

Social Problems and Destruction Faced by the Protagonist in Mahesh Elkunchwar's Play *GARBO*

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Abstract: *Mahesh Elkunchwar is one of the most prominent playwrights in Marathi literature. Elkunchwar's play Garbo is a play of destruction. He presents a clear picture of the problems faced by the women of a society and portrays the same via the female characters. He has shown the reality of society through the lives of protagonists in his plays. In this play Elkunchwar has brought the characters alive through his powerful characterization. Garbo is both the title of the play as well as the name of the protagonist. His plays are driven by the plight, grief, emotional complexities, hopeless, sexual politics between men and women and societal issues like man - woman relationships, patriarchy, deterioration of moral values and human bondage. The characters in this plays are the reflection of the middle - class society.*

Keywords: Social problem, sexuality, grief, hopelessness, greed, superiority, patriarchy

Mahesh Elkunchwar is a very popular and reputed name among Marathi dramatists. He is known as the best Marathi playwright after Vijay Tendulkar. He has been honored by many prestigious awards in India as well as in abroad. Elkunchwar has written full length plays filled with all the elements of a good drama. They have an appropriate beginning and ending. His plays have been translated from Marathi into various Indian and Foreign languages. His plays have such themes that leave the audience to think about them. Elkunchwar has done the same thing but in a divergent way and experimented with various themes. Elkunchwar has written not only for upper middle class and higher class people but for middle class people as well. He has presented the issues and difficulties that effect the mind ideologically and emotionally. He presents a new theme with the every new play. Mahesh Elkunchwar present a picture of post modern socio - cultural existence at the backdrop of post - independent India.

Garbo is about four young people who belongs to different background and have different thoughts and views. It is a drama that shows the unethical, immoral, insignificant life spending by four youngsters, Shrimant, Intuc, Pansy and Garbo. This article deals with the protagonist Garbo's life and the social problems in Mahesh Elkunchwar's play *Garbo*.

The main theme of *Garbo* is the meaningless life that young people live in our contemporary society, devoid of social and ethical values. The young people are portrayed as rebels against imposed customs, traditions and norms. The playwright talks about the frustrations, psychological stress, consequences faced by individuals when acted out of passion and without further thoughts on the situations ahead. It is also about the misuse of the freedom by individuals which sows the seeds of their own destruction. This play revolves around an aspiring actress Garbo. Lack of good opportunities forces her eventually to end up doing B grade films. She is the object of mere physical pleasure, a sex goddess and seductress. She lives with three men - Intuc, a college professor, Pansy, the art school dropout and

Shrimant, a small time businessman. And these three men merely use her for their sexual satisfaction with no genuine affection for her. These men have different attitude towards her. For Shrimant she is merely a sex machine, giving him sexual satisfaction. Intuc observes her as a living work of art while Pansy sees her as an older sister. Here, the playwright exposes the inner battles of sexuality, mentality and physical desires experienced by each of the characters of the play. they spend their time on useless conversations and discussions. The topics of their discussion were trivial and on everyday issues. In a sense the trivial topics they talk about are the harsh reality of our society. They live in the society but do not want to connect with the society. They have confined themselves at the apartment where they do what they want to do.

Garbo is the one and only medium that connects them with each other. She is the female protagonist of the play, whose body attracts them towards her, she is the only means through which they are connected with one another. For Garbo also, maybe it is the physical passion that connects her with them but she is also in search of love that comforts her soul. For each of them Garbo has a different image. For Shrimant she is only a sex - machine whose duty is to fulfill the need of their body. For Pansy, she is a mother figure on whose lap he forgets everything and finds an emotional solace and for Intuc she is different, physically and morally both. She is a challenge, a puzzle. He wants to win her soul rather than her body. It is clearly indicated that all these three men have strong desire of Garbo. For them her only business is to understand their physical need and satisfy it at any way. They do not care what she thinks and what she wants. This attitude of theirs shows the patriarchal chains which bounds the women in the shackles of the duty to serve men.

Garbo is a prostitute and hence she use to be careful about conceiving the baby because it can spoil her life by many ways. That is why the news of pregnancy shocked her. For her there were lots of questions to be asked by the society; if the child will come in this social world, because society

never allows a pregnant unwed mother to be lived peacefully. Secondly, if she will give birth to the child her career in movies will finish, then how she will spend her life. Thirdly her business of prostitution will also spoil. That is the reason she decides, that she will not become mother.

With full of pain and sadness she reveals the news of her pregnancy to the trio. At first, they makes fun of her. Neither of them knows who is the responsible man, but Garbo knows the truth.

Garbo does not tell to them about the responsible man. She wanted to see the reactions of their faces and wanted to know what they will do after getting this news. When she heard the conversation between Intuc and Shrimant she become restless and then she tells them that she will not depend on them for their mercy but it does not mean that they can shrug off their responsibilities for this child. She decides that she will not give birth to the child. Now Shrimant who knows his condition that he is unable to become father as he is impotent, requests Garbo to give birth to the child. He says that he will give his name to it. Now, Shrimant eagerly wants to know about the responsible man. But Garbo tells him about her decision that she will get rid of herself from this burden. She demands money so that she can spend this money on her. safe abortion, but not from Shrimant. She actually wanted that the real father of the child take the responsibility, but Intuc does not know that the child is his, hands over the cheque made by Shrimant. Garbo tears it into pieces and throws it hard across the face of Intuc and abuses him. He cracked up to the reason why she has done this. He becomes overwhelmed by this news and requests her to give birth to his child and begs her to not even think of destroying the child because he wants it badly. The decision of not giving birth to the child hurts the trio. For them, this creation of God becomes a new reason of their life. It would provide a new hope, a new definition of life. For Intuc, this baby could give him a new chance to pull out of all this materialistic life and live bravely. It could give a new way to take himself out from that filth. Pansy also tries to console her by saying that he will marry to her and give his name to the baby. the child is the creation of God and Intuc is the medium to transfer it into Garbo's womb. The minute she got pregnant she becomes the part of God and Intuc also because he has participated in this process of creation. Intuc accepts this truth. He wants to change himself, wants to lose his old inner self. His friends too want to change themselves although they have not participated in the creation but they are connected with the medium of creation - Garbo. Here the power of creativity is working very strongly. This dialogue of Intuc shows this:

INTUC: Yes and we will all humble ourselves before him. He will be our creation. And we will bow our heads before our creation. A single smile from him will move us. (Pleading) Garbo let us do this. We are doomed people we have neither seen, nor experienced, nor created anything beyond filth. Let us grab this opportunity. It's our only hope, our only chance. We will create something beautiful out of this filth. The world will know that there is a life somewhere which is beautiful, pure, fearless, innocent... And Garbo, we cannot achieve this without you. Do you know? Do you

know what a tremendous role you have to play? (Elkunchwar 40)

Garbo is the medium who could take them out from this insignificant life and make their life meaningful. Now it is an only chance for them to create something meaningful and worthy The life of theirs may be filled with beauty, joy and their existence could become eternal. For all these three men a glorious life filled with all kinds of joy and happiness is visible, just because of this baby. That is why they all stand around Garbo like humble devotees and prays her. She is in the centre, the mother, the power of fertility, the goddess of creativity: But the idea of upbringing the child felt horrifying to her given the circumstances of her social status as an actress in B – grade movies. What society thought about her and what the three men in her life thought about her, impacted on what she thought about herself. Her actions are controlled by the opinions and perceptions of the society and of men, she decided that the only solution to this whole situation is abortion. She becomes the ultimate victim in this mess when she is stabbed by Shrimant as he is very outraged by this decision of abortion. he stabs Garbo as she brought an end to his dreams and expectations. This scenario tells everyone upto what lengths men can go to achieve their greed and superiority over women. If woman goes her own way without man's considerations, he reminds her how the society works favoring his directions. Garbo was not allowed to have her own decisions on her life. Her life was controlled by these three men. Can she not decide what suits her the best in her life? Is a woman's life always to be controlled by a man? This play doubtlessly shows that the women are suppressed by the ruthless men and male – dominated society from taking the most important decisions pertaining to their own lives and the social problems faced by them.

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