CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION
M.V.Rama Sarma is not only an eminent Milton scholar and Shakespeare critic, but also a creative writer. He has produced six novels and eleven plays so far. But, surprisingly, he has not received the critical attention he deserves as a creative writer, in general and as a playwright in particular. He is yet to find a proper place in the history of Indian English Literature.

As a playwright, Rama Sarma belongs to the tradition of Drama of Ideas. He seems to have been greatly influenced by Ibsen and particularly by Bernard Shaw and Galsworthy who established Drama of Ideas or Thesis Drama. Rama Sarma seems to have been influenced also by Ravindranath Tagore who has enriched Indian Drama in English with his highly symbolic and lyrical plays which have a deeply ingrained moral purpose. He may be said to have been influenced by Arnold Wesker who is associated with Drama with a message.

Rama Sarma has produced eleven plays – social, mythological and philosophical – with different themes and techniques. Before going abroad he produced six plays – Youth and Crabbed age, Like to Like, Marpessa, This Busy World, Ignorance and Idiocy and Sakuntala. During his stay in England between 1946 – 1949, he produced two plays – Urvasi and Towards Marriage. After he returned to India he produced between 1950 – 1980 three plays – The Carnival,
Inspector Raghavan and The Mahatma. His latest play, Hail! Deliverer, based on the theme of martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi is under publication. The present study is concerned with the major plays – Towards Marriage, The Carnival and Sakuntala which are written in three acts. The other eight plays mentioned above are one-act plays. The major plays of Rama Sarma make a solid contribution to the growth and development of Indian English Drama. They are important not only for their distinct thematic concerns, but also for their technical virtuosities. They are essentially plays with a specific social purpose which is, of course, integrated into their artistic texture.

Towards Marriage is a brilliant social comedy with a distinct social purpose. It is based on the theme of marriage which has a good deal of relevance to contemporary society. The significance of the play lies in achieving a harmonious fusion of the Eastern and the Western values of life. It upholds a traditional view of marriage as a sacred and inviolable bond. At the same time, it projects the modern outlook that marriage must be based on mutual love and understanding, between husband and wife. Furthermore, the play artistically pleads for recognition of marriage more as companionship between man and woman than an outlet for their sexual instincts. The ultimate purpose of the play is to drive home to the audience that true love means sacrifice.
Towards Marriage can also be approached as a play dealing with incompatibility of temperament in marital life. The play shows how the life of any poet in the world, especially in India, becomes very problematic when he is burdened with a non-poetic wife, who not only fails to understand or inspire him, but even becomes a stumbling block in the path of his progress and happiness.

Set in a South Indian city, Towards Marriage deals with the life of a poet called Prakash who wishes to lead a simple and ideal life. He has a flair for beauty of things and beings. But his views of life are not shared by his non-poetic wife, Lalita, who is physically beautiful and proud, but morally shallow. She delights only in material success, glamour and, therefore, she cannot rise to the level of her husband.

The first part of the play which presents the matrimonial discard between Prakash and Lalita is very realistic. But the second part which shows Jaya's understanding and sacrifice is very idealistic. The "situation reminds us of Osborne's Look Back in Anger where the woman who comes as a rival withdraws, like Jaya, of her own accord, leaving the old pair to adjust to a way of life that may lead to domestic peace."

Like Towards Marriage, The Carnival is essentially a play of ideas. It deals with the problem of non-alignment between love and money which are two fundamental problems of human life. It presents
different approaches to life and upholds the idealistic attitude while disapproving the purely mercenary attitude to life. It deals with the victory of aesthetic life over mundane existence.

The Carnival dramatizes the conflict between the upper middle classes for whom, money is everything and the lower middle classes for whom human values are everything. It also presents the interaction between the middle class people like Suresh and Ramesh and the aristocrats like Shiv Lal and Ravinder. It stresses the intellectual aspect of the problem of love and money. As the title indicates the play raises a philosophical question – is life a Carnival or a Festival?

The Carnival is a neatly structured play with one main plot and three sub-plots which are unified into an organic whole. If the main plot is concerned with Suresh and Prem, the sub-plots are related to Ravinder and Asha, Manohar and Pratima and Ramesh and Rekha respectively. The play achieves a structural unity by interrelating the characters of the main plot with the characters of sub-plots and also by interconnecting the incidents in the main plot with the incidents in the sub-plot. Both in its theme and structure the play resembles Shakespeare's comedy, As You Like It.

Sakuntala may be said to be Rama Sarma's masterpiece. Closely modelled on Kalidasa's Sakuntala, the play deals with love at first sight which is finally transformed into sublime love. As Rama
Sarma himself points out in his preface to his play the focus is on “the sublimity of love, on the juxtaposition of the physical and the spiritual worlds.”

Sakuntala is remarkable for its superb treatment of resources. Rama Sarma had taken every care to concentrate on the essentials ignoring some of the popular dramatic devices of the age. The playwright displays great skill in handling the dramatic material derived from Kalidasa. He rightly avoids the scenes of clowning and tones down the supernatural element keeping in mind the modern audience for whom the play is meant.

The three acts of the play deal with the three aspects of Sakuntala's life – the maiden, the castaway and the woman sublimated. If the first act presents the romantic love of Dushyanta and Sakuntala with all the intoxication of Spring, the second act produces the dreariness of Winter with the rejection of Sakuntala by Dushyanta in the open court. The third act presents the mellowed fruitfulness of Autumn by introducing Bharata, the offspring of Dushyanta and Sakuntala. Thus, the play presents the growth of Sakuntala from a purely physical to a highly spiritual plane.

Interestingly enough, Rama Sarma's Sakuntala has certain affinities with Shakespeare's plays like The Merchant of Venice, The Winters Tale and Pericles. The ring episode which plays a key role in
Sakuntala invariably reminds us of the significance of the ring episode in The Merchant of Venice. The reconciliation between Dushyanta and Sakuntala is almost similar to the reconciliation between Leontes and Hermione in The Winter Tale. Just as Bharata serves as a connecting link between Dushyanta and Sakuntala, Perdita in The Winter Tale serves as a connecting link between Leontes and Hermione. Bharata as a connecting link between Dushyanta and Sakuntala also reminds us of Marrina in Pericles who brings together her separated parents.

A close study of the major plays of Rama Sarma reveals to us “a profound growth of vision from interrogation to affirmation, protest to acceptance and Dionysian intensity to Apollonian serenity.” They are “concretization of his contemporary consciousness, keen sense of human nature, wide scholarship and amazing self-control that is evident in his dialogues.” They demonstrate not only his keen observation of contemporary life, but also his vivid imagination of a world of beauty, love and truth.

A close study of Rama Sarma’s major plays reveals that he is a writer with a moral purpose. Towards Marriage, is a powerful plea for recognition of marriage as a companionship between a man and woman rather than a business contract or an object of sexual gratification. The Carnival, has an underlying moral idea of
demonstrating that life is no mercy-go-round, but something to be taken seriously and lived purposefully. The message it conveys is that life understood in the proper perspective is bound to be exciting, interesting and glorious. We can make it, or mar it according to our attitude towards life. The playwright's moral purpose in writing *Sakuntala* is to show the transformation of love from the physical plane to a spiritual level. However, as a dramatic artist, Rama Sarma succeeds in his attempt to adjust a harmonious fusion of the moral ideas and the artistic norms of drama. The dramatic artist in him is as much alive as the social moralist.

A close study of Rama Sarma's major plays also reveals the affinities he has with Bernard Shaw, on the one hand, and some of the contemporary Indian English dramatists like Harindranath Chattopadyaya and Asif Currimbhoy. Like Bernard Shaw, Rama Sarma considers drama as a tool for conveying his moral ideas. Though he is consciously a dramatic artist, he, at times, appears to be more a moralist than an artist. Because of the preponderance of intellectual element and the underlying dominant moral tone, critics like Basava Raj, S. Naikar say that Rama Sarma's plays "tend to look like the Moralities." Rama Sarma is comparable to Harindranath Chattopadyaya for his zeal for social reform. As far as the treatment of burning issues of the contemporary society are concerned, Rama
Sarma is akin to Asif Currimbhoy who is popularly known as “the dramatist of the public event.”

To conclude, a proper approach to Rama Sarma's major plays reveals that they make good drama from various points of view – thematic concerns, structural unity, art of characterization, technical virtuosities like realism, satire, humour, irony and contrast and use of irony. They can be read and enjoyed for their thought content, social purpose, unfailing relevance to the problems of life, moral fervour, and for their artistic excellence. They are also good pieces of theatre. They can be thoroughly enjoyed on the stage because of their stageworthiness. Above all, embodying as they do human values they have a universal appeal.
REFERENCES:


4. Ibid., p.155.