

## **Kaleidoscopic image of women in Mahesh Elkunchwar's Play**

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### **Abstract**

Indian Drama has its origin since years back with the evolution of human civilization. Part of this can be seen in the famous writing of Natayashtra, said to be written Bharat Muni. This theatre art is clearly being mentioned in Natayashtra which gives a description of the stage art, actor, music, dance etc. Later on these basics the Sanskrit theatre form is developed. It is considered that Natayashtra of Bharat Muni is an inspiration for the Sanskrit art form and further developed art forms. India developed its writing skill with the reference of this writing and many forms of issues were being handled and developed. At the very start of modern era the stories related to epic were given the foremost priority, further the epic was taken over by sufferings of the human during the Independence period and after the Independence period. Post-colonial era is the period in which the form of writing by few of the writers has completely changed. One of them is Mahesh Elkunchwar, who is writing for the society and trying to put forward the issues of the general class people in front of the society. These issues are related to women having an abstract role. Elkunchwar through his writing has created new genera of art.

**Keywords:** Natayashtra, Bharat Muni, Post-colonial, Abstract role, Mahesh Elkunchwar.

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### **Indian Theatrical Art:**

Indian drama, theatre and novel had its own background. It has a precious background of theatrical art which could be easily traced years back from the era when it started with human civilization. The later part of this can be seen with a writings and notation of the famous writings like Natayashtra of Bharat Muni. This precious writing describes the stage art the form of theatre art, actor, actress, music, its role and its change accordingly. This theatre art culture could be seen to be followed for many years by the renowned Indian writers which includes Rabindra Nath Tagore, T.P.Kaliswami etc. even the drama and writings written for the theatrical art was specified and to the point as mentioned by Bharat Muni. In short we can say that within a typical frame work and with specified limitation the script was written and was presented in front of the audience. The dramas presented were having the role of characters very much typical to the prescribed situation.

The women presented in the early plays were the women of nature, character and a person of Godly character. The women though were presented purely in nature but, it was hard enough to present the dark side of female character in front of the audience so that they could accept it. The women/ female hence remained and sustained for a longer duration a typical role of mother, daughter, wife, sister and all sorts. No writer ever dared to put boldly the dark face of women in front of audience/ reader. Similarly, the typical roles were being provided to the female characters but, these roles again presented the pure, divine, optimistic feature of women. The characters were serene and of one type. The plot presented/ created around them were also serene and of type which was for the women only. This change in the writing trend came forward with the notable contemporary writers. Many writers came forward and gave new plot, new ideas and different characters to that of the casual writings. They discussed on the issues of technicalities and also the theme. This change could not only

be seen in the regional writings but, also the writings and language which was adapted by the writers. The issues discussed now were more contemporary based and discussed boldly and broadly. This issues not only discussed the beautiful side of the characters but, infact it gave the deep, dark side of a character which a normal person could not accept it easily. These writers can be also seen to break the rules of typical drama writings which included the specified plot and character.

The plot which was specified and which dealt with single story line now with the evolution of contemporary writers and their writings changed on the inner phase and plot. This plot was now not revolving around the single plot but, dealt with kaleidoscopic situations. This modern wave in Indian drama focused on frank inquiry into human life. They challenged female existence and their life. Mahesh Elkunchwar was one such writer whose main aim and his learning and writing skill to the changing world and changing situations was very prominent.

Mahesh Elkunchwar imbibed the wave of change and favoured itself with the awakening of women consciousness. Now, the women can be experienced a (wo)men in the plays of Mahesh Elkunchwar. The dark women in the divine and serene women now was active and completely changed. This silent and suffering women outburst with her experience and pain and came forward as a character which Shakespeare always wanted to present. Women as a Leading character.

### **Kaleidoscopic women of Mahesh Elkunchwar:**

Mahesh Elkunchwar is one such writer who has become a prominent and famous name in the Indian drama especially in Indian Marathi theatre despite he being a person who maintained himself by avoiding the commercial pressure. He is one of the finest Marathi writers who gave us more than 20 successful play to his name. Apart from writing and putting forward successful plays he is one of the renowned parallel cinema actor and screen writer. We find a great zeal of absurdity in the plays of Mahesh Elkunchwar's play which not only put forward before us the human conditions but, leave it to the blank space for us to create and end or understand or presume our own end for his story. Mahesh Elkunchwar has a

great influence of Vijay Tendulkar for his writing and also apart from Tendulkar he himself declares to have a great influence of Anton Chekov, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus.

Vikrant Pande in “Mahesh Elkunchwar: Where Silence Speaks More Than Words” says- Elkunchwar is a self- conscious modernist, not a hoary Traditionalist.

Like other writers Mahesh Elkunchwar does not use a word of violence or creates violence in his plays but, through silence he speaks and at the same time his characters speaks a lot. Girish Karnad one of the most renowned writers of the country and director of many of the plays comment about Elkunchwar’s plays and style as-

“What sets Mahesh apart among Indian playwrights is his command of the broken phrase, the sentence half uttered, the casual pause- in his hands these silence can be lethal and communicate a menace that would be scattered in a collection of fully expressive sentences. Every time I have taken of his, I have enjoyed the crispness of sentences often left cliff- hanging, the deliberate avoidance of direct reply, and poignancy plays are resonant with the dhvani (sound) of the words he has chosen to use or throw away”.

Mahesh Elkunchwar is one such name in the theatre who has tried his hand with all the themes and which has created a difference in the writing and presenting of drama to a great extent. His plays have a very beautiful use of pauses and silence. Mahesh Elkunchwar in the very starting used to create this gap and used to refer to it with counts. This pause created by Elkunchwar is so prominent that he creates and wants his actor to create a deep meaning of sense through this pause/ silence. He trusts the audience and tries to make them understand the condition and complexities with the dialogue created by the actors. He considers that pauses are the space where the audience makes/ gives an action to the particular scene/ act. Being a personality of theatre Elkunchwar clearly understands the uses of all these terms. Also, with silence the difference which Elkunchwar created in his writing was he created (fe)male role which were very specified. These characters created by him are having its own opinion, conditions, and particular situation, own personality etc. which of course gave them voice. This voice this voice which Elkunchwar has created in his plays is the voice of struggle, a fight for the search of identity, voice of complexity, a voice of arrogance, a voice of cruelty. Truly, Elkunchwar created within his plays the female

characters which were not general female character what we find in other plays. He created the plays in which the characters were changing and the situation were also changing with this changing characters. This has gained Elkunchwar national and international critical attention, becoming a part of India's post-colonial theatrical canon.

**SONATA:** Sonata written by Mahesh Elkunchwar in the year 2000 is a play which displays the three different female characters revolving around their problems and signifying their life. The characters portrayed by Elkunchwar in Sonata are three women's who are non-conformist and unconventional. The three are unmarried and with lots of compassion. All the three friends are living together and shoring up their ideas and problems knowingly and unknowingly with each other. Elkunchwar has tried to show the changing nature of these characters with the single place i.e.: the drawing room. The time chosen by Elkunchwar is also, very much special which can be considered to show or represent in a symbolic manner the dark side of all these characters. This kaleidoscopic nature of the three characters is so prominent that unknowingly or knowingly they even hurt each other. One more change which Elkunchwar has tried to show/ represent is that all the three characters are prudent mature scholars, and all belong to different cultural background. The characters are always shown to be trying to mix/ match up with the nature of other character but, without leaving (disturbing) their own cultural ethics. Despite of being a scholarly person, having a happy go lucky, loving, free spirited in nature they all have no peace within themselves. The so called ideal and independent thinking of the women today living in the society is handled curiously through this play.

**RAKTAPUSHPA (FLOWER OF BLOOD):** His play Raktapushpa, written in the year 1971, is a play which deals with the issues of women which generally cannot be handled. As, per our culture (Indian culture) the issue on which Elkunchwar speaks in Raktapushpa is pure psychological thought of a women. The play can be said to be a experimental play dealing with the women psychology about the change in their life. The change in the nature of two characters mother and daughter and their ability to handle this situation gives the play a very difficult mode in handling. This issues though personal and cannot be handled in public but, Elkunchwar through his language and through his dialogues with a mother and daughter has

tried to show the change within them and tried to show that how this change a women tries to handle. On one part a mother who is lacking a sex life while on the other hand the daughter who is now discovering her new life. The common person who we find in this play is a boy who stays on rent with the two characters. These two women are shown to be bound with laws of society and laws of nature, and they are trying to accept yet deny the change within themselves.

**Conclusion:** The two plays of the Elkunchwar represents that within a person pretending to be normal or appearing to be normal, can sometimes be considered as a absurd type. These characters pretend to be happy go type with very many normal situations but, actually they have a very drastic change in the conditions. These women change according to the conditions and situations around them. Elkunchwar has handled the conditions and characters so directly yet delicately, so the audience do not go against it and even the real situations can be handled.

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