



## TREATMENT OF CREATION AND DESTRUCTION IN MAHESH ELKUNCHWAR'S GARBO

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### ABSTRACT

*The present paper aims at analyzing Mahesh Elkunchwar's play Garbo in terms of creation and destruction. How the destruction of creation and its creator by the destructive force occurred in this play is the major concern of this paper. Garbo – the protagonist of the play has been murdered by Shrimant because she has murdered their hope of life, which was also the creation of the trio- Intuc , Shrimant and Pansy. Garbo, who has a different place in the life of these three male characters; used her for their own sake. When she has decided something for herself she has been brutally murdered as the only refuge has been destructed by the creator herself. She was the medium who can take them out from the insignificant life and can make their life meaningful but at last the negative force gets strong and destruction has won over creation.*

### Introduction

An experimental Marathi playwright 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. Almost all the major theatre directors like Vijaya Mehta, Shreeram Lagoo, Amol Palekar, Satyadev Dubey, etc. have directed his plays like *Holi*, *Old Stone Mansion*, *Sonata*, *An Autobiography*, *Pond*, *Apocalypse*, etc. His *Wada Trilogy* is the most famous among all. Elkunchwar has written full length plays filled with all the elements of a good drama. They have an appropriate beginning and ending in Aristotelean sense. This is the reason his plays have been gained a wide attention among the readers, theatre lovers as well as media and theatre critics. 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.

*Garbo* and *Desire in the Rocks* were highly criticized by the censor board due to the reason of immorality. But still these plays have a significant meaning. Both of these plays came at that



time when sexuality in Indian context was not a topic to talk about so boldly. But it is the topic that is talked, discussed and used by most of the writers of different genre. Elkunchwar has done the same thing but in a divergent way and experimented with various themes. Basically, Elkunchwar has written for not only 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. His writing changes, and presents a new theme with the every new play.

The theme of creation and destruction has presented by Elkunchwar in his many plays like *Garbo*, *Desire in the Rocks*, *Party*, *Apocalypse*, etc. God, the almighty has divine power of creation and destruction in the form of birth and death. He has provided this grace of creativity power to almost every life that exists in this universe. Hence birth and death are the two realities that could not belied in any circumstance. Elkunchwar has used it in his plays as a major theme.

*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. Shrimant is a small businessman, Intuc is a college professor and Pansy is an art school dropout. They all are connected with one single thread, Garbo- a petty actress of B-grade movies and a prostitute. They are connected with her for physical pleasure and for fulfilling their physical passion. In this play *Garbo*, four outsiders belongs to different backgrounds are the major and only characters. Garbo is the protagonist. Intuc and Pansy shares Shrimant's place to stay and it is the place where whole drama has been dramatized. The dialogues of this play are highly symbolical especially the dialogues of Intuc. According to Shanta Gokhale Shrimant, Intuc and Pansy are the symbols of wealth, intelligence and effete man respectively (271). Garbo is the symbol of fertility, a source of new life. Among these Shrimant is the earthiest. For them nothing is creative and adventurous and they are habitual of living filthy life. They have been spending their life is purposeless, meaningless and worthless. The kind of life they are living is materialistic life which is burden over them. That is the reason 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.

**SHRIMANT:** ... In what way is Garbo great? Her only business in life has been jumping from bed to bed. She's nothing but a sex-machine (Pleased with the phrase.) a sex-machine. Yeah boy!  
A sex-machine. (Elkunchwar 16)

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. To know what Shrimant, Intuc and Pansy will do after hearing this news she goes to Shrimant's apartment. But there she gets very shocked like someone has blown a hammer on her heart. 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 (Pointedly to Shrimant):** I know more than you who is capable of  
behaving like a man. (Elkunchwar 28)

This dialogue of Garbo shows that Shrimant is not the father of the child. Further the conversation between Intuc and Shrimant shows that both of them do not know whose baby is this and that is why they do not want to take responsibility of it. 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 Shrimant, it becomes a medium that would help him to wash away his hands from those sins that he has committed. 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. But Garbo does not satisfy by any body's offer. She has makeup her mind to what she has to do.

Undoubtedly 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. This is their only refuge. Osho has said, "The only virtue worth calling virtue is creativity. What you create does not matter, but it should enhance life, beautify existence, make living more joyous, the song a little more juicy, the love a little more glorious- And the life of a creator starts becoming part of eternity and immortality." (Zarathustra- A God That Can Dance)



Hence, Intuc is saying the same thing that Osho has said. The child of Garbo can change the life of all these four people. 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 pray her. She is in the centre, the mother, the power of fertility, the goddess of creativity:

**SHRIMANT, INTUC, PANSY:**

You are life  
And the root of all life.  
The spring of fearless beauty,  
The source of all hope,  
the fulfillment of all promises  
are you. You are the beginning of belief.  
You are the everlasting.  
All future suns are in your womb.  
Give us your light.  
Give us your sun.  
He will burn up darkness and destroy it.  
Retribution in the face of suffering,  
Suffering in the face of suffering,  
Sympathy in the face of calamity,  
Courage in the face of death.  
This he will be. He will be creation out of destruction.  
Mother!  
Mother!  
Mother! (Elkunchwar 42)

They are requesting and praying to the mother, goddess of creative power to give a chance to change themselves and provide them a light in the form of baby who will consume the darkness of their life and show a new path in injustice, suffering, calamity and death.

In the Act II, Shrimant, Pansy and Intuc has done all the preparations for the arrival of new member, the baby. They have decorated the rooms with lots of different kinds of toys. They all are very happy and excited because Garbo had promised them to come back within a month. But they are doubtful if she will come or not. When Garbo entered in the room she was trying to hide something. But Intuc guessed the truth the minute she entered into the room. He asks her to tell to Shrimant and Pansy that the baby is no more. But she saved herself by telling them lie and creates a false story about her miscarriage. She tells them that



it was happened during the camel race. She was under oxygen for two days due to her miscarriage. On listening about this mishap they lose their hope of changing themselves. There is something connected with that baby, they are now hopeless. There was something missed inside them. They were empty, suffered from incurable emptiness and hollowness. They needed some creative power which could take them away from that very filth in which they are spending their lives. But when they come to know that their deity child is no more, Intuc insists them to throw every toy outside the house. Now, they have only one way is left and that is to return in that filth again. This is what they deserve. Garbo is no more a creator because with the death of the child she has lost her creative power. Now she becomes an ordinary woman, a prostitute. She blames herself for Pansy's falling morally down. Finally one thing has left and that is the world of filth. Now Garbo also fits in that world.

Gautam Buddha has said "Truth is bitter in the beginning, sweet in the end and lies are sweet in the beginning, bitter in the end". With the moving of the play everyone reveals their truth. Shrimant admits that he has lost his manhood and incapable to support in creating a new life which he was hiding from everyone. He has nothing left but only his mortal body. He wanted to hide his impotency by giving his name to the child. Pansy has the tendency of gay, he also couldn't create anything. Intuc declares that he has stopped writing and in his life he has never written anything genuine. He had contributed in creating a life in Garbo's womb that has been destroyed. At last, Garbo tells that she has lost her fertility power; but with this truth she tells one more truth bitter than previous one. It is she who has murdered her baby to teach lesson to the director of the movie in which she was working. The truth she had hidden by everyone very wisely is now revealed by her. She tells everyone that there was no accident, she has chosen for camel ride. They had option for the dummy and also the duplicate but she wanted to do it by her. She has sacrificed the child for the sake of her carrier and also to punish the director because he had been insulting her from the beginning and laughs at her. Now, she has seen the real face of these three men and what actually they are. She is feeling lucky that her child is no more and she has got an escape from it. She do not wants to keep up that imaginary virtues burdened over by them forever.

There was relationship between these three men and Garbo but there was not any inner feeling; if there was anything it was between Intuc and Garbo, but for very short moment, otherwise it was only physical passion, desire and sex, nothing else. This relationship was only ephemera. With the revelation of truth about the death of the baby a tremendous bitterness came that Garbo has deceived them. The frustration came in that way that they have nothing to do now. Garbo has snatched the opportunity from them. Now they will do what. Intuc suggested,

**INTUC :** *Let's return to filth. The world we desired was not for us, could never have been. (Laugh bitterly.) We were idiots, out to turn dreams into reality. (Pause.) Let's go back to our world now. The*

*world of filth. As a punishment. And as a sort of consolation too.  
(Elkunchwar 49)*

Pansy wanted to leave this world and return back to his home but Shrimant does not want to let him go. They all gets frustrate, lost their senses. The frustration reaches its highest point. When Garbo was going to leave the place Shrimant plunges the knife into Garbo's stomach. Garbo collapses to death. Hence, everything becomes finished with the death of Garbo.

One thing that can be noticed here, that existence of the baby was, but, by chance from Intuc. Intuc was the father of that baby but it was the medium of the redemption of all these three men and Garbo. It was the only way through which their soul could find solace. Shrimant wanted to give his name to the baby, so that he can hide his impotency from the world. It was the only chance for him that is now snatched by the goddess of creation. Intuc remarks on it:

**INTUC :** *Who are these invisible powers ranged against us? (Pause.) there is only one way to face them now, Garbo. Either we turn and fight those who wish to fight against us, or we gore ourselves bloody before they get a chance to inflict the first blow... these powers desire to crush us and force us into filth, but before they can, let us throw ourselves headlong into it. Let us create our own world of filth. And then, the very winds blowing over us will turn our enemies black and blue with their rotten, hate-filled breath. We cannot avoid these antagonists now. They are our eternal foes. We need to become more powerful. That is, more rotten. More perverse. Corroded with hatred. (Elkunchwar 50-51)*

Finally, destruction came. Destruction has won over creation. This time with the murder of Garbo, because the truth that was consoling Shrimant, Intuc and Pansy was now came in the form of lie. Now there was only vacuum left, created between Garbo and these three men. She is destroyed because their only medium that would help them to redemption and take them away from the filth, has been snatched by Garbo. They were deceived by her. They were celebrating for that whose existence was no more. Garbo was consoling them by hiding the reality. They were continuously talking about whose existence was no more.

At last, everything became filthy. This time again, the filth become the core of inner self, and it is deeper than that filthy world which was before the existence of the baby. This time the situation became more complex because the only refuge was destroyed by the creator herself. The medium is destructed by the power of destruction because she has destructed the creation that was germinated from the destructive force. Now, for Shrimant, Intuc and Pansy again, a filthy, insignificant, meaningless life will start which will lead them to the doom because they know that their inner being is not balanced, but disturbed. It is not silent and peaceful. For



them every door has been closed by the power destruction. Their existence has been destroying slowly and with the death of the baby and Garbo, it has finished.

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