his own novels and short stories. His first play Sabhya Grihastha Ho (later is known as Sahakutumba Sahapariwar). His most famous play is Barister is a sensitive study in sexual abnormality and Natigoti presents the plight of a middle class couple saddled with a grown-up son who is a moron. His other plays are Sandhyachhaya, Purush, Paryaya, Kalachakra, Sparsha, Lagna, Mahasagar, Durgi, Savitri, Kinara and Mi Rashtrapati.
II.xv.i. Bal Kolhatkar:

Bal Kolhatkar wrote fifteen plays which deal family relationships mostly in their emotional aspects. His *Wahato Durvachi Judi* is most representative play of family relationship of which thousands of performances have so far been given. His other popular plays are *Vegala Vayachaya Mala*, *Duritanche Timir Jawo*, and *Lahanapana Dega Deva*. His historical plays are *Simevarun Parat Ja* and *Kavirai Bhushan*. His *Ughadale Swargache Dar* is about scientific fantasy.

Some other playwrights like Madhusudan Kelkar, S. N. Pendse, G. N. Dandekar, Vyankatesh Madgulkar, and Ranjit Desai can’t forget. Madhusudan Kelkar’s *Diwa Jalude Sari Rat, Dilya Ghari Tu Sukhi Raha, Aparadha Meech Kela Amritel* etc. G. N. Dandekar is known for his *Sambhusanchya Chalit, Asam Zalam Ani Ujadalam*, and *Pandit Aata Tari Shanane Vha*. Vyankatesh Madgulkar’s plays are based on his own short stories, *Pati Gele Ga Katewadi*, is based on folk tale. Ranjit Desai is known for his plays *Tansen, Meghmalhar* and *He Bandha Reshamache*. Purushotam Darvekar is an important figure in the Marathi theatre. Among his half dozen plays, the most outstanding are *Chandra Nabhicha Dhalala, Varhadi Manasa, Nayana Tuze Jadugar* and *Katyar Kalajat Ghusali*.

II.xvi. The Experimental Theatre:

The Contemporary Indian theatre is associated with the Western theatre, classical Sanskrit theatre and Indian folk. The impact of the Western theatre is more discernible after the Independence. There is an attempt to adopt the techniques practised by Pirandello, Strindberg, Antonin Artaud, Brecht and Beckett such as Expressionism, Symbolism, Absurdism, Naturalism, an Epic Theatre and Theatre of Cruelty; however, there was the attempt to resist any form of the Western hegemony during the time. The Indian theatre has retained its Indian identity by evoking typical Indian situations, moods and sentiments though there was application of what was universal and relevant in the Western devices. The dramatists observed that the post-war situation in India and the Western countries was more or less the same; the difference being only in degree and not in kind. The Experimental plays in the sixties and seventies represented the general modern human situation— a sense of alienation, sensless suffering and unpredictability of the universe. In the book *Flowering of Indian Drama: Growth and Development* (2004), Shailaja Wadikar explains:
The Experimental Theatre marks a definite break with the precious traditions of theatre. It is characterized with realism in the theme, structure, dialogues, setting and performance of the play. The presentation of the contemporary daily life is its main purpose.

(Wadikar 30)

In the 1970s and thereafter, the search for the roots of Indian theatre became deeper and more insistent. The folk forms turned out to be a rich source of authentic modes and expression of native experiences and wisdom. The need for for probing the indigenous elements in theatre stirred the imagination of drama critics, directors, producers and playwrights like Amol Palekar, Mohan Rakesh, Utpal Dutt, Badal Sarkar, Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar, Maheah Elkunchwar, C. T. Khanolkar, Sadanand Rege and many others.

The Experimental theatre has been the significant feature of the Marathi theatre. Along with acceptance and practice of traditional theatrical performance, it also shows sign of subversion where it challenges the canon of the Western and Indian drama. The terms Experimental play and Experimental Theatre came to be employed increasingly around the 1960s; however, this does not mean that there had been no experiment in Marathi drama before. The play *Andhalyanci Shala* (1933) was a new experiment considered in the context of the state of Marathi drama. Before the play *Andhalyanci Shala* (1933) Ram Ganesh Gadkari’s *Ekach Pyala* was the first experimental play in Marathi. Shanta Gokhale comments:

*The Validity of Ekach Pyala as a work of dramatic art lies not only in the tremendous impact it had on contemporary audience, but on the interesting reading it can yield even today. Even more importantly, in terms of our study, it showed a way out of the morass that the Sangeetnatak was sinking into. It also demonstrated how the hasya rasa, moving towards the bibhatsa, could provide an edge to the karuna to save it from insipid sentimentality. A present day sensibility is capable of responding to Ekach Pyala more holistically than did Gadkari’s contemporaries and immediate successors, driven as they were by the new idea*
of realism. In this light, one may say that Ekach Pyala was the first experimental play in Marathi.

(Gokhale 50)

The exact idea and concept of the term Experimental is always under discussion. The questions have always been asked in connection with the same; which follows: Is it something that has arisen out of some experimentation or then is simply an experiment itself? Is it breaking away from the conventional and Experimental? Is challenging conventional modes and set practices and Experimental? Is discovering new and setting up a different trend Experimental? Dr. Ajay Joshi defines the term Experimental as follows,

Experimental, as a self exploration, uninhibited by rigid norms, giving free space to try out never things and interpretation and unhindered and unfettered by expected responses. A space to dare to try different approaches to issues creatively and try to create a new work order, though not trying to be overtly self indulgent trivializing or sensationalizing. However this experimentation could be intentional or may arise unintentionally. Hence it becomes pertinent to understand whether this is a result of the need of the demands of theatre or arisen due to external agencies and influence.

(Joshi 125)

The Oxford Dictionary meaning of the Experimental is ‘to test’ or to try something in order to discover what it is like or find out more about it. The Marathi meaning of the Experiment is ‘Prayog’ and Experimental means ‘Prayogic’. The Marathi Experimental Theatre is called ‘Prayogic Rangabhumi’ and Experimental Play means ‘Prayogic Natak’. Shanta Gokhale defines Experimental plays in her book Playwright at the Centre: Marathi Drama from 1983 to The Present in following words:

The crisp sharpness of the writing and the modern sensibility informing the themes and presentation set them a little apart from mainstream plays, they could, by no stretch of imagination be called Experimental Plays.

(Gokale 107-108)
As the name suggests, the Experimental theatre has proved to be the workshop of Marathi theatre where various kinds of experiments are carried out with plays- both in content and form and techniques. The theatre also gives encouragement and space for budding writers to come up with various kinds of experiments in playwriting through the State Level Drama competitions.

II.xvii. Characteristics of the Experimental Plays:

The Marathi Experimental plays developed from various elements like subject, content and form but this change was not just a change for test but rather a change of the audience’ test for Marathi theatre. The perception at the origin of the playwriting affected the very world of drama and as a result the composition, character portrayals, dialogue and language naturally changed. Of course, the impact did not affect all the constituent parts of the play. Therefore, the characteristics of a visibility of the plays have been conveyed in a nutshell.

II.xvii.i. Rejection of the Concept of Well-made Play and Freytag’s Pyramid:

Eugene Scribe’s concept of Well-made play is a play which was constructed very logically with various elements of a good drama with climax, reversal of fortunes, suspense, battles of wit, logical denouement, etc. However Gustav Freytag, in his book *Technique of Drama* (1863) introduced an analysis of plot, which is known as Freytag’s Pyramid. He describes the typical plot of a five act play as a pyramidal shape, consisting of a rising action, climax, and falling action. But, the playwrights of the Experimental theatre have rejected the concept of the Well-made play by Eugene Scribe and Gustav Freytag’s pyramid. In the experimental plays, playwrights developed the plot with the help of common incident, and the action and reaction on this incident by the characters. E.g. in *The Dread Departure* Alekar has developed the plot on the death of Bhaurao who is a common man and his funeral procession.

II.xvii.ii. Different Arrangements and Compositions:

The playwrights have used different types of composition e.g. the musical composition in the Tendulkar’s *Ghashiram Kotwal*; the arrangement of the discussion in G. P. Deshpande’s *Udhwast Dharmashala*. Alekar has used the musical songs in *Begum Barve* and the *Keertan* in *The Dread Departure*. 
II.xvii.iii. Writing Techniques:

Girish Karnad’s *Tughlaq, Yayati*, Mahesh Elkunchwar’s *Desire in the Rocks* have constructed into scenes only not into the acts. The playwright has no restriction to complete the act on particular situation. *The Dread Departure* has only two acts. These playwrights break down the artificiality of the divisions of the play into the five acts.

II.xvii.iv. Use of Songs, Dance and Music:

In the Experimental play dramatists like Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad, Badal Sarkar, Mohan Rakesh, Satish Alekar, and Mahesh Elkunchwar have used group songs and group dance. Satish Alekar in his play *Begum Barve* has used the songs from Marathi musical plays. The dance in *Ghashiram Kotwal* has played vital role. The music in the plays like *Mahanirvan*, and *Ghashiram Kotwal* is the central part of the play.

II.xvii.v. The Rebirth of Sutradhara:

A play is not only the story telling through the actors. This theory accepted by the experimental playwrights. They have used the character of Sutradhara from traditional Sanskrit plays in their plays in order to connect two incidents, to introduce the characters, to comment on the situations, and to co-ordination in to the scenes e.g., Sutradhara in *Ghashiram Kotwal, Haywadana, and Ajab Nyay Wartulacha* etc.

II.xvii.vi. Use of Chorus:

‘Chorus’ in the theatre is a group of singers and dancers who are accompanied by music. During the pauses in the play, the chorus sang lyrical passages and performed dance movements which was a comment on the play and added to its progress. The playwrights of the Experimental plays have used the chorus in their plays. Pratihari in *Aranyak*, Brahmins in *Ghashiram Kotwal*, Chalkari in *The Dread Departure* functions as a chorus. They comment on the incidents which happen on the stage.

II.xvii.vii. Use of the Folk Forms:

Playwrights of the Experimental plays have used in their plays Indian traditional folk forms skilfully. These folk forms are *Dashawtar, Khel, Keertan*, Yakshagan, Bhavai, and Tamasha etc. Vijay Tendulkar has used *Tamasha* in his play
Ghashiram Kotwal. Satish Alekar has used Kirtan in his play *The Dread Departure*. Girish Karnad has used Yakshagan in his play *Hayavadana*.

II.xvii.viii. Use of Monologues:

Use of the monologues is one of the major characteristics of the Western and Classical Indian theatre. The Experimental plays are influenced by the Western and Eastern Theatre. The playwrights of the Experimental theatre have used the monologues in their plays.

II.xvii.ix. Use of Myth, History and Folk Tales:

The Experimental playwrights have used the subjects of their plays form the history, myths and the folk tales.

II.xvii.x. Use of an Auditorium for Entrance and Exit on the Stage:

Luigi Pirandello has used the auditorium for the entrance and exit of his characters in his famous play *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. The playwrights of the Experimental have used this dramatic technic in their plays. Vijay Tendulkar has used this technique in his play *Ghashiram Kotwal*.

II.xvii.xi. Changing Concept of the Characterization:

In the traditional plays hero and heroines were kings, queens and princes. However, the playwrights of the experimental plays rejected the traditional concept of the characters. The hero or the heroine of the experimental plays is common man or woman.

Use of pantomime, major changes in the dialogues and communication with the audience, etc. are some of the other characteristics of the Contemporary Experimental plays. The playwrights of the Experimental theatre have used the above mentioned characteristics very skilfully in their plays.

The Contemporary Experimental Plays have made a brilliant culmination in the field of theatre in the form of various dramatic devices, techniques and performances on the stage. Along with acceptance and practice of traditional theatrical performance, it also shows sign of subversion where it challenges the canon of Western and Indian drama. The new schools like Existentialism, the Theatre of the Absurd, the Theatre of Cruelty, Realism, Naturalism, Expressionism and the Epic Theatre etc. also influenced
the Contemporary Experimental Theatre. The major exponents of experimental plays are Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar, Mahesh Elkunchwar, Ratnakar Matkari, Achut Vaze and G. P. Deshpande and others who have made a radical change in content as well as form of the plays. The immense importance of the Experimental theatre may be figured out by the fact that Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar, and Mahesh Elkunchwar. They have been influenced by German playwright Bertolt Brecht, Russian playwright Anton Chekhov, Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen and Italian Luigi Pirandello. The practice of above playwrights’ works strengthened them to produce innovative conceptions in their dramatic works. The writers of Experimental plays practiced their dramatic works, strengthened and then deliberately modified.

II.xviii. Theatrical Groups and Development of Experimental Theatre:

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, launched an inter-collegiate one-act drama competition in mid nineteen sixties. Drama Competition of the Maharashtra State, Marathi Sahitya Sangh, and Indian National Theatre also began round at the same time. These competitions encouraged the budding playwrights. The theatre audience showed a lot of interest in the festivals of plays organised by the sponsors of these competitions. Damu Kenkare, Vijaya Mehata, Kamalakar Sarang, Nandkumar Raote, Ratnakar Matkari, Arvind Deshpande, Sulbha Deshpande, Vijay Tendulkar, Baban Prabhu, Vasant Mane and others are some luminaries who were product of the experiment.

The Progressive Dramatic Association (PDA) in Pune and Rangayan in Mumbai were established in the sixties. Prof. Bhalba Kelkar and Vijaya Mehata led these groups respectively. Satish Alekar explains about the directors of Rangayan and PDA in his interview with Rekha Inamdar-Sane.

In Rangayan the director Vijaya Mehata was associated with
Vijay Tendulkar, later on Elkunchwar. In PDA Bhalba Kelkar the director was associated with the playwrights Vasant Kanetkar and Venkatesh Madgulkar.

(Rekha Inamdar-Sane 190)

Dr. Shriram Lagoo, Vasudev Palande and others were active in the Progressive Dramatic Association. The organization provided a major platform for experimentation in theatre. It brought a shifting paradigm especially in the middle class community, encouraging many more artists, directors, and playwrights to join
the experimental theatre movement. They produced groundbreaking plays with an attempt to create something new and challenging. PDA’s valuable productions of the plays are Wedyache Ghar Hote Unhat, Prema Tuza Rang Kasa?, Jagannathacha Rath, Ashi Pakhare Yeti, and Ghashiram Kotwal which became milestone not only in Marathi Experimental Plays but also on the global level.

Apart from the PDA, the Marathi Experimental Theatre also witnessed to the activities of the Bharat Natya Mandir, which started their own library for the conversation of photographs, scripts, plays and performances. It is an important centre today for experimental theatre.

Rangayan was established in Mumbai by Vijaya Mehata. Vijaya Mehata, Vijay Tendulkar, Arvind Deshpande, S.P.Bhagat, Madhav Watawe, Arun Kanade and Manohar Kardhare were forerunners of Rangayan.

The Awishkar Theatre Group was founded by Arvind and Sulbha Deshpande. It has produced over 150 plays in the last forty-three years; most of them being experimental plays provided a precious platform for several directors, technicians as well as growing artists. It has been organised various workshops for amateur artists. It was the advent of films that had started the decline of Marathi theatre in the thirties. The period of 1960s witnessed the decline of Marathi cinema. The middle class people reverted back to the theatre. The new audience expected a treatment of its life and problems in the plays. The prominent playwrights from 1955 to 1985 displayed an awareness of contemporary reality and dealt with the problems of human relationships in a fast-changing society. Thus, these theatre groups dared to stage plays which were different from the mainstream trends.

The Chabildas School at Mumbai played a vital role in the experimental theatre movement by leading playwrights, actors, directors. Satyadev Dubey, Amol Palekar and his wife Chitra, Shriram Lagoo, Om Puri, Sai Paranjape Arvind Deshpande, and Sulbha Deshpande came together and staged memorable plays like, Pratima, Adhe Adhure, Udhwasta Dharmashala, Julus, Chal re Bhopalya Tunuk Tunuk, Pahije Jatiche, Party, and Raktabeej etc. were some of the more conspicuous staged between 1975 to 1984.

Theatre Academy plays significant role in the growth and development of the Marathi Experimental theatre. Few members were separated from Progressive Dramatic Association and established another association called Theatre Academy dated 27, March 1973 on the Terrace of Satish Alekar’s residence in Shaniwar Peth.
Satish Alekar explains about the Theatre Academy in his interview with Rekha Inamdar-Sane,

*It so happened that the Progressive Dramatic Association experienced great shocks after the performance of Ghashiram Kotwal on the stage. People in Maharashtra had diverse heterogeneous reactions to the staging of Ghashiram Kotwal. This heterogeneity resulted into the brake up in PDA. The then a few members of PDA broke away from their parent institution and established another association called Theatre Academy on the terrace of my residence in Shaniwar Peth.*

(Rekha Inamdar-Sane 178)

The members of the Theatre Academy were Satish Alekar, Jabbar Patel, Mohan Agashe, and Anil Jogalekar etc. These members separated because of the Progressive Dramatic Association experienced great shock after the performance of Ghashiram Kotwal on the stage in State Level Drama Competition. People in Maharashtra had diverse heterogeneous reactions to the staging of Ghashiram Kotwal. Some other theatre groups are Lalit Kala Kendra, Indian National Theatre, and Maharashtriya Kalaposak Kendra etc. also plays very important role to strengthen the contemporary Marathi Experimental Theatre.

The need to break away from tradition and conventions, having a different take of theatre and life, incorporating innovations as in light design, sets, acting, direction, forms and topics of the plays, was felt here and these groups took the onus upon themselves to achieve just this. Experimentation questions the very nature of the dramatic experience, the possibilities new techniques and ways of presentation. This realisation to break away from convention was found in many ways. The Experimented plays inspired by Western plays as well as inspiration taken from works of the Eastern playwrights. The Experimental plays trace back to our folk tradition also.

The Marathi Experimental plays inspired by works of the Western playwrights and their plays in translation and adaptation which led to works like Khurchya, Teen Paishyacha Tamasha, Tee Phoolrani, Antigany, Waiting for Godot, Natakkarachya Shodhat Saha Patre from works by Samuel Beckett, Bertolt Brecht, George Bernard
Shaw, Samuel Beckett and Luigi Pirendello. The Marathi Experimental plays were influenced by the regional playwrights of the regional languages like Badal Sarkar, Utpal Dutta, Mohan Rakesh, Girish Karnard and many others. The Marathi Experimental plays also trace back to folk forms like, Keertan, Bahrud, Tamasha, Dashawtar and Yakshagan.

The main objectives of the Contemporary Marathi Experimental Plays were not only to stage performances of the plays, but also to create new playwrights, actors, directors, and to present the problems in front of the society through their plays without any solutions. Modern playwrights who attempted Experimentation in their plays are Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar, Mahesh Elkunchwar, Ratnakar Matkari, C. T. Khanolkar, Atchyut Waze, G. P. Deshpande, Vrindavan Dandavate, Sadanand Rege, Dilip Jagtap, Makarand Sathe, Atul Pethe Rajeev Naik and others.

The Marathi Experimental plays play very important role in the history of the Marathi theatre. Tracing the history, Experimental theatre strengthens the belief of the immense contribution of the Marathi theatre. However, not all of the experimental theatre done in this period as digested by the audience probably because they were exposed something new, away from the musical and also because it all came with a different sensibility for which the audience was not trained. This led many controversies, which strangely had a positive impact on boosting the moral of this generation artistes and making this unforgettable period of Modern Marathi Theatre. These conflicts also exposed many aspects of the functioning of the theatre, artist – audience relationships, censorship etc. strengthening the Experimental theatre.

II.xix. Life and Works of Vijay Tendulkar:

Vijay Tendulkar is well known playwrights in the modern Indian theatre. Arundhati Banerjee rightly points out that:

Vijay Tendulkar has been in the vanguard of not just Marathi but Indian theatre for almost forty years.

(Banerjee viii)

Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar was born on 6th January 1928, in a Bhalawalikar Saraswat Brahmin family in Kolhapur, Maharashtra. He spent his early childhood in Bombay. There was a literature friendly atmosphere in his family, because his father acted in the plays staged by amateur artist. His elder brother also acted in the plays. Tendulkar’s father wrote many plays but he did not publish them. In addition to
Tendulkar’s house was full of books and his father encouraged him to read. The literary environment at home and his interaction with books and writers prompted young Vijay to take up to writing. He started his career as a freelance writer. He worked as Assistant Editor of Naavbharat, Maratha and Loksatta.

Vijay Tendulkar has written twenty eight fill-length plays, twenty four one act plays, several middles, articles, editorials and eleven plays for children since then. In spite of his success in every genre, this versatility as a writer has been overshadowed by his fame as a dramatist since drama has been his forte. His extra dramatic writing also reveals his pure taste for drama which tries to capture the different tensions and through them, finds dramatics accurately. His one act plays are more experimental than his full length plays. Most of them have been translated and produced in major Indian languages and some of them into English. A comprehensive list of his plays is given below:

- **Gruhastha** (The house holder) Unpublished
- **Shrimant** (The Rich ) 1955
- **Manus Navache Bet** (An Island Called Man) 1956
- **Madhalya Bhinti** (Middle Walls)1958
- **Chimniche Ghar Hote Menache** (The Wax House of Sparrow),1960
- **Mi Jinkalo, Mi Haralo** (I Won, I Lost) 1963
- **Kavlyanchi Shala** (School for Crows) 1964
- **Sariga Sari** (Drizzle O Drizzle 1964
- **Ek Hatti Mulagi** (An Obstinate Girl) 1968
- **Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe** (Silence! The Court is in Session)1968
- **Jhala Anant Hanumant** (1968)
- **Ashi Pakhare Yeti** (So Come Birds) 1970
- **Gidhade** (The Vultures) 1971
- **Sakharam Binder** (1972)
- **Gharate Amuche Chhan** (Nice is Our Nest) 1973
- **Ghashiram Kotwal** (1973)
- **Dambdwipacha Mukabala** (Encounter in Umbugland) 1974
- **Bhalya Kaka** (1974)
- **Baby** (1975)
- **Bhai Murarrao** (1975)
• Pahiye Jatiche (1976)
• Mitrachi Goshta (A Friend’s Story) 1982
• Kamala (1982)
• Kanyadaan (1983)
• Vithala (1985)
• Chiranjeev Saubhagya Kanshini (Unpublished)
• Safar (Unpublished)
• Niyatichya Bailala Ho (To Hell With the Bull of Fate) Unpublished
• The Cyclist (2006)
• His Fifth Woman( 2006)

II.xix.i. Awards:

Vijay Tendulkar won the ‘Maharashtra State Government Awards’ in 1956, 1969 and 1973; and ‘Maharashtra Gaurav Puraskar’ in 1999. His play Silence! The Court is in Session was awarded the ‘Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay Award’ in 1970. He was honoured with the ‘Sangeet Natak Akademi Award’ in 1971. In 1978, he became the member of the General Council, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. He worked as a guest lecturer ar Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay (1979-81). In 1977, Tendulkar won the National Film Award for Best Screenplay for his screenplay of Shyam Benegal’s movie, Manthan (1976) and Akrosh in 1980. In 1979, he became the Vice-Chairman of the National School of Drama, New Delhi. He became emeritus producer in All India Radio and Doordarshan. In 1984, he received the Padma Bhushan award from the Government of India for his literary accomplishments. He has written screenplays for many significant art movies, such as Nishant, Akrosh, and Ardha- Satya. In 1991, he received the Kalidas Award. He awarded by an Honorary Doctorate from Ravindra Bharati University, Calcutta. He won the Janasthan Award in 1999 which was followed by the Katha Chudamani Award in 2001. Drama Festival of his plays was organized by Amol Palekar at Pune in 2005. In 2004, ‘The Tendulkar Festival’ sponsored by the Indo-American Arts Council was organized at New York.

II.xx. Life and Works of Satish Alekar:

Satish Vasant Alekar was born on 30th January 1949 in Delhi, India, but he grew up in a centre of Marathi culture called Pune, Maharashtra. He studied in
Marathi medium school 'New English School', Ramanbag which was started in 1880 by Lokmanya Tilak. Further he has completed his B. Sc. from Fergusson College. He received his master degree in biochemistry from University of Pune in 1972.

Alekar gained his first stage experience as an actor in a college drama competition. Director Bhalbha Kelkar, who started PDA, impressed by Alekar’s performance, and invited him to join it. *Jhulta Phool* Alekar’s first one-act play wrote and directed in 1969. He became a part of a young circle that Dr. Jabbar Patel had started within the *Progressive Dramatic Association*. This group split with the parent body in 1973 and set up *Theatre Academy* in Pune. The split was over Vijay Tendulkar’s play *Ghashiram Kotwal*. The senior members PDA decided against its premiere in 1972 and the members of Theatre Academy decided to produce it under the auspices of their own *Theater Academy*. Alekar has worked as assistant director of Patel in the direction of *Ghashiram Kotwal*, and the group has staged over 35 plays by him and manages to establish its foothold in experimental Marathi theatre.

Satish Alekar has made his singular contribution to Indian Theatre. He has in, directed and produced some of the most influential and progressive written, acted plays of post independence India, and is part of the trinity, with Vijay Tendulkar and Mahesh Elkunchwar that have shaped modern theatre. He is known for experimentation, presentation of absurd situation in his plays and use of the traditional Indian folk forms like *Keertan*, songs from *Sangeetnatak*. His best plays are,

- *Mahapur* (Deluge) 1975.

List of Original One-Act-Plays

- *Memory* (1969)
- *Bhajan* (1969)
II.xx.i Awards:

Alekar is the recipient of several national and state awards for his contribution to the field of Theatre and Literature. He received Nandikar Sanman Award at Kolkata in 1992. He has received fellowships from the Council of Asian Culture, New York in 1983 to study theatre in the United States, and from the Ford Foundation to study Theatre of South Asia in 1988. He honoured with a Sangeet Natak Akademi award for play writing from Sangeet Natak Akademi, Delhi in 1994. He has honoured with the award "Padamshree" conferred by the President of India in January 2012.

II.xxii. Life and Works of Mahesh Elkunchwar:

Mahesh Elkunchwar was born on October 9, 1939 in a Telugu Brahmin family in Parwa, a village in Vidharba region in Maharashtra, is an Indian playwright with more than fifteen plays to his fame and name, in addition to his critical works, theoretical writings, and his active work as actor and screenwriter in India's Parallel Cinema. Today, along with Vijay Tendulkar and Satish Alekar he is one of the most influential and progressive playwrights not just in modern Marathi theatre, but also larger modern Indian theatre. According to Girish Karnard:

Restless in his search and unrelenting in his honesty, 
Elkunchwar stands unsurpassed in modern Indian theatre for his emotional sweep, intellectual rigour, and subtlety.

(Cover Jacket)

A complete list of his plays is given below

- **Rudravarsha** (The Savage Year), 1966
- **Sultan** (one act), 1967
- **Zumbar** (one act), 1967
- **Eka Mhatarachya Khoon** (An Old Man’s Murder, one act), 1968
- **Kaifiyat** (one act), 1967
- **Ek Osad Gaon** (one act), 1969
- **Yatanaghar** (The Chamber of Anguish), 1970
- **Garbo**, 1970


- *Vasanakand* (Desire in the Rocks), 1972
- *Party*, 1976
- *Wada Chirebandi* (Old Stone Mansion), 1985
- *Pratibimb* (Reflection), 1987
- *Atmakatha* (Autobiography), 1988
- *Magna Talyakathi* (The Pond), 1991
- *Yuganta* (The End of an Age)
- *Wasanani Jeernani* (Tattered Clothes), 1995
- *Dharmaputra* (Godson), 1998
- *Sonata*, 2000
- *Eka Natachya Mrityu* (An Actor Exits), 2005
- *Rakta Purush*

### II.xxi.i. Awards:

Elkunchwar's plays have gained national and international identity, critical attention towards Marathi theatre, and his growing body of work has become part of India's post-colonial theatrical world. He has honoured with the Homi Bhabha Fellowship in India (1976-78), *the Sangeet Natak Akademi* Award, annual award for best playwright (given by the National Academy of the Performing Arts, 1989), *Nandika* (1989), *Maharashtra Gaurav* (1990), the *Maharashtra Foundation Award* (1997), *the Sahitya Akademi* Award (given by the National Academy of Letters, 2002), and the *Saraswathi Samman*, one of India's highest literary awards (2003), and internationally with the Brittingham Fellowship (2005), *Janasthan Puraskar* (2011) and recently *Anant Bhalerao Puraskar* (2012).

### II.xxii. Conclusion:

The present chapter provides the comprehensive study of the Contemporary Experimental Theatre with its aims and objectives. The chapter has taken survey of the Indian Dramaturgy, Bharata’s *Rasa Theory*, Classical Sanskrit Theatre, Indian Folk Forms, Pre-Independent Drama, Post-Independent Drama, Modern Drama, Indian English Drama in Post Modern era, Contemporary Indian Drama in English Translation, Origin and Development of Marathi Theatre, the Professional Theatre, the Contemporary Marathi Experimental theatre, Characteristics of the Experimental Plays and Theatrical Groups and Development of the Experimental Theatre. It also
takes its overview and states place of the Experimental Marathi theatre in Indian English literature which sets the theme for the next chapters.

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CHAPTER III
VIJAY TENDULKAR: THE VANGUARD OF
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE

The present chapter aims to analyze and interpret the Western and Indian dramaturgy employed in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar’s *Silence! The Court is in Session* (1967) and *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972). It also concentrates on the various experiments and contributions in the modern dramaturgy made by Vijay Tendulkar. As a playwright of the Marathi theatre, he is considered as the Vanguard of the avant-garde movement in the Indian context. He commands a unique place in the history of the contemporary Indian theatre and shaped the Indian theatre to the extent that as the Indian Theatre emerged and flourished equally serious and fertile theatre at global level. Thus, the Western Theatre started academic consideration of the Indian Theatre. His plays *Silence! The Court is in Session* and *Ghashiram Kotwal* are landmarks not only in Tendulkar’s career but also in the history of the Marathi theatre. *Ghashiram Kotwal* is a classic experimental play which not only won international fame for him but also excelled the Indian theatre at the global level. *Silence! The Court is in Session* is a play radical in subject and bit aggressive in tone; it became a part of new Indian experimental drama phenomenon of the sixties. In *Ghashiram Kotwal*, Tendulkar bridges the gulf between the tradition and modern theatre by creating new theatrical form and develop flexible as well as carefully crafted novel dramatic form, modes of recitation and storytelling in the Marathi Experimental Theatre.

III.i. Tendulkar as a Playwright:

Vijay Tendulkar is a prolific playwright of Indian Theatre who experimented, developed and directed the entire Indian theatre in second half of the twentieth century. He started his career as a dramatist with his play, *Shreemant (The Rich)*, in 1955. He is the realistic modern dramatist who made several attempts to ridicule the contemporary social customs through his plays; in this parlance, he harbingered the experimental theatre movement in Marathi and also guided it towards new dramatic strategies. His play *Ghashiram Kotwal* made him a writer of International fame in the mid seventies and placed him in the first line of experimental dramatists of his time. *Silence! The Court is in Session* is also a well known play which earned many laurels.
at national and international levels. Though some of the plays of Vijay Tendulkar are controversial in theme because of their contemporary social, political and theatrical concerns, they are widely read and enjoyed by the readers and of its rich and beautiful literary projections. He used various themes and employs different forms in plays and fuses with contemporary social and political issues such as isolation, distancing and alienation of individual in the modern society. The beauty of Tendulkar’s plays lies in his art of dramaturgy, connotative and metaphoric structure suffused with the hue of suggestive images and symbols, words and phrases, extraordinary portrayal of bitter and harsh truths of life through wide range of music and metaphors. Tendulkar’s plays extensively deal with the oppression of the weak by the powerful, suppression of minorities by majority, discrimination of the lower class by the upper class, exploitation of women by men in the Indian society.

*Silence! The Court is in Session* critiques on diverse hypocrisy of the middle class society which the playwright exposes through characters, dialogues, gestures and even mannerism too. It reflects their petty, circumscribed existences; which gets expressed in their malicious and spiteful attitudes towards fellow being. Leela Benare, the protagonist of the play is the only exception of this malicious attitude because she is harmless and sensitive to others and bears men’s prejudices and victimization with fortitude and forbearance. Male characters, Kashikar, Sukhatme and others gang up against her and torture her through a mock trial. It is a bold play which based on a taboo subject and sarcastic in tone appreciatively becomes a part of new Indian experimental drama phenomenon of the Modern Experimental plays.

*Ghashiram Kotwal* is a fine blending of the theme and style, thoughts and language and drama and dramaturgy. In the play, Tendulkar has taken the help of Indian history to expose the reality, hypocrisy, beliefs and values of the contemporary times. It deals with the themes of power politics, ambition, sexual hunger and revenge and exposes the latent savagery of human being e.g. treachery, violence, sexuality and power mania. It is explicitly the story of the power politics between Nana Phadanvis and Ghashiram Kotwal; the former hungry for sex and the latter for power. Ghashiram progresses from a common man to an eminent personality in society; however, it is with the beastly ambition and passion for the power of state. Through these two characters, Tendulkar has shown the moral degradation, social degeneration and spiritual regression in the contemporary society.
Vijay Tendulkar always remained true to his own ideology as a realistic, reforming and rational humanistic person. He wrote whatever appealed to him and never bothered for blame or praise. He is thinking about society and human life which appear to be quite deep and is reflected in his writings. Instead of resorting to romantic idealism and depicting false stories of victory, he wrote about the defeated individuals fighting against hostile circumstances. The violence, oppression and exploitation in the society that he closely observed during his journalistic career made him restless. M. Sarat Babu comments:

Tendulkar perceives the realities of the human society without any preconceived notions reacts to them as a sensitive and sensible human being and writes about them in his plays as a responsible writer.

(Sarat Babu 25)

Vijay Tendulkar is the most turbulent and controversial dramatist among the modern Marathi playwrights. Tendulkar’s plays helped to refine and re-establish Marathi Theatre. He gave a pure dramatic taste to the Marathi play and cultivated that taste to focus it on the very existence of one’s ‘being’, directing it to the origin, to the subtle. Today, it is believed and accepted that Tendulkar has guided Marathi Theatre that seemed to have lost its proper track and has kept leading it for over two decades. His place and importance in this respect shall remain unique in the history of the Marathi theatre.

Tendulkar expressed his opinion on the technique in writing while delivering the prestigious Shri. Ram Memorial Lectures for Performing Arts in 1997 in New Delhi. He explained the importance of a playwright possessing the basic and essential sense of structure or form of the play. According to Tendulkar, a play must have a strong structure or framework on which its plot rests. Just like architecture, a play’s structure should have a base and an outer form which rests on it. The performance of a play cannot involve the audience and affect it deeply if its structure is faulty. A strong and long lasting structure acts as the binding element of the play and allows it to endure through time. It allows the plot a fluent and steady movement. The success of the playwright and play depends upon the style and techniques implied in the plays. However, profound and rich the theme of the play may be, it fails to satisfy the demands of the audience or the readers if it is not properly synthesized with the elements of dramatic art which include music, metaphor, stage direction, prologue,
epilogue, dialogue, soliloquy, chorus, distortions and assimilation of the events and situations. Tendulkar Commented upon the developments of playwright’s dramatic technique as follows:

The technique has to become a part of the playwright’s subconscious mind and should function naturally like an extended entity just as his mind and body function together. A playwright needs to get complete mastery over his medium by working sincerely and devotedly for a long time. He needs to internalize the skills required for his medium. If the playwright is not careful, the technique and the content may fall apart.

(Tendulkar xxxiii)

Vijay Tendulkar believed that an art of Characterization and the structure of the play are essential elements for the play and the playwright. A playwright must possess two skills, one is the skill of characterization and the other is the sense of structure. Characterization is the process by which an actor creates a character, through it the dramatist communicates with the audience. But in the case of Tendulkar, he learnt the skill of structuring his plays by persistently watching and analyzing performances of plays in the early part of his career. He watched the complete performances even if the plays were of an inferior quality. He said about his plays:

I must have seen more bad plays than good ones. But I think it helped me in internalizing the technique of playwriting especially the structuring of play. Bad plays provoked me mentally to correct their structures in my own way which, I think, was an excellent exercise.

(Tendulkar xxxiv)

In addition to the observation of the performances of various plays, Tendulkar spent lot of time watching the rehearsals of his own plays. He found the inner mechanism of his plays being laid bare and discussed in detail in their preparation. He has learned to make corrections of the faults of his plays by observing their rehearsals. He kept experimenting and committing mistakes and learnt from them.

Tendulkar’s dramatic art represents a perfect blend of Marathi folk forms, The Western stage techniques, modern trends and isms etc. Tendulkar’s style of
playwriting seems to be very closer to the Naturalism and The Theatre of Cruelty. Like G. B. Shaw, John Galsworthy and Henrik Ibsen, Tendulkar is a problem play writer. In almost all his plays, he raised some maladies with a keen eye for negative presentation of the aberrant types in the society. He was fond of describing vultures, exploiters, sadists, predators and some atavistic behaviour. He wanted to root out the evils of the world by examining them critically and exposing dauntlessly and provocatively.

Tendulkar’s dramatic portrayal of social ills and maladies is not historical, dry and monotonous; rather it is suffused with various dramatic poetic devices. He had an equal command on feeling and form, matter and manner. His images, symbols and metaphors are very suggestive; so far as the dramatic pageant and presentation is concerned, Tendulkar seems to be a master craftsman with grip on the various techniques of dramatic art. He has given the post independence Marathi drama new themes, style, perspective, idiom and vision; thus, put the Marathi drama on the National and International map.

III.ii. Dramaturgy in Silence! The Court is in Session:

The original name of Silence! The Court is in Session in Marathi is Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe; it was first staged in 1967, subsequently became one of his widely staged plays in different languages. It earned praise with controversy in India and became very popular in the Western countries. It was translated into English by Priya Adarkar as Silence! The Court is in Session and published by Oxford University press in 1974.

Tendulkar was much ahead of his time, aggressively presented the shame and hypocrisy of the middle class society. Silence! The Court is in Session flings a mock on the humiliation and duplicity of the middle class male dominated. Priya Adarkar comments:

*The characters, dialogues, gesture and even mannerisms reflect their petty, circumscribed existence fraught with frustrations and repressed desires that find expression in their malicious and spiteful attitudes towards their fellow being.*

(Adarkar viii)
Silence! The Court is in Session is considered as a novel experiment in the world of the Modern Indian theatre due to its distinct style and concepts derived from various -isms of the Western traditions like Naturalism, Existentialism and the theatre of Absurd and Indian dramaturgy like Bharata’s theory of Rasa. It has a naturalistic as well as existential appearance. Being the presentation of a game, it becomes an allegory where make-believe can easily blend with reality. Tendulkar’s casting of various themes into appropriate structures bears testimony to his multifaceted creative genius. He constructed a new way for the contemporary Indian theatre by his innovative experimentation with the form, content and various the Western and Indian techniques of the play. Tendulkar explored the new schools of drama of G. B. Shaw, Henrik Ibsen, Samuel Beckett, John Osborne, Harold Pinter and Edward Albee who made experimented with new forms, new subjects and various theatrical devices in their plays.

III.ii.i. Silence! The Court is in Session: In the Light of Rasa Theory

Tendulkar used various Rasa Siddhantas in his play Silence! The Court is in Session from an aesthetic point of view. The examination of the play in the light of the Rasa theory makes it significant and meaningful to the reader and the audience. Rasa is one of the most vital ingredients of Indian drama. According to Indian poetics, Bharata’s Natyashastra, Rasa is a one type of pleasure. In the dramaturgy, Rasa is considered as an aesthetic experience enjoyed at the time of witnessing a play. The Bibhatsa Rasa, Karuna Rasa and Vira Rasa are the major rasas recognized in Silence! The Court is in Session. They are as follows:

III.ii.i.i. Karuna Rasa (The Pathetic Sentiment):

Karuna means pathos. The outcome of Karuna Rasa is from the soka (sorrow), which is the sthayibhava. Karuna Rasa is both painful and pleasing. Soka or sorrow prevails throughout the play Silence! The Court is in Session. A dilemma of the Miss. Leela Benare fills the colour of pathos or karuna. The emotions and feelings like sorrow, ache, anguish, gloominess, melancholy, uselessness and anger expressed through the characters of the play. These emotions of karuna Rasa find its expression in the disastrous outline of human predicament and human existence.

When all members of the Amateur theatre group decided to arrange the mock trial and abuse Leela Benare, the situation arouses karuna Rasa. The sentiment of
Karuna Rasa begins with the plight of Leela Benare who is accused for the infanticide. The members of the amateur theatre group Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar, Sukhatme, Karnik, Ponkshe and Rokade begin to torture Leela Benare in the mock trial. Throughout the mock trial, she is projected as a lustful woman in search of men. She is even charged for the illicit relationship with her maternal uncle and later with the Prof. Damale. She is shown as pregnant without being married. But, due to the principles of the tradition, cultural bondage and restrictions, she failed to marry with her maternal uncle at the age of fourteen. The following sentences by Leela Benare represent the Karuna, sorrow, pain and predicament.

Why, I was hardly fourteen! I didn’t even know what sin was, I didn’t! I insisted on marriage. So I could live my beautiful lovely dreams openly. But all of them- my mother too- were against it, and my brave man turned tail and ran. Such a rage- I felt such a rage against him then I felt like smashing his face in public and spitting on it.

(Tendulkar 117-118)

She had a love affair with her maternal uncle who enjoyed her physically. He fulfils his lust exploiting her at a tender age to satisfy his hunger for physical sex.

Similarly, Leela Benare falls in love with Prof. Damale who is an elderly person with his wife and children. But Leela Benare is grown up, matured and unmarried woman. Prof. Damale satisfies his bodily thirst leading to Benare’s pregnancy; he withdraws himself from his own responsibility. For Prof. Damale, Benare is an object or commodity to be used it and throw it away. Because of her pregnancy, she is terminated from school as a school teacher. She explains her relationship with Prof. Damale in the following words:

Again I fell in love. As a grown woman. I threw all my heart in to it; I thought, this will be different. This love is intelligent. It is love for an unusual intellect. It isn’t love at all- it’s worship! But it was the same mistake. I offered up my body on the altar of my worship. And my intellectual god took the offering- and went his way. He didn’t want my mind, or my devotion- he didn’t care about them! (Feebly) He wasn’t a god. He was a man. For whom everything was of the body, for the body! That’s all!
Again, the body! (Screaming) This body is a traitor! (She is writhing with pain) I despise this body- and love it! I hate it- but- it’s all you have, in the end, isn’t it? It will be there. It will be yours. Where will it go without you? And where will you go if you reject it? Don’t be ungrateful. It was your body that once burnt and gave you a moment so beautiful, so blissful, so near to heaven! Have you forgotten? It took you high, high, high above yourself into place like paradise. Will you deny it? And now it carries within it the witness of time- a tender little bud- of what will be a lisping, laughing, dancing little life- my son-my whole existence!

(Tendulkar 118)

The character of Miss Leela Benare reminds us the heroine, Nora form Ibsen’s famous play A Doll’s House. Nora abandons her children and husband due to the annoyance and dominance created by her husband. Like Nora, Benare is the modern woman on cross-road struggling with the question ‘to be or not to be’. In the quest for liberation, she is under the dilemma how far one should reject the traditions and social conventions. She wants freedom, so she questions the male dominating society and finds escape. The sentiment of Karuna Rasa spread through the entire mock trial in the Silence! The Court is in Session.

III.ii.i.ii. Vira Rasa (The Heroic):

Vira Rasa is produced out of energy and enthusiasm (utsaha), discipline, prowess, courage, might and valour, etc. The transient feelings of the vira Rasa are fortitude (patience), remembrance, arrogance, dignity, etc.

In Silence! The Court is in Session, the sentiment of Vira Rasa arises when Miss. Leela Benare wants to live a free life. She is a modern, educated, simple and innocent woman who is always submerged in the male dominated society. She wants freedom from patriarchal society. She wants liberty from dominance and conservative norms of social, traditional and cultural conventions. She displays the self determination, self assertiveness and cynicism. Her long soliloquy in self defence symbolizes that the voice of protest of a woman in the contemporary Indian society. She represents the several questions about love, sex and marriage and established
moral values. The attitude reveals the heroic sentiments in the determination in the beginning and in her long soliloquy. Benare says:

I’m used standing while teaching. In class, I have never sit when teaching. That’s how I keep my eye on the whole class. No one has a chance to play up. My class is scared stiff of me! And they adore me, too. My children will do anything for me. For I’d give the last drop of my blood to teach them. (In different tone.) That’s why people are jealous. Specially the other teachers and the management. But what can they do to me? What can they do? However hard they try, what can they do? They’re holding an enquiry, if you please! But my teaching’s perfect. I’ve put my whole life into it- I’ve worn myself to a shadow in this job! Just because of one bit of slander, what can they do to me? Throw me out? Let them! I haven’t hurt anyone. Anyone at all! If I’ve hurt anybody, it’s been myself. But is that any kind of reason for throwing me out? Who are these people to say what I can or can’t do? My life is my own- i haven’t sold it to anyone for a job! My will is my own. My wishes are my own. No one can kill those- no one! I’ll do what I like with myself and my life! I’ll decide...

(Tendulkar 58)

Leela Benare revolts against her mother when she opposes her proposal to marry her own maternal uncle who incited her to sex. Thus, she stands against the social system. Innocent of the ways of the world, she shows greater courage, defiance and manliness than her men who pretends to love her but run away when the time comes to accept her.

III.ii.i.iii. Bibhatsa Rasa (The Odious):

Bibhatsa Rasa evokes the sentiment of disgust. It depicts disgusting and repulsive scenes. The vibhavas for bibhatsa Rasa are hearing of something repulsive or bad omens. The sancharibhavas involved in it are epilepsy, delusion, pangs of death, illness, agitation, etc.
The play *Silence! The Court is in Session* comprises the few characteristics of *Bibhatsa Rasa*. These are grotesque, uncertainty and disorder. The close study of the play reveals the ugliness of human life in the contemporary society, search of self identity and the abstractions of existence leads to a collaborative sense of disgust are sensibly identified with Bharata’s concept of *Bibhatsa rasa*.

The *Bibhatsa Rasa* arises when Mrs. Kashikar shows the disinterest to help Miss Leela Benare in the court in spite of being a woman. Benare is a progressive contemporary woman who revolts against the conventional and male dominated society. However, Mrs. Kashikar is typical Indian house wife who believes the conventions of the traditional Indian cultural bondages; she accepts all the norms formed by the society. She accepts that woman is commodity, which is to be used and thrown. Mrs. Kashikar said:

**Mrs. Kashikar:** What better proof? Just look at the way she behaves. I don’t like to say anything since she’s one of us. Should there be no limit to how freely a woman can behave with a man? An unmarried woman? No matter how well she knows him? Look how loudly she laughs! How she sings, dances, cracks jokes! And wandering alone with how many men, day in and day out!

**Sukhatme:** (disappointed at the proof) Mrs. Kashikar, at the most one can say all this shows how free she is.

**Mrs. Kashikar:** Free! Free! She’s free all right- in everything! I shouldn’t say it. But since it’s come up in court, I will just hold this a minute. Why must she have Prof. Damale, and Damale alone, to see her home after a performance? Tell me that.

(Tendulkar 100)

The *Bibhatsa Rasa* arises at its height when the Court of Law allows Benare’s maternal uncle and Prof. Damale to enjoy sex with unmarried woman and withdraw from their responsibility. Both of them continue the physical relationship with Benare and fulfil their lustful thirst. It depicts the condemnation on the Indian society and the prejudice it carries against women. The playwright exposes the hypocrisy of the middle class society.
III.ii.ii. *Silence! The Court is in Session: A Social Satire*

*Silence! The Court is in Session* is a social critic on the patriarchal society, in which, a woman neither gets a sympathetic response nor wins a man to give legitimacy to her child. The play deals with the problem of premarital pregnancy. The theme of the play centres on the idea of a mock trial, a game in which protagonist Benare is trapped by the male dominated society. She tries to be offensive in the beginning, but at the end, she finds herself entrapped in the game and becomes helpless. The rehearsal of a mock trial play, which is a cunning game, arranged by the other members of the theatre group expose Leela Benare’s personal life. It reveals her illicit relationship with Prof. Damale that results in her pregnancy. Without any compassion, Benare was punished and Prof. Damale was free from his mistakes. It explores the exploitation, subjugation and oppression of woman in male dominated society.

*Silence! The Court is in Session* satirizes the judicial process also. Miss Benare is accused and arrested under the charge of infanticide. Throughout the rehearsal, she is projected as licentious woman hunting for men. For this, she is put to trial and not the man Prof. Damale who is responsible for her pregnancy. At the end, the charge against her turns as a punishment. The Court of Law orders her to kill the foetus which she strongly rejects. On the same reason, she is removed from the job of a school teacher.

III.ii.iii. *Silence! The Court is in Session: a Symbolic Play*

*Silence! The Court is in Session* is highly symbolic play in nature. Tendulkar has used various symbols and animal images in this play. The title *Silence! The Court is in Session* itself indicates that the playwright gives symbolic title to his play. Prior to the ‘Mock-trial’, Benare is vigorous, in a sense. She comments on the behaviour of her fellow characters as well as sings songs. But, silence descends on her when ‘Mock-trial’ begins with Kashikar’s sudden interrogative statement;

*Prisoner Miss Benare, under section No 302 of the Indian Penal Code you are accused of the crime of infanticide.
Are you guilty or not guilty of the aforementioned crime?*
(Tendulkar 75)

Benare becomes dumb, calm and silent. As the trial precedes, her attempt at protest are callously drowned in Kashikar, the Mock judge’s imposition: “silence!”.
this helpless and intimidating situation, Banare has no other option but to stay Silent, as no language can come to her rescue. The court pronouncing “Silence” itself is a mechanism to silence the natural human drive and truth under the code of the legal legitimacy. However, Banare breaks her silence at last towards the close of the play when she burst forth into long and brilliant monologue. The way in which the monologue is presented in the play with the music from somewhere in the background, the change of light and whole court freezing and sharp stylistic break in tone, speech is really projection of the unspoken and naturally unheard by the other players. At the same time, Tendulkar the astute craftsman that he draws on a series of similar but shorter barely heard asides earlier in the play, so typical of Banare, vulnerable and yet so determined to play her game through.

Vijay Tendulkar explored symbolic meaning with the help of the door bolt. The door bolt that hurts Banare’s finger at the very outset physically locks her into the hall where her tormentors persecute her. Banare’s attempt to leave the rehearsal and go out is thwarted because of the door having become locked from outside due to a faulty door-bolt. According to Arundhati Banerjee,

> The incident of the faulty door bolt is an externalization of the ‘no escape’ plight in which Banare finds herself in real life.

(Banerjee 573)

Animals like hen, parrot and dog symbolize an imbroglgio of innocent simple and straightforward woman like Banare symbolizes hen that is pursued by cruel persons with dual personality; the duel personality symbolizes the dogs. The pursuit of the hen by the dogs symbolically represents Miss Banare’s inhuman hunt by her fellow companions. The parrot suggests Samant who is good person in the play. The crow symbolizes selfishness; it suggests Prof. Damale who seems like crow, callous and selfish professor.

The character of Banare also symbolizes a modern and educated woman but helpless woman in the modern contemporary Indian society. She represents the several questions about love, sex, marriage and established moral values. Her long soliloquy in self defence symbolizes that the voice of protest of a simple and innocent woman is always submerged in the male dominated society.
III.ii.iv. Silence! The Court is in Session: An Epitome of the Theatre of Cruelty:

A detailed study of the play Silence! The Court is in Session represents that some features of the Theatre of Cruelty are traced in this drama which promoted by the great French writer Antonio Artaud who resuscitated the theme of cruelty. The play Silence! The Court is in Session is full of diverse features of the theatre of cruelty. It has various incidents of the cruelty and injustice. The play exposes the shrewd and foxy nature of men to harass an independent woman Leela Benare and failure of relationships owing to men’s inherent cruelty towards women. There is an inherent urge for unkindness in man whether he is a ruler or subject.

In the play, all the characters take the chance to harass and embarrassment to Leela Benare as she is a modern woman who challenges the customs of traditional Indian society by asking her love and desires. She is caged and tortured by harsh words and personal comments without any sense of her solitude. In her witness, Mrs. Kashikar harms Leela Benare:

*Mrs. Kashikar: What better proof? Just look at the way she behaves. I don’t like to say anything since she’s one of us. Should there be no limit to how freely a woman can behave with a man? An unmarried woman? No matter how well she knows him? Look how loudly she laughs! How she sings, dances, cracks jokes! And wandering alone with how many men, day in and day out!*

*Sukhatme: (disappointed at the proof) Mrs. Kashikar, at the most one can say all this shows how free she is. Mrs. Kashikar: Free! Free! She’s free all right- in everything! I shouldn’t say it. But since it’s come up in court, I will just hold this a minute. Why must she have Prof. Damale, and Damale alone, to see her home after a performance? Tell me that.*

*(Tendulkar 100)*

The conspiracy among all the members of armature group makes victim Leela Benare a victim for just passing a time by taking a sadistic pleasure. Mr. Kashikar accuses her under the crime of infanticide. Mrs. Kahikar describes Benare as a characterless woman. Sukatme has spies and comments immorally on the relationship between Prof. Damale and Leela Benare.
The humiliation, psychological harassment and torture of Leela Benare grow with the progress of the plot. The cruelty of the play reveals in the inhuman treatment with Leela Benare, the independent and modern woman which leads encroachment on her private life and character. Leela Benare became victim of narrow minded failure people of the hypocritical middle class society. In the course of the play, audience see the harassment and sufferings of Leela Benare by her companions of armature theatre group.

III.ii.v. Silence! The Court is in Session: A Problem Play

Leela Benare, the protagonist of the play is the only exception of the malicious attitude and victim of patriarchal values. She is undisruptive and passionate to others who bears men’s prejudice and victimization with fortitude. Male characters in the play like Kashikar, Sukhatme, Ponkshe, Karnik and Rokade oppress her and torture her in playing a game of trial on the name of passing time. In this trial, she is made the accused and arrested under the charge of anatomy of her private affairs. She is projected as a licentious woman hunting for men and she is also projected as pregnant without being married. For this, she is put to trial, but Prof. Damale who makes her pregnant is not prosecuted. Audience at the end see how, the charge itself becomes the punishment. The court orders her to kill the foetus which she strongly rejects. On the same basis, she is sacked from the job of a school teacher. Tendulkar here deals with the social problem like sex, violence, syndrome, pre-marital pregnancy and marriage. He diagnoses the evils of the contemporary society with a view bring the reformation and revolt against traditional Society in the mind set of the people. According to Shailaja Wadikar:

> Most of Tendulkar's plays deal with the white collar, middle class society, its problems and the protagonist's effort is, oblique or implicitly, directed towards solving these problems.

(Wadikar 39)

Tendulkar leaves readers wondering, who is the villain? Is the society which puts her in the cage or Leela Benare? He presents the social problem of the society and predicament of women in the way as Henrik Ibsen presented in his famous play *A Doll's House*. Leela Benare is the victim of hypocritical society like Ibsens’s character Nora in *A Doll's House*. Like Ibsen’s Nora, Leela Benare makes the
audience aware of the fact about freedom of the modern woman. Leela Benare is the modern, educated and sophisticated woman in the patriarchal society. She is a school teacher by profession; however, her profession, modernization, education and sophistication do not solve her problems. Education has not enabled her to overcome the traditional barriers of sex discrimination and she became the victim of the male dominated society. The play is a blatant example of Benare becoming the victim of men’s lust, prejudice and patriarchy. When she was just fourteen years old, she became prey of incestuous lust of her own maternal uncle. She painfully recounts it when it is raked up by Karnik.

> It’s true, I did commit a sin. I was in love with my mother’s brother. But in our strict house, in the prime of my unfolding youth, he was the one who came close to me. He praised my bloom every day. He gave me love... how was I know...if you felt that just being with him gave a whole meaning to life and if he was your uncle, it was a sin! I didn’t know what sin was... I insisted on marriage. So I could live my beautiful lovely dream openly. But all them, my mother too were against it. And my brave man turned tail and ran.

(Tendulkar 117)

Benare convinces all that she was innocent and the impulse for physical relationship was just natural. She was drawn into the affair by her maternal uncle. But the onus of the tragedy is impressed on her by Kashikar, judge, Sukhatme, advocate and others. The incident proves that the society is prejudiced against a progressive, modern, educated, and sophisticated woman.

The problem of violence is skilfully depicted by Tendulkar. There are two types of violence: verbal and physical in Silence! The Court is in Session. Benare is continuously subjected to such torture and humiliation by the members of theatre group with the exception Samant, a rustic uneducated villager in the world of educated urban characters. Verbal violence operates in terms of humiliating charges against Benare and the attempt to project her as unforgivable villain of society has psychological ramification for both victim and victimizers.
III.ii.vi. *Silence! The Court is in Session: a Naturalistic Play*

A Naturalistic play is realistic in subject matter and manner. The characters are selected from the middle class society or the working class people and are usually people without any exceptional contribution in the society. Emile Zola, August Strindberg, George Moore, Theodore Dreiser and Eugene O’Neill are the playwrights associated with the Naturalism.

Vijay Tendulkar’s writing style follows naturalist writers. The writing style of the Naturalists show the people, things and experiences as they really do not influenced by one’s emotions. Their intention is to present the various parts of life. Tendulkar depicts in his plays the real life and the situations of the people in the present society. Shanta Gokhale observes:

> Naturalism appears to be the characteristic manner of expression in Tendulkar’s plays. Tendulkar is an inveterate observer of humankind.

(Gokhale 60)

The naturalistic form drives a writer into the minutiae of everyday life so that it credible characters and situations creates. Tendulkar’s preoccupation with contemporary reality made naturalism a suitable form for the expression of his content and stresses on visual concreteness of the settings in his plays. He chose his subjects from the world around him which he has observed in his day to day life. His plays represent average humanity and its concerns. Like other naturalistic writers, Tendulkar also believed that the everyday life of the Middle and Lower class people of his own time provided subjects worthy of serious literary treatment to be rendered without artificiality and scrupulous care for meticulousness of details. Aspects of the naturalistic selection and management of materials and a brutal frankness of manner are apparent in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar.

*Silence! The Court is in Session* is a naturalistic play. All characters of this play are from the Middle class society without any exceptional contribution to society. Leela Benare is shown as a bold and successful working unmarried woman. Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar, Sukhatme, Karnik, Ponkshe and Rokade are unsuccessful persons in their respective fields. Sukhatme is an unsuccessful lawyer sits alone in the barrister’ room at court; Ponkshe is an Inter-failed scientist; Mr. Kashikar having nothing to do meaningful in his life; Mrs. Kashikar is dependent on her husband Kashikar; Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar are childless couple who gave shelter to Rokade;
Rokade is a man like slave of Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar; and Karnik is unsuccessful actor who plays trivial roles in the plays.

*Mr. Kashikar and the hand-that-Rocks the Cradle, in order that nothing should happen to either of them in their bare, bare house and that they shouldn’t die of boredom!*  
*Gave shelter to a young boy. Educated him and made him toil away and slave. Well we have an expert in Law. He just sits in the barrister’s room at court, swatting flies with legal precedents! And one is scientist! Inter Failed!*

(Tendulkar 59)

Tendulkar points out that the spinelessness of the frustrated and unsuccessful men forces them to search for vicious pleasure in inflicting miseries on others and to take the sadistic pleasure, particularly those who are simple and innocent like Benare.

The story of the play is based on a real incident. Tendulkar exposes the worthlessness of the Middle class mentality, morality and dual standards of society. Satire, irony, pathos and mock element are successfully used by Tendulkar. The problem rose by the protagonist of the play are seen in all the ages and societies over the world.

**III.ii.vii. Existentialism in Silence! The Court is in Session:**

*Silence! The Court is in Session* represents the Existential situation of the modern life along with the absurdity in Contemporary Indian Society. It represents the contemporary predicament of the rootless metropolitan generation age groups of the modern society. They feel the futility, meaninglessness and uselessness condition of uselessness of human being in the present. Leela Benare tries to represent her existence as a school teacher, modern and married woman and many others. Tendulkar portrayed Miss Leela Benare as an extraordinary and vital character in the play. She is a young middle class woman who is teacher to earn her livelihood. She is very punctual and she is always appreciated by her students in the school. She goes to school on time, carrying her assignments and her courses. She corrects the assignments of her students on time too. Benare keeps away her anguish and problems of personal life from her professional life. Benare always tries to represents herself as a teacher. But because of charge pregnancy without marriage, she is terminated from the school. She states that:
Why? Was I slack in my work? I just put my whole life into working with the children…I loved it! I taught them well! I knew that life is no straightforward thing. People can be so cruel. Even your own flesh and blood don’t want to understand you. Only one thing in life is all important the body! You may deny it but it is true. … I did not teach any of this to those tender, young souls! I swallowed that poison, but didn’t even let a drop of it touch them! I taught them beauty, purity. I made them laugh. I was cracking up with despair and I taught them hope.

(Tendulkar 117)

Because of the modern nature, Leela Benare struggles and became a helpless woman in the contemporary society. She revolts against the tradition and convention of the male dominated society. However, she is defeated. She tries a lot to present the several questions on love, sex, marriage and established moral values to show her existence, but fails to this traditional patriarchal society. This play belongs to the theatre of the absurd of modern drama. It depicts the absurdity of life, meaninglessness of life and frustration in the life which creates the horror and cruelty. Dialogues of the play are characterized by certain unconventional use of syntax. Like absurd plays of The Birthday Party and The Caretaker by Harold Pinter, the most of utterance are short. There are abundant pauses and silence marked by numerous dots and dashes. However, when serious issues are discussed, the dialogues pick up a faster rhythms and the sentences a certain depth and fullness. For example:

*Rokade: So then-so then I said-'This isn’t proper!- I – I don’t like this at all it doesn’t become you,- That’s-that’s what I said.*

(Tendulkarp 102)

*Silence! The Court is in Session* contains the characteristics of existentialism as well as the theatre of Absurd. It contains the elements of grotesque uncertainty, disorder, alienation and disillusionment. It reveals the ugliness of human life and identity crisis.
III.ii.viii. Style of Vijay Tendulkar in *Silence! The Court is in Session*:

About the style of Vijay Tendulkar’s play writing Anju Bala Agrawal observes:

*The style that Tendulkar uses in Silence! The Court is in Session is ‘demotic’ modelled on the language, rhythms, and association of ordinary speech.*

(Agrawal 197)

The play *Silence! The Court is in Session* divided into three acts; there are no scene divisions of the acts. The plot is skillfully organized by Tendulkar so that the denouement unravels itself as ‘reversal’. The element of reversal is another important theatrical device of the play. It plays very vital role in the play which gives the unique dramatic significance. It surprises not only the characters but also the readers and the audience. The elements like surprise and suspense in the play make the audience eagerly look towards what would happen next. The drastic change that comes over Benare surprises the audience and readers. The silence of Miss Benare is the imposed silence, silence of force which makes the title of the play unique. From beginning to the commencement of the ‘mock trial’, Benare looks like a picture of poise and vitality. She sings songs, hums and makes comments on the behaviour of her fellow characters.

The commencement of the mock trial, which constitutes a ‘play within play’, offers Tendulkar ample scope to dissect and lay bare the dormant ills of discontent in the psyche of these urban hypocrites. The silence comes down when ‘mock trial’ begins with Kashikar’s sudden interrogative statements. N. S. Dharan accurately comments on the ‘mock trial’:

*The mock trial marks a deft stroke on the part of Tendulkar. It functions almost like a ‘play within play’, as the real performances is supposed to have been ‘Mock Law Court’.*

(Dharan 94)

Tendulkar is influenced by the Western plays, playwrights and films. He uses these techniques in his plays, e.g. Shakespeare’s technique of ‘play within play’, used in his play *Hamlet*. The mock trial causes the terminal reversal of the play. It trial also helps the playwright expose to his audience the cruelty that is latent in the collective psyche of the city bred male who display their innate cruelty towards her.
Benare’s rhetorical soliloquy at the end of the play has several paradoxical statements. It has become very famous in the contemporary Indian Theatre.

Benare: Yes, I have let to say....... He must have a mother...a father to call his own – a- house- to be looked after- he must have good name!

(Tendulkar 116-118)

The soliloquy by Benare after a long gap, when she breaks her silence in the extempore monologue saying, “Yes, I have a lot to say.”; she admits that she has not spoken a word for many years despite a wail like death’ inside. Her life has become a burden for her. She turns philosophic and narrates her personal experience of an attempt to commit suicide. She also says that there is a great joy in being saved from the mouth of death or suicide. She broods on the different facets of life- Life is poisonous; life is betrayal’ for her life is so many things. It is fraud, funny, drug, drudgery and dreadful thing that should be hanged. She calls it worthless. She then questions the justification of the enquiry against her. She also questions if she has been unjust to the duty of teaching children; if she has ever let her personal trauma affect her duty in the school. She goes on justifying herself and tries to win the sympathy of the people by recounting the trials to win the sympathy of the people by recounting the trials and tribulations she has faced. However, she is firm on the point that her private life is her own business as long as it does not affect her profession.

All of a sudden, she goes offensive and comes down heavily on the men. She calls them ‘mortal remains of some cultured men of the twentieth century’. She tries to show their tainted faces, ferocious look and lustful appetite. To her, men are emotionless and are interested in women’s body only.

Benare in this speech is rhetorical, sentimental and defensive; she indulges in self- justification. Benare’s monologue is reminiscent of Nora’s declaration of independence but lacks the note of protest that characterizes the speech of Ibsen’s heroine or of Rakesh’s Savitiri in Halfway House. It is more a self justification than an attack on the hollowness and hypocrisies of the society.

Through this soliloquy, she frankly says that my private life is my own business. “I will decide what to do with myself?” Her ideas are very clear about her life and society. She is not a hypocrite. Shailaja Wadikar describes this soliloquy in the following way:
It explains that, what she feels about the colleagues and other people. It is represented in such a way that it recreates a doubt in the mind of audience whether it is a soliloquy or self defence suggesting, of course, in the final that truth always gets suppressed in the proceedings of court, the fountain of justice! That is why Benare’s objection seems to have been drowned by judge’s cry of silence and the banging of the gavel during the court proceedings. Her tragedy reveals that too much of innocence is unpardonable even in the so called cultured society. Innocent is punished and cruelty is set free and quite ironically, the play concludes with the words; “The show must go on”.

(Wadikar 16)

The songs Tendulkar assign to Benare have vital dramatic significance; such as, the song of opening scene she sings:

Oh, I've got a sweetheart
Who carries all my books?
He plays in my doll house,
And says he likes my looks.
I’ll tell you a secret-
He wants to marry me.
But mummy says, I’m too little
To have such thoughts as these.

(Tendulkar 58-59).

The above song anticipates Karnik's revelation of Benare's fruitless love for her maternal uncle in the third Act.

The second song is a nursery-rhyme which appears in the first act indicates that Benare realization for she has not anything that she can call her own.

The grass is green,
The rose is red.
This book is mine
Till I am dead.

(Tendulkar 62)
Another important verse, which she recites in the opening scene:

*Our feet tread upon unknown*

*And dangerous pathways evermore.*

*Wave after blinded wave is shattered*

*Stormily upon the shore.*

*Light glows alive again. Again*

*It mingles with the dark of night.*

*Our earthen hands burn out, and then*

*Again in flames they are alight.*

*Everything is fully known,*

*And everything is fully known,*

*And everything is clear to see.*

*And the wound that’s born to bleed*

*Bleeds on forever, faithfully.*

*There is a battle sometimes, where*

*Defeat is destined as the end.*

*Some experience are meant*

*To taste, then just to waste and spend.*

(Tendulkar 63)

The above song is a Marathi poem written by Mrs. Shirish Pai. Through this song, Tendulkar has conceived that Benare is the central character in the play. According to the above aphoristic style of the song, Benare, the protagonist of the play feels that at the end of the play she is destined to be defeated. The next song is like ballad:

*The parrot to the sparrow said*

*‘why, oh why are your eyes so red?’*

*‘oh, my dear friend, what shall I say?*

*Someone has stolen my nest away.’*

*Sparrow, sparrow, poor little sparrow!*

(Tendulkar 74)

Benare sings it to herself towards the end of Act I and repeats it again at the end of Act III where it supposedly emerges from an indistinct source in Benare's voice. The ‘parrot’ in the play is suggestive of Samant, the ‘nest’ may refer to her
chastity which she is deprived of by Professor Damle and ‘the crow’ too seems to be none other than the callous and selfish Professor himself.

III.iii. Dramaturgy in Ghashiram Kotwal:

_Ghashiram Kotwal_ is a milestone in the history of Indian Drama. It is a play in with is a fine blending of theme, style, language and dramatic devices like folk forms, music, etc. Vijay Tendulkar’s dramatic art peaks in this play with a perfect blend of Marathi folk forms, modern stage techniques, songs, dances and dialogues. In this play, Tendulkar has used the three fold tradition of Indian Theatre in the play they are: the classical, folk and modern. According to Veena N. Dass,

_Tendulkar showed how the indigenous folk forms could be pressed into the service of the modern Marathi theatre by recreating the form as well as the spirit of folk theatre in his play Ghashiram Kotwal without diluting its contemporary appeal._

(Dass Veena 65)

_Ghashiram Kotwal_ represents the power politics, over-ambition, lust and vengeance. It reveals the latent savagery of human being such as betrayal, cruelty, sexuality and power hungry politics. The play dramatizes the conflict between Ghashiram Kotwal, the eponymous hero and Nana Fadanvis, the Chief Minister of the Peshwa of Pune in the early nineteenth century. Through these two characters, Tendulkar has shown the moral and social degeneration and spiritual regression of upper-class society. It is the tragedy born of power conflict between the powerful and the powerless.

Ghashiram, an innocent Brahmin of Kanauj comes to Pune to try his luck. But, he suffers an unexpected humiliation at Pune when he is wrongly accused of the thievery and therefore imprisoned. He cries out his innocence but nobody listens to him. Somehow, he gets released from the jail with a warning.

This incident awakens in him the powerful emotion of revenge of unjust state. The urge for revenge turns him in to a devil. He exploits the Nana’s weakness for women. He buys the post of Kotwal of Pune at the cost of his beautiful unmarried daughter. She lives with the Peshwa as a concubine; Ghashiram rules over the people of Pune with high handedness and arrogance.
He misuses his power to fulfil his revenge and dreams of finding a good bridegroom for his daughter and celebrating her wedding with great pomp and show. But what he conveniently forgets is that crime begets crime and hatred begets hatred. He is widely hated and cursed. One day, he learns that about his daughter’s death on account of her pre-marital pregnancy. The power with which he wanted to enhance the happiness of his daughter has consumed her life. But far from being mellower and wiser, Ghashiram grows more and more vindictive in his actions. He reminds us of Macbeth for who going forward was as tedious as going backward. One day, he gets some Brahmins arrested and put behind a small cell just for plucking some flowers. As a result of suffocation twenty two of them die. He is held responsible for their death. The law of retribution starts working through the angry Brahmins of Pune and forces Nana to order for Ghashiram beheading. Ghashiram is surrounded by the angry mob and beaten severely. At the end, realization dawns on him and he reconciles with his lot.

The play ends with mixed feelings of pathos and festivity. Ghashiram dies a death of a dog and the people of Pune once again indulge in sexual vulgarity and undisciplined administration.

III.iii.i. Ghashiram Kotwal: In the Light of Rasa Theory

Tendulkar has used various Rasa Siddhantas in his play Ghashiram Kotwal for an aesthetic point of view. If the play is examined in the light of the Rasa theory, it becomes more significant and meaningful to the reader.

III.iii.i.i. Bibhatsa Rasa (The Odious):

There are the scenes in Ghashiram Kotwal, which represent Bibhatsa Rasa i.e. odious, repulsive, disgusting and hideous. When Nana dances with Gulabi, Nana’s lustful pursuit of Gauri, Brahmins visit to Bavannakahani instead of temple and the secret meeting of the wives of Brahmins to their respective Maratha lovers, all these incidents bring out the underlying strain eroticism presents in the play. The scenes represent Bibhatsa Rasa which is very odious and repulsive for the society.

The play exposes sexuality and illicit relations of the characters and reveals the woman as scapegoats of man’s lust and hunger for sex such as Nana’s relationships with different women, Gulabi and Lalita Gauri; his so many marriages; all these scene represent the Bibhatsa rasa.
III.iii.ii. Karuna Rasa (The Pathetic Sentiment):

In the very first act of the play, some incidents highlight the Karuna Rasa. Ghashiram Savaldas, an innocent Brahmin of Kanauj come to Pune to try his luck. But, he suffers an unexpected humiliation at Pune when he is wrongly accused of the thievery and therefore imprisoned. He cries out his innocence but nobody listens to him.

\[ \text{Ghashiram: I didn’t steal. I swear to God I didn’t. I’m not a thief. I’m from Kanauj. I’m Brahman. I’ve been here two weeks to find my fortune and lost my reputation.} \]

(Tendulkar 375)

The incident awakens in him the powerful emotion of revenge. The urge for revenge turns him in to a devil. When he becomes Kotwal of Pune at the cost of his beautiful unmarried daughter, he grows very cruel and wild. He wrongly uses his power to fulfil his revenge. Though the Brahmin is innocent, the soldiers of Ghashiram want him to admit the guilt.

At the end of the play, Brahmins pleases to Nana to behead Ghashiram Kotwal who is responsible for the death of the Brahmins. Now, Nana is so much pressurized by the angry mob that he has to take a stately judgment as Gauri is already no more. He gives order for Ghashiram’s execution:

\[ \text{First shave his head and anoint it with sindur. Then run him around town on a camel, tie him to an elephant’s leg and lastly give him the sentence to death. At the very end, tie one of his hands behind his back and let Ghashiram Savaldas face the mob.} \]

(Tendulkar 413)

After the order of Nana, Ghashiram is brutally beaten, disfigured and blooded by mob. Ghashiram falls, gets up, falls and growls like an animal and finally lies motionless. This scene arouses Karuna and the pathetic element and sorrowful emotions in the play.

III.iii.ii. Satire in Ghashiram Kotwal:

Tendulkar’s Ghashiram Kotwal is a satire on the power politics, humorous satire on the contemporary society, ironical satire on the corruption, hypocrisy and pretension of the Brahmins who are thoroughly indulged in eroticism and sexuality. It
reveals brutality, violence, treachery, greedy, sexuality and immorality that characterize power politics of the people. The play is not historical but it is based on a historical events and incidents. The characters represent the historical real life personages. The projection of cruelty and violence involved in the power struggle of duel nature of Ghashiram as well as Nana Phadanavis. These characters are individual verses the individual and the other of individual verses society.

Through the play, Tendulkar satirizes the contemporary society, social practices and characters. In the opening scene, there is ironic and sarcastic conversation between the Brahmins and Sutradhara. The inquiry of Sutradhara exposes that Brahmins are going to Bavannakhani instead of going to temple. Sutradhara explores the layers one by one through his questions to the Brahmins and he flings a very humorous satire on the hypocrisy and corruption of the Brahmins. These hypocrite Brahmins use very loathsome and abusive language instead of chanting the hymns of Vedas, Puranas, and Scriptures. These Brahmins work like a pimp at Bavannakhani when English men come. Through these hypocrite and nagging characters, Tendulkar exposes the corruption by the Brahmins and contemporary society.

Ghashiram Kotwal is a satire on the immorality and voluptuousness of the Nana Phadnavis. Tendulkar satirizes Nana who is a sexually degenerated character who wants to satisfy his hunger of lust. The exaggeration of immorality is seen in the course of action of the play. Nana misbehaved with the young girl Lalita Gauri in front the idol Lord Ganesha. Quenching the lust of his sexual passion and making Gauri pregnant; he deserts her to die in pregnancy. The playwright flings a very bitter satire on the wild, savage and cruel administration of the Gahshiram Kotwal. He shows his cruelty and the feelings of revenge through his administration, the humiliation of the Brahmins of Pune.

III.iii.iii. Images and Symbolism in Ghashiram Kotwal:

Symbolism is important poetic tool and the ornament which is successfully employed by the playwright. Tendulkar’s Ghashiram Kotwal is a symbolic play. Tendulkar has skillfully selected some images and symbols which are highly suggestive. According to Amarnath Prasad:

*Tendulkar has been placed symbols in the plot of the play
in such a masterly way that sometimes like Shakespeare,*
the metaphor becomes not the dress of thought but the thought itself. Most of the images and symbols have been taken from the animal world thereby suggesting the cruelty, savagery, and sometimes the lascivious and carnal activities of the animal.

(Prasad 5)

Tendulkar has employed the symbols and images in this play are very connotative. They suggest the savagery of animal behaviour in men which reminds us of Othello and King Lear by Shakespeare. The animal imagery in this play is the most conspicuous. This imagery is intended partly to show man’s place in the chain of being and brings out the sub-human nature of the evil characters; partly shows man’s weakness which is compared with the animals and partly to compare human existence to the life of Jungle. References of animals are scattered throughout the play. The mouse, cat, pig, tiger, lion, deer, donkey, monkey and dog are mentioned in the course of the play. The following sentences have symbolic meanings.

Nana looks unblinkingly at a pretty girl. She is beautiful, shy innocent. Nana walks towards the girl. The girl goes to bow at the Haridasa’s feet. Falls at his feet. Nana steps towards her like a cat.

(Tendulkar 377)

Through these sentences, it is found that the animal imagery is related with the lust and hunger for sex. When Nana looks at young girl with his unblinking eyes, it means that he has sexual intention towards that young girl. Here, Nana is like cat and the plight of the young girl represents the trapped mouse to be devoured by the hungry cat very soon.

Like frightened mouse, the same image has been extended through some suitable imaginative variations. These are as follows:

She runs like a frightened deer. (378)
If the hunter is ready, they prey will be found. (379)
I have given my beloved daughter in to the jaws of that wolf.

(Tendulkar 381)

Tendulkar has aptly used admirable images and suggestive symbols which explore connotative meanings of the play. Tendulkar’s the image of ‘frightened deer’
who is at a loss before a fierce lion and so she runs desperately in haste with all her might. Here, Nana is imagined as a dangerous tiger or lion. The other image of ‘prey and hunter’ spoken by the servant of Nana also speaks a lot. He suggests his master to put his sword back in its sheath. This is the connotative way of speaking vulgar thing. By this image, he means to say that Nana Phadnavis should bridle his desire for sexual hunger for some time. The image of wolf which stands for the lust of Nana Phadnavis interprets the same image of hunter and prey.

There is other animal imageries are used by the playwright in the play; like tiger, lion, pigs, monkey, donkey and dog. They are beautifully placed in order to suggest the desired sense. These are as follows:

*Brahman: No donkey? No donkey in the Peshwa’s Kingdom?* (365)
*Brahman: Get aside, you dog.* (372)
*Soldier: Get Lost. Hey Thief monkey.* (376)
*Ghashiram: I’ll come back. I’ll make this Pune a Kingdom of Pigs.*

(Tendulkar 377)

The following Speech of Ghashiram is similar to the speech of Iago, the villain of the play *Othello* by Shakespeare. Iago is a devil in guise of saint. Ghashiram says I am not what I am.

*Ghashiram: I am a Kanauj Brahman, but I’ve become a shudra, a criminal, a useless animal… now I am devil. You have made me an animal; I’ll be a devil inside. I’ll come back.*

(Tendulkar 376-377)

Like Iago, Ghashiram is a villainous character of the play. He is very callous and cruel in his attitude like Iago. Ghashiram in a fit of anger vows to take revenge, expressed his inner nature like the language of Iago and said that he will be a devil inside and he will come back like a bore and stay as devil. He will make this city kingdom of pigs.

In the play, playwright has skilfully used some beautiful images relating gustatory, auditory and olfactory images. All these images symbolized a vulgar, lustful, sexual and licentious connotation. Nana ogles the woman and smells the
flower. He is womanizer; thus his behaviour and actions of ogle represent his lustful 
nature and desire of sex towards that young girl and other women.

According to Shailaja wadikar, Ghashiram Kotwal is a symbolic play because it ends with suggesting some consequential ideas for debate. She explains:

The spectators leave the theatre with the consciousness that Ghashiram is dead only as a person whiles his role is very much alive. Somebody will play it. Ghashiram and Nana may be seen as ancestors of power seekers irrespective of time and place. However the playwright does not work out all details. He just hints at the clue and leaves his audience and readers to explore the ultimate truth of the situation and also of life at large.

(Wadikar 22)

III.iii.iv. Ghashiram Kotwal: An Epitome of the Theatre of Cruelty

A detail study of the play Ghashiram Kotwal, it is understood that some features of the Theatre of Cruelty are traced in this drama which propounded by a great French writer Antonio Artaud who resuscitated the theme of cruelty. The play Ghashiram Kotwal is full of various characteristics of the theatre of cruelty. It has various incidents of the cruelty and injustice. The play exposes the failure of human relations owing to men’s inherent cruelty to his fellow men. There is an innate urge for cruelty in man whether he is a ruler or subject.

In the beginning of the play, Ghashiram came across the insults and humiliation by the Brahmins of Pune due to false charge of stealing money. He is imprisoned and tortured by soldiers without any sense of justice. Consequently, he takes the oath to take revenge of his humiliation. He is so much insulted that he fumes like a tiger and he warns them:

I’ll come back. I’ll come back to Pune. I’ll show my strength. It will cost you! Your good days are gone! I am a Kanauj Brahman, but i’hv become a Shudra, a criminal, a useless animal. There is no one to stop me now, to mock me, to make me bend, to cheat me. Now I am a devil. You’ve made me an animal; I’ll be a devil inside. I’ll
come back like a bore and I'll stay as a devil. I'll make pigs all of you. I'll make this Poona a kingdom of pigs.

(Tendulkar 377)

A deal is made between Ghashiram and Nana. The deal is Ghashiram procures his only daughter; Lalit Gauri to Nana to quench the latter’s lust on the condition that he would be made the Kotwal, the police superintendent of the Pune city.

The cruelty, savagery and sexuality are on the peak when Ghashiram becomes Kotwal of the city Pune. He becomes very cruel at those people who enjoying inflicting cruelty. Abusing, slapping, whipping, adultery and arm twisting have become the daily routine of the day. A Brahmin is wrongly accused of the theft, threatened, intimidated and even slapped to admit his guilt. At the moment, Ghashiram is standing by twisting his moustache with a great sense of pride; he orders his soldiers to place a burning ball of iron on his hands so that he may speak the truth. When the ball is placed on his palm, the innocent Brahmin yells, groans, falls to the ground and writhes in agony. Ghashiram watches and enjoys the scene.

The cruelty of the play reveals in the inhuman treatment with Lalita Gauri, the innocent girl which leads her to fatal death. Gauri becomes victim of the Nana’s lust and hunger for the sex. Nana is so much infatuated to her beauty and so much enveloped with lust and sex to Gauri. The unnatural death of Gauri makes Ghashiram mad with anger and wants to take revenge of it. On the other hand, Nana is not sad even a bit.

At the end of the play, Ghashiram Kotwal faces the tortures and sufferings. He is stoned to death. In other words, he meets a dog’s death. The death of Ghashiram reveals the scene of savagery and animalistic end of life. The mob begins to shout. Ghashiram falls, gets up, falls and yells like animal.

Ghashiram Kotwal is based on the concept of the theatre of cruelty. It has some abnormal actions and situations, sexual vulgarity, untold miseries and sufferings, uncontrolled greed and ambition which are generally the central aspects of the theatre of cruelty. Nana Phandanvis and Ghashiram Kotwal are full of evil aspects of life. Their inhuman treatment and cruel attitude place them in the category of animal world. They are bundle of evils like cruelty, sexuality and machination. They prove the proverb ‘a serpent beneath the rose’ and at length the fox turns monk.
III.iii.v. An Exploration of the Folk Forms in Ghashiram Kotwal:

Tendulkar has made a perfect innovative and extensive use of the folk forms of the Indian Theatre for producing the right dramatic effect in the play. The Contemporary Experimental plays trace back to indigenous folk forms which are different from the Western theatrical devices. The major elements of the folk forms known as the Dashawtar Khel and Tamasha are used by the playwright in this play. In the play, Tamasha is combined with the music of the Dashavtara and mime. The dramatic persons like Haridasa, the chief actor and the Sutradhara and the chorus of the Dashavtara Khel and its chief musical instruments like Mridinga and Zhanza have used by Tendulkar.

Ghashiram Kotwal begins with rich musical quality, a prologue type hymn to Lord Ganapati and later on sequences of dance of Saraswati, the Godess of the music and wisdom; Ganapati, the God of good luck and Laxmi, the Godess of wealth. After the dance sequence, it establishes a link of the twelve man chorus of Dashavtara Khel which is a form of folk theatre. They ask for the blessing of Lord Ganapati for the success of the play. The opening ritual trace back to the classical Sanskrit plays. Another aim is to arouse the interest of the audience to instil a feeling of seriousness and to arrest their attention.

The opening of the song, music and dance turns a full circle with the other dancers, professional dancers like Gulabi, a girl who dances an erotic dance turns with a full of circle with Nana joining the dancers in singing and dancing at the end. The songs sung or hummed by the chorus also establish the appropriate mood and comment on the action. The use of traditional songs and dances effectively sets the backdrop of the decadence of the Peshwas of Pune of the eighteenth century. The aptly placed songs provide the necessary dramatic relief in tense situations. Sometimes, they serve to reinforce the tense atmosphere. The Lavani and love songs highlight the sensuous and passionate element and comment on corruption. The juxtaposition of the Lavani with the Abhanga or religious hymn serves to bring out the contradiction in social values and norms.

Changing form of Abhanga to Lavani represents the intention of playwright to emphasize the complicity between religion and sex.

pretty girl. She is beautiful, shy and innocent. Everyone falls at the feet of the Haridasa. Nana walks towards the girl. The girl goes to bow at the Haridasa’s feet. Falls at his feet. Nana steps towards her like a cat. All go but girl stays behind, Nana’s gesture to the servant to close the door.

(Tendulkar 377)

The above actions highlights Nana, the chief administrator, mainly to ogle at the women in the temple, the complicity of religion, sex and politics clearly emphasized. Nana’s pursuit of Lalita Gauri the fourteen year young girl is done in the temple in front of the Lord Ganesha.

Tamasha is another folk form of the folk theatre is used effectively from the beginning to the end of the play by Tendulkar to reveal the social and political evils of the society. Basically, Tamasha is accompanied with music; however, prose dialogues are also used to make social and political comment. Lavani brings a sensuous and passionate element in the Tamasha. The first Lavani of Gulabi with Ghashiram is not only dramatically appropriate but also an indirect comment on the prevailing social corruption. The Brahmins go to Bavannakhani and the wives of these Brahmins stay at home. Their wives think that their husbands go the keertan at the temple. But, actually they go to Bavannakhani:

The Brahman Curtain: It’s like Mathura. Ho!
Bavannakhani! Ho Bavannakhani! It’s like Mathura.
The Brahmin curtain is transformed in to a group sitting in Gulabi’s hall in Bavannakhani. A dancer dances is erotic. Ghashiram is dancing with her. He is her foil. All are involved in the erotic mood, alternative her.

(Tendulkar 367)

Nana joins the erotic dance and he starts to dance with Gulabi effeminately. It is projected as a weak character that is quite different from the revered Nana of history.

The chorus plays an important role in Ghashiram Kotwal. The chorus is a group of people served mainly as commentators of the dramatic action and events in the Greek plays who expressed traditional, moral, religious and social attitude. The role of chorus was to serve the purpose of the refrain in the Marathi folk plays. The
playwrights of the Contemporary Experimental Plays have been influenced by this
tradition. The character like Sutradhara is reminiscent of the chorus in the Greek
play. The function of the Greek chorus transfers in Tendulkar’ Ghashiram Kotwal as a
Sutradhara who narrates the story, comments on the situations, etc. The presence of
the chorus and twelve Brahmins and the Sutradhara shows the tradition of the folk
theatre. Shailaja Wadikar explains:

The character of sutradhara is reminiscent of the chorus
in Greek play. Like the chorus, the Sutradhara narrates
the story, introduces the characters, and tells the time
between two acts, comments on the behaviour of
characters. In the light of his apparently objective
observation, the audience can study the characters and
also can guess the future state of action.

(Wadikar 108)

The Sutradhara of Ghashiram Kotwal plays various roles. His role contributes
a lot in the development of the plot. Sutradhara satirizes the curious social ills and
maladies of the contemporary society and makes inquiry of the Brahmins who are
going to the Bavannakhani at the opening of the play. Here, Sutradhara plays role
like an interlocutor. He Very humorously opens the various layers of the Brahmins
and flings irony and satire on their hypocrisy and vulgarity.

Sutradhara: Ho! Ho! Ho! Bhatji Buwa! Wait now wait
now. Hold your horses! Must you go? Where is your
honour going so late at night?

Brahmin: to the graveyard.

Sutradhara: then I am coming.

(Tendulkar 363-4)

These dialogues of the Sutradhara with Brahmins highlight the secret things
and sometimes some actions which can’t be presented on the stage. The Sutradhara
addresses to audience informing them that Brahmins enjoy themselves in the
Bavannakhani means the red light area of Pune and some wives of them carry other
men at home. Sutradhara exposes the various professions of the Brahmins through
inquiry. They are Vedantic Scholar, Vaidya doctor, Logician, Astrologer, Linguist
and Baron.
The Sutradhara seems to fulfil almost all the requirements of the dramatic art or the tools of dramaturgy of the play. Tendulkar has exposed the bitter reality or the hypocrisy of the corrupt society. When Ghashiram is thrown in jail, the Sutradhara comments as:

*The thief is a simple thief.*

*The police are official thieves.*

(Tendulkar 376)

Here, Sutradhara flings castigating remarks to the police of the then society and says that police becomes the most corrupted fellows.

In act II, Sutradhara’s communicates with common people also exposes the Ghashirams administration:

*Sutradhara:* Ghashiram Kotwal says to kill pig, to do an abortion, to be a pimp, to commit a misdemeanour, to steal, to live with one’s divorced wife, to remarry if one’s husband is alive, to hide one’s cast, to use counterfeit coins, to commit suicide, without a permit, is a sin. A good woman may not prostitute herself, a Brahmman may not sin, without a permit.  

(Tendulkar 387)

Above sentences of Sutradhara highlight the clear picture of the misrule of the state. He says that Gauri orders, Nana does and Ghashiram reigns and further opines that Gauri dances, Nana dances and Ghashiram gets his chances. The Sutradhara also presents detail picture of the marriage of the Nana with Lalita Gauri. He says to the audience that how Nana is wedding a tender blooming bride, a slender willowy bride, or a just this year ripened bride. He invites us to go to the marriage of Nana whose ripe age does not suit the marriage. The Sutradhara also plays the role of announcer. He announces the order of Nana to the Brahmmins. He says that Nana has given order of the execution of Ghashiram Kotwal. Thus, the role of Sutradhara is now negligible, as we generally see his role in our great classical plays of Greek, Roman and Sanskrit. He is such a character who is present everywhere right from the beginning up to the end. He seems to be the mouthpiece of the playwright.

The human curtain is another important theatrical device which is used by Tendulkar in his play Ghashiram Kotwal. The function of the human curtain is in the play, which is basic structure of the play. The human curtain used throughout the play
has an individual role. Like *Sutradhara*, it also serves a chorus in the play for it helps in the transition from one scene to another. At times, it is transformed into a group sitting in Gulabi’s hall, at others they sneak off stealthily as individuals, in hurry to get to Bavannakhani. At another incident, it forms a human god house round Ganapati, when Nana chases a girl; the human curtain becomes a garden. The human curtain is also a symbol of mechanism of secrecy, hiding and revealing happenings by human being, it also conceals the various faces of human beings; their hypocrisy, it is wall again that the singing chorus uses for the chant of saint’s and god’s names as yet another screen of complacence and consolation cast over the yawning horror of corruption and tyranny; double standards and tendencies to violence and oppression because at the end of the play at Ghashiram’s execution; the human curtain becomes the fierce mob of angry Brahmins shouting with sadistic glee. Thus, the human curtain with its tremendous potential as spectacle; it performs several functions controlling and enhancing the flow of the story.

The difference between the Western stage and stage of Tendulkar of the Contemporary Indian Theatre is most spectacularly evident in the use of a Human Wall as the theatrical device. Tendulkar’s Human Wall is a radical innovation for the modern Indian Theatre. According to the Theatre Academy:

*The basic structure of the play is human wall which is basically a singing chorus, impersonally commenting on the episodic developments. The human wall ceases to exist when its back is turned to the audience.*

(NCPA)

*Ghashiram Kotwal* is an innovative experiment that offers a new direction to the Contemporary Experimental plays of the Indian Theatre. The Experimental plays of the Indian theatre have been replacing the old and new forms mingle and renew themselves. The new cross fertilization between the realistic Westernized urban theatre and folk theatre seems hero to stay. The reshaping and experimentation which have resulted from absorption of folk theatre into the mainstream of urban theatre has given rise to a new theatre movement.
III.iii.vi. Ghashiram Kotwal: A Musical Play

Vijay Tendulkar has made effective use of humming in addition to the songs with music in Ghashiram Kotwal. Pt. Bhaskar Chandavarkar was the musician who worked for Ghashiram Kotwal. The musical instrument like Drum, Shahanai and Mrudang are used in the play. Shailaja Wadikar explains the functions of music in the play serves as follows:

- The use of the traditional songs and dances effectively sets the background of the decadence of the Peshwa’s Pune of the eighteenth century.
- Music helps to provide dramatic relief.
- Sometimes they serve to reinforce the tense atmosphere. Satish Alekar, the assistant director to Dr. Jabbar Patel opines after the ordeal by fire the tempo tended to slow down a little. But with the introduction of the Malhari song, the tense atmosphere, created by the sequence was reinforced.
- The Lavani highlights the sensuous, passionate element. It also provides the contradiction in social values and norms.
- The mingling of the Lavani with the Abhanga serves to bring out the contradiction in social values and norms.
- The musical form helps to deglamorise history.

(Wadikar 107)

The music and song always come again and again to decrease the pressure of savagery and rudeness of human being for others. In the beginning phase of the play, music is created for showing the merry and joy of the corrupted Brahmins. There is music on the occasion of Nana’s seventh wedding ceremony in the middle of the play. Music shows not simply the gay occasion of the wedding but also satirical exposure of Nana’s lust for sexual pleasure. The play ends with the tragic death of Ghashiram Kotwal with the music in background again. Ghashiram Kotwal is stoned to death by Brahmins of Pune at the one side and at the other side the Brahmins indulge once again the same vulgar and carnal music and dance. Ghashiram Kotwal works like a contrast in a tragedy. It seems to fling irony on the pathetic plight and the tragic ending of the protagonist.

The masterly use of music by Tendulkar bears the testimony of his great craftsmanship. The music has been employed by the playwright not simply for the sake of creating mellifluent but also for fulfilling the certain supple and soft and it
also makes play rhythmical so as to suit the sentiments of the people of the decadent society who never want to see any interruption or hurdle in the path of their mean and vulgar festivities.

III.iii.vii. Ghashiram Kotwal: A Tragic Play

Tendulkar’s *Ghashiram Kotwal* is a tragic play. A close analysis of the play highlights it as a revenge tragedy. From the beginning till end, the whole play centres on the theme of revenge. The utter humiliation suffered by Ghashiram awakens in him the powerful emotion of revenge. The tragedy of Ghashiram is near to the tragedy of the Shakespeare’s hero like Macbeth.

According to Aristotle, a tragic hero is a distinguished person occupying a high position or having a high status in life and in very prosperous circumstances falling into misfortune on account of a *hamartia* or some defect of character. A tragic hero in Aristotle’s view should be good or fine man, though not perfect. The tragic hero is neither a moral paragon nor a scoundrel. It should arouse a sense of pity and fear which is called Catharsis in the mind of the audience.

The analysis of the play on the basis of the Aristotle’s concept of tragedy, *Ghashiram Kotwal* fulfils all characteristics of the tragedy. The play arouses pity and fear in the mind of audience. The cruelty of Ghashiram towards the Brahmins of Pune and the cruelty of Nana Phadanvis for Ghashiram arouse sense of pity and fear in the mind of audience and readers.

Ghashiram Kotwal is a tragic hero, who is a poor Brahmin from Kanauj. He comes to the city of Pune along with his beautiful fourteen years old young daughter Lalita Gauri. He is over ambitious like Shakespeare’s tragic hero Macbeth. The tragic flaw of the Ghashiram Kotwal is his over ambitiousness for grabbing the power and administration. He wants to achieve the highest position in the city Pune. He falls prey to the dirty politics and immoral administration of Nana Phadanvis. By dint of his flattery and selling the virginity and honour of his daughter, he succeeds in getting the goal of his life, to become Kotwal of Pune.

When Ghashiram becomes Kotwal, he burns with the powerful emotions of revenge. When he was humiliated by the Brahmins of Pune, soldiers and other people, he takes a firm decision to stay in Pune and pay the People of Pune in their own coin. He says:
I’ll come back. I’ll come back to Pune. I’ll show my strength. It will cost you! Your good days are gone! I am a Kanauj Brahman, but I’ve become a Shudra, a criminal, a useless animal. There is no one to stop me now, to mock me, to make me bend, to cheat me. Now I am a devil. You’ve made me an animal; I’ll be a devil inside. I’ll come back like a bore and I’ll stay as a devil. I’ll make pigs all of you. I’ll make this Poona a kingdom of pigs.

(Tendulkar 377)

This humiliation makes Ghashiram a revenging hero who takes a solemn vow to take revenge on the cruel people of Pune.

Ghashiram had forbided whoring and cremation without a permit in his administration. The people of Pune had to stay at home in the night. He ordered his soldiers “tie the hands and feet of the culprit”, if he was proved to be an adulterer or thief. Ghashiram gave cruel treatment to Brahmins of Pune. In the process of revenge, Ghashiram himself falls prey to the jaws of the Brahmins and Nana Phadnavis. Nana is so much pressurized by the angry mob of the Brahmins that he had to take a royal decision. He gives order for Ghashiram’s execution.

III.iii.viii. Ghashiram Kotwal: The Indian Classic

Ghashiram Kotwal is a classic and most vital and controversial play in the history of Indian drama. It is with a fine amalgamation of idea and technique, thoughts and diction. Tendulkar has taken the help of Indian history to expose reality and hypocrisy of the contemporary society. However, it is not a historical play; it is a historic-fictional play. According to Pushpa Bhave:

Tendulkar has used all the three fold tradition of Indian theatre (i) the Classical, (ii) the folk, and (iii) the modern. It is an Indian Classic as it dissolves the boundaries of historicity and eternity. No other major playwright before Tendulkar has made such extensive and innovative use of folk theatre.

(Bhave 47)

Tendulkar has used various theatrical devices from the Indian classics and Indian Folk Theatre; such as theory of Rasa, Sutradhara, Musical instrument like
Mrudunga and Zhanz, Dashawtar, Khel, Tamasha, as well as the Western dramaturgy like; Aristotle’s theory of Tragedy, Theatre of Cruelty and Symbolism.

III.iv. Conclusion:

The present chapter attempted the analysis and interpretation of the experimentation of various dramatic techniques of the Western and Indian dramaturgy in Vijay Tendulkar’s selected plays Silence! The Court is in Session and Ghashiram Kotwal. He has aptly used the techniques to express his views on the evils, problems and maladies of society. He has made innovations in the use of folk forms of the Indian folk theatre, music, the amalgamation of traditional dramatic patterns with appropriate and evocative symbols, juxtaposition of history with contemporary political, economical and social situations, a uniquely blend seriousness with the wit, humour, satire, irony, etc.

Tendulkar’s stage directions are quite significant and they are part of the dramatic meaning like Shaw, Ibsen, Pinter and Artaud. They indicate the dramatist’s intuitive awareness of the stage. Tendulkar has used the stage not to entertain the audience but convey a change. He dreams change for the better behaviour of the people. He avoids the emotional involvement of the audience and enables them to judge the play in a detached manner. He has been greatly influenced by the Western theatre, playwrights and films. He has applied the Western techniques of Shakespeare’s play within play in Silence! The Court is in Session; Artaud’s concept of the Theatre of Cruelty in the plays Silence! The Court is in Session and Ghashiram Kotwal. Tendulkar’s plays are linked with the classical Sanskrit, folk and the Western Theatre. He has experimented not only with the subject matter but also with a form and structure of the play. His plays are closer to the established norms and tradition of the Western, Indian Classical and Modern Theatre as well as the various -isms and movements in the literary world of the 19th and 20th century.
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**Articals:**

CHAPTER-IV
SATISH ALEKAR: THE MAN OF EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE

The present chapter aims to analyze and interpret the Western and Indian dramaturgies employed in the plays of Satish Alekar such as *The Dread Departure* (1974) and *Begum Barve* (1979). It concentrates on various experiments made by the playwright in these plays and it attempts to analyze and interpret the plot, structure, characterization and various -isms of the Western theatre. It also focuses on the Indian dramaturgy and folk forms applied by Satish Alekar in his plays. The experimental features are explored in the respect of themes and techniques prevalent in *The Dread Departure* and *Begum Barve*.

Satish Alekar is known to the world ‘the man of theatre’ like William Shakespeare. As a stage manager, actor and playwright; he has supervised each of his plays and watched with interest though which he looked for further scope for improvement in stage performance of the play. He made his contribution to Indian Theatre by writing, acting, directing and producing some of the most influential and progressive plays during post-independent India to give constructive shape to the modern theatre. Alekar is also known for experimentation, presentation of absurd situation and mingling black humour and social satire in his plays.

IV.i. Alekar as a Playwright:

Satish Alekar is the modern Marathi playwright of international stature; he has always shown the modern man’s alienation from the God, religion, society and from his own self. He has seen a gradual change in the socio-cultural life of the modern man in the Contemporary Society. Alekar has tried to construct a new idiom for the theatrical performances of the plays. His plays reveal the advent of modernist strain, the old cultural continuity and the subverted aesthetic stability. Alekar did not depend upon the mythical past as his relationship with those myths has been completely broken now. He ridiculed the middle class values and highlighted on the absurdity of human existence. The philosophy of Absurdism suggests the human efforts to find inherent meaning of life will ultimately fail and therefore, Satish Alekar critiques the absurdist vision of life in his play *The Dread Departure* which highlights futility of
human wishes and cultural practices. His plays chiefly belong to the school of Absurd Theatre and thus become the most effective presentation of absurdity in it. At the same, time he uses irony, satire and sarcasm effectively to heighten the effect. In interview with Samik Bandopadhay, Alekar states:

*Excelling in depicting absurdities of life, mingling black humour and satire, Satish Alekar has been acknowledged as a major force in the Indian theatre. Coming under the influence of the dramatist Diwakar (Shankar Kashinath Garge 1889-1931) who employed Natyachhata (dramatic monologues) to project issues of social customs, women, politics, colonial bureaucracy, using dark comedy and cynicism, Alekar has successfully mingled colloquialism and traditional theatrical practices of Maharashtra.*

(Alekar 410)

*The Dead Departure* deals with death and cremation which defuses the sense of horror surrounding it showing it as an everyday occurrence by using the surrealistic fantasy. Alekar has used the traditional *Keertan* very skilfully in the play to achieve the desired effect of the play. *Begum Barve* comments on the cultural forms that are lost to modernity, portrayed through the character of Barve, a small time female impersonator of the *Sangeetnatak* era of the Marathi theatre who has fallen on hard times and his exploitative employer, Shyamrao who calls him Begum. The second thread follows the lives and dreams of a pair of clerks, Jawadekar and Bawdekar. The link between these two pair’s lives and dreams is formed by the incense sticks which Barve sells for a living.

**IV.ii. Dramaturgy in The Dread Departure:**

Satish Alekar’s *Mahanirvan* was written in the year 1974 for Theatre Academy, Pune for the Maharashtra State Drama Competition. The first production was directed by Alekar himself and it was performed at the Bharat Natya Mandir, Pune on 22nd November 1974. It was translated into English as *The Dread Departure* by Gauri Deshpande, which was first published by Seagull Books, Kolkata in 1989. The play looks at death in manner of a tragi-comedy. It takes an ironic look at the funeral rites of Marathi Bramhins using the traditional Marathi musical mode of the
mourning *Keertan* and the theme of death. It has black humour, pure fun and irony on
the life. The humour along with the live traditional music and songs provide a format
for the three chief characters of the play Bhaurao, Nana and Rama.

The central incident in *The Dread Departure* is the death of Bhaurao, a very
common and middle aged man living in *chawl* in Pune. In the normal course, such a
dearth would be followed by the gathering of friends, neighbours and relatives and the
quick but ritualistically-correct disposal of the dead body. The death would leave the
wife desolate and the son suddenly in charge of family affairs, responsible for all
decisions. The social ritual for well-wishers would entail counselling the bereaved
family with worm phrases of commiseration and attending the tenth and thirteenth-
day rites before returning to normal life.

In Bhaurao’s case, the smooth course of events is thwarted by several
obstacles. His son Nana is away from home when death occurs. Nana return home and
the funeral procession have reached the burning ground finally, the gate is found
locked. The Municipal Corporation has taken a secret decision to return the property
to the owner whose family had donated it during the Peshwa regime. Instead of this
place, Municipal Corporation is offered a more efficient and modern crematorium at
some distance from the old one. At this point, under pretext of fetching an ambulance
to carry the body there, all the mourners desert Nana. Above all these things,
Bhaurao’s spirit still not free of earthly entanglements; he refuses to allow his body to
be burnt in the new crematorium that has always looked forward to being burnt in the
old one.

Nana’s wits end and he takes the body back home and stows it in the loft. He
deals with the problem which is created by his father, the post-death rituals of tenth
and thirteenth day. They occupy all his energies right now, along with another
problem. His mother has become infatuatated with a man in suit and dark glasses whom
she thinks she saw amongst her dead husband’s pallbearers, standing third form left.
Both dead father and living son are angry at the widow’s intransigence. Nana must
now be the *chawl* Hamlet, bent on destroying him. Here, Nana compares his situation
quite appropriately to that of Shakespeare's character Hamlet when he finds that his
beautiful mother may have plotted his father's death with the help of her lover (the
lover is actually a figment of the mother's imagination or more concretely of her
unfulfilled desires). His investigation comes to naught because the man in suit and
dark glasses is only a dream of his mother. After the rituals over, Nana must finally
dispose his father’s stinking corpse. He carries it to the old crematorium where the attendant and his followers are conducting a thriving black-market business by allowing people to burnt bodies ‘for a consideration’. Finally, Nana consists to his father to the flames, exhorting him to burn to his heart’s content.

Alekar treats fundamental aspects of Maharashtrian middle-class culture with irony in the bizarre play *The Dread Departure*. Some of these are the reverence for rituals are common to every community in India. The father-son conflict itself is an archetypal here. The father feeding off the son is the crux of the *Yayathi* myth. As Nana toils to fulfil his filial responsibilities, Bhauroa hovers around telling his own tale, therefore Nana becomes the sole narrator of the story only after father’s dead body is burnt. But the father, even in death has created the final impasse for him as he refuses to burn in the new crematorium and the old crematorium is closed.

**IV.iii.i. The Dread Departure: An Absurd Play**

Alekar has depicted absurdity of life in the play *The Dread Departure*. The Modern man has lost his identity in the modern world. Earlier, there was a bond of intimacy that had tied man to his fellow human beings. There were some ideals and noble aims before man and he always tried to abide by principles but now that seems a thing of the past. In the modern world, he seems to have lost his own self and everything that he had held dear to his heart. His sense of belonging to society is cut off. He is alienated from the God, religion, society and himself. He has become self-centered and has lost interest in basic human values. The Modern man has been the victim of aimlessness, unemployment, frustration and alienation. The absurd condition of modern man has been reflected through the Marathi theatre especially the plays of Satish Alekar. Rajendra Banhatti & G.N. Joglekar comments on the Absurdism in Alekar’s plays:

*In Marathi theatre Satish Alekar’s plays belong to the School of Absurd Drama. The most effective presentation of the ‘absurdity’ of existence in modern Marathi drama is perhaps to be found in the best plays of Alekar. His primarily a world of middle class consciousness and his main concern is with the impact on this consciousness of the fundamental futility and meaningless at the heart of human existence. His*
presentation of this experience is marked by an effective use of irony, satire and sarcasm.

(Rajendra Banhatti and G.N. Joglekar 145)

The eminent critic Pushpa Bhave has written two playwrights Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Beckett; she has also written about playwrights of Marathi theatre in the context of the absurd:

In the course of their exploration of the theatre medium, it was natural that playwrights and directors in Maharashtra should feel fascinated by the ‘theatre of the absurd’... Though theatre people felt enticed by the absurdist style of drama which examined the very fundamentals of the theatre medium and took it far away from the conventional idea of characterization, they had not been able to find its links in the Marathi reality. Is it any wonder that they were found by two young playwrights? For the ‘absurd’ is not an objective entity. When the connection in someone’s life between what is expected to exist and what actually exists slips, people around him begin to appear to this individual like puppets, the light strikes him as false, the link that welded him to his experience snaps into two or three strands.

(Bhave 208)

The absurdity presented in The Dread Departure is about the death of the protagonist Bhaurao and his beautiful wife, son and the neighbours in the chawl who play very important role in the structure of the play. Alekar has used the event of Bhaurao’s death to show the contradictions in the social life of the middle class people. He tried to highlight the society’s indifference to the things happening around them. He has also pointed out the insensitivity of individual men and women to the death of their loved one. Alekar shows that in spite of the death of head of the family, the wife and son are quite indifferent to this incident. Even the reactions of the relatives and neighbours are equally shocking and confusing. These mixed feelings are reflected through the behaviour of all the characters. The conduct of these
characters is also quite absurd. Audience get shocked to see some of them throwing rice ball at one another. The writer has used an ironic tone in this play.

The Dread Departure is one of the most controversial plays on the Marathi stage because it violated the convention of not showing a death scene and funeral rituals on the stage. In the history of the Marathi theatre, death and rituals following it were presented for the first time with the introduction of this play on the stage. This being an off-beat play, as there is an unusual characteristics of the traditional plays. This play does not have regular plot, proper characterization, decorated stage and significant events. There is an absence of the chief protagonists i.e. hero and heroine and dialogues are also quite ordinary. In spite of the lack of the usual elements, the play was a grand success on the stage.

Alekar has exposed the vested interests of these people in Bhaurao’s death. He shows how some of them try to earn money through the purchase of the essential things such as kerosene, pieces of dry wood, cloth, vermillion, sticks, dry hey and straw for preparing a bed for carrying the corpse, bamboos and an earthen pot needed for cremation. Alekar points his finger at the arguments, hot verbal exchanges between them over the issue of quantity and price for the same. He shows how the seriousness of the situation is replaced by the noise and arguments.

The late arrival of late Bhaurao’s son Nana baffles all of them. He remarks that they should not have wasted time in waiting for him which shocks all of them because he does not seem to be affected by his father’s death.

Mother: Nana!
Nana: When did it happen?
Mother: At dawn.
Nana: Then why is the body still here?
Mother: They are waiting for you.
Nana: Why?
Mother: Why? What do you mean, ‘why’? Who will light the fire?

(Alekar 38)

The above incident recalls the opening scene of the first chapter of greatest absurd novel The Outsider by Albert Camus. The hero of the novel Meursault was a very insensitive like Nana.
Nana gets angry and irritated while performing rituals. When they take the corpse of Bhaurao to the crematorium, they find its gate locked and learn that the Municipal Corporation has banned the conventional cremation and has made available the facility of electric hot plate for burning the dead body at another place. They are upset to learn that the new facility is yet to be inaugurated. The employees at the new electric crematorium are reluctant to burn the body; however, after receiving bribe they allow it to be burned there. A *Puja* (ritual worship) is performed at the time of the cremation or ‘last rites’. Nana makes haste in performing the rites. He wants the crow to touch the ritual food offered to the dead. He is no longer seriously involved in the last ritual. He has no faith in all these activities, as he simply wants to wind it up. He speaks to his mother in an ironic tone and asks her to cook the expensive Basmati rice so that his dead father may gorge himself upon these delicacies. He complains that since the old crematorium is shut down, he would have to walk bare-footed to a long distance to reach the new crematorium. He warns her not to weep because it would affect her beauty and charm. In fact, Nana’s mother is not unhappy at the death of her husband but she pretends to be unhappy so as to deceive the people assembled there. She advises her son not to waste time and to eat food if the crow does not touch the ritualistic food. Alekar exposes depravity in human nature and hints of the recklessness of people while dealing with deaths of their loved ones. He suggests how a son criticizes his own dead father and ridicules his dying posture. He refers to a widow who has recently lost her husband and how she is sensually attracted towards another man. She has no qualms of conscience, thus, she forgets life and time spent with her husband who has recently passed away. Through this situation, Alekar has raised questions about the viability of the man-made culture and moral principles. In this play, Nana suspects that due to his mother’s illicit relationship with her lover who is third from left pallbearer, she might have murdered his father. He wants to discover the truth of his father’s death. He finds that his mother’s lover was present at his father’s funeral and thinks that she might have secretly met him. He begins to find out the truth of his father’s death. His talk is devoid of any love and affection for his mother and it is full of contradictions. There is no trace of his sense of gratitude or sublime thoughts towards his mother.
IV.ii.ii. Parody in *The Dread Departure*:

*The Dread Departure* is a play about the funeral rites of Marathi Brahmins using the traditional Marathi Musical mode of mourning *Keertan* and the theme of death. It takes an ironic link at the post-death rituals and rites. It offers a dose of black humor, pure fun and a community’s struggle to face a serious situation such as death. Shanta Gokhale describes:

*The grief that should follow death is treated ironically on the two levels. On one hand, the neighbours treat death as an exciting event. While they mouth sentiments expressing sorrow, their attitude towards the funeral and rituals oscillates between the utterly practical and the celebratory.*

(Gokhale 255)

The *chawl* man is a neighbour as well as charges of the arrangements of the funeral gives the instructions to the inexperienced young man who is sending off to buy the required material for cremation.

**Neighbour:** Wait. Wait. Don’t run around in circles. Tell him to put on good wood. If you afraid of the damp increase the total by twenty kilos. But on no account, on pain of death, remember, you’re never to decrease the dried dung. Not by a single jot. And see that he gives the full measure of kerosene. At least six full beer bottles. Understand? Tell him to give every sindle thing as though for his own dead father’s cremation. And listen, listen! Take my message to the priest. He will come right away if you tell him my name. And remember, wait there in the cremation grounds. Don’t reun back frightened. I won’t let you enter the block, I tell you! And the dung, remember, not one jot less. The heat must be high. All must be finished fast. We have to come back and bath before the water’s turned off, see?

(Alekar 31)
Alekar points his finger at the arguments and hot verbal exchanges between them over the issue of quantity and price for the same. He shows how the seriousness of the situation is replaced by the noise and arguments.

All the neighbours wait for Nana’s arrival. One of them announces the arrival of Nana and then everybody is busy belting out songs. It is only when he whistles shrilly; they fell silent. The man announces Nana’s arrival to the beat of the tabala. Everybody sings the lines ‘Nana is here, Nana is here’. They dance to the beat of the tabala. Their faces are suffused with pleasure as they tell each other of Nana’s arrival.

Satish Alekar highlights the mentality, morality of the typical middle class men. *The Dread Departure* is parody on the rituals and the funeral procession in the middle class. The ritual needs particular objects like two bamboos of six feet, six bamboos of three feet, three bamboos of one foot, cow-dung cake, bier, pyre and water from the Ganga or any holy river being poured as a last offering on the dying Brahman’s head. All these objects are needed for the rituals of funeral procession. The corpus is carried to the cremation grounds on a bamboo pyre. The fire is brought to the ground in a special earthen pot. The fire is lighted by eldest son. The thirteen days of mourning is observed by the family members of the dead person and it is then followed by a feast for neighbours and family. The dramatist has made fun of the false seriousness that is forced during death rites at time of funeral. Swati Suhas Karve comments on this rituals and attitude of the middle class mentality in her article in Lalit, special issue on the Marathi Theatre:

> According to Hindu culture cremation, offering of rice lump and feast of thirteenth day, etc. are rituals before and after the funeral procession. Relatives, neighbours, friends have to go to crematorium with the procession; it is emotional and social duty. But in the contemporary period it becomes meaningless. This ritual nominally followed. It has not any emotional attachment. Hurry up! Hurry up! It’s too late. This words we listen now days in this rituals.

(Karve 82)

The sorrow of widow Rama is ironically treated by Alekar. On the tenth day after the death, a rice ball is prepared and carried to the crematorium. The ritual requires a crow to peck it to indicate that the dead man’s soul has been freed of all
earthly bounds and desires. Life for the dead man’s kin cannot return to normal unless this happens because it is their responsibility to free the soul. Rama is weeping in grief on the tenth day. Nana tries three different approaches to make her stop crying and get on with the job of making the ritual rice ball. Finally, he loses patience and shouts:

*Shut up, will you! Just shut up! Get up. Go put the rice on to boil and make me a rice ball. Fast, use the best basmati rice. Let Bhau have a bloody ball!*  

(Alekar 50)

The theme of the play appears to be unpleasant but Alekar has used a satiric and sardonic method while dealing with it in humorous manner. Alekar has presented his ironic perspective on life which is reflected through his language of irreverence that ranges from playfulness to biting irony. With the help of fantasy, Alekar has made the play parody.

**IV.ii.iii. The Dread Departure: A Surrealistic Fantasy**

Satish Alekar’ *The Dread Departure* is a play of surrealistic fantasy. The surrealist attempted to express in art and literature the working of the unconscious mind and to synthesize these workings with the conscious mind. The surrealist allows their work to develop non-logically rather than logically, so that the results represent the operations of unconscious. The first manifesto of the surrealism recommended that the mind should be liberated from logic and reason. The surrealists were particularly interested in the study of effects of dreams and hallucinations.

*The Dread Departure* is a surrealistic fantasy dealing with Bhaurao, a middle class tenement-dweller who gives a long discourse on his own life after he dies. There is a skilfully use of the traditional *keertan* (a long discourse, interspersed with songs, mainly on a religious subject) in the play. The use of the device in the service of a trivial subject is productive of irony and absurdity. Alekar has used the incident of Bhaurao’s death as an instrument to comment on the contradictions in the social life. He tried to highlight an individual’s insensitivity and indifference to the things happening around. In spite of the death of the head of family, the wife and the son are unhappy and they are quite indifferent to the incident. Even the reactions of the relatives and neighbours are quite disgusting and bewildering. Alekar has given an artistic expression to all these mixed feelings. It is suggested through the irrational
plot and equally irrational conduct of these characters. At the surface level the whole play appears illogical and implausible but there is an undercurrent of irony in it.

**IV.ii.iv. The Dread Departure: A Problem Play:**

*The Dread Departure* which focuses on the social life of people tries to explore the social problems faced by people. There is consistency in the action of its characters. The play begins with the sad demise of a man called Bhaurao. The plot goes on unfolding the series of minor incidents that follow the death of Bhaurao. He has presented the impact of his death on his wife, son and neighbours. The death of the family head is a very serious event that renders everyone in the family helpless. As a result of his death, the wife becomes a widow. All the family members remember his sacrifices and feel sorry for his death. In normal course, the wife deeply feels the loss of her husband because she has spent many years in his company giving shape to their family. After husband’s death the wife finds no purpose to live in the world and feels a great vacuum in her life. However, she has to forget her grief and prepare to fight the battle of life for the sake of her children and the family.

After the death of Bhaurao, all the funeral and post-funeral rituals are meticulously performed as per the Hindu tradition. They are performed because it is believed that if they are not performed, the soul of the deceased would never have peace. The playwright says that the rituals are not really and seriously observed and performed because in the last fifty years there have been many social changes that have discouraged our human society. In cities like Mumbai and Pune, people are so self-absorbed that they are not ready to care for others or not interested in others. They do not even know anything about their neighbours. Alekar has ridiculed the idea of death, expressed a doubt about human integrity, and launched a scathing attack on human hypocrisy.

Though Bhaurao is dead, he is presented as a central character. Alekar has presented the reactions Bhaurao’s wife, son and neighbours on his death. He has described how these people behave after Bhaurao’s death. These observations throw light on the dark side of human nature so intensely that one would never think of dying. General indifference to human feelings and emotions has been the prominent feature of our modern society. People are neither happy nor upset at the birth of a child or sufferings of others respectively. The dead Bhaurao looks at all the events in a detached manner in the play. He talks to others and hear what others speak. By
choosing this idea, Alekar has revealed how reality is quite different. Most people believe that it is only after death, we realize the meaning of life but nobody cares for life while being alive. As long as one breathes on, his life has some meaning, but after death, the body becomes useless. It is immediately taken to the cemetery because the corpse starts decomposing. Alekar shows how the family members become selfish immediately after Bahurao’s death. Baurao’s son Nana cannot return to see his dead father immediately. The delay proves very trying for other people who are desirous of winding up the cremation and post-cremation ceremonies at the earliest. However, as per the convention, they have to wait till the son arrives.

IV.i.i.v. Symbolism in *The Dread Departure*

The title of the play is highly symbolic. The title of this play in Marathi is ‘*Mahanirvan*’ while in its English translation renamed as *The Dread Departure*. The term ‘*Mahanirvan*’ is usually associated with departing of great souls and sages which is deliberately denoted by the author. Alekar is concerned with the lives of lower middle-class urban people confronting their cultural history in the face of modernity. The hero and the narrator of *Mahanirvan* is the departed soul of an ordinary man named Bhaurao who resides in a typical Maharashtrian chawl with his wife and a son. He himself offers a sort of running commentary on the various Brahmin rituals for cremation and aftermath. His observations are marked with satire, parody, ridicule and censure. The ‘presence of the absent one’ has been beautifully transformed into a drama along with all the social contexts the ritual has got. The fantasy of external or wandering soul is a motif or an ideation which is found in folk-based stories worldwide and has been used effectively by Alekar.

Bhaurao is the symbolic figure in the play whose demise makes some people sad and others elated. They have a desire to establish some secret relationship with her. However, they fear that the late Bhaurao’s desires might not have been fulfilled. They fear that he might have become a ghost and wonder at the sudden death of Bhaurao. At a moment, they suspect that he might have been murdered by his beautiful wife. Baurao’s confession throws light on various reactions of his loved-ones and neighbours. He remarks that his death made some people sad, some people anxious and scared some of them. However, they look at this phenomenon in an indifferent manner. He opines that his death is transformed into a great departure. It is
given a religious touch by them. He feels exasperated at their varied reactions on his death. He does not like the way they treat his departure from this world.

The characters of Bhaurao and Nana represent indifference towards human values such as love, fellow-feeling, maternal and paternal love etc. It is reflected through the mother’s conversation with Nana. She says that when she saw her lover lifting the death bed of her dead husband, it was clear that he was her true lover who would take her away from that ugly and poverty-stricken neighbourhood and she would be free from the everyday domestic drudgery. Her son Nana crosses the limits of decency when he thinks of finding out a suitor for her. He considers it as his duty to remarry his mother to another person of her choice. He tells her lover that she is fond of him and wants to marry him and adds that since she is beautiful, she would be a good match for him. He convinces him that he would not interfere in their life and would prefer to remain aloof from them. All these thoughts of Nana and his mother reveal moral and social degeneration of modern society. It shows the moral disintegration of society and loss of moral and ethical values. The end of the play provokes the audience to think of the extent of human hypocrisy that is depicted in the play.

IV.ii.vi. Alienation Effect and Black Humour in The Dread Departure:

The Dread Departure is a comedy that employs black humour; it is a subgenre of comedy and satire in which laughter arises from cynicism and scepticism. Black humour deals with topics and events that are usually regarded as taboo, specifically death is treated in an unusually humorous or satirical manner while retaining their seriousness. The intent of black comedy therefore is often for the audience to experience both laughter and discomfort. Brecht rightly says:

*Humor is a sense of distance.*

(Styan: 142)

The idea of distancing lies at the very centre of Brecht’s theory. The familiar things are seen to be unfamiliar and macabre. Brecht defines distancing as:

*A representation that alienates is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar.*

(Brecht, Trans. By John Willett)
The Distancing Effect is used by the dramatist to make familiar aspects of the present social reality seem strange, so as to prevent the emotional identification or involvement of the audience with the characters and their action in a play. The aim was to evoke a critical attitude and distance in the audience’s mind in order to arouse them to take action against, rather than simply to accept the state of society and behavior represented on the stage. Alekar has employed black humour in the play which results into distancing effect.

The title of the play ‘Mahanirvana’ translated as ‘The Dread Departure’ sounds to be parody. The word ‘Mahanirvan’ literally stands for departing of great souls and sages. But here, it deals contrary with the death of a common middle class man Bhaurao who resides in a typical Maharashtrian Chawl with his wife – Rama and son – Nana. It is author’s deliberate attempt to desacralisation and with his a religious attitude he strikes to the effect of distancing.

Brecht and his theory of distancing effect are influenced by Marx’s concept of Alienation. Though, Marx used Alienation effect in the political context, Brecht used it comparatively for socio-political point of view; in order to bring social and moral purpose to the theatre. Like Brecht, in ‘The Dread Departure, Alekar uses it with socio-cultural context. He uses themes dealing with religious rituals which are close to the heart of Indians. The Dread Departure is an unusually irreverent text that plays with the traditional Marathi musical mode of the mourning keertan and the theme of death. As per the Hindu culture, death is something not only tragic but also inauspicious and unmentionable, not to be discussed and certainly never joked about or made fun of. Alekar has broken a long standing Indian theatrical tradition. Not only he has depicted a taboo subject of death on the stage but also presented it with a mixture of realism, absurdity, song, dance and shuddering black humour. The story is about a dead man who wants to be cremated the way he wished to be and no other way and lives on as a dead man till he stinks and his son-Nana battles with civic rules to honour his father’s last wishes and his widow gets enamoured by a ghostly lover. Even the writer has used many synonyms for death such as – crisis day, most dire day and rare day for neighbours, calamity and dread departure.

As the play is about a man’s death, Alekar unmistakably depicts the religious rituals and traditions those are related with death and after death. Pouring of the Ganga water and putting basil leaf in the mouth of cadaver, picking up the bier on shoulders, cremation of giving fire to the pyre, the tenth day’s offering of rice balls to
the dead and thirteenth day feast for pal-bearers are evidences of rituals of typical the Hindu culture. Alekar’s main focal point is not to glorify the rituals but to mock at the malpractices and blind beliefs which are prevailing and dominating over the centuries on society. Not only he points out the culture or tradition but also brings out the pitfalls and their irrelevance in the contemporary society. He questions directly to the age old customs and rituals and this questioning brings out his distance from culture or tradition, which is mutely and meekly followed by the common man. Living under the threat of tradition, no one dares to question the rituals but Nana in the first act is seen questioning, when all the neighbours are waiting for Nana – a son who will light the fire to the corpse of father Bhaurao, his reaction over the situation is:

You should not have waited… don’t you know that it will begin to decompose?

(Alekar 40)

Though Bhaurao’s above reaction seems ironic, it is practically apt; the scene of two quarrelling men fighting with each other over the issue of offering rice balls to the crow on the tenth day and finally culminating into throwing of rice balls at each other is a parody of selfish and self centred human being. The religious attitude successfully brings distancing effect. Bribing the watchman to sneak into the closed crematorium, kerosene from the black market points out the distance between culture and human being in this practical modern world.

To achieve distancing effect, actor has to make clear to his audience his gist’s or demonstrable social attitude and his basic disposition. He would drive his character from the actions of the person he portrayed. Sometimes the actor has to do his work objectively, he would speak with a certain resent or distance or repeat an action slowly or stop to explain to the audience what he was doing. In The Dread Departure, the protagonist is not a live human being but dead Bhaurao’s Soul. The dead Bhaurao plays a role of narrator and commentator throughout the play. He comments on the humiliation of the dead body as it is being made ready for cremation:

One of the ropes has caught, caught me in the jaw and cut my tongue in two and though I don’t mind the basil leaf bit it’s making me very sick. Just that I am dead and my groans and complaints and coughs and sick ups can’t be heard.

(Alekar 33)
Comment on the neighbours,

They are past masters at cremations, I can tell you.
Their hands calloused with roping bamboos together
for biers. And there hasn’t been a death in our block for
long time, so the news of my death fell upon their ears
like rain on parched land. Come ye and celebrate.

(Alekar 29)

As a visionary, he comments on life and death, body and soul.

**Bhaurao:** As from the fruit and cones,
so hangs the flesh from your bones.
Just as the tree is dearly beloved, valued for
the fruit it gives, So your bones are enhanced
by the skin that covers them.
What a body all about but the flesh and the
bones? / for once are dead and gone.

(Alekar 24)

The most experimental treatment with the character of Bhaurao is his role as Narrator
(*Sutradharaa*) and his direct address to the audience,

So there you are, my friends. That is how I died. A good
man called Bhaurao was cut off in the prime of his life.

(Alekar 25)

In the act two

There’s the bell, folks,
So take your seats.
We continue to tell folks,
of a man’s demise.

(Alekar 47)

In the first act, Bhaurao is a narrator and in second act Nana is narrator who
takes the lead in the play. These two characters are the main focal points of author.
Other characters are also focal points to the extent, however; they are not
individualized or given detailed characterization. Rama, wife of Bhaurao is shown to
be totally changed from a mourning widow within thirteen days of mourning to her
dreaming of ‘Third man from the left’ who would complete the ‘empty frame of her
dream and life.’ Other characters such as neighbours, two men and a watchman are
not given elaborate characterizations that appear on the stage only for once or twice. Many of them are even identified with their number e.g. Neighbour one, Neighbour two, Man one, Man two and so on. Alekar uses the juxtaposition of human society which gives glimpse of complete human nature in a micro size. Here, author with character’s language, nature, style, manners and communication strategy of characters presents absurdity of human existence. The characters are not ordinary as in any typical play; however, they are anti-heroes, comic and full of pathos. The habits they exhibit are unholy and their behaviour is purposeless which creates restlessness in audience. The farce is successfully used to create black humour. The episode in which Nana assumes the role of the crow to collect the holy rice balls offered to the dead, culminates in Nana’s second encounter with the dead Bhaurao who is sewing his fallen off finger and seeking ‘exit’ in the face of his desperate bid to meet his widow; this is a piece of farce that stands on its own. The playful theatricality of the two men in their late thirties who are dressed as little boys fighting over rice balls and insulting each other till Nana turns into the crow in black toga, wearing dark glasses and brings them to order is an example of farcical desecration which helps to create antipathy and distancing effect among the audience.

In order to achieve distancing effect, Brecht advocates number of devices such as the actor would speak in the third person or in the past tense. *The Dread Departure* similarly follows Brechtian idea of the soliloquy in third person:

**Bhaurao:** A good man called Bhaurao was cut off in the prime of his life. Or he left the fears of life at the entrée. Or in short he died.

*(Alekar 25)*

Sometimes, Bhaurao even speaks about the stage directions.

**Bhaurao:** Excuse me! But what can I do? They must pour holy Ganga water in your face the moment you are dead. And how! A dead by drop.......... And so everything made ready. My neighbours are busy making the bier for my body. While tying the bamboos they are singing a threnody.

*(Alekar 31)*

The direct address by Bhaurao to the audience is completely unlike the traditional aside. The narrator says:
**Bhaurao:** There’s the bell, folks.
So take your seats.
We continue to tell folks.
of a man’s demise.

(Alekar 47)

The mind of audience is consciously awakened to give a feel that they are watching a performance in theatre. Bhaurao’s soliloquy also addresses the audience directly to guide the judgments and responses of the audience. When Rama is unable to trust Bhaurao is dead, Bhaurao’s soliloquy shows his anguish by direct address to the audience.

**Bhaurao:** Poor thing! What trust? What conviction?
She still doesn’t believe I am dead. What more can I do? She’ll believe it fast enough when the neighbours tell her, or when the doctor tells her! But believe me?
Her husband, lord, master, and companion of many years? No way had she never taken my living word for anything; she’s not the one to take my dead word either.
Well!”. Surprisingly she asks what he is saying. And he by directly linking with the audience and coming out of the character says “You didn’t hear that. It was a soliloquy.

(Alekar 21)

In the above soliloquy, the audience is alienated from the stage performance. Similar dialogues are purposefully included by the dramatist to keep audience’s presence with the story and non-attachment with the characters.

Illusion is an important characteristic of traditional play to take the audience out of the strong traditional consideration. To achieve the desired result, Brecht uses unique Anti-illusionistic devices. Alike Brecht, Alekar too uses such devices recurringly the play especially in second Act.

**Nana:** What if you had fainted or tripped. It would have been all up yours. I tell you. You really were a pain in the arse at the end of the last act. Just as well the act was over, otherwise, I would have had to lift you up on my shoulders and cart you home. (Alekar 57)
**Nana:** Bhau I think I’d better exit here (Alekar 60)

**Neighbor 4:** Then how about playing 'Last Letter starts the…?'

**Nana:** No

**Neighbor 4:** Why not?

**Nana:** We played that in the first act.

**Neighbor 4:** How would you know? You enter the play after that!

**Nana:** I was watching off stage. And besides I was prompting till then. (Alekar 71)

**Nana:** No, No. It’s over. I’ve got it! You go off stage now. (Bhau begins to exit left) No, not there Right. (Alekar 75)

**Nana:** The fire has caught Bhau. Heat increases. It’s time for the skull to crack.

The frames have woven a frame in which the vague face of a girl is taking on definition. Who knows, there she sits in the dress circle, third from the left. I like her. I can’t see her yet but I can see the fly sitting elegantly on that frame.

(Alekar 90)

The above dialogues explicitly indicate Brecht’s aim of distancing effect. The strategies are deliberately used in order to differentiate between the reality and illusion.

Alekar makes abnormal things to appear normal throughout the play. The abnormal is never allowed the dimension of monstrosity but it is gently and casually naturalized. It may be Bhaurao’s playing narrator cum commentator’s role or his comments on neighbour or even moving to visionary and speaking over the significance of body and soul facilitates the inversion of the abnormal to normal. Nana’s responses to Bhaurao’s continue to live in death and refusing to be cremated in the new crematorium is completely devoid of shock or surprise. The theatrical sills are delicately used to balance the real and unreal. When the widowed Rama has to bring her ten days sobbing to an end in order to start cooking rice for making the rice balls to be offered to crows to ensure the release of the soul of the dead is registered
brilliantly in her sharp shift from sobbing to “wait a minute/ I’m picking over rice/ Drat this life! It’s all a bore.

_Nana:_ All a bore, All a bore.
I’m still waiting for rice, so hurry up, mother and open
the door.

_Mother:_ I’ve put the pot upon the fire.
_Nana:_ Where’s the rice?
_Mother:_ it’ll cook in trice.
_Nana:_ Where’s the rice?
_Mother:_ I’m moulding it so nice.

(Alekar 49-50)

Alekar holds real and normal situations in order. The sequence of special days with their specific rituals in the funerary calendar, e.g. tenth day for offering of the rice balls to the souls of dead, thirteenth day for the feast ‘for all those who shouldered the bier; each occasion throw up a fresh complication in the plot. As the abnormal and ritual-ceremonial crisscross in a surreal scheme, the sacred turns into profane, the living and the dead seek romantic union with shades of forbidden or illicit giving the urge a change of its own. While Bhaurao hopes to talk to Rama, She dreams of her new lord and master, the ‘Suit and shades… third from the left among the pal-bearers.’

Alekar presents typical society of Pune of the 70’s in the play. Throughout the play, Alekar describes the conflict of orthodoxy of older generation and new modern approach, point of view of the younger generation that remarkably shows the gap between the generations. The neighbours’ treatment to Rama as a widow shows the tradition of treating widows as untouchables:

“Now better take care and close your door
close your door but let in the neighbours,
wake up…
Don’t you open a crack.
Just sit in the dark
Just sit in the dark
Like a widow black
Wake up."

(Alekar 27)
On the contrary, Rama cannot abide her feelings and dreams of a lover ‘Third from left’. Inter-generational politics is more a table for negotiations than a battleground in Alekar’s plays. The new generation is accommodated itself with the changes in the life by the readiness to compromise. It is left to Nana to fulfil his already dead father’s post-death plea to be cremated in the closed down crematorium and keep his father properly hidden and maintains till the mission is accomplished. Moreover, he plans the marriage of his mother. Many a times, he teases his mother by calling ‘oh shy puss’ or ‘you are blushing’, ‘Naughty’, etc. He sometimes angrily abuses ‘you-lie old lady’, which is unbearable as far as the background and relationships are concerned. Alekar here is irreverently indulgent and chuckling over the discrepancies and contradictions reaches to the point of amusedly appreciating the negotiating skills of the younger generation.

*The Dread Departure* is a black comedy. Alekar ends the play like traditional comedies with the meeting of Rama and Bhaurao as new lovers and Rama becomes happy at the end of the play:

> My partner for the rest of my life, My prince who will
> take me away from this block on a white charger.

(Alekar 78)

In end of the play with happy note is perfect end for the comedy. Mother bursts into song to tell the world, “I am happy, happy”. Alekar chooses logical end for the play to project the absurd reality of the contemporary middle class family:

> There’s the only one thing to do to stop this family from
> sliding into a Hindi movie Cremation.

(Alekar 84)

The cremation involves bribing the watchman to sneak into the closed crematorium, wood, dried dung and Kerosene from the black market and the final waiting for ‘the skull to crack.’ Till then, Bhaurao who is dead, continues singing which ends with a positive and practical note. Nana says:

> You will be disappointed, alas! And begin your search
to fill your frame all over again. But no! I am not going
to reveal to you this secret of Bhau’s. Not if you won’t
reveal to me the identity of this third man.”

(Alekar 84)
Through the above lines it is realised Nana keeps something hidden or secret intact. Thus, he forgets the past and lives in the present. The play ends with a very positive and practical note, which would bring everything in order and happy.

Similar to Brecht’s distancing effect, Alekar shows the bare reality of life in which people live wearing masks. Alekar performs the duty of a playwright to show and tear off the mask to view the bare reality. Bhaurao’s visionary and non-human entity is sufficient to tear off the mask; the mask of his wife as loyal and devoted to her husband; the mask of a Son showing his devotion to his parents and the neighbours’ mask of humanity and duteousness. The intentional use of keertan is an experiment with folktale achieves alienation effect. Audience become aware of what they are watching is a stage performance and not the reality of day to day life. These examples are enough to show the influence of Brecht and his theory of distancing effect. Death is no doubt serious, thought provoking and making a stable mind restless. It reveals the layers of grief and sadness. However, Alekar, by keeping death at the centre discusses the subject and its other side to show contradiction in life and humans relation. By using death and post-death rituals as subject Alekar not only mocks but also attacks on the hypocrisy and dual mindedness of the human nature in the modern world.

IV.ii.viii. Use of Folk Forms, Music and Sutradharaa:

Alekar has experimented with narrative technique. He has presented the narration in the style of ‘Akhyana’. ‘Aakhyana’ is Sanskrit word that stands for folktale especially Indian, which is often with a moral. It is always in prose, the climactic middle part being in verse. As a narrator of Aakhyana, Alekar chooses the dead Bhaurao’s soul and specifically the dead Bhaurao’s soul himself comes out of his dead body and narrates Akhyana of his departure.

\[
\text{And so, the way of all flesh, folks and friends!}
\]
\[
\text{In the long run we’re all dead.}
\]
\[
\text{I know I am! of high blood pressure.}
\]
\[
\text{Before the sun rose high,}
\]
\[
\text{In Nana’s absence died I.}
\]

(Alekar 26)
From the beginning of the second act till the act of giving fire to the pyre of Bhaurao, the incidents are narrated by Nana and the same is concluded by Bhaurao himself. At a time, it also gives philosophic message:

When you are alive your sorrows are for sharing. But when you are dead they are only for bearing.

(Alekar 25)

As a visionary, Bhaurao narrates about body, soul, death and life.

“What is this body all about but the flesh and the bones? for once you are dead and gone.
Then comes the time of the bone.

(Alekar 24)

Alekar has given a touch of irony to the religious verses or Abhangas of the famous Marathi saints such as Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Eknath, Tukaram and Ramdas. He quotes lines form Ramdas in which he advises people of Maharashtra that they should not be extravagant while leading a domestic life. They should observe restraint while spending money and then alone they should turn to spiritual pursuit of God. However, Alekar pushes his own lines into it in an ironic tone.

Neighbors: Wake up! Wake up, Rama, Wake up!
We’re upright folk and neighbourly,
Who’ll be eating their bread with honey. Wake up...
This terrible blow does whiten your brow
Whiten your brow does make you a widow wake up...
Now better take care and close your door.
Close your door but let in the neighbour. Wake up...
Don’t you open a crack
Just sit in the dark, just sit in the dark
Like a widow black. Wake up...
And though a widow-lady
Won’t you still be neighbourly?
To upright folk and many
Who’ll be, eating their bread with honey?
Wake up….

(Alekar 27)
The first act begins with *Keertan* where as the second act opend with the Dynaneshwar’s *Pasaydan*.

*Nana:* May darkness be dispelled from the farthest.  
May the world be illumined by the sun of its essence. May each being be granted each of his wishes.

(Alekar 47)

The various conventions, chorus, music, seemingly unrelated comic interludes, mixing of human and non human worlds permit a simultaneous presentation of alternate points of views. They allow borrowing phrase from Bertolt Brechet ‘‘Complex seeing.” Death, the most serious thing is treated in a light hearted manner and it is given musical liturgical mode in two different kinds of *Keertans*:

*All your knowledge and your art  
all in vein, if you know not  
Pandurang, Pandurang*  

(Alekar 29)

Alekar has used folk tales, folk songs, religious songs, *Abhangas* or the Marathi devotional poetry, poems, conventions and customs to achieve desired effect. The entire play has an air of a mock on moral discourse. There is a particular tone in the development of the action of the play. The language is quite similar to that of the Marathi *Keertan*. The dead Bhaurao’s comments on his own death are quite ironic. Alekar uses songs from the Hindi films. For example:

*Bhaub:* He! *Muttakadi Kavvadi Hada*  
*Muttakadi Kavvadi Hada*  
*Pyar me job hi karna hoga vahi mujhe kanrna padega.*  

(Alekar 82)

The *Sutradharaa* of *The Dread Departure* plays various roles. His role contributes a lot in the development of the plot. Bhaurao is *sutradhara* of the play. Bhaurao performs dual role as narrator and *sutradhara* in first act. He narrates his own *Aakhyana*. As a narrator of *Aakhyana*, Alekar chooses the dead Bhaurao’s soul and specifically the dead Bhaurao himself comes out of his dead body and narrates
Akhyana of his departure. Bahrao is dead, but he is narrator; he does not narrate his dialogues in straightforward pose however, he recites them in the Keertan style.

Drama is essentially an experimental and performing art. Its text and performance on the stage are quite different and mutually dependent. The text of the play is complex and difficult to comprehend. It requires a different type of reading to understand its content. Alekar has written and directed the play and he has also played the role of Nana. The dramatist has given valuable suggestions for the director in the preface of the play. There are suggestions for actors, gestures, light effects, background music, stage property, etc. which has facilitated the proper direction for the play. The theme and structure of the play are quite uncommon; the artists may not comprehend their roles properly. It is essential to take into consideration the varied context of the highly intellectual play. It covers topics as varied as last rites to the universe. There are references to the past, present and future. The writer has skilfully made use of religious songs and film songs to ridicule contradictions. It is hardly possible to show Bhaurao’s home, the recess under the roof, kitchen, crematorium and street. The folk drama technique is used for the achieving the desired effect in the play.

The Classical musical instruments such as a harmonium, a drum (Tabala), percussion drum (Mridung) and cymbals (Taal) are used for achieving the purpose. The dialogues need to be delivered in the style of the Keertan that involves recitation of religious songs and dance. Everything in the play is symbolic. The playwright has cleverly used the traditional tale of a ‘He’ sparrow and a ‘She’ sparrow. In a black coat with the black-spectacle, Nana symbolizes the crow. The Dread Departure is an extraordinary ‘slice of life’ drama which is an expression of a creative artist who transcends his own self to become a part of the awareness of the society at large.

IV.iii. Dramaturgy in Begum Barve:

Begum Barve is a known play in Marathi theatre which is much more complex in construction. It was written 1979 for the Theatre Academy, Pune and its first production was directed by Satish Alekar. It was translated in to English by Shanta Gokahle with the same title, which was published by Seagull Books, Kolkata in 1993. It is story of Barve; a small time female impersonator and performer of the early twentieth-century Marathi musical theatre tradition who has fallen on hard times and his exploitative employer Shyamrao calls him Begum. He confuses the beguiling and
seductive world of the Marathi stage with the harsh cold reality of his life in poverty and exploitation. Barve lives with the sadistic and manipulative Shyamrao who is habitually frightening and occasionally inspiring for performance. Barve is greatly inspired by Narayan Shripad Rajhans who is also known as Bal Gandharv, one of the greatest Marathi singers and stage actors. He was famous for the role of female characters in the Marathi plays, since female were not allowed to act on the stage during his time. Driven by a lack of success on the stage, the fanatical Barve sinks into an escapist fantasy world.

Disillusioned with his pitiful existence and harangued by his master as well as lover Shyamrao, Barve builds an elaborate and fragile alter ego as the feminine ideal which he desperately craves. In the process, he draws into fantasy of the two office clerks: Jawadekar and Bawadekar, a very Rosencrantz-and-Guildenstern like pair whose daily high point consists of meeting for after-work tea-sip at a roadside shop. However fantasy becomes reality when Barve insinuates himself into their lives as the coy and experienced young widow, Nalawadebai. Barve is caught up as a willing participant in fantasy life she imagines Jawadekar as the heroic young lover and Bawadekar as the loyal brother to the seductive Nalawadebai. As she and Jawadekar plan their wedding later anticipate the birth of their ‘child’; Shyamrao becomes increasingly twisted and enraged rather than crushing the dream immediately. The opportunistic Shyamrao manipulates the fantasy to his own sadistic purposes, controlling everything with the timing and skill of a master puppeteer. Finally, in a breathtakingly poignant scene, Nalawadebai’s traditional “seventh month dinner” is interrupted by the bitter Shyamrao who reduces the proud bride to his cruel reality: the aging female impersonator Barve is penniless, homeless and friendless.

IV.iii.i. Plot, Structure and Characterization:

The structure of the play is like modern Experimental play. It apparently looks like traditional Marathi Sangeetnatak (Marathi Musical play); however, like old Musical plays it doesn’t have five acts; on the other hand, it is presented into two acts. It has no scenes like the traditional Greek plays and similar to the acts and scenes of the plays by William Shakespeare. Moreover, it is a modern play like Absurd theatre. Similar to an old musical plays, it starts with the prelude followed by the entry of sutradhara, heroine, other characters and the play ends with the epilogue. It has eleven famous dramatic songs from the Marathi Musical Plays and it also has two
different worlds related to the each other: the first follows the lives and dreams of a pair of clerks, Jawdekar and Bawdekar and the other world is the story of Barve, a small time female impersonator of the Sangeetnatak era who has fallen on hard times and his exploitative employer, Shyamrao.

The play begins by Sutradhara with the waiting scene on the road for the heroine and Jawdekar for his friend. The scene reminds us of the scene from Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot:

Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!

(Beckett 3)

However, the narrative followed by the opening scene is unlike the traditional Sangeetnatak.

The playwright weaves a complex narrative with just four characters in the Contemporary Experimental plays: Begum Barve, a small time female impersonator who has spent his life playing bit roles in the professional Marathi theatre of the early twentieth century, his exploitative employer, Shaymrao and two characters Jawadekar and Bawadkar trapped between sensuous longing and the sordid reality of their humdrum existence. The layers of space and time interweave as well as overlap in this haunting play in which dreams and fantasy inevitably turn into nightmares. The curtain rolls up exposing a handsome and beautiful man, singing a song from a well recognized musical play of the pre independence era when female imitators played female's roles on stage. The middle aged man, who is recalling the golden days of the Marathi Musicalplays (Sangeetnatak) and the time when when Bal Gandharva the famous actor who plays the role of female characters in the Marathi plays and filled the theatre with his heavenly music. On the stage, Barve who was a negligible actor now sings the same songs which are the hallmark of the Marathi Musical plays.

The play opens with the epilogue by Sutradhara and the two men. The two men belong to middle aged and middle class. They are friends: one is Bawadekar and the other is Jawadekar. They are clerks in a government office, live in the same room and settled in the middle class of faithfully working family and indulging in mild fantasies about marrying some appropriate bridegroom.

Shyamrao is a cruel and angered gambler. He survives on Barve's work of selling incense sticks. He was a driver of horse cart, but he is now paralyzed. Now days, he regularly looses in the gambling game; however, he is patron of Barve's life.
and lives with Barve under the staircase of the apartment where the two clerks live. Shaymrao calls Barve as Begum although Shymrao is exploitative employer of Barve who becomes angry and hungry today and demands to be fed.

Alekar puts plot, structure and characterization firmly similar like the playwrights of the Absurd Theatre such as Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard. The Time and place in Begum Barve are compressed and distorted for the purpose of rapid succession. It seems that the whole plot takes place in a day or two days; however, the events from the initial meeting to marriage and childbirth require nearly a year. Shyamrao is dysfunctional and cruelly manipulative like Pinter’s characters. Jawadekar and Bawadekar do not resemble to Tom Stoppard’s interchangeable dynamic duo of idiot servants. Barve himself passes through wretched poverty, escapist fantasy and a final crushing dehumanization. Shyamrao brutally exposes his fraud, both literally and figuratively by rip off Barve’s pants with childlike glee and exclaiming says, “Look at this dhoti-wearing woman!” At the end fairy tale turns tragic because the monster wins.

IV.iii.ii. Absurdity in Begum Barve:

The norms of the theatre of absurd are used in Begum Barve. The play presents the painful situations of Jawdekar, Bawadekar, Shyamrao and Begum Barve. They have created a fantasy of Sarangnayana for their own meaningless and sterile life. The play is set in a particular place without unusual reference and location. It is set in the places like the road, tea canteen beside the road, staircase of the apartment and rooms where the characters live. Similar to the scene in Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot, this play opens with the waiting for someone on the road. Sutradhara appears as Shyamrao after the epilogue. Shyamrao and Jawadekar are waiting for heroine Begum Barve as well as friend respectively who seem to be boring and dull. Audience also experience the similar feeling.

Day to day life of Jawdekar and Bawdekar is boring and meaningless. Both of them go to the office and return to their room by the same road. They habitually go to the same canteen to have tea. They comment:

Jawadekar: The tea here is really...

Bawdekar: What’s to be done! If we were married,
We'd have escaped these problems. But that is never to be. This is not the tea we must drink.....

(Alekar 297)

Both of them are clerks in a government office and they are unmarried and living in the same room. They belong to the Marathi working middle class. They indulge in mild fantasies about marrying some appropriate brides. Every Thursday, they worship Lord Dattatraya. They always speak about sexual activities which represent the suppression of their desire of sex or sexual pleasure. They live meaningless life and do meaningless activities; all of which have no importance in their life.

The eponymous hero of the play Begum Barve is a small time female impersonator of the Sangeetnatak era who has fallen on hard times and his exploitative employer Shymrao calls him Begum. Now days, Barve is in search of own identity who considers himself as the best female actor of the Marathi Sangeetnatak. The curtain rolls up exposing a strangely handsome and beautiful man singing a song from a well recognized musical play of the pre-independent era, while female imitators played female's roles on the stage. Barve is a leftover waif from the era of Marathi musical extravaganzas. He worships Balgandharva whose feminine roles made him a trendsetting icon not only in music and histrionics but also in women's fashions. Barve himself could aspire only to peripheral parts, of the less-favoured sakhi. He cherishes the shawl that the star once gave him, the only tangible remnant of the world of opulent sets, silk and satin, heady fragrance and exquisite music. Barve was once a negligible actor on the stage, but now sings the similar songs which are the hallmark of the Marathi Musical plays known as the Sangeetnatak in the Marathi dramatic tradition.

The life of shyamrao is full of absurdity. Shyamrao was a driver of horse cart; however, he is now paralyzed. Shyamrao survives on Barve's work of selling incense-sticks presently. He has lost his independent identity. Shyamrao is a cruel and angered gambler. He regularly looses in the gambling game during these days. However, Barve assumes that Shyamrao is patron of his life and lives with him under the staircase of the apartment where the two clerks Jawdekar and Bawdekar live.

All these characters face the reality of their meaningless, bored and unbearable life. They live only in their fantasy. Jawadekar and Bawdekar think that Barve is Mrs.
Nalawade. Mrs. Nalawade is the widowed lady-clerk in their office. Both of them have been fantasized about her as she comes actually in the apartment:

**Jawdekar:** Gurudev Datta. Stranger and stranger. Is that you, Nalawadebai, so late at night?

**Bawdekar:** What did I say?........

**Barve:** Won’t you put this water pot away? My arm has grown so stiff.

**Jawdekar:** (recovering from shock), why not- of- course let me take it. (Putting the pot away).

Nalawadebai, how could you have brought the pot so late at night? Weren’t you afraid?

(Alekar 312)

Barve is Begum for Shyamrao but in the fantasy Barve becomes Saranganayana like a minor character in Sangeet Saubhadra, while both the clerks see him as Nalawadebai and Jawdekar’s wife in their fantasy.

The play reminds us Edward Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Similar to *Begum Barve*, in Albee’s play, George and Martha also face the reality of meaningless, bored and miserable life. They live while creating an illusion that they have a son who comes home the next day for his birthday.

### IV.iii.iii. Surrealistic Fantasy and Parody in *Begum Barve*:

Satish Alekar’s *Begum Barve* is based on the parody of impersonation. Man becomes woman, woman becomes dream and finally such dreams break. The playwright has used eleven dramatic songs from *Sangeetnatak* in order to makes parody. It is also a ground-breaking Absurd play of Modern and Postmodern era. The middle class men Jawdekar and Bavdedkar endlessly wait for a life partner. They always think about the sexual pleasure. As a negligible lady, Barve also dreams and her dream breaks. In interview with Rekha Inamdar Sane, Alekar states about fantasy:

*So far as fantasy is concerned, it can resort to my habit of going in a state of loosing. If I can be in such a state, why not the characters? A stage is a vacant queue from which the characters can prop up any time. Why should we account for their entry and exit? So long as the play is on the characters are bound to be theirs, how can we*
perform a play without characters? I am always annoyed by such actions shown on the stage like drinking tea, wine, worshiping god, changing or doing any household work. I always felt that biography of characters has leased to do with the very performance of the play. Therefore in my play Mahanirvan the characters do not have surnames. The neighbours are nameless. We cannot make out what their profession is? In Begum Barve the characters are known by their surnames only, with exception of Shyamrao. And still the play is performed. That which is assumed is performed for a drama the central, ideal the subject is important. That’s why I avoided all such annoying actions on the stage and tried to write, you may call it fantasy or by any other name.

(Sane 209)

The three characters Jawdekar, Bawdekar and Shyamrao dream their fantasy and Barve dreams different fantasy. Jawadekar and Bawdekar think that Barve is Mrs. Nalawade who is the widowed lady-clerk in their office. Both of them have been fantasized about her. They think that she comes actually in their apartment bringing a pot of water during summer and singing the romantic songs. Jawdekar with support of Bawdekar announces his love for Mrs Nalawade in romantic mood. She accepts, but supposed Mrs. Nalawade is Barve who has to go back to Shyamrao who is waiting in his room under the staircase.

Barve always assumes more than two spaces of existence. While he is the man called Barve, he is Begum for Shyamrao and in the fantasy he thinks he is Saranganayana who is a minor character of Sangeet Saubhadra. The clerks see him as Nalawadebai and as Jawdekar’s wife. Exploitation of Barve by Shyamrao is presented through an elaborate fantasy in which the female impersonator gets married and pregnant too. These are two faces of authority of Shyamrao as he plays the agent-spoilsport-interventionist and villain in the Sangeetnatak at the same time.

The protagonist is female impersonator of the Sangeetnatak era in the play. He is a minor actor and continues even after his professional days are over to live two lives. He moves from one space to another with great ease: talking to himself and
others simultaneously. It is a psychic thread which connects Barve with the female impersonator of Sangeetnatak. Urmila Bhirdikar observes:

*Barve’s movement across spaces not only characterizes the life of an actor, but since the movement is primarily across gender, it harks back to the practice of female impersonation in the commercial Marathi theatre in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The effeminacy of Barve belongs to the theatrical practice which shaped and employed it for representing women in theatre. His association with other males and especially with Shaymrao, is a residue of the representation of this gender relation.*

(Bhirdikar xv)

The songs, narrative and dialogues are chosen by Alekar prove very effective in the context of the play. The parody invokes laughter along with a sense of pathos. The dialogues between Barve and Jawadekar revel the parody as follows:

**Jawdekar:** Gurudev Datta. *What a voice, Nalawadebai!* *What a voice... what a wretch I am, that I didn’t know of your divine voice even though I’ve worked with you for so many years!*

**Barve:** Go on! *It’s no credit to me, this voice of mine. It is all by the grace of Narayanrao.*

(Alekar 313)

The play symbolically focuses on universal yearning by Alekar’s characters about marriage; it also suggests remedy on the similar situation being a female character. Barve personifies both the male and female genders and attempts to be a complete woman for Shyamrao, Jawdekar and Bawdekar. He attempts fulfil yearning of others by suppressing his yearnings. Amal Allana justifies Barve’s ability as follows:

*Barve becomes the fantasy which constantly remanifests and reinvents itself, seen always in a state of constant mutation. The androgynous actor Barve is neither male nor female exclusively, but both, forever capable of donning the mask of the moment, mounting half*
forgotten dialogues and songs thus becoming a quote. Barve is that grotesque clown, that parody of himself, personifying in his person the perverted human condition. In the individual spilt in two, the Chitpawan Barve and the Muslim Begum reside side-by-side as uneasy bedfellows, awaiting reintegration.

(Allana 81)

**IV.iii.iv. Songs and Music in Begum Barve:**

The songs sung by Barve in *Begum Barve* are from the famous *Sangeetnatak* Annasaheb Kriloskar’s *Sangeet Saubhadra*, Ram Ganesh Gadkari’s *Ekach Pyala*, Deval’s *Samshaykallol* and *Sangeet Sharada* Khadilkar’s *Sangeet Swayamva*, *Sangeet Manapaman* and others. Alekar has skilfully used the songs from *Sangeetnatak* as a complete and resonant metaphor for the life of the female impersonator. These songs help the male actors on the stage who have to behave as women. Satish Alekar mentions in interview:

*The form of Begum Bare is like hold ancient Marathi musical drama. There are numerous songs uttered by Barve. There cannot be any casual relation between the occasion where the song is sung by character in Begum Bare and that actual drama from which the song is extracted. I did not have to study the history of Marathi stage particularly Musical Marathi dramas. I have been listening these songs right from my childhood. I might not have seen the plays but their songs appeal. The extract of songs in Begum Barve is an outcome of my memories of those songs listened. I just cannot say the impact of these songs in Begum Barve on spectators mind. We never get tired even though the rehearsal is conducted on long time. The origin of any Marathi drama for that matter is like an iceberg, these are many things that we also cannot tell.*

(Inamdar-Sane 217)
The music also plays important role in *Begum Barve*. Rajeev Paranjape is the musician of the play who has selected tunes from already existing songs. It is a wide variety of classical *bandishes* and Hindustani ‘semi’ classical forms like *Thumari*, *Dadra* and *Kawali*; also from *Lavani* and traditional songs sung by the Marathi women. The use of recorded songs from the Marathi musicals accompanied by video projections of the original Marathi text overlaid with English translation one of the most visually interesting conventions of the performance unfortunately turns distracting and ultimately detracting. Music and dance are vital parts of the Indian theatre tradition and in the previous productions of *Begum Barve* these songs were sung and enacted by the actors themselves. The songs and dance reinforce Barve’s descent into fantasy. As the English translations illustrate, these songs are directly taken from the famous scenes of the Marathi stage. The musical digressions drew Barve more relentlessly into the vicarious fantasies of life that the Marathi musicals offer. These songs transform the hapless Jadawekar into Barve’s romantic hero. The music is fundamental to both the protagonist’s psychological state and the underlying culture, but its impact is lost to the audience because of being reduced to a multimedia event. The songs from *Sangeetnatak* and musical tunes from Indian classical forms are used by Satish Alekar and the musician Rajeev Paranjape. Urmila Bhirdikar writes on the songs in her article *A note on the Songs in Begum Barve*. The Marathi and English versions of the songs are as follows:

The first song is taken from the *Sangeetnatak Sangeet Sharada* by Govind Ballal Deval. The music and tune is based on ‘*baat haarkeeje Janaab se*’. Raga is *Bheempalas*:

[Murtimant bhiti ubhi majhasamora rahili…………
…………..rakshasa ruchel ka pahawaya jasa bali. (Marathi)]

*Barve: Before me stands the very incarnation of Fear,*

*Such a sacrifice to see?*

(Alekar 302)

The second song is taken from *Sangeet Swaymvar* by Krishnaji Prabhakr Khadilkar. The tune of this song is based on the Marathi song ‘*prabhu leela gamete hee*’. Raga is *Bihag* and *Tala* is *Triwat*:

[mama atma gamala ha…………………………..]
Barve: Lost my soul, idon’t know how………
…my soulmate comes.

(Alekar 313)

The third song is also taken from Sangeet Swaymvar by Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar. Tune is based on Marathi song ‘chal gaye.’ Raga is Pahadi. Tala is Kawali:

[ narawara krushnasaman ghetase janma…….                      
                     ……………………………pari manila yaduvara zala

Mantra mahan. (Marathi)]

Barve: When a man like Krishna is born……
…………Krishna alone became a prayer in my
heart.

(Alekar 315)

The forth song in the first act is taken from the Sangeetnatak: Sangeet Saubhadra by Annasaheb Kirloskar. The base tune is popular Lavani ‘nesali pintambar zari…’ (There are also some other Lavanis on this tune):

[Wad Jaaao kunala sharan
Karil jo haran sankatanche………………
………………………………………………
Aga sakhaye, pratikul hoti saache. (Marathi)]

Barve:To whom shall I surrender?……
……………………………………………

Stand against ne now!

(Alekar 316)

In the second act the first song is taken from Sangeet Manapaman by Krishnaji Prabhakr Khadiilkar. Tune is based on ‘hamase naa bolo raje’. Raga is Khamaaj. Taal is Dadra:

[winayheen wadaaa naatha nahi mi bolat aata.
…….winayawati mee kaantaa naatha..(Marathi)]
Barve: My lord, I’ll not talk to you,………………

I am a modest maiden, My lord, I’ll not talk to you

(Alekar 330)

The next song is taken from Ram Ganesh Gadkari’s Ekach Pyala. The base tune of this song is ‘gaa gori nanadi’. Raga is Bhairavi. Tala is Kehrawa:

[prabhu aki gamala, mani toshalaan………
shravani sakal maazi shakti ekatra hote. (Marathi)

Barve: My lord is happy, content in mind……
…………………………To hear those honey-sweet
words again.

(Alekar 334)

All these songs underline the terrible pathos of the situation. Like Sindhu, Barve too calls for mercy. God’s grace has been withdrawn and also the support of very person Jawadekar-Krishna is a person who should have protected him from harm.

The next song is taken from Ekach Pyala by Ram Ganesh Gadkari. The base tune is a traditional Marathi song sung by women ‘vida ghyaa ho narayana’:

[ghaas ghe re taanhyaa baala govinda gopaalaa.
…………………………govindagrajaachaar uralaa
Suralla ghaas. (Marathi)]

Barve: Eat my little one, eat O Gopala, Govinda...
…………………………This last mouthful from
Govindagraj.

(Alekar 338)

The next song is taken from Sangget Punyaprabhav by Ram Ganesh Gadkari. The base tune is traditional Marathi lullaby:

[nija baalaa re gaate gaane aai | kari aataa jo jo
Gaaill...............tee radanaari radatil dhaai
Dhaai \ Kari aata jo jo gaaill (Marathi)]

Barve: Sleep, my little one sleep, mother sings a
Lullaby;.........................................................

Let the weepers weep- sleep my pet, sleep.

(Alekar 339)

The base tune of the next song is traditional women song sung during the celebration of the first pregnancy:

[pahilyaa ga mahinyaalaal| kalaa laagalyaa
Dehaalaal| rang piwala jaahalaal| sakhe tuzaal|

..............................................................

Karoo dohaala jevana| baisy baa ki zopaayaataal|
Sakhya sange bagichyataa| Jaain sukhe|

(Marathi)

Barve: It is the first month. The body aches

..............................................................

Go happily into the garden with your beloved.

(Alekar 344)

The next song is from Ekach Pyala by Ram Ganesh Gadkari. The base tune of this song is ‘piya man se’. Raga is Jilha maand. Tala is Kawali:

[dayaa chaayaa ghe ni waaruniyaa, praphu majawari
kopalaal|.... To hi kasaa aji lopalaal|

Barve: Mercy, help me, ........

Where has he too vanished?

(Alekar 346)

The last song is a prayer, which is taken from the old comedy of the ancient era that still remains popular Deval’s Sangeet Samshaykallol:

[chinmayaa sakala hrudayaal, sadayaa de yaa
govindaa......................................................

Sukhabhavani daasaa maa (Marathi)]

Barve: Spirit if the universe, have pity on me.

O granter of boons, destroy of sins......

..............................................................

Where all is pave and tranquility.

(Alekar 347)
These songs are brilliantly used by Alekar as a complete and resonant metaphor for the life of the female impersonator. Gawri Ramnarayan in her article in the Hindu, *A Classic Comes alive* rightly comments on the music and songs:

*Alekar's greatest success as playwright and director, is in exposing unpredictable layers of irony through the beautiful songs of the old musicals, sung here in contexts unrelated to them. While the music intoxicates, the alien setting shakes you back into the grim present. The imagery, especially the olfactory, is equally striking. It shocks you into perceptions oblique. (Ramnarayan: The Hindu, Sunday, June 17, 2001)*

As a musical play, *Begum Barve* presents the grandeur and musicality of the *Sangeetnatak* with its evocation of the loves and indiscretion of Krishna touch an elevation that itself threatens the dissolution because the text is being punctured by the performance. The play is interspersed with the songs borrowed from the popular Marathi musical plays and they are placed in unexpected contexts to yield an ironic third meaning which is neither conveyed through the song nor in the situation. Written in a layered language varying from the most ornate to naked obscenity, it is ultimately a play wherein the playwright catches the nimble spirit of theatricality itself.

**IV.iv. Conclusion:**

Satish Alekar’s plays *The Dread Departure* and *Begum Barve* represent the experimentation by mingling of various dramatic techniques of the Western and Indian Theatre. Alekar skillfully uses praiseworthy techniques to express his views on the evils, problems and maladies of society. He employs the Marathi folklores such as *Keertan*, music and songs from the Marathi musical plays of pre-independent period to bring a special ironic effect to the situations happenings on the stage. He experiments in the use of folk forms of the Indian folk theatre, music and the amalgamation of traditional dramatic patterns with appropriate and evocative symbols, juxtaposition of history with contemporary political, economical and social situations, a unique blending of seriousness with the wit, humour, satire, irony, etc.
Alekar applies multiple traditions that he inherits, wallows in and resents to produce some of the most powerful plays of the Modern Indian stage. In his unusual dramaturgy, Alekar focuses to an absence that is conjured up by the little men and waves in words, songs, keertans, music, Symbolism, Absurdism, alienation effect, parody, satire and performances through the unearthly and bizarre plays The Dread Departure and Begum Barve. These plays are best for their connections with the culture, history and drama of Maharashtra and their influence on the development of the Marathi theatre. Similar to Brecht’s distancing effect, Alekar tries to show the bare reality of life in which people are living while wearing a mask to show off others. Alekar performs the duty of the playwright to show and tear off this mask to view the reality. Alekar leaves much scope for the director as well as much to the imagination of audience.

Satish Alekar is influenced by Tendulkar’s plays, Ritwik Ghatak, Shambhu Mitra and Ibrahim Alkazi. Apart from the impact of the Indian theatre Alekar acknowledges the influence of the Western theatre and the playwrights like Ionesco, Bertolt Brecht, Luigi Pirandello, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard in the development of the form, content and techniques. He also influenced by the various -isms of the Nineteenth and Twentieth century from the Western country like the Symbolism, Surrealism, Existentialism, Expressionism, the Epic Theatre and the Theatre of Absurd. The reflection of these various currents of thoughts figure out in his plays.

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CHAPTER-V
MAHESH ELKUNCHWAR: THE MILESTONE OF
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE

The present chapter aims at the analysis and interpretation of the Western and Indian dramaturgy employed in Mahesh Elkunchwar’s Garbo (1973) and Vasanakand (Desire in the Rocks) (1974). These plays manifest the different angles and perceptions of the writer. The first play Garbo revolves around four outsiders who are bond to their ‘out-sidedness’ and try to find the purpose, beauty and meaning in life by imitating other lives. The second play Desire in the Rocks is a story of incest which deeply probes into the meanings of creativity and truth, passion and infatuation, creativity and sterility on the other. Garbo and Desire in the Rocks are written in the first phase when Elkunchwar was very young and wanted to assert freedom in every possible manner; he wanted to bring everything out in the open and protest against a whole baggage of taboos and inhabitants. Garbo and Vasanakand are translated into English by Shanta Gokhale as Garbo and Vasanakand as Desire in the Rocks.

Mahesh Elkunchwar is an important practitioner of the Contemporary Experimental Theatre who plays vital role to bridge the gap between experimental and professional theatre. He concentrates on symbolism and also shows how the barriers between professional and experimental dramas are significantly breaking down. They are constructed with solid substance and experimental techniques. The themes of Garbo and Vasanakand are an incestuous relationship and intractable emotional and other problems raised out of the situation. These plays have been interpreted on a symbolic level exploring the complex relationships between the characters. Girish Karnad aptly comments:

Restless in his search and unrelenting in his honesty,
Elkunchwar stands unsurpassed in modern Indian theatre for his emotional sweep, intellectual rigour, and subtlety.

(Karnad, Cover Jacket)

Elkunchwar has experimented with many forms of dramatic expression, ranging from the Realism to Symbolism and Expressionism to Absurdism. His themes range from creativeness to the life and sterility towards the death and have influenced
the contemporary Indian theatre for more than thirty years. His plays have been translated into various Indian and Western languages.

**Garbo** presents the story of four individuals: Garbo, Intuc, Shrimant and Pansy. It deals with the physical and psychological relationship among three male friends: Intuc (the pseudo-intellectual), Pansy (the effete), and Shrimant (the Rich) and Garbo, an ordinary film actress-cum-prostitute who struggles to be successful.

**Vasanakand (Desire in the Rocks)** depicts the incidents in the lives of a brother and sister: Hemakant and Lalita. They come together by chance and enter into illicit sexual relationships by choice. The themes of the plays are the incest relationships between brother and sister on the one hand and the primordial elemental relationship between the man and woman on the other hand.

**V.i. Elkunchwar’s Experimentation in the plays:**

Elkunchwar has experimented with various forms of drama such as the Realistic, Naturalistic, Absurdist, Symbolist and Existentialist. His plays are about the anxieties, frustrations, hopes and conflicts of the middle class society. He focuses on the pangs, angst, agony and sorrows of the men and women in the society in the period of transition. Elkunchwar was deeply inspired by Tendulkar; he exhibits the same boldness in the choice of themes. He acknowledges about his inspiration on the following words:

*I have a grand legacy of one hundred and fifty years of playwriting but it is Tendulkar who is in my emergence as a playwright. Temperamentally also I feel closer to him than many of the playwrights of his generation. So my tradition begins with Tendulkar.*

(Elkunchwar 26)

Elkunchwar was influenced by the Western theatre and Western dramatists such as Anton Chekhov, Jezzy Grotowsaki, August Strindberg, Eugene Ionesco, Antonio Artaud and Samuel Beckett. Elkunchwar reveals the fact in his interview with Rana Nayar:

*The first four plays are like that. Perhaps this is the time I was working under the influence of Strindberg, Chekhov, Lorca, Sartre and Camus, among other playwrights of the West. Though I tried hard to resist,
all of these influences did somehow filter in my early
work.

(Nayar, The Tribune, Sunday Reading.)

Ravindra Kimbhune traces the influence of the various Western -isms of the
nineteenth and twentieth century like the Absurdism, Realism, Surrealism,
Symbolism, Expressionism and Existentialism on Elkunchwar’s writing. He points
out:

Elkunchwar’s plays are based on the philosophy of the
Existentialism and Absurdism.

(Kimbhune 9)

Elkunchwar’s earlier one-act-plays and the full length plays are written in the
absurdist style. Many of his plays suggest the existential problems of the individuals.
Mahesh Elkunchwar says:

I am more interested, in an individual’s problems, his
inner life, and his anguish. The psyche of an unhappy
disturbed person interests me more than social
problems. Social problems do not interest me really,
because they have solutions. The human mind is
unfathomable. It is the kind of material that’s never
exhausted.

(Elkunchwar xv)

The other dramatic devices such as games and role playing are also used in
plays like Garbo, Reflection and one-act-plays. These aspects of his plays are
illustrated in relation to the features of his plays such as themes, plot construction,
characterization, diction, setting, symbols and dramatic forms.

V.ii. Dramaturgy in Garbo:

Garbo is the story of the tragedy of four characters: Garbo, Intuc, Shrimant
and Pansy. These characters have come together by coincidence and have entered into
physical and sexual relationships. Intuc and Pansy live in a flat owned by Shrimant.
The first act of Garbo opens in a sitting room of Shrimant’s flat on Sunday morning.
The opening of the play is set in the mood of boredom and the passing of the time
becomes the motif of the inmates of the room. Intuc and Pansy engage themselves in
casual talks just to pass time until Shrimant comes. After the arrival of Shrimant, the
trios play various games just to pass the time. They eagerly wish Garbo to come to pass time pleasantly. Garbo arrives and joins the threesome in fun and frolic in flippant and frivolous talk. Amidst this revelry, Garbo announces that she is going to be a mother. The threesomes take it to be a joke and continue with the funny games. It is only when Garbo exhausts and retires to the inner room Intuc guesses that she might be pregnant. He talks to Shrimant about the problem. He feels that it would be foolish to take the responsibility of the child without knowing the authenticity of the father. As soon as Garbo comes out, she lets them to know that she is pregnant. A heated discussion takes place on the father of the child. Garbo asks for money so she should get rid of the child. She accuses them of unsupportive to her in moments of crisis. Intuc, steeped in remorse, comes out with the determination of rearing the child and becomes successful in convincing Garbo to accept her that she would give birth to the child. Shrimant offers to give his name as father of the child. The threesomes adore Garbo for being the harbinger of joy, hope beauty and meaning in their lives. Garbo is brought at the centre stage. The three men encircle her and pay homage in ritualistic style.

The second act opens after a month with preparations going on with full enthusiasm for the homecoming of the baby. Garbo is out of city for the shootout of a film in the desert of Rajasthan. The threesomes eagerly wait for her arrival. The atmosphere is full of joy and reverence for Garbo. The threesomes are occupied with their dream project; the arrival of their baby. When Garbo comes, she avoids the eyes of Intuc and goes on with her casual and flippant ways narrating the activities at the shooting. Intuc guesses something has gone wrong. He wanted that child badly to keep his identity intact. The aborted child aborts with itself the hopes of the threesomes to create, or at least to witness the creation of something beautiful in their lives, otherwise full of dirt and filth. The characters start accusing one another of deception and mistrust. Intuc wants to have sex with Garbo for now she is fit for nothing but just sex machine. In this regard, Kamlesh observes that:

Garbo dreams of becoming an actor like Greta Garbo,
but in this attempt forsake the biological creativity of life. Her action leads her to the emptiness and pangs of life. (Kamlesh 63)

Shrimant still offers Garbo for marriage proposal, once again, as an attempt to cover his manhood; however, Garbo turns down the proposal. Pansy wants to go with Garbo
instead of going home or living with Shrimant as an object of his sexual gratification. Shrimant proposes Pansy and Garbo alternatively to stay with him. When Garbo is about to leave, Pansy shouts that Garbo is a cheater and must be killed. Shrimant on the spur of the heated moment stabs her with knife. Garbo falls on the stage in a pull of blood. Pansy cries out for help. There is a dead silence and the curtain falls. Shanta Gokhale rightly points out:

Garbo- who is pregnant, they do not know whom, but probably by one of them- will be the source of a new life. They look forward not merely to a new individual, but to the new purpose in life, the new hope that this individual will bring. But Garbo sacrifices the growing foetus to her pursuit of success. The three men, themselves not creative, kill her for having killed their only means of contributing creativity to life.

(Gokhale 271-272)

The pregnancy of Garbo and the expected arrival of child are at the centre of the sea-saw of the relationships among the characters. The frivolousness and flippancy of the pre-pregnancy phase and frustration, accusation and violence of the post abortion phase are balanced on the warm and compassionate relationship. The play slowly unfolds the anguish and struggle in the lives of the characters who try their capacity to come in terms with the life. Initially the mood of the play is asserted through the overtly careless and frivolous behaviour of the characters which heightens the tragedy. Intuc’s phony cynicism, Shrimant’s sex- ridden talk of perversion and Garbo’s flippant behaviour as a sex machine in the initial phase result from their awareness of their true selves. The play slowly leads the audience to the core of this awareness through the initial grab of frivolousness. Garbo grows out of a claustrophobic real life situation pushed to the limits of endurance, burgeoning into a surreal holy dream that is too unreal and brittle to stand the test.

V.ii.i. Garbo: In the Light of Rasa Theory

Elkunchwar has used various Rasa Siddhantas in his play Garbo for an aesthetic point of view. If the play is examined in the light of the Rasa theory, it becomes more significant and meaningful to the audience. Rasa is one of the most vital ingredients of the play. Rasa is considered as an aesthetic experience enjoyed at
the time of witnessing a play. Bibhatsa *Rasa* evokes the sentiment of disgust. It depicts disgusting and repulsive scenes. The *vibhasas* for *bibhatsa rasa* are hearing of something repulsive or bad omens. The *sancharibhasas* involved in it are epilepsy, delusion, pangs of death, illness, agitation, etc.

*Garbo* comprises the characteristics of *Bibhatsa Rasa*. They are grotesque, uncertainty and disorder. The study reveals the ugliness of human life in the contemporary society in search of self identity; the abstractions of existence lead to a collaborative sense of disgust which is sensibly identified as *Bibhatsa*.

The *Bibhatsa Rasas* is explored through the dialogues of the four characters, when they wait and speak about Garbo. The moment she appears on the stage Shrimant welcomes her:

*Here she comes. The greatest sex machine on the earth.*  
(Elkunchwar 20)

They lift her up and put her in a chair at the centre of the stage. She participates in the frivolity of her friends; however, she is not in her usual mood. When Shrimant calls Pansy a Motherfucker, Garbo retorts:

*Shrimant: Christ! That makes him a motherfucker.*

*Garbo: Button up your dirty mouth, will you? I’m not in mood today for this kind of talk.*  
(Elkunchwar 22)

Shrimant, Intuc and Pansy think Garbo as an instrument of sex. They are physically involved in Garbo. Garbo also does not mind the same. The physical involvement with Garbo is the beginning of their relationship. The three males define and construct Garbo in their own ways as they experience her. For Shrimant, Garbo is nothing but an instrument for Sex, whose ‘only business in life has been jumping from bed to bed’, ‘who is available at any time you go,’ and that ‘she is great in bed’. For him, the act sex is nothing but a physical and mechanical activity.

*Just get on the top of this machine, one machine on the top of another, and presto! Printing begins. Sir Intuc, kindly tell me where emotions enter the picture. Once you get going, there’s nothing but the body.*  
(Elkunchwar 16)
For Pansy, Garbo is a great actor; she is very rational and is the one who never seems to lose her emotional balance. For him, sexual act is rare and beautiful experience, which Shrimant makes the whole thing look so ugly.

**V.ii.ii. Garbo: An Archetype of Theatre of Cruelty**

A study of *Garbo* reveals features of the Theatre of Cruelty propounded by a great French writer Antonio Artaud who resuscitated the theme of cruelty. The play *Garbo* embodies the characteristics of the theatre of cruelty. The incidents in the play speak of the cruelty, injustice and expose the failure of human relations owing to man’s inherent cruelty for the fellow men.

*Garbo* is the dramatic revelation of wild and sexual human impulses which are blazingly surrealistic, penetrating and bitter. Though, the stimulus behind the creation of *Garbo* is the Western, it however perpetrates the conventional accumulation of the set of themes of the Marathi stage craft. C. T. Khanokar in his play *Ek Shunya Bajirao* (1966) and *Avaidhya* (1972) try to expose cruelty, human nakedness and passion. Vijay Tendulkar’s plays *Gidhade (The Vultures)* (1971), *Sakharam Binder* (1972) and *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972) show the cruelty on stage in an ascending manner.

Similarly Elkunchwar in ascending manner produce the effect of cruelty in an intensely surrealistic, blazing, penetrating and efficient manner.

It is observed that Elkunchwar has followed the beaten track of his contemporaries; however, the worth of his play does not diminish. Elkunchwar not only shows violence, sexuality and cruelty but also tries to probe into the subtle human relationships, its constraints, concept of sins and finally impulses behind creativity. He also aims to show that human beings have lost rhythm and harmony in their life. They have merely become harsh, practical and dry. Therefore, *Garbo* is an expression of the modern generation which is invalid, barren and valueless. In this regards, Elkunchwar’s *Garbo* is extraordinary play in the tradition of the Marathi Experimental Theatre.

*Garbo* focuses on the group of ‘young generation’ who living without aim along with frustration of devastated dreams, the burden of inhibitions and diffus of mediocrity. It explores the inner battles and conflict of these people as well as the manner how their sexuality becomes the main anxiety. Intuc represents frustrated intellectual professor who searches for comfort with help of words. Pansy is student who is dropped out from an art school and plays a role of potential homosexual.
Shrimant represents richness and Garbo is an actress of B grade movies who loses her glamour. She is mistress of the Intuc, Pansy and Shrimant. She has sexual relationship with these three men. These three men are failures in their respective fields. They bear their sexual urges in relation with Garbo. When Garbo is pregnant, they are afraid to face the reality. On the other hand, they look for their individual salvation. Frustrated, hedonistic, cynic, aimless and invalid the three behave like successful men who have aims and objects in their lives. Shrimant seeks to cover up his physical weakness, whereas Intuc tries the child to do away with his morbidity. They start preparation for welcome ceremony of the baby; however, Garbo is a career oriented, thus, she decides to proceed for an abortion when she goes for film shooting. When all these three men: Pansy, Intuc and Shrimant know about the abortion, they kill Garbo. Elkunhwar ends the storm at this crucial mode leaving behind number of questions for audience to ponder on:

**Pansy**: she’s cheating us. Kill her. Kill her.

(As Garbo blindly struggles towards the door, Shrimant plunges a knife into her. She collapses.)

**Shrimant**: Pansy, Pansy I have killed her.

**Pansy**: Killed…

**Intuc**: Garbo’s gone. Murdered. Or did she die first and was murdered later?

**Pansy**: Is she dead? Is this blood? So much of it.

**Intuc**: Blood. The blood is real…Garbo was false.

**Pansy** (hoarsely): Help!

**Shrimant**: Pansy, don’t shout. Stay with me.

**Pansy** (going to the window): Help! Help! (Silence)

Nobody’s coming. What now? What now?

(Elkunchwar 66)

The cruelty is revealed through the situation when the three people consider Garbo as an instrument of sex, abortion and murder of Garbo.

**V.ii.iii. Garbo: Epitome of Symbolism:**

Symbolism is the ornament of the great work of art. The proper use of symbolism is the scale of judging the literary personality of an author. Elkunchwar employs various symbols and imageries in his plays. His symbols grow out of the
The names of the characters in Garbo are highly symbolic: such as the name Shrimant symbolizes richness and materialistic; Intuc represents intellectuality (a college professor); Pansy indicates a womanish and effeminate adolescent of seventeen. The three men try to fill void between and inside them with seemingly meaningful conversation, music and sexually charged discussion about Garbo, the struggling actress and the woman in their lives. The name Garbo represents a film actress for the B grade films. Except the name, Garbo possesses nothing of the legendary Hollywood actor, Greta Garbo. She is considered as one of the greatest and most enigmatic movie stars in the Hollywood. Greta Garbo was bisexual; she had an intimate relationship with the men as well as women. Soon after her career took off, she becomes known as recluse throughout her life. She lives the last years of her life in absolute seclusion.

Shrimant likes the company of Intuc and so he asks him to stay in his flat because Shrimant likes delicate body and womanish behaviour of Pansy. Pansy on the other hand, needs shelter and many other luxuries of life so he happily accepts Shrimant’s offer. Pansy has a great admiration for Intuc and his intellect.

Elkunchwar’s use of symbolic names grows out the action of the play. Shrimant’s sexual impotency, Intuc’s loss of creativity and Garbo’s loss of creativity all in artistic and biological terms contribute to the total action of barrenness and waste in Garbo.

Four characters in this play symbolically represent tendencies of the society. They are common human being representing the tendency that they embody. They are not individuals in a real sense. They symbolise the intellectual class, modernity and perversity. If Pansy is the symbol of immaturity and emotionalism, Garbo on the other hand representative of creativity. It raises certain question related to society; if each individual is an independent then why does it happen that such an individual is communalized and labelled against a specific tendency or class. Is it possible to liberate oneself from communalization? Is it possible to lead in an independent, passionate and succulent life? Elkunchwar has endeavoured to expose to these possibilities in the play. The four characters mentioned above are tied up with one another by the thread of biological necessity. These characters come together as an escape from intense frustration and disappointment. Shrimant has given refugee to Intuc and Pansy in his room. They do not have to import unity because of being the refugees of Shrimant. They are well aware of the fact that Shrimant needs their mental
support. Their life is not real life, but rather a mask they have put on which embodies the false reality.

The three of them are stuck of in quagmire of the existential boredom and they try in order to escape from it. They give rise to various sports play within play and they also wait for Garbo to give them something at least her acompany for time pass which they believe.

In the first act, the waiting for Garbo and discussion about Garbo ends with her entry on the scene. When Intuc announces about Garbo’s arrival, Shrimant comments:

**Intuc:** Garbo’s coming.

**Pansy:** Garbo? Where?

**Shrimant:** That’s right. Run.

**Pansy:** (at the window): Garbo.

**Garbo** (off): Hi!

**Pansy:** Garbo is here.

**Shrimant:** Good. So now all of us may look forward to being pleasantly occupied for at least ten minutes each.

(Elkunchwar 20)

The moment she appears on the stage, Shrimant welcomes her:

**Shrimant:** Pansy, beat on something good and loud when she comes in and I... (Garbo enters) Here she comes. The Greatest Sex Machine on the Earth.

**Garbo:** Shrimant!

**Shrimant:** Now three cheers for Garbo the sex-machine. Come on. Darling Garbo....

(Elkunchwar 20)

They lift her up and put her in a chair at the centre of stage. The action is symbolic for the play revolves around Garbo.

**V.ii.iv. Garbo: Paradigm of Expressionism**

The Expressionistic plays often dramatise the spiritual awakening and suffering of their protagonists. Garbo is known as an expressionistic play with its essential techniques and characteristics.
The play is dramatisation of the sub-consciousness, a kind of scripted dream with a consequent loss of character motivation. It expresses character’s self-centred megalomania, delusional fantasies of power and inflated self-esteem.

*Garbo* as expressionistic play epitomises its characters as more symbolic and expressionistic in nature. The characters lose their individuality and merely identified by nameless designations like Shrimant, Garbo and Intuc. The word ‘Garbo’ sounds pregnancy. Intuc represents intellectuality and Shrimant paradoxically or inconsistantly connotes as the richest person. These characters are stereotypes and caricatures rather than individual personalities. They represent a general social group or ideas or ideologies rather than a particular person and appear grotesque and unreal.

The play presents life in a highly personal and idiosyncratic manner. The form of the play; however, expresses deep and profound content. The play discloses secret and hidden state of mind. It is a drama of protest against the rigid lines of the social order and authority in the family and community. Garbo wants to live a liberal and arbitrary life without having the burden of metaphysical, religious and social values. But, the other characters enunciate the culture forcefully on her. *Garbo* testifies the failure of social values with a prediction for ecstasy and despair and hence a tendency toward the inflated and grotesque.

The play is mystical even with frequent apocalyptic overtones. It also dramatises the destructive feelings and struggle against bourgeois values. The character ‘Garbo’ is rational and practical human with low aims and aspirations. She tries to kill her baby. In addition to this, characters like Intuc, Shrimant and Pansy tyrannically stab Garbo to death. Such apocalyptic actions and overtones are found in the expressionistic plays like *Garbo*.

The apocalyptic overtones are not only found in the actions of the characters such as Shrimant, Intuc, and Pansy but also in the feelings and fantasies of them. Intuc goes with long desire to see new-coming baby. When his dreams shatter, he becomes destructive and his speech becomes more severe with taboos and abusive words. The destructive and nightmarish fantasies and hallucinations add more effective to the expressionistic drama.

Like other expressionistic play, *Garbo* is highly poetic and melodramatic rather than intellectual and rational. Illogical consequences, irrational ideas and unreasonable actions are often found in *Garbo*. However, the heart-touching pieces of dialogues of caricatural characters from *Garbo* are grotesquely comic to the
The audience does not feel sympathy and menace for the misrepresentation of these caricatural characters. There is no cathartic impulse or sublimation of the audience rather the audience feel alienated and estranged about the false-impressions of these caricatural characters. All the men in the play fall under the spell of their own words and the dream. They conjure up their refuge and chance to create something beautiful. Finally, the act ends with an adoration of the Dream. The following long lyrical song by Shrimant, Intuc and Pancy create poetic exaggeration or overstatement of the character.

You are the life  
And roots of all life  
The spring of all hope,  
The fulfilment of all happiness  
Are you. You are the beginning of belief.  
You are the everlasting.  
All future sons are in your womb.  
Give us your light.  
Gives us your son.  
He will burn up darkness and destroy it.  
Retribution in the face of injustice,  
Compassion in the face of suffering,  
Sympathy in the face of calamity,  
Courage in the face of death.  
This he will be. He we will be creation out of destruction.  
Mother!  
Mother!  
Mother!

(Elkunchwar 42)

The atmosphere in the play is often dreamlike and nightmarish. The mood of the characters is aided by shadowy and unrealistic lightning and visual distortions in the set. A characteristic use of pauses and silence is carefully placed in counterpoint with speech. It is held for an abnormal length of the time and also contributed to the dream effect.
The plot and structure of the play tend to be disconnected and broken into episodes, incidents and tableaux, each making a point of its own. Unlike the dramatic conflict of the well-made play, the emphasis is on a sequence of dramatic statements by the dreamers like Intuc and Pancy. Though the play is structured into two acts; there is little action and more a dream vision of the characters. The plot and structure of the play are static, wearisome and circular because the character’s life is also the same. The play is a drama of episodes and demonstrations, although they are arranged to stimulate the intelligence of the audience and not to appeal to the emotions of the audience.

The speech in *Gabro* is heightened as expansive, rhapsodic, clipped and telegraphic. There are number of bad syntax, fragmented words, sudden breakdown of conversations and restless pause and silences which convey stifling state of characters’ mind. Pancy’s repression of her laughter expresses:

*Pansy:* Shrimant is...is...a...a...sickening...

*Shrimant:* I say, why don’t w-we-g-g-go home?

*Pansy:* A perfect ...a...a

(Elkunchwar 29)

*Garbo* is embodied with profound repetitions, pleonasms of words and sentences. The prolific use of tautologies and redundancies functions to reinforce an idea, contention or disputation. The repetitiveness cannot produce poetic and melodramatic feelings in the play rather they produce monotonous, wearisome, bizarre and tiresome tone. The repetitions articulate character’s infertile, sterile, lifeless talks and moods.

*Shrimant:* (No one stirs. All are silent, lifeless. After some time, in a tired)

Talk. Will somebody talk? (Pause). For God’s sake talk. (Pause) What’s the matter with you, all of a sudden? Like bloody corpses both of them. (Pause) Pansy. (Pansy does not answer. Shouts) Pansy! (Pansy does not answer.) Pansy! (Furiously, he begins to throw whatever comes to hand from where he is sitting.) A whole morning is wasted. Didn’t meet the soul.........To hell with you. (Pause) And
there’s is still the entire day to get through. I hope at least
Garbo turns up. (Pause) Talk, damn you.

(Elkunchwar 12)
The repetitions of words sometimes produce emotional overtones of the characters.


(Elkunchwar 42)

V.ii.v. Theme of Existentialism and Absurdity in Garbo:
The characters of Intuc, Pansy, Shrimant and Garbo are neither the family members nor the blood relatives; nor have they come together with a slightest possible idea of living together as a family, ever in the immanent or distant future. Rather, the characters in the play are the citizens of metropolitans’ city, outsiders, nonetheless, migrants from village to metropolis, brought together by chance and rootlessness which is their only bond. Makarand Sathe comments:

The characters in Garbo seem to be rootless, weightless, lost, and showy.

(Sathe 1063)
However, the rootlessness as the only bond lasts in the initial stage in their relationships. It depicts the meaningless life of the individuals. According to Ujjwala Jadhav:

In Garbo there are neither heroes nor villains. It depicts the meaningless life of the individuals.

(Jadhav 218)
Intuc is prattle, his speech is a playwright’s exploration of life’s futility, and it is the darning for life blood. Since they have lost meaning of life, hatred has arisen in their mind for all that is beautiful and sacred. They make fun of typical bourgeois ethics which are fake and pseudo; since the life itself for them is a kind of alienation. They make fun of even sacred thing in life. The purpose of life of Intuc, Pansy, Shrimant and Garbo is to lead to life according to their impulse and the purpose lends uncommon life style. They have adopted their own typical lifestyle
and they are frustrated by the real inhuman life and are reduced to dust. Frustrated and bored, they try to come out of existentialist boredom.

The characters in the play live with biological passion, feelings of love, rationality and popularity. They are all useless, so their lives become meaningless and useless. The whole life becomes mechanical and Garbo becomes instrument of sex. The characters in the play feel themselves alienated from the rest of world and therefore they are singled out. A single individual is alone in the vacuum of the world. No one is able to remove the sense of loneliness from his mind.

The characters in the play do not even commit suicide, which is actually meaningful, which brings salvation to them. It is a mandate to live and yet there is dangling dagger of death above. They live because the death does not come to them. They cannot create anything which is classic and beautiful. They lead a frustrated role in life and play a ridiculous and an erotic game.

**Pansy: I Know. But she is great.**

**Shrimant: Oh no! I see the light of devotion in his eyes! Honestly Pansy, you really are the most terrifying deadly humorist around. In what way is Garbo is great? Her only business in life has been jumping from one bed to bed. She’s nothing but a sex machine. (Pleased with a phrase). A Sex Machine. Yeah boy! A Sex Machine.**

(Elkunchwar 16)

They do not live like a man; they do not enjoy the sexual pleasure, they do not have any relation like male and female, they have only feeling of erotic sex machine. It is nothing but sufferance of all that is sacred holy and aesthetic sexuality. Elkunchwar tries to bring in here a dire reality of how in the meaningless words are nothing but bubbles; pleasure of sex is nothing but in and out.

Though, Garbo feels that she should get rid of such shackles, Intuc says that such shackles should be there. Man is to be tied by such shackles if he wishes to fall apart from illusion; if it is removed, man starts feeling lonely. The germinal and microbial cognizance is felt throughout the play. We feel that our life is *Shudra*. We do not have liberty in life. Life cannot be given any meaning because we cannot lead the life as we wish it to be.
Elkunchwar has tried to explore the tragic, meaningless, uselessness and absurdity of life. According to Albert Camus, the concept of life is nothingness and absurd. Garbo is complete failure in life because she lives aimlessly with existential anxiety. She has basically materialistic attitude. Her life is alienated and estranged with all the creative, resourceful aims and actions, happy spirit and purposeful achievements. She is trapped in cut-throat competitions and duties. She is lonely with all her aims and aspiration. Her destination is not complete throughout life because she is not pleased with all quintessential values. She betrothed with her work and gives least meaningful time to herself. Being apart from all ethical and fair principles, she lives a life almost practically and realistically. She is ruthless to herself because she aborts her child when she goes to shooting. Garbo represents as a trivial-being who can hopelessly gratify herself. She is cut off from all worth ethical values; values become burden to her. While sharing herself with Intuc, she comments:

> And what will you gain in return for all the suffering and the risk? Anything of value? And so on and on. Is there anything to be gained out of search exaggerated cautiousness? Making a million subtractions to get something. I can’t cope with this anymore. I am low woman of no importance why do you burden me with impossible significance. It is not fair.

(Elkunchwar 57)

Even the three characters: Intuc, Shrimant and Pansy cut off themselves from natural, normal and expected things. One of the brilliant characteristics of the play is illusion or false impression. Intuc hopelessly searches for creativity which is a kind of fantasy and daydream. He thinks Garbo’s child may bring meaning and worth value in his life. Garbo is nothing but an illusion that she has built for herself. Pansy is also unable to escape from the ultimate disillusionment. He thinks that nobody can escape him from the disillusionment.

V.ii.vi. Language and Dialogue in Garbo:

Dialogue writing is one of the characteristic features of the play. The dialogue uttered by the characters is interspersed with typical Marathi abuses. Yet, the play
never reaches to the obscenity or vulgarity. The readers occasionally feel that the playwright has consciously attempted to make words useless. Irony, satire, laughter and clownish dialogue make the audience think and ponder on the theme.

It is generally alleged that the language in Garbo is a common place and vulgar. Such dialogues don’t even appear in Marathi folk plays. The fact is that playwright has used such a common place vulgar and rustic language in order to express the barrenness of the modern generation. Elkunchwar’s strength lies in so called common place and vulgar language. It justifies Elkunchwar’s great command over language. Elkunchwar’s language though outwardly looking common but it is pregnant with meaning. Elkunchwar’s desires to transmit certain thoughts, even lavish use of English language at times create impression. Elkunchwar due to his rural background has enamoured of English language’s urbanity and modernity.

Elkunhwar’s insensitive language, audacious body language, sudden breakdown of conversation and restless pauses achieve something in conveying the stifling state of the characters’ existence and their physical desires. It is observed in the words of Shrimant very clearly what he has in his mind about Garbo:

**Shrimant:** Come off it, yaar. Who’s bickering? Aren’t we all involved with Garbo? I mean, I certainly am, only physically. If this is so, and is openly admitted to be so, and Garbo doesn’t seem to mind, why the hell are we chucking weighty words at each other? Sheer hypocrisy. And we don’t’ want that. Do we?

(Elkunchwar 17)

**V.ii.vii. Garbo: A Surrealistic Fantasy:**

Surrealist connections with the stage are necessarily somewhat uncertain. Illogic, which is static rather than dramatic, does not play fungal part. Freud himself would have insisted that even bad dreams have a point. But the search for an elusive reality or a personal identity in the fantasies of trance and dream, and in the violent expression of the subconscious mind, went on in one way or another for a generation, and inevitably touched those who wrote for the stage.

Garbo is a surrealistic fantasy dealing with desires and sexual fantasies. The name of the four characters represents their roles. Samik Bandyopadhyay comments:
Of the foursome, Shrimant alone, the earthiest of them all, has a name for himself. The others carry their roles in their names.

(Bandyopadhyay, P. xii)

The play opens with a scene of cynical camaraderie on a Sunday morning that soon breaks into bickering, inevitably leading on to the theme of Garbo whom all three of them invest with their particular desires and sexual fantasies. They all have physical sexual relationship with Garbo. Shrimant treats Garbo like an instrument of sex; Intuc as a ‘challenge’, living work of art that grows older, but never stale even after fulfilling the needs of all three, a part of her still remains untouched; and Pansy as a mother figure, a guardian deity. All the three hit out at one another and Garbo too with bitter, offensive banter and bite, trying to hold onto their private images of Garbo who in her turn, hits back from time to time, often out of extreme self contempt.

The second act opens after one month with the arrangements of the baby’s arrival. Garbo is in the desert of Rajasthan for the shooting of a film. The three characters impatiently wait for Garbo’s arrival. The atmosphere is full of joy and reverence for Garbo and so flippancy has no place in it. Shrimant, Intuc and Pansy are occupied with their dream project the arrival of their baby. When Garbo comes, she avoids the eyes of Intuc and goes on with her casual, flippant ways, narrating the activities at the shootout. Intuc guesses something has gone wrong with Garbo and the child. At last, Garbo lets them know that the baby is no more. It shocks the trio, especially Shrimant. Shrimant has gone impotent, and wanted that child badly to keep his identity as a man intact. The aborted child aborts with itself the hopes of the three-somes to create, or at last to witness the creation of something beautiful in their lives, otherwise full of dirt and filth. The characters start accusing one another of deception and mistrust. Intuc wants to have sex with Garbo for now she is fit for nothing but sex-machine.

The mood of the play gears into a dreamy and emotional state. Intuc is full of dreams now. He uses all possible power of words and his ability to use them as the means of pursing and convincing other to accept his views. Shrimant also lives in his fantasy that he would become father. They are all live in a dream. They are busy toying with their own dreamy ideas and are very happy. But Garbo asks:

What’s the use of having this child? Doesn’t he need a name? A father?  

(Elkunchwar 41)
Shrimant, already in a trance offers:

*He'll be my son. (Dreamy.) People will say, do you see that sweet boy? He's Shrimant's son.*

(Elkunchwar 41)

The three characters have genuine feelings. The threesomes are in a joyous mood and they are busy with the preparation for the coming baby. Shrimant scolds Pansy as he tries to play with the toy monkey meant for the baby. They eagerly wait for Garbo to come. They are worried too for there is no news of Garbo since she had left them last month. Shrimant still lives under the charmed spell of the last scene of the first Act when they celebrated the motherhood of Garbo. When Garbo returns, she avoids Intuc’s eyes. Intuc guesses from her behaviour that she might have lost the baby. She speaks in her usual flippant ways. She tells them about young director of the film and about how she tried to seduce him to get a role in his new film. But Intuc forces her to reveal what has happened to her child. Garbo lets them know that the child is no more, that she miscarried in an accident during the shot. They are shocked as their dreams are shattered. Intuc accuses her of cheating them. Garbo tries to convince them that it was just an accident and she did not mean to do it purposefully. She regrets that she could not do it for Intuc whom she owes a lot. Intuc accepts the fact but with an immense sense of loss:

*Let's return to filth. The world we desired was not for us, could never have been. (Laughs bitterly). We were idiots, out to turn dreams into reality. (Pause). Let's go back to our old world now. The world of filth. As a punishment. And as a sort of consolation too.*

(Elkunchwar 49)

Intuc lets his world of filth to return. Moreover, Pansy announces to leave him. Shrimant becomes restless and feels cheated by both Garbo and Pansy whom he has supported financially. Now when he needs their support to shield and assure him of his manhood, they desert him. As a well-constructed dream and the future hopes tied to its end, the inmates of the room enter the mutual accusations of distrust and deception. Elkunchwar’s *Garbo* deals with surrealistic fantasy. The characters live in a dream vision that they create something.
V.ii.viii. Garbo: A Play within Play:

The first act is an epitome of ironical comments on bourgeois’ mentality pretence and the habit of putting on false fronts. Shrimanth sits down in an elevated chair during their walk and he feels himself like a judge in the court. He asks Intuc to explain defend charges against him. The philosophy of self-deception is again reflected in the words of Intuc to cover up his real nature. He says:

_Intuc: Milord, we are decent, white-collar, middle-class intellectuals. However eloquent our speech outside the court may be, it is a sacred tradition with us, going back thousands of years and fully endorsed by society, that our lips shall remain sealed at the time of judgement._

(Elkunchwar 10)

Intuc makes fun of all those bourgeois concepts of ethics and values. The three character express indignation through their conversation with one another. Their hate for the bourgeois is made more intense by the dramatist. The playwright makes them play a game of police and criminal. Pansy and Intuc are made police officer, whereas Shrimant is an accused who is arrested and presented in the court of law. The charges against Shrimant are riden out in the court and which dissect bourgeois ethics and parody. The bourgeois narrow mindedness the fall of ideal life values, ethics, pretence falsity and slippery morality comes in a ridiculous and ironical way. Judgment passed by Shrimant is an attack on bourgeois pretence artificiality and false precedents. Shrimant says:

_Shrimant: Right. The court will now declare its verdict and pass sentence on you. Taking into consideration the serious nature of your crimes, the court has decided that gold medals shall be hung around your necks for each of the following charges: integrity, extensive scholarship, ardent selflessness, boundless philanthropy, humble service, burning patriotism and unblemished character. Accused will then he made to sit in a cushy, flower bedecked Impala and driven all around the town to the accompaniment of a brass band. At every square pious suhagans wearing traditional pearl nose ornaments will give them a heroes’
reception. Reports and photographs of the event will appear prominently in newspapers throughout the country.

(Elkunchwar 11)

This kind of ridiculous punishment passed by the jury has nothing to do with the three characters who think that they are singled out from bourgeois class and they have nothing to do with the class and the ethics and the character, intellect and indiscrimination. They also talk about their physical relationship with Garbo.

The three characters wait for Garbo’s arrival. It is a sure remedy to get way from boredom. They welcome her in a typical dramatic manner and start playing new game after her arrival. The name of the game is ‘a whore and three gentlemen’. Intuc plays the role of an affluent man. Shrimant becomes Pansy and Pansy becomes Intuc. They have put on fronts, but Garbo is Garbo herself. She has not put on any mask. Generally in a play the actors play their allocated role. They do not have any idea, whether they are an embodiment of the character of which ‘they are representatives’. They are aware of the fact. They have changed their roles through which they try to explore life. The playwright has endeavoured to expose bourgeois mentality, its ridiculousness, pretence and futility expressed in his play. They are the representative of middle class, when they meet to a prostitute, bargain their transactions. Outwardly, Tatya calls Garbo his daughter, but the way in which he looks at her is lustful. It is the same Tatya who is married a blind woman and produce nine ugly daughters, looks to Garbo as a sort of stop gap arrangement and falls to call her a daughter. ‘Female infanticide is a sin’, exactly opposite is in his behaviour pattern for cajole and stokes sexual organs of Garbo. That is why Tatya, Shrimant is down to earth naked. Even in his old age. He cannot get rid of precocious sensuality. He plays double role, his one mask is a typical bourgeois sacred man and there is lust.

The game that the three characters are playing in Garbo is their spiritual need because they are bewildered by a sense of loneliness and futility. They are even horrified and order to overcome the boredom. They play a game, what psychiatrist calls ‘the game of psychodrama’. Intuc wants to recreate aesthetic quagmire thorough the game.
V.iii. Dramaturgies in \textit{Desire in the Rocks}:

\textit{Desire in the Rocks (Vasanakand)} depicts the incidents in the lives of two characters: Hemakant and Lalita. The play is constructed into six scenes. Hemakant is Lalita’s brother. Hemakant and Lalita come together by chance and by choice enter the sexual relationships. Their relationship results into the pregnancy of Lalita. Hemakant accuses her of trapping him and depriving him of his artistic freedom and abundance her for a short while. Lalita gives birth to a stillborn. Hemakant returns to her and both face the wrath of the villagers. Lalita tells about the penance by turning herself into a prostitute. The furious villagers demolish Hemakant’s dream forest of the sculptures of the pure lust. Both get stoned and at last Lalita sets the mansion on fire, take his head in her lap and the play ends as the whole mansion bursts into flames. The play brings in the notions of the violation of social sections, the resulting sin and the redress of it through penance and punishment. It also brings in the notion of curse and its fulfilment through the death of child and its mother. \textit{Desire in the Rocks} is analyzed with a focus on the two prominent elements in the play. The theme of incest relationships between brother and sister and other hand the primordial elemental relationships between man and woman.

The theme of incest is not the focal point of the play. At its core lie the vibrant relationships between man and woman. However, the fact that the man and woman in question are also brother and sister who provides the play with its outer form and theme. The play opens with the invitation of Hemakant to his sister Lalita to involve in the sexual play. It ends with a sense of sin, unchastely, impurity and the resultant guilt on the part of Lalita. She considers their plights as the punishment for their sin. The theme of incest looms largely over the play. Thus, their relationships with each other cannot be fully studied by excluding this dimension. The author has taken much care not to complicate the brother-sister relationship by any material motif of property or revenge like in Webster’s \textit{The Duchess of Malfi}. There is no attempt either by Lalita to retain the estate legally offered to her father, or by Hemakant who is deprived of his due rights to process Lalita for the sake of property.

Lalita is younger than Hemakant by fifteen years. When the play opens, she is of twenty and Hemakant is of thirty five. They meet after the segregation of fifteen years. Their family history is revealed through their dialogues. They used to live with their father Dadasaheb, a rich Zamindar from an aristocratic family lineage. He was a man of very strict discipline in moral codes. He used to control his children through
his austere looks and speech. Lalita might have lost her mother in her very early
childhood as she mentions only the large portrait of the mother. She has to bow before
the portrait every night before going to sleep. Hemakant has developed a passion for
sculptures and his father obviously used to get enraged because of the different
expectations from his son. Once, he comes into Hemakant’s room with a hunter to
beat him. Hemakant getting hold of that announces his freedom. He leaves his father’s
house abandoning the legal rights on the property. He wanders throughout the Europe
for his passionately to become a sculptor. He leaves the house and breaks the relations
at his twenty when Lalita is just five. He returns after fifteen years of exile after the
death of his father.

Lalita has lived alone all these twenty years without the care and love of
mother, with the strict behaviour of her father and with the treatment of the
maidservants who always served her as a princess. Hemakant’s rooms were locked
forever and nobody was allowed to speak about him. One day, a maidservant has
shown a photograph of Hemakant to Lalita and terminated from the job. Lalita lived
like a princess in a golden cage with the feelings of fear, insecurity and the need of
love. The death of her father relieves her from his austere presence, but she gets
subjected to the care of security and love from somebody who is a blood relative, a
brother. She longs for his love, trusts him and submits herself and her will to him.
Hemakant, on the other hand, lives alienated from his home, close relations, blood ties
and society. He has accepted and suffered this estrangement for the single pursuit of
his passion for the creation in the rocks. He spots a model for his purpose in the form
of Lalita.

V.iii.i. Rasa Theory in Desire in the Rocks:

Elkunchwar has attempted various Rasa Siddhantas in his play Desire in the
Rocks for an aesthetic beauty. The study of the play in the light of the Rasa theory, it
becomes more significant and meaningful to the reader and audience. The Bibhatsa
Rasa is the major Rasa recognized in Desire in the Rocks.

Desire in the Rocks comprises the characteristics of Bibhatsa Rasa. The study
of the play reveals the sexual intimacy of Hemakant and Lalita who are brother and
sister. The society accepts relationship as a brother and sister, however, the brother-
sister sexual relation is forbidden at social and family level. Lalita wants their sexual
relation to be kept secret. However, Hemakant does not care for secrecy of their
physical relationship. This contrast of in the thinking about the relationship is explicit in the following dialogue of between Lalita and Hemkant on the occasion of nearing the procession of Goddess.

Hemakant: Look. Look in to my eyes. (Holds her tightly.) Look.

Lalita (in a swoon): Hem!

Hemakant: Look up Lalita. Look up.

Lalita: What is it? What? What is this noise?

Hemakant: The Goddess.

Lalita: The Goddess? Goddess?

Hemakant: Yes. They take her out in procession every new moon and And full moon night. To judge sin and virtue.

Lalita: Shut the windows, Hem.

Hemakant: No.

Lalita: Hem...

Hemakant: No. The windows will remain open.

(Elkunchwar 82)

The Bibhatsa Rasas is explored through the dialogues and positions of the lovemaking between Hemakant and Lalita in the second scene as follows:

Lalita: hold me close.

Hemakant: Come Here.

Lalita: Unhunh. Feel the agony first.

Hemakant: Lali...

Lalita: Shall I open my lips?

Hemakant: Lalan...

can’t take the weight of so much bliss. (he pulls her roughly to himself.) Oh! Hem!

**Hemakant:** Lal!

**Lalita:** you’ve scattered live coals in my body. Quench them with your lips.

(Elkunchwar 90)

In the second scene, when Lalita wants to open the windows during their physical pleasure:

**Hemakant:** Shall I shut the windows?

**Lalita:** Why? Why should you do that?

**Hemakant:** The Goddess is out there. And people.

**Lalita:** What Goddess? What People? And what sin am I guilty of? Let her see. Let the Goddess also see. She cannot have ever seen such a wild celebration of physical pleasure. Take me. Take me. Hold me close. I shall become one with you to the beat of these drums. Look. Look into my eyes before they close with happiness. Do you see fear? Doubt? Terror? You will see chandeliers of desire blazing there. Extinguish them one by one. With your lips. Hands. Body. Let only the burning torch remain. To prevent accusations. As witness to the uninhibited bliss of man and woman. A symbol of my eternally burning desire. Come to me. Come. Come.

(Elkunchwar 94)

The above dialogues between Lalita and Hemakant reveal sexual intimacy, physical pleasure and the exhibition of the sexual activity which indicates **Bibhatsa** feeling (the odious).

**V.iii.ii. Desire in the Rocks: An Archetype of Theatre of Cruelty**

The play is an impact of Antonin Artaud’s The Theatre of Cruelty. Antonin Artaud related cruelty with pure ethics. Stage performance is impossible without the element of cruelty. Even life is impossible without cruelty and he further says that bad omen is ultimate truth and therefore the very concept of cruelty is larger than life. Any
endeavour in life is cruelty. Struggle for existence is also cruelty and even erotic feelings are also cruel. If life is not without cruelty, why should stage be exception to that?

Mahesh Elkunchwar through his play *Desire in the Rocks* shows the realistic life which is free from time and place. Hemakant is cruel because he does not support Lalita’s weak protest. Hemakant’s erotic feelings are hideous because such feelings he uses for his art sculptures. The sexual relationship between Hemakant and Lalita, the handing over the Hemakant’s deceased child to a beggar, Lalita becoming a whore, villagers’ disgrace of Lalita and demolishing of the sculptures – all these actions show the obscenity and cruelty, erotic nature and violence of life. Elkunchwar tries to explore values of life from such hideous things.

**V.iii.iii. Desire in the Rocks: an Epitome of Symbolism**

The play *Desire in the Rocks* is set on a symbolic plain. The concept of time, place, situation and reality is not applicable to the plot of the play. The context of the past may not be assumed the consequences of any life style are not also applicable. The playwright has repudiated the bond of time, place and situation. Therefore, the play cannot be majored by the yardstick of reality and conventional criteria. The only yardstick which may be applied to the play is only that of content. The background of unintelligible self-sexual enjoyment lies at the forefront of a large way of the life. The present way of life is definitely modern. It has similarities to the medieval times of knighthood and serfdom. The play portrays a typical medieval aristocratic life, as well as the stereotyped lifestyle.

The plot of the play is based on the erotic relationship between brother and sister. The conflict is one of biological, psychological and the sole. The playwright has established a connection between the inner self of the characters with the situation of the outside. Elkunchwar has used the atmosphere around them to denote the inner kayos of brother and sister, whereby there is concord and discord between the two characters.

Right from the beginning till the end the play is passes through an extreme black shadow which is ripping and frightful. At night, it appears unanimated and again the remote thick forest. A mansion is constructed which is made of wood. The playwright has made use of the physical and metaphysical background to express the complex content of the play. The black stone, procession of Goddess and mansion are
symbols that add to the complexity of the play. If the stone is the symbol of lack of creativity, the procession of Goddess is a symbol of universality and consistent life values, whereas the wooden mansion is symbol of the curse. The dire of background does affect Hemakant and Lalita, but the impact of the background echo brings different effect.

Hemakant’s fascination for rocks also symbolizes his bend of mind. The contrasts in their attitudes towards the sculptures have also been suggested right in the beginning. He wants to immortalize her in the rocks. But she is reluctant to do so. She finds it sinful to bare everything to the public through the sculptures.

The orgy of the musical instruments in the procession of the goddess symbolizes the orgy inside where Hemakant worships Lalita’s beauty and they indulge with each other. She uses the symbol of Yamapash, the bonds of death for their union. When she is burning with the desire, he compares her with the flame-tree.

In the later phase, when Lalita finds Hemakant to be indifferent to her, she curses him in a variety of ways. She calls him a leech who sucks her blood. Lalita’s still-born baby is a symbol of punishment for their sin. Lalita says:

_**Lalita:** You have to be born a true human being. I am true. My blood is true. It’s alive. It’s impulses are true. They’re alive. What can I not understand? Do I not merit even this much, having travelled through fire, burning everything behind me? Why are you deceiving yourself? You know it yourself. That is why you sit staring at your work for hours in despair. Creation is not such an easy thing.

**Hemakant:** You telling me that?

**Lalita:** Yes I am.

**Hemakant:** and who are you anyway?

**Lalita:** There is something greater than your status and creation.

**Hemakant:** create something and show me.

**Lalita:** What?

**Hemakant:** A sculpture. A Poem. A Song. A Painting.

**Lalita:** Is that all?
**Hemakant**: It’s not easy. You have to stake a lifetime of obsession. Turning your back on all others calls.

**Lalita**: is that all? I am going to have a baby.

**Hemakant**: You’ve trapped me.

**Lalita**: What do you say that?

**Hemakant**: Are you happy because you’re going to have a baby? Or because it’s a way to put me in fetters?

(Elkunchwar 104-106)

The whole plot seems to be like an allegory of Vishwamitra-Menaka myth. After enjoying conjugal bliss with Menaka, Vishwamitra avoids further responsibility of its consequences. At another level, Elkunchwar probably wants to make a statement over the perpetual relationship between a man and woman.

The playwright has woven a fine costume of concord and discord. If Hemakant is a symbol of an artist; Lalita stands for craze for intense life. Both are brother and sister by relation. They have come out of a same womb. An artist loves life, which is neutral whereas, a work of art is an expression of that love of life. This is how they are symbolically lover and beloved, but not metaphorically. When an artist loves life with a sense of objectivity, it is not love at all; it is rather a sin, which gives birth to corrupt and dead images of life and art.

**V.iii.iv. Expressionism in Desire in the Rocks:**

Expressionist playwrights make regular use of soliloquies, asides and interior monologues to expose the character’s mind in order to give outer expression to thoughts and emotions which are normally unexpressed. Elkunchwar has used these dramatic techniques to bring the depth and complexity to his plays. He consistently applies soliloquy to reveal the self-communication of the characters in their most critical moments. The asides are often said to present the characters’ subconscious minds. But they actually present the characters’ more or less conscious thoughts and less unconscious urges.

Styan comments on the plot and structure of the Expressionistic plays in his book *Modern Drama Theory and Practice-3: Expressionism and Epic Theatre* as follows:
The plot and structure of the play tended to be disjointed and broken into episodes, incidents and tableaux, each making a point of its own.

(Styan 4)

*Desire in the Rocks* consists of a total of six scenes arranged in hierarchical succession. The first and last scenes are realistic. The four middle scenes are 'expressionistic', consisting of monologues of Hemakant and Lalita, interspersed with descriptions of the forest of sculpture, temple and mansion which forms the setting of the play and which is also an overseeing character in it. It influences both the characters and action like O’Neill’s *The Emperor Jones*. The scenes may be briefly outlined as follows:

The first and second scenes open at a rambling old mansion in pitch-black night with entrance of Lalita and Hemakan. Hemakant carries a torch. It starts with the realistic dialogues between Lalita and Hemakan. They discuss about their past and future plans. The scene ends with Lalita clings to Hemakan. They begins sexual act. The woman in a trance sways. Lalita and Hemakan freeze. Lights are dim and darkness falls. The beating of the drum in the procession of the Goddess on the road outside is heard at the close of the scene and it continues up to the end of the play.

The third scene opens at a veritable forest of Lalita’s sculptures outside the village. Hemakant is working on a new piece. Lalita sits on the ground and stare at him. Both the characters express their passion. It ends with the sound of women singing from the distance. Lalita turns in that direction. Gradually, the words of song become more distant and the strains of the song linger on with which the lights go off.

The fourth and fifth scenes open at the temple and mansion respectively. Lalita stands near Hemakant with a baby in her arms. The notes of women singing songs drift in form a distance. The scene consists with baby songs and soliloquies by Lalita when Hemakan leaves her alone. It ends with Lalita’s wandering blindly, calling out in mourning hysteria, her voice turn to shreds with terror. A solitary voice, lonely calls, answered only by their faint, far away echoes. Finally, she collapses, something within her has snapped, she whimpers and darkness falls.

The sixth scene opens at the forest of sculptures. Hemakant is sitting and Lalita is absorbed. Lalita is dressed gradually like a prostitute. Hemakant holds her hands tight. She looks at him with compassion. The villagers come with torches. Their faces are vindictive and violent. For a moment, they stand till watching to Hemakant
and Lalita. Slowly but steadily, they come forward to surround Hemakant and Lalita. Lalita goes towards them; Hemakant kneels down and bows his head. As mob moves forward, Hemakant raises his hammer. He musters all his strength to drop the hammer on the ground in the midst of silence, the people picks up stones, coldly vindictive. Some of them drag Lalita. Someone throws the first stone which draws Hemakant’s blood followed by shower of stones.

*Desire in the Rocks* has simplicity and austerity. The actions begin on the pitch-black nights, which are the most crucial situations in the life of Hemakant and Lalita. The readers learn about Lalita’s past through the dialogue between Lalita and Hemakant. There is only one single action and straight-forward movement without sub-plots, episodes, and digressions. The play ends with tragedy of the Hemakant and Lalita in darkness.

Another important characteristic of Expressionistic plays is the number of characters is reduced to minimum. The concentration is focussed on the central characters and other characters are not individualised. Elkunchwar has introduced only two central figures in the play who known as Hemakant, Lalita, and five women who sing a song at the end of the third scene. Except Hemakant and Lalita, the five women have not even been given any names.

Through the Expressionistic technique, Elkunchwar represents what happens in the mind and soul of the character under the stress of external incidents and circumstances on the stage in a concrete manner which is an objectification of the dark depths of the human psyche.

**V.iii.v. Existentialism in *Desire in the Rocks*:**

Hemakant’s individualistic limitations lie in his relative concept of love and sin. Hemakant is the protagonist whose ideas of sin are related to existentialism. He is a person who has established sexual relationship with his own sister that too with her own consent and yet he says that he has not committed sin. He is without encumbrance in so far as his relationship with his sister is concerned; it is just an embodiment of sexual desire. He is loyal to his sensitivity, impulses and ideas. He lives only in the present and thinks of the same. He is capable of making decision and ready to bear responsibility. Hemakant does not agree with the established values of life, conventional, social, cultural, religious and ethical precedents. In his effort to explore his own self, he realizes that he too is not true to life and his own self
awakened but he could not reach those incidents and their pros and cons because of limitations of his personality. Hemakant’s final lot is meaningless kernel of life because of his repudiation of conventional and realistic life values and his belief in it. Hemakant has built up a kind of castle around him for own safety. He always desired to test the beauty of life without having any scratch on it and therefore Lalita says:

**Hemakant:** (fearful) Am I so weak? Was I playing all my life when I thought I was unattached?

**Lalita:** You had erected a wall around yourself in self defence. You refused to get involved. You were always guarded, aloof to make sure that you didn’t suffer a single scratch. You wanted life’s warmth without burning your fingers. But life always has its revenge in the end Hem. Its blow has fallen on you all on a sudden. That’s why you have collapsed.

(Elkunchwar 127)

Lalita has woven together an unavoidable chain of the events of her life. It is an eternal and painless journey of sorrow, pangs and sufferings. Lalita says:

**Lalita:** Who says so? Where have I found the truth? Perhaps nobody finds it at any time. But that doesn’t mean we are permitted deny it. Our ineluctable destiny is to wander in search of it forever.

(Elkunchwar 128)

Even her ideas of sin are also beyond expectation. Lalita’s journey accompanied by black sorrow is nothing but a metaphysical exploration of life.

When his own conscious awakens Hemakant realizes the pangs and sufferings of Lalita. He feels that there is some unavoidable connection between his pseudo creations and Lalita’s deceased child. Creation means sacredness and happiness; therefore, the process of creativity is based on holiness and related to origin and principles of human beings.

**V.iii.vi. Language and Dialogues in Desire in the Rocks:**

The dramatic experience in *Desire in the Rocks* is on one hand philosophical, and intensely emotional on the other. Elkunchwar has woven these two textures together by making use of poetic language which occasionally turns out to be
philosophic. Elkunchwar describes Hemakant’s passion, his idea of physical pleasures and Lalita’s enamouring body in a poetic manner.

**Hemakant:** Yes. In all places. At all times. I will take you in all your moods. I will store them up in every drop of my blood. And bring them alive again in stone upon stone. Lali of the brimming, vulnerable eyes. Lali tossing from side to side with the exquisite pain of fulfilment. Lali of the full, inviting lips, Lali of the breasts having with emotion, Lali of the navel as deep as desire. Lali of the long, long thighs trembling with irresistible lust. I am going to embed it all in stone— the physical manifestations of pure desire. Primeval. Elemental. The eternal beauty and vitality of woman. The heady light of passion that surges and overflows through every pore of your body, will fill and flow out of every pore of my sculptures. The desire that palpitates in your every sinew will be seen breathing in my sculptures. This indestructible, eternal passion can be embedded only in another indestructible, eternal thing. Lali. In my sculptures. In art.

(Elkunchwar 91)

The poetic language has one of the layers of logic also. It is a characteristics feature of Elkunchwar’s poetic style to unite language with logic.

**Lalita:** So why have been punished?

**Hemakant:** it’s how you are.

**Lalita:** Why did my baby die?

**Hemakant:** Coincidence.

**Lalita:** Isn’t it a punishment for my sin?

**Hemakant (lost in his thoughts):** What does sin mean?

**Lalita:** I don’t know.

**Hemakant:** Even I don’t know, Lalita.

**Lalita:** I only know grief, agony, anguish.

(Elkunchwar 115-116)
Lalita’s severing herself from universal real and permanent values, alienation, separation, sense of loneliness, loneliness as an orphan and pangs of the mind all these are endless journey without any direction.

**Lalita:** I will come back. Of course I will. (Pause).
Where else can I go? How many days have gone by!
How alien is the sky overhead. How alien the ground beneath my feet. All eight directions, vast and alien.
Why do my eyes grow wet where I stand? And why is my mind like a broken shell- cast off on a desolate beach?
In orphaned solitariness like breath cut off from body.
How is it that the body doesn’t fray and fall off the barren mind? Why does my restless foot not stay in any place? Why can I not bear to lay my head anywhere?
Why does the mind not grow dizzy with this aimless wandering? Go. Keep going. You must keep walking, without a break, with no respite. There is nothing now for you, dear friend, except walk.

(Elkunchwar 121)

The poetic language of Elkunchwar does not emerge as figures of speech but it is command of the content of the play. Elkunchwar expresses his whole experiences of life through unique style. He has established his own style. It is free from conventional figures of speech; however, it is used with certain intention.

Elkunchwar uses monologues in his play without any prohibition. *Desire in the Rocks* contains the exquisite pieces of monologues. Use of the Monologues into the play is an art of the playwright. Elkunchwar skilfully deploys monologues to give vent to the personal anguish of his characters on the stage.

**V.iii.vii. An Exploration of Brecht’s Verfremdungseffekt in Desire in the Rocks:**

In the Epic Theatre of the 1920s and later, Brecht adapted the Russian Formalist concept of ‘defamiliarization’ into what he called the ‘Verfremdungseffekt’ or ‘alienation effect’. The term is also translated as estrangement effect or distancing.
effect; the last is closest to Brecht’s notion which avoids the connotation of jadedness, incapacity to feel and social apathy that the word ‘alienation’ has acquired in English. The effect, Brecht said, is used to make familiar aspects of the present social reality seem strange, so as to prevent the emotional identification or involvement of the audience with the characters and their actions in a play. His aim was instead to evoke a critical distance and attitude in the audience, in order to arouse them to take action against, rather than simply to accept, the state of society and behaviour represented on the stage.

The impact of Brecht’s alienation effect is marked on Desire in the Rocks. Though it has alienation effect, it tries to show a definite from out of deformity. The playwright keeps himself aloof from the dispute of the concept of sin, obscene, projectable and un-projectable and he tries to show life as it is. He makes skilful use of darkness also along with bright. This, he does for the communicating content of the play. The dark and bright have been endowed with words and rhythm. Both the dark and bright are symbolic here.

Desire in the Rocks is a thoughtful and thought provoking sculpture. It is the exception of the playwright that the audience should watch this play in the almost objective manner. Their mental and emotional identification with the characters on the stage is not acceptable of the playwright. He expects from audience thoughtful identification with the play. Audience should not involve themselves in the feeling around by the play, shouldn’t enable their emotion but rather the emotions so created should be scatter in the pieces. The audience should become thought provoking. Elkunchwar has consciously made use of pauses in this play and they are very vital to impart to content aspects that he assumes. The playwright has made use of Verfremdungseffekt to impart his thoughts without going across proscenium art.

In order to bring about a harmonious blending of content and expression, Elkunchwar has discarded the traditional technical devices and he has adopted new devises. Instead of using the concept of scene and act the whole play has been brought up on visual level. Elkunchwar’s extreme command over dramaturgy is seen in his micro-colour suggestions when we come across drapery, light effects, emotional level of characters, punctuation marks, body language of the characters, procession of Goddess and cruel tendency of the mob. Elkunchwar has finely blended together the style of Antonin Artaud and Bertolt Brecht in the use of his devices as a result.
V.iii.viii. *Desire in the Rocks: Epitome of Tragedy*

The play *Desire in the Rocks* with its theme of incest becomes a tragedy in the tradition of the classical Greek tragedy. It is a play which re-enacts private anguish on a public stage. The protagonists belong to the aristocratic family with an ancestral history of prosperity, pride in the wealth, many mansions in many villages, the injustice inflicted upon the poor people to the extent of burying them alive for the construction of their mansions. But, the family is also a cursed that their heirs will not survive. There will be nothing to the inmates of the family but the anguish, suffering, premature death and segregations from their near ones. Lalita and Hemakant are destined to the same fate. They are brought to the mansion, forced into the forbidden relationships and punished as retribution. No compensation comes to them. There is no tragedy where there is compensation and justice. There is little they could mend their real beings, attempt to understand the workings of their fate and submit to it, but with the full knowledge. Hemakant shuts his eyes to the deeper workings of the fate and rejects to know his role in it. Lalita, on the other hand, shows her courage to take on the journey to the inroads of the truth. Like Sophocles’ *Antigony* and *Electra*, she makes a deliberated choice to face the path destined to her.

V.iii.ix. *Songs and Music in Desire in the Rocks:*

Elkunchwar artistically employs songs and music in his *Desire in the Rocks*. Lullaby is the song which expresses heightened emotions, love and affection for a new baby. In *Desire in the Rocks* five women sing song (lullaby) at the end of third and fourth scene of the play.

*First Woman: In the first month...*

*The mother- to- looks golden.*

*The baby grows, a dark –skinned god.*

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*Fifth Woman: In the fifth month...*

*The baby bows to the Goddess*

*Pick up your fill of scattered pearls*

*Sleep my baby sleep.*

(Elkunchwar 107)

Lalita sings a song (lullaby) in scene four very softly.

*My baby, he lies in a jewelled bed*
A toy made of pearls hangs above
This baby to me by the Goddess given
Now wants to sleep, sleep dear love.....

(Elkunchwar 109)

Lalita sings these lullabies because she thinks that the birth of baby is natural consequence to her and she is not cursed. The two songs express pristine emotions of Lalita for a baby. The songs also express her romantic obsessions and fantasies of the new-coming baby. The song makes escapism of her doubts and fears about the society. The baby is growing in her womb is from illegitimate relationship her brother. However, Hemakant, her brother, he fails to find anything sinful in the relationship.

Drum beating in Desire in the Rocks symbolizes the pervasive and inescapable presence of the primitive impulses. Furthermore, the throbs of the drum are the most effective device used in the play to objectify the inner terrors of Lalita and Hemakant. It becomes the voice of their internal guilt. The arbitrary relationship between Hemakant and Lalita is basically innate and natural in its pervasive nature. The song employed in the play represents innocence of these characters. Instead, the social system creates a kind of fear, guilt and depression in their heart. The continuous beating of the drum expresses more exhausted and frightened hallucinations of these characters.

V.iv. Conclusion:

The chapter is about the various dramatic techniques used by Mahesh Elkunchwar in his plays Garbo and Desire in the Rocks. Mahesh Elkunchwar has used various dramatic techniques of the Western and Classical Indian theatre in his plays. He has experimented with the forms and content. He aptly uses praiseworthy techniques to express his views on the evils, problems and maladies of society. He makes innovations in music, amalgamation of traditional dramatic patterns with appropriate and evocative symbols, language, juxtaposition of history with contemporary political, economical and social situations, a unique blending of seriousness with the wit, humour, satire, irony and so on.

As a playwright, theorist and critic, Mahesh Elkunchwar significantly contributes in development of the contemporary Marathi and Indian theatre. His plays deal with wide range of themes. The nature and process of creativity, sexual urge and
drives, problems of communication and dialogue between people, their need and struggle to belong to and connect with the surrounding, their attempts to know themselves and others to achieve fulfilment in life are the issues that concern him and consequently find expressions in his plays.

Elkunchwar acknowledges the influence of the various -isms of the Nineteenth and Twentieth century from the Western country such as the Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Existentialism, Expressionism, Imagism, the Epic Theatre, the Theatre of Absurd and the Theatre of the Cruelty and the Western playwrights such as Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, Luigi Pirandello, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Ionesco and Anton Chekhov. The reflection of these various -isms and playwrights is figured in his plays. Elkunchwar has traced back not only the Greek Classics and Western theatre but also Indian Classical dramatic theory of Bharata’s Natyashastra and folk forms of the Indian tradition.

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CHAPTER -VI
CONCLUSION

Drama is the prominent form of literature. It articulates message for the viewers largely through its stage performance marked by its distinctiveness. Drama is live and more genuine representation which defines and designs the experiences of life. It breaks the web of illusion and ignorance developing understanding and perception of the people. It is the most touching medium of representation of human life and it has a power to surface the conscience of the audience. It is more sensitive, sincere and the complete form of literature. The drama being dynamic medium, depicts the dynamics of human experiences acquainting us with character’s veiled and intricate pattern of human consciousness.

Dramaturgy is the constituent part of the theatrical art which involves bringing productions of life on the stage. It is the art of dramatic composition and representation of the main elements on the stage. It explores various dramatic techniques and devices, which comprises dramatic structure, stage craft, set designs and entire textual composition. The study of dramaturgy also includes the study of history of theatre. Dramaturgy is widely recognized as important part of the creative process or writing texts.

The Contemporary Experimental Plays have made a brilliant culmination in the field of theatre in the form of various dramatic devices, techniques and performances on the stage. Along with acceptance and practice of traditional theatrical performance, it also shows sign of subversion where it challenges the canon of the Western and Indian drama. The Contemporary Experimental plays display three major influences: The first influence on the Contemporary Experimental theatre is that of the Western Theatre. The second influence is that of Classical Sanskrit theatre, which had for its foundation Bharatmuni’s *Natyashastra*. The third influence is that of the folk theatre. It is scattered all over the country in various forms such as *Ramlila, Nautanki, Yatra, Tamasha, Dashavtar, Khel, Keertan, Bharud*, etc. The folk form is underwent metamorphosis during the British regime and then in the post-independence period, but folk theatre definitely influenced the Contemporary Experimental Plays.
The present thesis is the modest attempt to investigate the dramaturgy revealed in the Contemporary Experimental plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar and enter the horizons of the Contemporary Indian Theatre.

In the milieu of the contemporary Indian drama, the impact of the Western theatre was prominently noticeable. There was an attempt to adopt the techniques of Bertolt Brecht, Samuel Beckett, Antonin Artaud, Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekhov and August Strindberg as well as various –isms such as Expressionism, Symbolism, Naturalism, Existentialism, Absurdism, the Epic Theatre and the Theatre of Cruelty. However, the Contemporary Experimental plays have retained its Indian identity by evoking typical Indian situations, Indian moods and sentiments though the application of what was universal and relevant in the Western devises. The Contemporary Experimental plays in the sixties and seventies represented the general modern human situations such as a sense of alienation, senseless suffering and unpredictability of the universe.

In the 1970s and thereafter, the search for the roots of Indian theatre became deeper and more insistent. The folk forms turned out to be a rich source of authentic modes and expression of native experiences and wisdom. The need for probing the indigenous elements in theatre stirred the imagination of playwrights, directors, producers and drama critics. The last two decades of last century witnessed a change from the trend of the anti-theatre, anti-novel and anti-poetry, which sought to de-emphasise the language and the story element to the literary trend and there is a renewed focus on the language, the story and the narrative.

The legendary trio of playwrights Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar has been at the helm of redefining meaning as well as substance in the Indian theatre. Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar have put the Marathi drama on the international map with their intensely thought-provoking and socially significant plays. They appeared on the scene of the Marathi theatre from the mid-1960s. The Marathi theatre witnessed the decline of the verse play and the rise of the prose drama after 1920. The glorious days of the Marathi verse play were followed by a long period of decline for the Marathi drama. Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar contributed to the growth and development of the modern Indian theatre by their innovative works and the play’s presentation on the stage.
The plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar express their deep concern for society. They did not choose the subjects of their plays or wrote with a view to their commercial success. However, they dealt with the themes that genuinely interested them and were vital such as the several ills the Indian society was beset with the problems. They make readers and audience restless and galvanise us to think by portraying the problems in a frank and objective manner. Instead of aiming at making the audience laugh or weep, they aim at forcing them to think. They have expressed their vision of the rottenness in contemporary society with an unflinching realism. They do not mince words while portraying the stark reality as it is. They have shown a mirror to the society while expressing their heart-felt feelings and sincere reactions to the contemporary situation.

VI.i. Vijay Tendulkar:

Vijay Tendulkar has been the front runner among the revolutionary playwrights. He is considered a controversial dramatist, as almost all his plays deal with some controversial topics related to sex, violence, politics and women. His plays explore the anxieties, tensions, suffocations and agonies of the urban white-collar and middle class society. They also point out the conflict and confrontation between individual and society. His protagonists, both men and women have to bear the brunt of social maladies. Their undeserved humiliation made them rebel against the conventional and traditional norms and values.

Tendulkar’s precursors such as K. P. Khadilkar, G. B. Deval, and R. G. Gadkari had dealt with contemporary social problems in some of their plays. With the exception of B. V. Varerkar, P. K. Atre and M. G. Rangnekar the other playwrights in the post-independence era were mostly writing farces and melodramas in order to entertain the audiences. Tendulkar’s socially and politically significant plays revolutionized the Marathi drama which was trapped in a melodramatic mode. He forced the reader-audience to confront the brutal realities of life through his portrayal of society and human life with all its ugliness and crudity. Vijay Tendulkar is a problem play writer like G. B. Shaw. In almost all his plays, he raises some social maladies with a keen eye for negative presentation of the aberrant types in the society. He is fond of describing vultures, exploiters, sadists, predators and some atavistic behaviour. He wants to root out the evils of the world by examining critically and exposing dauntlessly and provocatively.
The violence becomes the integral part in Vijay Tendulkar’s plays as his plays are based on reality. The Indian society is divided into many castes and religions and the upper class people always rule over the lower classes. The relationship is like the ruler and ruled. If the ruler is going to oppress the ruled and the ruled wants to take revenge, violence is inevitable. The upper class people have exploited the *dalits* not only physically but also economically. Tendulkar’s plays are unconventional and he penetrated the dark corners, the repression, the brutality, rejection and alienation of his characters. According to him, theatre is necessary to break the traditional framework of the Marathi theatre was essential and to do some experiment. This view of Tendulkar shows that he was influenced by a French dramatist Antonin Artaud who replaced the French “bourgeois” classical theatre with the “theatre of cruelty” and in his plays he liberated the human subconscious and revealed man to himself. Tendulkar’s *Silence! The Court is in Session* and *Ghashiram Kotwal* are influenced by Artaud’s ‘Theatre of Cruelty’ and he experimented with it. In the *Silence! The Court is in Session* the protagonist of the play Leela Benare suffers a lot in the hands of other characters of the play. At the end of the play she is sentenced to undergo an abortion. In *Ghashiram Kotwal*, Ghashiram suffers due to the punishment given to him for theft he has not committed. Injustice is done to him by the Brahmins of Poona. Later, after becoming the Kotwal of Poona, he takes revenge on the Brahmins of Poona by committing cruel atrocities against them. Lalita Gauri, the daughter of Ghashiram dies while undergoing an abortion due to the midwife’s crude attempt. Ghashiram is killed by the mob at the end of the play.

Tendulkar has an equal command of feeling and form, matter and manner. His dramatic portrayal of social ills and maladies is not simply historical, dry and monotonous; but rather it is suffused with various dramatic and poetic devices. His images, symbols and metaphors are very suggestive; so far as the dramatic pageant and presentation is concerned, Tendulkar seems to be master craftsman with an unslipping grip on the various techniques of dramatic art. In *Silence! The Court is in Session* the symbols such as the title, the door bolt, during the mock trial animal images like dog, hen, parrot and crow have used very skilfully. In *Ghashiram Kotwal* animal imagery such as tiger, lion, pigs, monkey, donkey and dog has used by Tendulkar. They are beautifully placed in order to suggest the sense.

Tendulkar has traced back not only the Greek Classics but also Indian Classical dramatic theory of Bharata’s *Natyashastra, Sutradhara* from classical
Sanskrit plays and folk forms of the Indian tradition. He has used various *Rasa Siddhantas* such as *Bibhatsa Rasa*, *Karuna Rasa*, *Vira Rasa* and *Hasya Rasa* are explored in the in *Silence! The Court is in Session* and *Ghashiram Kotwal*. Tendulkar has used in order to give an aesthetic pleasure to the reader and audience. *Ghashiram Kotwal* is full of actions. The play observes the folk-theatre form and it is turned almost into a musical. It is the combination of *Tamasha, Khele and Dashavatar*. The actions in the play are form oriented. Music is an inseparable part of folk-theatre and in the plays of Tendulkar. Tendulkar has used music in his play *Ghashiram Kotwal* particularly.

In Vijay Tendulkar’s *Silence! The Court is in Session*, the mock trial leads the action to present and past of Leela Benare. The Western technique ‘play within the play’ helps the writer to show the actions which have taken place in the past life of Leela Benare. *Silence! The Court is in Session* contains the characteristics of existentialism as well as the theatre of Absurd. It contains the elements of grotesque uncertainty, disorder, alienation and disillusionment. It reveals the ugliness of human life and identity crisis.

Vijay Tendulkar’s plays established new conventions in Modern drama by writing simple natural and character revealing dialogues. Tendulkar never used dialogue that can reach poetic heights when simply for dramatization, a temptation that almost all Marathi playwrights have failed to resist. The dialogue gradually exposes his character. He also used the old techniques of soliloquies effectively. His characters have self revealing dialogues.

Tendulkar makes effective use of irony and satire. He also makes effective use of the traditional techniques and soliloquies. Tendulkar’s dialogues are simple and natural. They gradually expose his characters. He does not use refined dialogues simply for dramatization. His simple dialogues can reach poetic heights when required.

According to Tendulkar, playwriting was his necessity and the way he talked and behaved was his reaction to the terrible feelings of loneliness. Though he was in the crowd he felt himself lonely all the time. Tendulkar got from happiness and sorrow, excitement and thrill, anger and pleasure, as he was leading a very intense life his writing came to him naturally. Tendulkar presented the woes of the middle class as he himself came from a middle class family and middle class surroundings. The struggle and tensions of the middle class and shattering of their dreams, the cruel and
harsh surroundings that trapped these victims, their emotions, misery, and sufferings are presented with degree of sympathy bordering on sentiments while presenting of the social reality. Tendulkar discovered that violence makes men fascinating.

VI.ii. Satish Alekar:

Satish Alekar is a Modern Indian Contemporary Experimental playwright and one of the most outstanding practitioners of performing arts. He is known as a man of the theatre because he has acted in movies, directed and produced plays, movies, documentaries and television serials in Marathi, Hindi and English. His plays translated into the major Indian and Western languages, having gained a national and international fame and name.

As a writer and director, some people definitely left impact on Satish Alekar’s mind. Satish Alekar in his early career as a playwright has greatly influenced by the great works like Ritwik Ghatak’s Bengali film Meghe Dhaka Tara, Shambhu Mitra’s two plays King Oedipus and Putulkhela, Vijay Tendulkar’s Silence! The Court is in Session, Ibrahim Alkazi produced National School of Drama’s Three Penny Opera, Coceshian Chalk Circle a play by Bertolt Brecht and Shanta Gandhi’s drama Jasma Oden, a Bhavai type play. He feels that Ritwik Ghatak’s Bengali film is a very great because this film is a beautiful entertainment of horizontal-vertical threads of relationship. Among a family of four- mother, daughter, sister, brother and unemployed, helpless father; this film subtly reflects a parallel thread of violence along with love. Financial and emotional exploitation is seen mercilessly depicted. The heroine’s sense of education to look at all these networks disinterestedly is itself piteous. It is the style of Ritwik Ghatak to take up a square family and present a spectacle of diverse personalities. Satish Alekar is much fond of Tendulkar’s four plays, Ghashiram Kotwal, Ashi Pakhare Yeti, Sakharam Binder and Silence! The Court is in Session.

Apart from the impact of Tendulkar’s plays, Ritwik Ghatak, Shambhu Mitra, and Ibrahim Alkazi Satish Alekar acknowledges the influence of the Western theatre and the playwrights like Ionesco, Bertolt Brecht, Luigi Pirandello, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter and Ionesco in the development of the form, content and techniques. He also influenced by the various -isms of the Nineteenth and Twentieth century from the Western country like the Symbolism, Surrealism, Existentialism,
Expressionism, The Epic Theatre and The Theatre of Absurd. The reflection of these various currents of thoughts figure out in his plays.

Satish Alekar’s plays belong to the school of Absurd Theatre. Satish Alekar has developed his own style of the Absurd plays, with relevant links of the tradition with modern society. He is primarily concerned with the middle class consciousness and his main concern is with the impact on this consciousness of the fundamental futility and meaningless at the heart of human existence. The Absurdity and Existentialism presented in *The Dread Departure* and *Begum Barve*. *The Dread Departure* through the post-death rituals of the protagonist Bhaurao. *Begum Barve* presents the painful situations of Jawdekar, Bawadekar and Shyamrao for their own meaningless, sterile life and Begum Barve who lives in the fantasy of *Sarangnayana* who was a minor character in *Sangeet Saubhadra*. Alekar has been accused of being out of tradition.

Alekar is well known for his ironic perspective on life. His language is an expression of irreverence, ranging from playfulness in order to scathing irony. Its flavour is so unique which is described as *Alekari*. He borrows the technique of alienation effect from Brecht’s Epic theatre to help audience analyze the scenes critically and reflect on them instead of getting emotionally involved in the play.

Alekar traces back the Indian classical Sanskrit plays. He has used *Sutradhara* from classical Sanskrit plays, folk forms of the Indian tradition and songs from the Marathi *Sangeetnatak*. *Sutradhara* plays various roles in *The Dread Departure*. As a narrator (dead Bhaurao), *Sutradhar* in first act narrates his own *Aakhyana* of his departure. *The Dread Departure* looks at death in manner of a tragi-comedy. It takes an ironic look at the funeral rites with the help of the traditional Marathi *Keertans* and *Abhangas* of the famous Marathi saints such as Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Eknath, Tukaram and Ramdas. Begum *Barve* is a parody about the female characters of *Marathi Sangeetnatak*. Barve was in the past a small time female impersonator of the *Sangeetnatak* era. In *Begum Barve* Alekar has used songs from the famous *Sangeetnataks* such as Annaasaheb Kriloskar’s *Sangeet Saubhadra*, Ram Ganesh Gadkari’s *Ekach Pyala*, Deval’s *Samshaykallol*, and *Sangeet Sharada* Khadilkar’s *Sangeet Swayamvar* and *Sangeet Manapaman*.

The experimental vein, both in respect of theme and technique is as apparent in *The Dread Departure* as in *Begum Barve*, though the latter has not greater thematic weight. It is a play dealing with the inner world of the mind, a drama reflecting the
hero’s mirror image of himself in his ‘land heart’s desire.’ The protagonist is an actor of the second rank who specializes in female roles. The yawning gulf between his heart’s desire to play the role of the heroine at least once in his lifetime and the harsh reality constitutes the core of the play. *Begam Barve* like *The Dread Departure* is a play tinged with multiple uncertainties and is a peculiar mixture of hope, melancholy and music. One of the strengths of the play is that it is a remarkable tale acknowledging the myths while doggedly trying to get to the facts of the *Sangeetnatak* tradition that Marathi theatre is so steeped in. Right from the start, there is no nonsense about an era whose time has come and gone, even as the playwright cuts through the fabrication of a nostalgic realist fable of an unidentifiable beginning shrouded in mystery.

**VI.iii. Mahesh Elkunchwar:**

Mahesh Elkunchwar is one of the significant Contemporary Indian Experimental playwrights. He has played an important role in the shaping of modern, post modern Indian Theatre along with other well known playwrights such as Badal Sarkar, Mohan Rakesh, Girish Karnard, Vijay Tendulkar and Satish Alekar.

Mahesh Elkunchwar has significantly contributed in the development of the Contemporary Experimental Theatre as a playwright, theorist and critic. His plays deal with wide ranging themes and the social issues, conflict between tradition and modernity, between old and new.

Mahesh Elkunchwar duly acknowledges the importance of the two elements that have been his source of inspiration as a playwright. The first element is from the theatre of Vijay Tendulkar and the second element comes from the Western playwrights such as Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, Luigi Pirandello, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Ionesco and Anton Chekhov. Elkunchwar developed interest in theatre after a chance watching of Vijay Tendulkar’s play *Mi Jinkalo, Mi Harlo (I win, I Lost)*. Elkunchwar has collected as many plays by Tendulkar as he could read them. This reading attracted him towards the field of Marathi theatre and also inspired him for a playwriting career. He was moved by the arresting power of Tendulkar’s plays.

Apart from the impact of Tendulkar’s plays, Elkunchwar acknowledges the influence of the various isms of the Nineteenth and Twentieth century from the Western country such as the Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Dadaism, Surrealism,
Existentialism, Expressionism, Imagism, The Epic Theatre, The Theatre of Absurd and the Theatre of the Cruelty. The reflection of these various -isms figured in his plays. Elkunchwar’s plays are written in the absurd style. The dramatic devices like games and role playing are used in his play *Garbo*. These aspects of his plays are illustrated in relation to the features of his plays such as themes, plot-construction, characterization, diction, setting, symbols and the dramatic forms. The subject in *Desire in the Rocks* is an incestuous relationship between a brother and a sister, and the intractable emotional and other problems the situation creates. The play has been interpreted on a symbolic level also, as a study of the complex relationship between the artist and his creative impulse. Elkunchwar’s plays have shown how the barriers between professional and experimental drama are breaking down, which indeed is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Elkunchwar’s *Garbo* and *Desire in the Rocks* are influenced by Artaud’s ‘Theatre of Cruelty’ and he experimented with it. In *Garbo* the cruelty is revealed through the situation when Shrimant, Intuc and Pansy consider Garbo as sex machine, the abortion because Garbo is very career oriented and murder of Garbo by Pansy, Intuc and Shrimant because they know about the abortion and they kill Garbo.

Elkunchwar employs various symbols and imageries in his *Garbo* and *Desire in the Rocks*. In *Garbo*, Shrimant symbolizes a richness and materialistic; Intuc represents intellectuality (a college professor); Pansy indicates a womanish and effeminate adolescent of seventeen. Elkunchwar’s use of symbolic names grows out the action of the play. Shrimant’s sexual impotency, Intuc’s loss of creativity and Garbo’s loss of creativity both in artistic and biological terms contribute to the total action of barrenness and waste in *Garbo*. In *Desire in the Rocks* Hemakant is a symbol of an artist; Lalita stands for craze for intense life. Both are brother and sister by relation but they keep physical relationship which is considered adultery and sin in the society. Adulteration or sin give birth to corrupt and dead images of life and art.

*Garbo* and *Desire in the Rocks* are known as expressionistic plays with essential techniques and characteristics. *Garbo* is dramatisation of the subconscious, a kind of scripted dream, with a consequent loss of character motivation. It expresses character’s self-centred megalomania, delusional fantasies of power and inflated self-esteem. The play is mystical, even with frequent apocalyptic overtones. The apocalyptic overtones are not only seen in the actions of the characters such as Shrimant and Intuc and Pansy rather in the feelings and fantasies of them.
*Desire in the Rocks* consists of a total of six scenes arranged in hierarchical succession. It has simplicity and austerity. The actions begin on the pitch-black nights, which are the most crucial situations in the life of Hemakant and Laita. It has minimum characters. The concentration is focussed on the central characters and other characters are not individualised.

Elkunchwar has tried to explore the tragic, meaningless, uselessness and absurdity of life in *Garbo* and *Desire in the Rocks*. Garbo is complete failure in life because she lives aimlessly with existential anxiety. Even the three characters: Intuc, Shrimant and Pansy cut off themselves from natural, normal and expected things. In *Desire in the Rocks*, Hemakant is an existentialist protagonist whose ideas of sin are related to existentialism. He is a person who has established sexual relationship with his own sister that too with her own consent and yet he says that he has not committed sin.

Elkunchwar’s extreme command over dramaturgy is seen in his micro-colour suggestions when it comes to drapery, light effects, emotional level of characters, punctuation marks, body language of the characters, procession of Goddess and cruel tendency of the mob. The impact of Brecht’s alienation effect is marked on *Desire in the Rocks*. Though it has alienation effect it tries to show a definite from out of deformity whereas *Garbo* is a surrealistic fantasy; dealing with desires and sexual fantasies. The characters live in a dream vision that they create something.

Elkunchwar traces back not only the Greek Classics and Western theatre but also Indian Classical dramatic theory of Bharata’s *Natyashastra* and folk forms of the Indian tradition. He has used various *Bibhatsa Rasa* in *Garbo* and *Desire in the Rocks*. The *Bibhatsa Rasas* is explored through the dialogues of the four characters, when they wait and speak about Garbo. *Desire in the Rocks* comprises the characteristics of *Bibhatsa Rasa*. It reveals the sexual intimacy of Hemakant and Lalita who are brother and sister.

Elkunchwar artistically employs songs and music in his *Desire in the Rocks*. Lullaby is the song which expresses heightened emotions, love and affection for a new baby. Drum beating in *Desire in the Rocks* symbolizes the pervasive and inescapable presence of the primitive impulses. The throbs of the drum are the most effective device used in the play to objectify the inner terrors of Lalita and Hemakant.
VI.iv. Findings of the Research:

- The Contemporary Experimental Plays have made a brilliant culmination in the field of theatre in the form of various dramatic devices, techniques and performances on the stage.
- They trace back their origin in classical Indian and Western drama by adopting their dramatic style.
- They show sign of subversion where they challenge the canon of the Western and Indian drama.
- They are characterized by the Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Existentialism, Expressionism, Imagism, The Epic Theatre, The Theatre of Absurd and the Theatre of the Cruelty in the theme, structure, dialogues, setting and performance of the play. The presentation of the contemporary day to day life is its main purpose.
- The Contemporary Experimental plays in the sixties and seventies represented the general modern human situation- a sense of alienation, senseless suffering and unpredictability of the universe.
- In the 1970s and thereafter, the search for the roots of Indian theatre became deeper and more insistent. The folk forms turned out to be a rich source of authentic modes and expression of native experiences and wisdom.
- The return to folk form is a return to a verbose, declamatory style with a profusion of song and music which characterize various folk forms.

VI.iv.i. Vijay Tendulkar:

- Vijay Tendulkar has used the conventional dramatic technique with modern innovations in order to express his themes and vision more effectively.
- Vijay Tendulkar has mingled the Western form and the indigenous folk forms to reach the desired effect.
- Vijay Tendulkar has chosen different forms of presentation in his plays on the basis of their ability to deliver his message to the reader-audience effectively.
- Vijay Tendulkar succeeds in avoiding the reader-audience’s identification with the characters and situations by bringing about the distancing effects in his plays.
• Vijay Tendulkar has given a new direction to modern Indian theatre by his innovative experimentation with the form and technique of drama.

• Vijay Tendulkar uses the stage not as a means to provide entertainment but to bring about a change or reformation in the attitude of people.

• Vijay Tendulkar has satirized the shams and snobbishness of society and the vices and follies of human beings with a view to help man get over his defects.

• Instead of giving solutions to the social problems that he has raised, Tendulkar tries to awaken people’s conscience and create awareness about the defects of society.

• Vijay Tendulkar has always raised his voice against the social evils like exploitation and atrocities through his plays.

• Vijay Tendulkar envisions an ideal society, free from exploitation and oppression, in which there is equality, freedom, happiness and peace for everyone. A sick society with decaying standards of morality cannot hope to prosper and flourish. Tendulkar has attempted to eradicate the obstructive forces that stand in the way of a healthy growth and development of human life.

VI.iv.ii. Satish Alekar:

• Satish Alekar is a Modern Indian Contemporary Experimental Playwright and is one of the most outstanding practitioners of performing arts.

• Apart from the impact of Tendulkar’s plays, Ritwik Ghatak, Shambhu Mitra, and Ibrahim Alkazi Satish Alekar acknowledges the influence of the Western theatre and the playwrights like August Strindberg, Anton Chekhov, Ionesco, Bertolt Brecht, Luigi Pirandello, Samuel Beckett, Herold Pinter, Ionesco and Antonin Artaud in the development of the form, content and techniques.

• Satish Alekar influenced by the various isms of the 19th and 20th century from the Western country like the Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Surrealism, Existentialism, The Epic Theatre and The Theatre of Absurd. The reflection of these various currents of thoughts figure out in his plays.

• Satish Alekar has developed his own style of the absurd, with relevant links with the tradition. His plays belong to the school of Absurd Theatre.
Satish Alekar is primarily concerned with the middle class consciousness and the impact on this consciousness of the fundamental futility and meaningless at the heart of human existence.

Satish Alekar’s presentation of this middle class experience is marked by an effective use of irony, satire and sarcasm.

Satish Alekar is well known for his ironic perspective on life. His language is an expression of this irreverence, ranging from playfulness to scathing irony.

Satish Alekar borrows the technique of alienation effect from Brecht’s Epic theatre to help audience analyze the scenes critically and reflect on them instead of getting emotionally involved in the play.

*The Dread Departure* has black humor, pure fun and irony on the life. The humor along with the live traditional music and songs provide a format for the three chief characters of the play, Bhaurao, Nana and Rama.

Satish Alekar has skillfully used the traditional *Keertan* in *The Dread Departure*. The very use of the device in the service of a trivial subject is itself productive of irony and absurdity.

**VI.iv.iii. Mahesh Elkunchwar:**

Mahesh Elkunchwar is a Modern Indian Contemporary Experimental Playwright and is one of the most outstanding practitioners of performing arts.

Mahesh Elkunchwar duly acknowledges the importance of the two elements that have been his source of inspiration as a playwright. The first element is from the theatre of Vijay Tendulkar and the second element comes from the western playwrights e.g., Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, Luigi Pirandello, Samuel Beckett, Herold Pinter, Ionesco, and Anton Chekhov and others.

Mahesh Elkunchwar influenced by the various -isms of the 19th and 20th century from the western country like the Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Existentialism, Expressionism, Imagism, The Epic Theatre, The Theatre of Absurd, and the Theatre of the Cruelty.

Mahesh Elkunchwar has tried to explore the tragic, meaningless, uselessness and absurdity of life in *Garbo* and *Desire in the Rocks.*
• Mahesh Elkunchwar borrows the technique of alienation effect from Brecht’s Epic theatre to help audience analyze the scenes critically and reflect on them instead of getting emotionally involved in the play.

• Mahesh Elkunchwar artistically employs songs and music in his *Desire in the Rocks* and *Garbo*. Lullaby is the song which expresses heightened emotions, love and affection for a new baby.

• The dramatic devices like games, role playing are used in many plays like *Garbo, Reflection*, etc. These aspects of his plays are illustrated in relation to the features of his plays such as themes, plot-construction, characterization, diction, setting, symbols and the dramatic forms.

• Mahesh Elkunchwar through his plays successfully bridges the gap between experimental and professional drama.

• Elkunchwar’s plays have shown how the barriers between professional and experimental drama are breaking down, which indeed is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

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VI.v. Similarities among Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar:

After having given a brief estimate of the playwrights studied from the dramaturgical and theatrical point of view, an attempt has been made to trace the similarities and the uniqueness of their theatrical talent.

• The plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar are plays influenced by the Traditional Sanskrit Theatre, which had for its foundation Bharatmuni’s *Natyashastra*. The plays of these playwrights flourished in the past and almost came to a state on extinction in the intervening periods. The use of *Sutradhara*, the rasa theory, etc. are the common features of the plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar Mahesh Elkunchwar.

• Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar trace back to the folk theatre. Their plays date back to times immemorial. The folk forms scattered all over the country in various forms such as *Tamasha, Kirtan, Lullaby* and *Dashavtar Khel*. These folk forms corrupted during the British regime and
then in the post independence period, but folk theatre are definitely claimed to have influenced present day the Indian theatre.

- The contemporary experimental playwrights have been greatly influenced by the Western Theatre. English dramas brought in the Western currents in to Indian theatre in the 19th century. The Contemporary Experimental playwrights were deeply influenced during 19th and 20th century isms, playwrights and their plays e.g., Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Existentialism, Imagism, Expressionism, the Epic Theatre, the Theatre of Absurd and the Theatre of the Cruelty; the playwrights like August Strindberg, Anton Chekhov, Ionesco, Bertolt Brecht, Luigi Pirandello, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Ionesco, Galsworthy, G. B. Shaw, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Eugene O’Neill, Albert Camus, and Antonin Artaud in the development of the form, content and techniques.

- The plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar have been explored the aspirations, anxieties, frustration and conflicts of the middle class society of the contemporary period. Their plays exclusively focus on the pangs, angst, agony, sorrows of the individuals living in this period of transition.

- Alienation, loneliness, the sense of absurdity in life and quest for identity are the common characteristics of the plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar, and Mahesh Elkunchwar.

- The themes of the plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar, and Mahesh Elkunchwar deal dealt with the theme of changing social order and its impact upon society and individuals.

- The Characters of their plays are common people. They rejected the traditional concept of the hero or heroine, who was king, queen, warrior and prince. They rejected the concept of the ideal tragic hero by Aristotle. The hero, heroine, villain are the common man or woman in these playwrights. They dealt with the individual ways of compromising with the situation, their success of failure.

- Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar have used common techniques such as games: play within play and mock trial for the growth and development of plot very effectively.
• Music is an integral part of these playwrights. They skillfully used music in their plays. These playwrights used group songs and group dance in their plays such as dance in *Ghashiram Kotwal* and in *The Dread Departure*.

After having raced the similar threads which bind the playwrights together, certain other features and aspects, common in some playwrights have been brought to the fore. The legendary trio of playwrights Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar, and Mahesh Elkunchwar has been at the helm of redefining meaning as well as substance in Indian theatre.

**VI.vi. Differences among Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar:**

The Contemporary Experimental plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar show their distinctiveness embodying with more similarities, rather than differences. The following differences are rarely found in plays of above playwrights.

• Events and incidents of the death are skillfully exhibited by Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar. However, the approach of the presentation of the death incident is very different. Tendulkar and Elkunchwar are very solemn about the death situation, whereas Satish Alekar handles it in the manner of Black Comedy with *Verfremdungseffekt*.

• The plays of Vijay Tendulkar and Satish Alekar are with full of satire and parody; however, the plays of Mahesh Elkunchwar are plain and the tone is serious.

• The plays of Vijay Tendulkar and Mahesh Elkunchwar explore the physical violence; however Satish Alekar’s plays rarely exhibit violence. The characters of Satish Alekar are alternate with the verbal attack.

• The characters of Vijay Tendulkar’s plays are victims of external conflict; however, Mahesh Elkunchwar’s characters are victims of internal conflict.

• Vijay Tendulkar and Satish Alekar belongs to metropolitan city culture background and drawn the problems of the modern society; however, Mahesh Elkunchwar has drawn more from small town culture, rural and family background.
• Mahesh Elkunchwar has lived and worked in Nagpur, away from the centre of the Marathi Theatre in Pune and Mumbai. It is this perspective of an ‘Outsider’ that enables his plays to work not just as good theatre but powerful social commentary as well. Paradoxically Vijay Tendulkar and Satish Alekar achieve the same by being an ‘Insider’. They lived in Mumabi and Pune respectively for most part of their lives and often direct their plays they write; however, Satish Alekar acts in them sometimes. (The Hindu, January 4, 2009)

VI.vii. Conclusion:

The Contemporary Experimental Theatre stands on the pedestal of theatrical tradition going back to 2500 years, which includes 150 years of modern tradition of the Western Theatre, Indian Classical Theatre and Indian Folk Forms. The future picture is optimistic, because change, growth and development are taking place at a faster pace. The plays are meticulous and consciously judicious. It is admissible that the native-alien encounter in Indian theatre is not one of confrontation but is in the form of conciliation and fusion. It is realising that while striving to create the great works of art on the Indian stage, it should not take ‘Indianness’ as the chief criterion but as one of the characteristic features.

VI.viii. Scope for the Further Research:

The plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar, are diverse in themes and forms as well as structures and techniques decoding various messages, meanings, impressions, appeal etc. An aspirant researcher can explore and investigate them further in the lights of the following perspectives.

• The major themes of Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar and Mahesh Elkunchwar’s plays.
• An exploration of the folk forms in the Vijay Tendulkar and Satish Alekar’s plays.
• The study of the theatre of Cruelty in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar.
• The study of absurdity in Satish Alekar’s Plays.
• The study of women characters in the Mahesh Elkunchwar and Vijay Tendulkar’s plays.
• The study of Existentialism in the Mahesh Elkunchwar’s plays.
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