

The Institution of Marriage as a Framework of Power and  
Relationships: A Study of *Wedding Album* by Girish  
Karnad and *Halfway House* by Mohan Rakesh

Dissertation submitted to the Central University of Punjab

For the award of  
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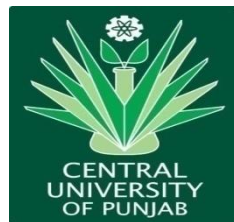
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May 2018

## CERTIFICATE

I declare that the dissertation entitled “The Institution of Marriage as a Framework of Power and Relationships: A Study of *Wedding Album* by Girish Karnad and *Halfway House* by Mohan Rakesh” has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Shahila Zafar, Assistant Professor, Department of Languages and Comparative Literature, School of Languages, Literature and Culture, Central University of Punjab.

No part of this dissertation has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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## CERTIFICATE

I certify that Rupal has prepared her dissertation entitled “The Institution of Marriage as a Framework of Power and Relationships: A Study of *Wedding Album* by Girish Karnad and *Halfway House* by Mohan Rakesh”, for the award of M.A. degree of the Central University of Punjab, under my guidance. She has carried out this work at the Department of Languages and Comparative Literature, School of Languages, Literature and Culture, Central University of Punjab.

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## ABSTRACT

### **The Institution of Marriage as a Framework of Power and Relationships: A Study of *Wedding Album* by Girish Karnad and *Halfway House* by Mohan Rakesh**

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The present study aims to explore the role of the social institution of marriage as the framework of power and relationships. The study attempts to analyze various perspectives on marriage with reference to the play *Wedding Album* by Girish Karnad. It seeks to endeavor various ups and down in the marital life, family facades and the distorted web of relationship in light of the play, *Halfway House* by Mohan Rakesh. The current study aims to bring the two plays together on the same platform through the medium known as Marriage. It acts as the catalytic agent which is dully subdued in both the plays. *Halfway House* can be the extension of the play *Wedding Album* as both the plays deals with basic fundamental theme of Marriage.

(Signature of Student)

(Signature of Supervisor)

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Drama: A Literary Genre

Literature is an interpretation of life. Drama, as well as theatre, is an inherent part of literature. Drama and theatrical performances are modes of emotional expression and they are important in order to create a stimulating response. In the contemporary times, Drama transpires out to be a plausible and popular medium through which the complications of social, political, traditional, cultural changes are being depicted which the society experiences alongside the issues of religion, class, caste and gender. According to M.H. Abrams, 'drama' means:

“The form of composition designed for performance in the theatre in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated actions, and utter the indicated dialogues.” (95)

Drama is designed in order to get performed. Drama includes a script, a particular plot, dialogues, actors and proper sound system. Drama is a literary genre which is written foremost to be performed.

#### 1.1. History of Drama

The oldest outset of the Drama is to be found out in the city of Athens, Greece. It was back in 535 BC. Ancient hymns and songs were sung in the festival of Dionysia was celebrated, in order to honor God Dionysus. These hymns and songs were later transformed to choral processions in which participants would dress up and use masks, enact the roles assigned to them. Out of them some people contribute to the role of the chorus, and the one who came across can be the audience. Drama originated in this way from the classical Greek drama and Roman drama. Aristotle composed and organized principles of drama particularly tragedy in his famous work *Poetics*. It was broadly classified into three categories: Comedy, Tragedy and Satyr

plays. Later, from the Elizabethan period to contemporary times Drama has changed its patterns and ways, and is divided into numerous types like miracle and mystery plays, drama of sensibility, epic theatre, morality plays, pastoral, problem plays, pantomime, tragicomedy etc.

## **1.2. Indian English Drama**

Indian English drama has its own spectacular tradition. In this regard, Ram Pundlikrao writes, “Traditional Sanskrit theatre, ritual drama and folk play involve the traditional Indian theatre. In the Sanskrit tradition, the plays which were concerned were supported by dramatists like Asvaghose, Bhasa, Kalidas, Bhavabhuti and Sudrak” (1). The plays of these writers have been regarded as ‘Indian Classics’. Ancient Indian Sanskrit plays represent elitism and the usage of eloquent phrases made them remarkable in the history of Indian Drama. As stated, “Drama in India is as old as its customs, starting right from the Vedic era.” Abha Shukla Kaushik in the Preface of the book *Indian Drama in English* (2013) suggest that “The distinct style of Indian dramaturgy evolved as an illustration of the rich mores of Indian traditions, rituals, customs and ethnicity from Bharat Muni’s *Natya Shastra* which is also known as the fifth Veda. With the passage of time, Indian drama moved from being narratives of heroes who were either royal or celestial, to being realistic representation of Indian society” (ii). After the decline of Sanskrit language the traditional drama carrying the theme of religion and epic heroes came to end. When the British invaded India, they carried over their traditions and literature as well. People started reading some prominent western dramatists such as Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and Ibsen and they kept inspiring the audience and in this way Indian theatre was revived. In the pre-independence time the works of Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo was notable for their excellence and variety. It also motivated many writers to talk about ethos and issues of Indian society and eradicating the depiction of European lifestyle. Indian English Drama caricatures the theme related to Indian society and culture, majority of them highlighting the about the middle class their concerns and problems. However after post-independence, Drama in the regional languages was reviving very vastly. There were tremendous of readers who preferred to read the plays in their mother

tongue. People went to theatres to watch the plays in their own regional languages as though whatever was being projected on the stage they could relate and understand it better. Similarly, Abha Shukla Kaushik discusses in the Preface “In meanwhile, drama in regional languages also started to emerge as an important genre. Writers like Badal Sircar, Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Mahesh Dattani, Manjula Padmanabhan and many others are responsible for the movement of English drama in India towards maturity, making it stand apart as a distinct art form which is both serious and dignified” (ii). Hence, these prominent writers have made significant contributions to Indian English Drama with some of their spectacular works written in their regional language and some of them have been translated into English so that it can reach to international audience.

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the current research study are following:

1. To examine marriage as a social institution and its different view point prevailing in the play *Wedding Album*.
2. To analyze breakdown of marital life, family facades and distorted relationship in the play *Halfway House*.
3. To examine power structure prevailing in both the plays.
4. To compare *Wedding Album* and *Halfway House* with respect to their treatment of marriage and desires of the central character in both the plays.

## **3. Literature Review**

Multiple scholars have critically acclaimed the works of Girish Karnad and Mohan Rakesh respectively. In this section, I will highlight some of the research studies that have been conducted on the two plays, *Wedding Album* and *Halfway House* respectively.

Sangeeta G. Avachar in her research paper “Exploring Girish Karnad’s *Wedding Album* as a Blend of Anxieties and Resentments Deep Rooted in Indian Marriage Institution” suggests that the Charges laid against Karnad that he is preoccupied with

history and folk myth and evade contemporary Indian reality is inverted by him in his play *Wedding Album* where he dealt with contemporary Indian reality effectively and turned it into a modern myth (2). Here, she studies that the play represents marriage as 'gamble' by Indian families. Karnad's woman characters are contemporary new women who are in the search of identity in the society. The present play also throws new light on the psyche and behavior of the women characters. The mother, Hema, Vidula, Pratibha and even Radhabai are involving as new women in the true sense. Their lives are full of anxieties and resentments while facing the mental, psychological and emotional hardships of life (2). G. Avachar talks about different characters and important incidents of the play highlighting that, "The play sprinkles like a fountain the everlasting spiritual Indian philosophy throughout its course."

In another research article, "Women perspective in Girish Karnad's plays" written by Deena Jana examines the plays of Girish Karnad from a feminist perspective. The themes, portrayal, picture and psychology of the women have been focused with the reason to assess Karnad's vision, concern, attitude and treatment of the women in his plays. "His profound humanism and worry for the upliftment of Indian women have delivered the two sets of characters—one the traditional representing the gendered subalternity; another dynamic which check the development of womenfolk" (1). This research article establishes that women are at the centre of Karnad's all of the major plays.

In the research article, "Marriage and Social Change: A Study of Three Plays" Nakul Berwal tries to expose marriage as a social institution. He visualizes marriage that can be viewed as a negotiating agency between social roles and responsibilities, and individual's urges and inclinations (185). But marriage does not have any independent existence; rather, it is firmly located within the totality of institutions, values and beliefs of a society. Thus, marriage can be figured out by modifying what M. H. Abrams inks about a literary text in New Historicism, as "an entity 'situated' within the totality of institutions, social practices, and discourse that constitute the culture of a particular time and place... a product and producer of cultural energies and codes" (191). This article deeply studies the present condition and employs marriage as a social

institution responding to which different characters reveals their desires and emotions as they have been shaped by ideology and their circumstances.

In research of article of B. Wadikar, "*Halfway House: a critique on love, marriage, sex, and violence*" he suggests that Mohan Rakesh's play portrays a real-life events and incidents of the contemporary Indian society. He critiques the issue of marriage in the play as well as analyzes the play covering all the post-modern aspects. In this article B. Wadikar aptly captures the anger and frustration of the major characters and highlights the issues in details. He just not only unveils the issue but gives a deep insight to them as well in order to make readers understanding the play and its characters in details.

The play *Halfway House* is critically acclaimed and has been performed many times. In the column of The Hindu, in Friday review of theatre this play was reviewed. Ravi Taneja's work on Mohan Rakesh's *Aadhe Adhure* proved to be intensely gripping. Ravi directed Mohan Rakesh's *Adhe Adhure* as *Halfway House* in Bindu Batra's English translation for Collegiate Drama Society which was presented recently at Shri Ram Centre in New Delhi (The Hindu 1). In the review, Taneja appreciates Mohan Rakesh as a playwright, highlighting that he as a Hindi playwright has mastered art and craft. The writing style has a new theatrical language and dialogues are skillfully ornamented having deep meaning in them. Hence, he highlights about the set arrangements, space and rhythm about the way in which actors gave justice to the characters in relation to performance of the play.

#### **4. Marriage as an institution in the context of Indian society**

Marriage is an institution which is legally, socially or ritually recognized union of two people in which the couple joins the wedlock accompanied by a formal event. It is all about generating a lifetime bond between the two lives. Marriage, its tradition and values differ worldwide. However, the notion of marriage, its necessity, acceptance and importance among human beings also differs. Every individual perceive the 'institution of marriage' differently. Furthermore, every country in the world has own customs and traditions of marriage. Moreover, India has completely different rituals

comparing to others. Although we have various religions in India but according to the census 2011, 79.8% are the followers of Hinduism. Marriage in Hindu religion, especially in Indian society is considered to be the most sacred bond. It is the reflection of the tradition and culture. It is accompanied by following the practice of monogamy. According to Collins English Dictionary, "Monogamy is the form of a relationship or a state or a custom of being married to only one person at a particular time." It is practiced and followed heavily by the people in Indian society. In the Indian society patriarchy is deep rooted. There are certain traditional rigid laws to which we act accordingly. However, Indian society is largely termed as patriarchal, and the monogamous relationships that exist in such a society under the institution of marriage are bound by rigid patriarchal norms which tend to delimit the righteous freedom of the women, thus establishing the dominance of men and eventually marginalizing the female counterparts.

It is assumed that, "Marriages are made in heaven" but this concept is quite ambiguous in the context of Indian society. Instead of seeking an emotional gratification and developing a familial connection for rest of the life, people tend to find financial and social connections. Marriage is the union of two souls but as realistically portrayed in the typically Indian context this union is based upon financial stability and social compatibility. The notion of marriage and how a family deals with it enables to expose the mentality of our society. Ideally, the choice of the two individuals should be kept on the higher pedestal, on the priority list of preferences rather than financial and objective attributes of each other. But the so called 'choice' is hampered and rejected. Instead, money and materialistic things are more focused throughout the ceremony and plays an important role. Marriage has been personified as a 'Market'. It is accompanied by one of the social evil known as Dowry. It is considered as gift which bride's family gives to the groom's family forcefully. Jitendra Gautam in his article defines "Dowry as a payment in cash and kind by bride's family to the bridegroom's family along with giving away of bride in Indian marriage" (5). Marriage has merely reduced to selling and buying the individuals. The marriage ceremony is called as Wedding. And, it has become the platform at which people got the chance to showcase their wealth and luxuries. An Indian wedding is an occasion

for a family to bring together all the clan and friends to expose their harmony and family ties. In the process the family also has to manage with the anxieties, concerning dowry and other economical burdens while maintaining the family's social status.

In the marriage two individuals are united to procreate, carry forward their lineage and make a happy living by providing equal opportunities, rights, freedom, happiness and respect to each other. Yet, in the Indian society where patriarchy is deeply seated, Man is mostly considered as the bread winner of family and on that basis he is treated as the 'guardian' of the house who is the custodian of all the power. He is decisions are supreme and women are treated merely as 'objects'. Men and women become the two binaries. Men usually hire the position of the 'self' and women are marginalized and are being regarded as the 'other.' Women are continuously 'silenced' by the men. The fake myths are attributed to the wife, that they nag all the time, they can never be satisfied and happy as men can be. Hence, men acquire the higher stature than women, who are still dependent and powerless.

Marriages acts as divided force in the narrow minded society. Generally, in India people are more biased or they are having more affinity towards their own religion, caste and class. Society ensures that the two individuals marry into the similar caste, class and religion thereby ensuring that their own community should grow more and more, they want the procreation among their community itself. It is a general conception that by moving forward with this mindset they will earn so called dignity and respect in the society. Moreover, this proceeding not only limits the choice of the two individuals but also ensures that they do not try and take chances with their personal life thereby hindering the growth of their personalities. Many girls are restricted and since their teenage they are taught to behave in certain way. Their choices are silenced. In many cases, their education is also being ceased so that they can stay at home and learn some household work so that it will contribute; help them in their martial sphere. One of the irony of the situation is women are expected to learn all the household chores even if they are educated and working though, majority

of the family pressurizes that they should learn how to manage the household stuff along with her work.

Change is the law of nature. The narrow minded society should understand and accept that the quality education will bring out some change in their typical patriarchal mindset. It will bring more tolerance and acceptance for people from different caste, religion, class and nationality. The few superstitions that exist even today will continue to become obsolete as trends have been for past centuries and people will become more logical in their approach towards relationships, marriages and ethics of a good society. Successful marital relationship has to guarantee equal rights and opportunities for both the partners as lay down by the Constitution of India. It is assumed that success in marriage does not come merely through finding the right person, but through being the right person.

Love, understanding and trust should be at the topmost level in the marital relationship. Partners should focus intently on the important building blocks of a healthy marriage which are commitment, sexual faithfulness, patience, forgiveness, honesty and selflessness. They should devote and invest the time daily for each other from their hectic schedule. Joshua Becker suggests that “Successful married partners should communicate as much as possible. They should communicate their hopes, dreams, fear and anxieties” (1). Marriage between two individual should not be just a legal bond or physical unification rather it should be emotional bond. It is not only about the relationship of husband and wife; it is much more than that.

Vinogradoff observed that “it is not only an institution regulating sexual intercourse and kept by conjugal affection, but also an arrangement for bringing up of children & a partnership for economic ends and social cooperation” (46). Marriage is a matter of status and legal consequences of a marriage affect not just the two parties but also innocent third parties—children. A happy and prosperous marriage is in which the father and mother bears an equally good relation with their children. They provide space to each member in the family. Each family member should help one another to grow leading towards a well to do life. Each individual in the family should be free to express his/ her own thoughts and the family environment should be friendly. Hence,

this is a simple call which defines a successful marriage. Basically, a successful marriage is far more precious than the transient things we chase after with our lives.

## **5. Traditional Depiction of Marriage in Indian Literature**

Marriage is particularly valuable to the society as it is the fundamental of the family and basic building block of the society. Indian Marriages are symbolic representation of culture and tradition uniquely. It brings out a significant firmness, meaning and stability to human relationship. It plays a vital role in transmitting the culture and traditions of a family to their future generations. It is not only a private relationship among two individual but rather it is recognized as a social institution of high public worth and concern. B.P. Beri while explaining the object of marriage says that “it is the source of every domestic comfort from infancy to old age; it is necessary for the preservation and well being of our species; it awakens and develops the best feelings of our nature; it is the source of important legal rights and obligations and in its higher forms it has tended to raise the weaker half of human race from a state of humiliating servitude” (53). In the traditional Indian society, Marriage is considered as an absolute bond between man and a women and it is universally conceived that they will stay together by prospering mutual confidence and peace.

Some prominent Indian authors and playwrights have scrutinized the theme of marriage and family in their well known works. The theme of marriage and family facades is one of common theme in the modern times. The Indian marriage as depicted in the Indian literature has its own variations. Many authors have brooded over the theme of marriage but their approach, perspective and outcome vary from each other. There are some commonalities and dissimilarities in their works. For instance as we can observe in the most notable work *Home and the World* (1916) also known as *Ghare Baire* by Rabindranath Tagore.

*Lights Out* (1984) by Manjula Padmanabhan is one the major texts which deals with one of the social issue of violence. It also reflects the theme of marriage in which Leela, who is being married to Bhasker is constantly suffers. She is in a traumatic condition. She wants to open up and raise her voice about the issue but she has been

'silenced' by her husband. Her husband does not want to consider the opinion of his wife. He attributes the voice the women as 'irrational' one and it is regarded as a meaningless discourse. Even though when Leela's friend Naina came to their house, she was also disturbed by the condition. He wants to call the police so that some actions could be taken and Leela's condition could be cured but Bhasker and Mohan, one the friend of her husband tries to rationalize the situation. They attempt to hide the truth and ignore the situation which traumatizes Leela. Therefore, the play is about how patriarchy delimits the voice of the female and they are consistently under the shadow of patriarchy.

Another promising work is *The Thousand faces of Night* (1992) written by Githa Hariharan, which caricatures the theme of suffering, alienation and humiliation of the women characters along with the theme of marriage. The position and agony of women characters after marriage in Indian society is well reflected in the novel. The characters are fighting against being the 'ideal women.' The women are supposed to follow the traditional marital rule hence, defining the limits. Devi is the main protagonist in the novel who is well educated and is exposed to the western culture. "She being a young educated girl with her "American experience" struggles to cope with her husband Mahesh, who is busy with his business tours most of the time. This is when Devi feels alienated in "her own" home. She searches for an identity and tries to free herself from the bondage of marriage. Her emotional and mental incompatibility with Mahesh brings her close to Baba." Although, she struggles in her marriage but still tries to be an obedient wife. Towards the end, she breaks all the chain, stands against the stereotypical norms and she has the strong stubbornness to prove herself. The author criticizes the patriarchal power structure of the Hindu society through these contemporary women and aims to highlight the patriarchal rigidity which prevails in the typical Indian society.

## **6. About the Authors**

In this current study Girish Karnad and Mohan Rakesh has been studied with reference to their major plays *Wedding Album* and *Halfway House*. The two plays

deals with central issue of marriage, family and relationships. They are based on modern contemporary Indian society.

### **6.1 Girish Karnad: The Man and His Works**

Girish Raghunath Karnad is regarded as one of the major dramatists of contemporary Indian drama. He was born on 19 May 1938 in Matheran, near Bombay, Maharashtra. He belongs from a Saraswat Brahmin family in Dharwar. They widely speak Konkani language. He has spent his childhood in the small village of Sirsi, Karnataka. In this city he was first acquainted with drama and indigenous folk theatre. In a conversation with Aparna Dharwadker his own words were:

“It may have something to do with the fact that in the small town of Sirsi, where I grew up, strolling groups of players, called Natak Mandalis or Natak companies, would come, set up a stage, present a few plays over a couple of months and move on. My parents were addicted to these plays. That was in the late 1940s. By the early 1950s, films had more or less finished off this kind of theatre, though some Mandalis still survive in the north of Karnataka in a degenerate state. But in those days they were good or at least I was young and thought so. I loved going to see them and the magic had stayed with me.  
(iii)

Karnad, as a youngster was highly influenced by the theatre and folklore in his village known as Yakshagana. His father used to generally take the whole family to the theatre to watch plays. Karnad usually sits there to watch the plays in the night as well. The stage was illuminated by the lamps and curtains all over. Basically, Karnad grew up in such an atmosphere where he was exposed to drama and its elements very early in his childhood. Drama and theatrical performances have marked such a remarkable influence on Karnad's life. Earlier he thought he could be a poet but then he realized that he could not be a poet but only a playwright. He had done his graduation from Karnatak Arts College, Dharwad in 1958 and moved to Bombay for further studies. Later, he went to England and studied at Magdalen in Oxford. In this Masters degree he earned Rhodes scholarship. After his return to India he worked

with Oxford University Press, Madras. Later, he was renowned for his direction in Film and Television Institute of India (1974-1975) and was a recipient of many prestigious awards. He was honored Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan by the Government of India and was conferred the prestigious Jnanpith Award.

Karnad's early influences include Indian history, myths and tradition. The Natak Mandali in his village has a deep impact on Karnad since childhood. He beautifully weaves the use of Indian myths and traditions and interprets them into his plays to drive out socio-cultural evils. He focuses on folklore and legends, hence interprets the past to a contemporary relevance. Abhishek Kosta comments "Karnad delves into Indian myths and legends, using them as vehicles of a new vision. Through these myths he tries to depict the absurdity of life with all its elemental passions, conflicts and man's eternal struggle to achieve perfection." In the prior phases of his writings, Karnad was profoundly influenced by French existentialists like Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and Albert Camus (1913-1960). He admits that he took the same theme of choice and responsibility in his play *Yayati* (1961) and at this time he was extensively reading these authors. Karnad accepts there is certain impact of Bertolt Brecht upon his play *Nagamandala* (1988).

Karnad has derived the myths mainly from the eminent epic, *The Mahabharata* and *The Kathasaritsagara*. His depiction of characters in a way is profound and his women characters can be considered the enlightened and emancipated women of modern times. Majority of the women characters in most of his play believes that marriage is their ultimate goal; and though it is a way of overpowering them which eventually results into acceptance of male dominance. Most of the heroines in Karnad's play carry the notion of distinctiveness but their identities are more often linked to cultural implications of gender, and they come out as forceful entities. Karnad is quite versatile in his career. He has worked at University of Chicago as a visiting professor and served widely as a Director in Films and theatre. Karnad has written numerous plays and directed many films. Some of the treasure trove of his plays are included *Yayati* (1961), *Tughlaq* (1964), *Hayavadana* (1971), *Anugumallige* (1977), *Hittine Hunja* (1980), *Nagamandala* (1988), *Tale Danda* (1990), *Agni Mattu*

*Male* (1995), *Flowers* (2012), *Wedding Album* (2009), *Boiled Beans on Toast* (2014), he has written some plays primarily in Kannada and later on these have been translated into English and some are written in English by himself.

*Wedding Album* (2009) is one of the recent plays written by Karnad. The play mirrors the life an urban middle class family. The depiction is of a modern, mid-class, Indian family. The plot revolves around the central female character Vidula. She is the younger daughter in the family who is looking forward to marry a suitable expat boy whom she has never met. He is portrayed as a typical Indian boy who is settled in the US. The family comprises of a doting mother, an aged father who has lost his authority upon the family, an elder daughter who lives in Australia with her husband and children and a son who is a media professional. The play revolves around traditional Indian wedding in the modern globalized technologically advanced India. It also portrays the notions of wealth, well-being, sexual propriety, tradition and modernity from the basis of middle-class society in contemporary India. AJ Sebastian marks that “The play is like a common TV series, presenting a realistic family situation. It also demystifies middle class South Indian Brahmin marriage in the backdrop of familial and emotional relationships, their choices, values and lifestyle.” The play highlights the issue of marriage as a social institution which becomes compulsion for Indian women. The play attempts to explore the hidden desire of women. The issues of family façades and the way characters deal with their relationships is appropriately represented.

## **6.2 Mohan Rakesh: The Man and His Works**

Mohan Rakesh (8<sup>th</sup> January 1925- 03<sup>rd</sup> January 1972) was one of those who made a remarkable contribution to Hindi literature. He was born in Amritsar, Punjab. He did his graduation from Punjab University. He started his career as a teacher in a college of Bombay later he resigned from his job to devote himself into full time writing. He made notable contributions to the novel, short stories, travelogue, criticism, memoir and drama. He has been honored the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1968.

He was an important figure in the post-independence time and wrote about themes of identity crisis, urban middle-class ethos and their problems. The variety in his works is indicative of the depth of his thinking and his writing; whatever he wrote was done in the context of his times and his environment. Pratibha Agrawal in her critical essay *Mohan Rakesh* comments that “He believed that an honest writer recreates in his work what he has experienced and lived through, giving voice to what he has experienced and lived through, giving voice to what he has felt and known.” (pp.93) His notable work includes *Ashadh ka ek din* (1958), *Lehron ke rajhans* (1963) and *Aadhe-adhure* (1969), one-act plays, *dhwaniatya*, *Beejantya* and other such as *Ande ke chilke*, *Anya ekanki tatha beej natak* and *Raat beetne tak tatha* and *Anya dhwani natak*. He wrote novels like *Andhere Band Kamre* (1961) *Na Aane wala Kal* (1968) *Antaraal* (1972) *Bakalama Khuda* (1974). He has translated the very eminent Sanskrit plays *Mrichkatikam* and *Shakuntalam*. Mohan Rakesh’s plays were famous for their simple, so colloquial and yet intensely dramatic diction.

In the play, *Adhe-adhure* Mohan Rakesh portrays a married couple Savitri and Mahendranath with their elder daughter Binni, son Ashok and a younger daughter Kinni. The family is disintegrated and degenerated one. Savitri is the sole bread earner of the family and an only working member in the entire family. Her husband and son are unemployed. The elder daughter, Binni has eloped with the one time lover of her mother, Manoj and now they have some problems in their marital life. She detest staying with him and eventually comes back to find the reason. She thinks that it is something from this house which she carried along and was the ultimate cause of the breakdown of her marriage. The younger one, Kinni is rude, stubborn, undisciplined and turns out to be a spoiled child. She is neglected and reprimanded by all the family members for her turbulent behaviour. In due course of the play it is revealed that Savitri has illegitimate relations outside her marital bond with other men such as Singhania, Jagmohan and Juneja. The house is war at itself, family members found this house as ‘hell’ from where there is no exit. The play captures the utter rottenness of the value system of the middle-class in urban modern society. It focuses on how power discourse and relationships are being portrayed in the marital life; Hence, mirroring the cracked relationship of Savitri and Mahendranath.

To conclude, this chapter is divided into five parts. The first part deals with the introductory note on Drama as literary genre. In this chapter 'drama' is defined in various ways for a better understanding. Drama, its origin and some of the famous playwrights are being discussed in the first part. In the later part the concepts of Indian English Drama has been discussed in details. The second part starts by defining marriage and its notions. There is a special reference to Hindu tradition of marriage as it is considered the most sacred bond in Hindu culture and monogamy is there. Moreover, the two plays which I am deciphering into portray Indian Hindu society. The concept of Marriage and family in the context of Indian society has been discussed. In addition to this, some other works has been discussed which deals with the theme of marriage and family. Towards the end, the third part briefly studies Girish Karnad, his life, education and influences along with some of his major works. The brief summary and issues of *Wedding Album* and *Halfway House* is added. In the fourth part, Mohan Rakesh is studied as a significant playwright and his literary contribution has been discussed. The current study aims to study marriage as a social institution. One of the objectives of the study is to find out how the institution of marriage is the framework of power and relationship in the light of the two contemporary plays *Wedding Album* by Girish Karnad and *Halfway House* by Mohan Rakesh, which is modeled upon on the modern urban Indian society. In addition, it will object to compare and contrast both plays with special reference to treatment of marriage, family facades, a study of relationships and finally tracing out the disillusionment and hopes of both the women protagonists.

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## Chapter 2

### Perspectives on marriage as social institution in *Wedding Album*

“*Wedding Album* is irreverent, subversive and radical, and reveals the Indian middle-class family as seen never, felt, or breathed before”.

-Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry (1)

*Wedding Album* is Girish Karnad's one of his latest plays, published in 2009. It deals with ordinary life of an urban middle class in India. The story revolves around a menacing arrange marriage to suitable boy, who is settled in US, and to whom she have never met. The play is simple yet unsettling, and a very real picture of Karnataka based, Saraswat Brahmin family- the Nadkarnis is being portrayed. The family includes Hema, a mature elder sister, who is married lives in Australia with two kids. A son Rohit, who is works as a social media professional. An old father, whose words are unheard in the family and a chivvy mother. The Indian wedding is expected to bring the two families together by harmony and mutual concern. This play attempts to explore the traditional Indian wedding and different life expectation of the family members. However, the play examines the notion of money, traditions and customs of marriage, sexual propriety and issues of intra-caste marriage in details.

#### 1. The Contemporary situation and purview of marriage

The play *Wedding Album* is based in globalized and technologically advanced India. As depicted in the opening scene, the central character Vidula, is preparing herself for the interview in which she has to introduce herself to Ashwin, the boy who lives in US for their marriage procedure. She is speaking facing towards in the camera and her brother Rohit, guides her to give her best. In the opening scene her situation is described that “She is extremely self-conscious and ill-at-ease.” (5) She is tired after making several reshoots. Traditionally, the first step in a matrimonial alliance is meeting up of spouses. In an arrange marriage usually family connection, relatives or

friends, marriage bureaus make a conscious effort to make the two families meet and know to each other. “In traditional arranged marriages the essential points of consideration, as is evident from the matrimonial advertisements, are caste, age, qualification, physical culture of the spouses, family status and composition, place of residence & profession.” (33) If the matchmaking is done, then generally the boy and his family come to meet the girl. Eventually, they talk, like and decide to be together after the meeting. In this play, Vidula is being forced to make an introductory video of her informing about all her qualities with a ‘mandatory smile on her face.’ Rohit, Vidula’s brother a media professional, directs her. Every now and then she is interrupted by the camera person and she becomes upset. As Rohit cajoles her,

Rohit: Why don’t you smile a bit? Look cheerful. (5)

This scene is relevant as the woman is being directed to behave in a ‘certain way’ for the shoot. She is given the instruction to smile, even though she doesn’t want. She has to present her cheerful look and to be perfect so that she can be fitted in a frame of the marriage proposal. As Rohit comments,

Rohit: I know, But remember, you are trying to show your best face to him. (5)

Vidula becomes frustrated as the take was for the third time with more smile and fakeness. Still, Rohit emphasizes on the look again, warns Vidula that she should not make herself unattractive. It may decipher that look and style of the girl is that much important in the marriage market; one must show our best face in order to lure other party. Heart and mind of the person occupies the secondary position, attractive face value comes first. In the contemporary modern society vanity is all the more important. Marriage is portrayed as the ‘market’ where we have to show our best face to win their heart. People are ridiculed to behave in a certain way.

The caste system in India is prevalent from the ancient times. Traditional Indian marriages are bound to be in caste. Inter-caste marriages are considered as impure and a kind sin to people in India. Moreover, Caste is highly related to working of marriage as a social institution. People prefer to marry in their own community. The strategy behind this can be that if two individual marries in their own caste, it will

prosper, more members will be added to it. There is certain power politics behind the issue of caste in India. To marry in the same community is a tool for it, so that one caste should remain more powerful. In the play Pratibha is women around forty from Orissa, who is very mature. She bitterly criticizes the condition of Vidula. She comments,

Pratibha: A girl from an educated family middle class family- a graduate- agrees to consider marrying a man whom she has never met. The boy turns up, all ready to jump on to the alter, without ever having seen her. In this day and age?

Rohit: They were not total strangers. I mean, they had video exchanged video tapes. SMSed. Talked on phone. And he belonged to our caste. (8)

Pratibha very sarcastically asks that in the contemporary modern society an educated girl would do so? These proceedings were conducted in ancient times where the two strangers marry each other without knowing a bit. She emphasizes that an educated girl should be aware of her choice, and moreover she should not choose someone abruptly without meeting him and knowing him personally. But Rohit, who can be seen as the custodian of power, immediately replies back, covers the fact and emphasize that the boy is best because he belongs to their caste. The Nadarkarnis, they always emphasize on belonging to an upper caste, Brahmins. The choice of Vidula hardly matters, even if they have communicated less, the main point on which Rohit focuses is he is also a Saraswat Brahmin. Amrit Srinivasan in his forward to the play *Wedding Album* also highlights that “For a South Indian Brahmins, the inevitability of marriage exists on the same experimental plane as the inevitability of being born in a particular family.” (Srinivasan xiii) For them it is necessary to carry forward the lineage in which she/he has been born. In the case of Rohit and Isabel, Hema sarcastically comments that, “Couldn’t he find a suitable match within our caste?” He is being constantly ridiculed by her sisters that a Christian girl would not be suitable for their family. (29) Moreover, according to the Hindu Marriage Act “The Hindu Marriage Validity Act XXI of 1949 conferred validity on inter-caste marriages with retrospective effect. This was followed by adoption of Constitutional Directive

Principles in 1950, for creating a casteless society. Still, the traditional sway continues even in twenty first century India” (23). Hence, the characters in this play have to forcefully indulge in looking for someone unknown ‘because’ it is necessary.

Some individual marry for companionship, some marry due to being forced, some for procreation but most of the persons marry as a socio-biological duty. Legally, marriage has two mandatory components viz. mutual consent and marriage ceremony. However, what precedes consent and what follows marriage ceremony are also important components of married life. As stated in the chapter one, the marriage ceremony is called as Wedding. As the mother of Vidula comments, “A wedding means expenses- there is no getting away from that.” (15) And, the big fat Indian wedding became the platform on which people get the chance to showcase their wealth and luxuries. In the play Vidula’s father remarks, “Shopping! A wedding is essentially for shopping. Everything else is secondary.” (31) This reflects the typical Indian mindset. The shopping and the discussion of gifts being exchanged in the two families are important. Karnad has perfectly weaved how wedding involves economical expenses, and one should save from the very beginning if you have a daughter. As Vidula’s mother states,

Mother: Hema, you were a witness. You saw how I pleaded with your father. I almost fell at his feet. I said our daughter and son-in-law are going abroad, let’s get some jewellery made for them. But he has ever listened to me? He just snarled at me: ‘Our son-in-law isn’t asking for anything. So what are you making such a fuss about? (15)

Making up of jewellery for the wedding is mode of materialization. It is a custom rather than a choice. One has to offer some ornaments to your son-in-law and daughter, it is mandatory. Even though the groom and the bride have not asked for any materialistic thing, it’s a compulsive custom to provide it, to showcase their reputation. So, Karnad here bitterly criticizes the Indian rituals that gift should not be owed to boy from the girl’s family. Henceforth, financial expense is still a dominant consideration in matrimonial alliance. Wedding becomes a platform in which people just come and join

to passing a fuss about arrangements, decorations, food etc. As Vidula's mother remarks,

Mother: It's all very well for him to waive these things. He lives in the US, after all. But I have attended weddings in our neighbours' families. Accepted their hospitality. Gorged myself at their wedding feast. And now, when it comes to my own daughter's wedding, you want to pack the guests off with a betel leaf and a nut? (16)

Vidula's mother feels flabbergasted to hear about the new environment and style of marriage when Rohit confirmed that, the talking on phone and video calling doesn't confirmed the marriage. Only if Ashwin liked Vidula, then he wants to go the Registrar and sign. He adds, "He already has said he doesn't want all that. No rituals, no wasteful tamasha, nothing". (25) Mother becomes suddenly cynical when she heard this, and wants to stop the marriage. She wanted to done with this then and there. Marriage is such a big deal for the girl in Indian society. The madness of the mother shows that parents are so much pressurized by this. Once the boy has been selected they want to fix and to be done with it. Traditionally, in India once the Marriage has been fixed, the girl's identity is struck to it. After the fallacious statement of her mother about the marriage being cancelled, Vidula screams,

Vidula: No we can't. We will become laughing stock of the town. We agreed to all this. No to break off for no reason! I can't face it. (26)

Marriage is a social institution in the maintenance of which the public is at large is deeply interested. Breaking up of marriage is such a big issue in Indian society. A person very conveniently connects the breakdown of the marriage to the girl's identity. The family becomes a laughing stock as pointed out by Vidula. She has not that much courage to face it. In other words, we can clearly depict that "Marriage is a gamble." (27)

The word 'dowry' means exchange of the compulsory materialistic gifts within the two families. It is the property, valuable securities, money that a bride brings to her husband's house at the time of her marriage. Dowry is a form of consideration (in

cash or otherwise) demanded by the groom or his relatives in return for marrying the bride to be. (Mitra 1) It is one of the social evils which Karnad has tried to expose in the play. It can be a joy to groom's family but at same time it is a curse for the bride's family as they have to bear the enormous cost to fulfill the unreasonable demand of the groom's family. In the play, the two bridegrooms didn't asked for any dowry. They rather prefer the 'ideal marriage.' As the father comments,

Father: But Hema's husband didn't take a penny. And this boy who has come for Vidula – what's his name?

Rohit: Ashwin.

Father: Ashwin. Ashwin Panje. He says the same thing: no dowry. Who says today's youth lacks values? Idealism? The first thing he said was: 'No thanks. I don't want any dowry' (31)

Karnad through Hema's husband and Ashwin wants to highlight that the in the institution of marriage, dowry plays an essential role in the Indian weddings. Some people regard this 'social evil' as a custom which has to be strictly followed. The custom of dowry is prevalent in almost all the sections of our society in form or the other. In the contemporary society even though both the girl and a boy are educated, they are working, still some of the families raise the demands Dowry. In the ancient times, it was demanded mainly by groom's family but now a days bride's family have also adopted it as a working strategy to bribe the boy. For instance, in the case of Rohit, we observe that Gopal continuously tries to bribe Rohit. He says:

Mohan: So everything Sister and Brother-in-law have in this world will go to Tapasya. You go ahead and take any risk you want to take.

Mira: Go abroad for training, if you wish. They can give you...

Rohit (*annoyed*): Are you trying to bribe me? (35)

Rohit is extremely passionate about his work. He don't want to get married so early. He has planned to resign the current job and wants to establish his own business. Gopal and Mohan tries to force him to marry their daughter, Tapasya. According to them, she is the epitome of perfectness. Gopal and describes that "She is not an uneducated girl. She has a First Class in MA in Sociology. She is a modern girl-educated and sensitive." (38) Apart from narrating all her qualities, Gopal and Mohan continuously focus that Tapasya will inherit all the property. Hence, the future of the boy who will marry her, will be stable, they will lead to a comfortable life. They wanted to keep all the facts in front of Rohit. At last, when Rohit didn't seem to agree on this point they literally beg him by saying, "She won't be able to show her face." (39)

One of the major point to notice is that generally in the Indian society, whenever a boy seems to reject the marriage proposal of a girl. They instantly connect this issue to the identity and reputation of the girl. And, it is acknowledged that the rejection provides some kind of power to the boy. They feel elevated. As Vidula sarcastically comments to Rohit:

Vidula: But it gives you a sense of power, doesn't it? To have a girl waiting for you- her parents kneeling before you-begging and pleading...It really must make you feel grand (44)

From the play we can extract that both Vidula and Tapasya are in the same condition, if their marriage will be hampered, they won't be able to face the world. Here, Karnad comments on the temporary and brittle identity of women. The Indian society more often tends to attach the value of women to their respective marriage. A married woman is more reputed than a single working woman. Thus, women and their identities are interrelated to their marital situations. This is one the perspectives of marriage being a social institution and how it surrounds the identity of the women.

Marriage for an Indian society has been regarded as a special occasions, celebrated with zest, joy and enthusiasm. Generally, Indian wedding tends to acquire the extravagant and magnificent settings with grand feast. As the growing economy

pumps a new wealth into the country; weddings have turned into veritable showpieces. With the changing times the festive spirit of the atmosphere of marriage has taken on a more flamboyant one as weddings become occasions for India's rapidly growing luxuriant classes to show off their social status and wealth. The occasion of marriage goes on wide scale and preparations consume so much time these days. As Mohan comments,

Mohan: Well, in the good old days, weddings would go on for weeks on end. Just preliminary discussions over exchange of gifts would take days. (31)

Gifts and discussion of clothes are one of the important discussions among Indian weddings. Time and people are involved in it for such a long time that people become irritated. As Vidula and Hema held a conversation,

Vidula: I never thought getting married would be such a hassle. Everything seems to...

Hema: All weddings are like that, don't worry. I haven't told you... (50)

Therefore, the concept of marriage reflected in the play *Wedding Album* attempts to caricature that "Indian weddings are not just the usual ceremonies which have close relatives, where the bride and groom's side are familiar with each other and the celebration gets over in two to three days. They are enormous events which have been planned for from months in advance, where the wedding celebrations last longer than seasons do. The whole extended family, friends and neighbors gathers together for an event. In an arrange marriage, the bride and groom risk their lives to live with an unfamiliar person, by gambling their ambitions and desires." (Cute nose, 2013) Sociologist Patricia Uberoi comments that in South Asia, weddings are "the most visible site of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous waste". Through the play, *Wedding Album* Karnad attempts to showcase a glamorized return to tradition; where desires, choice and ambition of two individuals are conveniently subdued.

Therefore, to conclude the play, *Wedding Album* Karnad aims to explore the purview of marriage in Indian contemporary society. This chapter aims to examine the contemporary situation along with the different perspectives on marriage being depicted as the social institution. The first part discusses a brief summary of the play along with the introduction of the characters. The play is analyzed by reflecting light upon different treatment and perspectives on marriage as social institution. The opening scene where the central character seems to deal with technological advancement has been discussed. How a girl is being forced to mould her voice and facial expressions to be fitted into the frame, so that the American boy adores it and selects her as his life partner. The desire and mood of Vidula is conveniently ignored. She has been trained to behave like a puppet. Another perspective of intra-caste marriage and its compulsion has been discussed in details with referring to certain dialogues of the characters in the play. Marriage ceremony is all together known as Wedding. Its form, expenses, a discussion about Dowry and consequences has been discussed with reference to the play. The identity and reputation of the bride, once marriage has been fixed has been talked about. The conclusion of the play and the title has been justified towards the end.

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## CHAPTER 3

### **Marital disharmony and Power structures depicted in the play *Halfway House***

“A sort of frost seems to have descended on the souls of the human agents... Every confrontation – and the play is series of confrontation – instead of thawing ice, it leaves a bigger iceberg.”

-R.L. Nigam, Enact (53).

*Halfway House* (1969) aims to examine a dysfunctional family. It is a constructive rendering of middle class ethos. The sole wage earner of the family is, Savitri and her husband is unemployed. Her son Ashok is an idle boy, eventually dependent on the mother for survival and has no intention to work. The older daughter Binni, is now married who has once eloped with Manoj, a one time lover of Savitri. The younger daughter, Kinni is haughty and impudent. She bears a bad temperament. She is always neglected and reprimanded by all the family members. The House is on the verge of disintegration. There is no mutual respect among the family members. It is a modern family which is devoid of traditional Indian ethics. The ‘House’ is at war with itself; it is divided and disunited. In the play, subversion of power structures from the mainstream can be minutely observed. Savitri who is economically independent, comes out as the matriarch in the family. She constantly tries to exert power on her husband. The insights of futility and marital disharmony can be traced in the play at every level and it effects largely on the disintegration of the house, the aloofness and ill-behavior of the children as well as on prevailing relationships. These all conflicts together lead to familial facades and that’s how the play is and its characters are ‘*Adhe-Adhure*’.

#### **1. Husband-wife relationship: The marital disharmony**

The relationship of Savitri and Mahendranath projects a dark and gloomy marital life. In the Prologue of the play, the setting is pictured as it describes the environment of the play. It is described as “A disorderly living room in what was once a fairly well-to-do middle class home.” (4) The word ‘disorderly’ means the disorder in the family. It can be the extended metaphor for disintegration in the family. In the Prologue, ‘several pieces of broken furniture’ and ‘a shelf of dilapidated old books’ represents the broken marriage and distorted relationships among the family members. The sentence in the Prologue ‘a writing desk and chair add to the over-crowded effect of the room’ may suggest that the room is over-crowded as it symbolizes the ongoing chaos in the family. The setting in the Act one, where ‘A high-school satchel lies open on a teapoy, with half the book spilt out.’ Torn books and old journals are kept on the sofa which signifies that the house is disintegrated and everywhere the things are left over, not in a proper manner. In the opening scene, Savitri has just arrived from the office and she throws the parcel on the chair, screams “Whenever I come back, the house is a mess.” (7) She is the working lady and not very much interested in keeping the house clean. She handles the pressure of her work, her husband, children and the house! That is too much to handle. Savitri is always tends to taunt and torment Mahendranath. He is constantly being rebuked and reprimanded by his wife. As stated in the book,

The First Man: Actually...I do have to go out...but if you want me for...

The Women: I don't want you for anything. (9)

The relationship of Savitri and Mahendranath seems a bitter one. They spend all their time in just arguing with each other. Mahendranath is very displeased to be acquainted with Savitri's invitation of her boss, Singhania. Consequently, he always departs from the house whenever her boss comes to meet him. He is a bit irritated from all the male acquaintances around Savitri; Jagmohan, Juneja and Singhania, and even Manoj who now husband of Binni. He taunts Savitri of Manoj as well. As he talks with Savitri,

The First Man: So, people know that he comes here?

The Women: Why? Is there something wrong with that?

The First Man: Did I say so?

The Women: Didn't you imply it?

The First Man: I suppose I shouldn't say anything at all. But if I remain silent...

The Women: You remain silent! You of all people! (9)

This conversation portrays typical mindset of the patriarchal setup. Mahendranath is hesitant of his wife's relation to her boss. He doesn't appreciate this and always wants to procrastinate. He wants to escape when the boss is home. He has not that much courage to face the scenario. Hence, in numerous ways marital disharmony in their relationship has been reflected.

## 2. Tracing the power structure

Generally, in the patriarchal setup the husband is dominative but in the play *Halfway House*, the central female character, Savitri seems more dominant as she is the bread winner of the family. The structure of the relationship can be said as a matriarchal because of the financial cause. It reflects that both of them are not compatible, Is their marriage was a forced one? Or by their choice it is not much clear in the play. Mahendranath seems sad and frustrated in with marriage. In this context P. Lal remarks,

Man must become conscious the wholeness of his reality; his position...of the whole, his poverty loses its one great worth. (2)

Mahendranath feel worse about his condition in the family. He is voice is left unheard by all the family members. All of them neglect him as he doesn't provide any financial help to the family. Savitri expects a lot from his husband but in return he provides only nothingness. The dialogues of Mahendranath are very incomplete and full of ambiguity. He is not able to either complete the whole sentence or either he is not being able to convey the meaning in a proper way. As written in the book,

The Older Girl: There is Something.

The First Man: It's nothing. Your mother was saying....

The Older Girl: What was she saying?

The First Man: Nothing...actually....I was just saying. (5)

Almost in his every dialogue uncertainty prevails from the starting to the end in the play. Ram Pundlikrao suggest that “Even his utterances have dissimilar tones, also he confused when desires to express his dilemma” (2).

The tone and means of frustration can be traced in Mahendranath because of the marital disharmony and working of the power structure. Here, Savitri seem to overshadow her husband. She even didn't allow him to speak. She constantly reminds him that he lacks power, and she is the epitome of intelligence and sacrifice. The power can be shown by 'silencing' his speech. Savitri doesn't consider her husband's discourse as a meaning one. Moreover, she didn't give a single chance to complete the sentence of her husband. Even when they are discussing about rude nature of Kinni, Savitri take away the right to speak or pass opinion even in the case of their children. As written in the book,

The Older Girl: Mama, you really have turned her into a cheeky little brat!

The First Man: If I say that she...

The Women: Must you always say something? I asked you to...

The First Man: Say something! As if I ever got a chance to! (21)

Meanwhile, when Mahendranath is highly frustrated then he expresses his anguish to thee family members. He expresses the bitter reality that he is mistreated in his own domicile and comments,

The First Man: Yes, I do. For how many years have I been bearing the burden of life? And for how many years have I been looking after this family? And despite that, what have I come to... that everyone answers me back, is rude, disrespectful, impertinent and...

The Boy: I only said that, Daddy, because...

The First Man: Because, because, because! Everyone finds some cause or other! What is my status in this house? Silent acceptance, perpetual snubs, constant insults, is that all I deserve after so many years? (27)

Thus, Mahendranath's is always annoyed. He is in defiant and aggravated mood. He is like a puppet in the hands of his wife. He begins to hate Savitri, for her relationships

with Jagmohan, Juneja and Singhania her boss. Savitri always tries to inflict power on her husband. Hence, Ram Pundlikrao comments that, "Savitri always blames her husband as he is unable to fulfill household duties. Mahendranath seems to follow patriarchal principles where he wants to be a dominating colleague while Savitri is not ready to accept this. That is the reason why this attitude leads to the wedded dispute between husband and the wife" (03). By each passing time, Mahendranath sometimes gets a chance to express his emotions and he lays his heart out. He screams,

The First Man: On no grounds. I am of no use, of no use at all. I'm only an idler... to be kicked and bullied just as you please. Can anyone tell me why I should stay here? You can't, can you? (26)

Thus, infliction of economic power and marital dissonance weaves a thread of hatredness towards each other. Mahendranath and Savitri dislike each other and hence, due to their current marital problem, the environment of the house in which they breathe becomes polluted and as a consequence, the ill-effects drew upon their children.

### **3. Savitri and the children: Family façades**

It is universally acknowledged fact that children complete the family. People marry to procreate, to carry forward the lineage. Savitri treats her children in a loathsome manner. She is mostly preoccupied in her in works, meeting up with her boss. In her pastime, when she's home she rebukes her husband. There is a discord and communication gap between the husband and wife which lead to a dysfunctional family. The after effects of the broken relationship are seen upon the children. The older daughter, Binni elopes with Manoj and get married. However, her marital life is a misery. She is not happy. When she suddenly returns home and she don't know what's wrong and why! As Binni shares,

The Older Girl: That the longer two people live together, breathe the same air...the...the more estranged they become from one another.

The Women: Is that how you both feel?

The Older Girl: Well, at least I do.

The Women: Then there must be a reason...

The Older Girl: What reason? A cup of tea spilt from his hand or a shirt delay when he returns from work? These little things are not really reasons; they become reasons. A strange sort of feelings mounts up within me and spreads like a poison through my whole being. Everything I touch or see or hear becomes distorted and I stand helpless and fearful under the spell of a destructive fate. But Mama, I don't know why... I just can't see why! It happens unasked, unforeseen. It... it... tortures me till I think I'm going mad, And in the end? In the end he too turns against me and says...

The Women: What does he say?

The Older Girl: That...it's from this house I have taken something with me which prevents me from being natural.

The Women: What is this thing?

The Older Girl: That I can find out only from the within myself from this house.

(18)

The misery in the relationship of Binni and Manoj is the sole cause of her marriage being distressed. As Manoj states that it comes from the 'house' Binni belongs to can imply that Binni has inherited the disharmony from her parents. Since childhood Binni has observed them fighting day and night. They are used to argue and quarreling so may be it had left an impact upon Binni's mind and perception of marriage. Her married life is also full of conflicts. She wants to do exactly opposite things which her husband likes. For instance, she comments,

The Older Girl: That would enrage him. He likes my hair long, so I want to cut it. He doesn't like me work, so I want a job Anything to torment him! But I can't do it, And when I realize this, I feel so crushed that... (19)

She wants to do all these opposite things as she wants to undercut the desire of her husband. These desires can be the notions of patriarchy which she wants to subvert. Yet, the elopement of Binni with Manoj can be symbolic. Binni runs away from the home because she finds the atmosphere very suffocating or she may want to follow her mother's footsteps. As Savitri have relations with Juneja and Singhanian. Both

mother and daughter want to seek emotional stability; Savitri because Mahendranath does not care about her feelings and Binni is frustrated by the everyday chaotic environment of the house. As stated in the book,

The First Man: Have you ever considered why I stay away?

The Women: Why you do so is known only to you or to your son. He too disappears from home for three days at a time!

The First Man: You're comparing me to him?

The Women: No, him to you. Just as you've ruined your life, he too is...

The First Man: And your daughter? From whom did she learn to ruin her life? I had never thought of running away from home! (11)

Children are replica of their parents. We can conclude that Dilip Kumar Basu in his critical essay *Halfway House: Some Stray Comments Only* discusses "The Boy and The Daughter seem to replicate in certain ways the characteristics and responses of their father and mother respectively. They seem to duplicate the lives of their parents" (131). Whatever they have witnessed or experienced from their own home, affects their future life. Pratibha Aggarwal in her critical essay *Mohan Rakesh* comments that "*Adhe-Adhure*, in fact, is not only the story of the relationship between man and a woman, it is also the story of a disintegrating family whose members- husband, wife, elder daughter, son and younger daughter- have become extremely bitter and acrimonious" (102). There is no bonding and understanding between the family members. They seem to be constantly blaming and snapping each other. In the case of Ashok, we can analyze that he is lazy and careless boy. He feels no shame when Singhania, Savitri's boss enquires him about his graduation score in order to get job. He draws a zero in the air very conveniently. He does not want to work. He just wants to sit idle and be lethargic every time. As Savitri states,

The Women: (to the boy) You're only interested in three things...in sleeping all the day, in cutting those pictures and...in taking things from home and... (30)

The favorite time pass for Ashok is to irritate the younger sister, Kinni. He pulls her hairs and scolds her most of the time. Basically, he has no goals and ambition in his life and sometimes he comes home after three days. That's why Savitri comments that he is following his father. The younger daughter, Kinni is short tempered, peevish and highly volatile. She is that much impulsive because she is repeatedly ignored by mother and father even her difficulties are not solved. She constantly jabbars all the time. She never answers softly, instead she always babbles in a rude way. As stated,

The Woman: Come here!

The Younger Girl: I won't.

The Older Girl: You won't?

The Younger Girl: No, I won't (rushes to street door) First I get my hair pulled. Then everyone starts shouting. And, now I should come to you to be slapped!  
(*exits by street door*) (27)

Therefore, Binni, Ashok and Kinni all are disillusioned as they all lack a love of loving and caring parents. Instead they have always been ridiculed for the way they are, for the way they behave but it has only come from erratic behavior of parents. If the relationship between father and the mother is in continuous strife, it will automatically affect the psychology of children. The disharmony lies in the title of the play as well. The original text was published in Hindi, named as *Adhe-Adhure*. 'Adhe' is the hindi word which means 'half' or 'divided' and 'Ahure' means 'incomplete.' In the English translation by Bindu Batra, it is *Halfway House*. The title is very significant and it may reflect that the characters in the play are fragmented and full of dissonance. R.L. Nigam in the essay *Adhe-Adhure: A Comment* traces "to take the title as the playwright's criticism of life in a capsule. This criticism amounts to pinpoint the fact that the tragedy of contemporary life results from the failure of men including women to measure up the challenge of contemporary life" (92), the play is not wholly pessimistic but it has piece of depressing atmosphere. Due to the bitter relationship of the father and mother, family is on the verge of collapse. Hence, in the play marital disharmony and power structures are clearly represented.

In the wider aspect, the play attempts to delineate the crisis in the family system consequent upon, among other things, the virtual breakdown of marriage as an institution. The assertion of personal rights in the family seeks inter-personal adjustments but in this family no one is ready adjust and compromise. They talk in whim and follow their own ideology. The awful circle runs on and family is on the verge of total breakdown. In conclusion, this chapter aims to review the play under the lens of prevailing marital disharmony and power structures. In the first section a brief summary of the play has been given. Then, the relation of husband and wife, their miscommunication, frustration and disharmony has been depicted with reference to the play. The next section deals with tracing the power structures. There is a subversion of the power structure, usually power is attributed to the men but here, the central character Savitri subverts it as she has economic independence. In the modern society those who are economically profound automatically they are the controllers. In the last section, the relationship among whole family has been discussed. Savitri and her children don't have a healthy relationship. Her children communicate less among each other instead they poke, blame and pass sarcastic comments on each other. There is marital disharmony between husband and the wife, they always bully each other. It leads to less affection they provide to the children, due to the less affection and care they become uncouth and self-centered. The whole family being one entity, breaks at every level, becomes disintegrated and the one entity is divided as named 'Adhe-Adhure.'

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## Chapter 4

# A Comparative Analysis of the play *Wedding Album* and *Halfway House*

Indian society is embellished with a rich cultural heritage and it is a tradition bounded society with a diverse cultural repertoire. The Indian society is highly diverse and the only thing which blends the society in a single thread is its tradition which is carried over by a blend of culture and society. Marriage is foundational relationship for all societies. Successful marriages are the bedrock of healthy societies. It is regarded as one of the social institution in India. If society is a creative agent, then Marriage is its handmaid. They both are interlinked. Ruut Veenhoven suggests that “in the modern Western world, marriage is a relatively important institution. It has been shown that individual well-being in modern Western society is highly dependent on the presence of a marital relationship and on its quality” (01). Marriage in the Indian context is the union between two individuals which is based on financial stability and social compatibility.

### 1. A comparative analysis of Vidula and Savitri in *Wedding Album* and *Halfway House*

*Wedding Album* is the play which deals with marriage as a social institution. There are several perspectives on marriage. In the play marriage is considered as a ‘gamble’ There is no escape from it. Sangeeta G. Avachar in her essay states that “Karnad’s women are contemporary, new women in search of identity in the society which secures freedom to female sex on a par with male counterpart. The present play also throws new light on the psyche and behavior of these new women. The mother, Hema, Vidula, Pratibha and even Radhabai are new women in the true sense of the term. Their lives are full of anxieties and resentments while facing the mental, psychological and emotional hardships of life.” (02) Vidula, the central character has a tendency of ‘cynicism’ in her. She is inclined to belief that people are motivated by

self-interest. She is also in the search of finding freedom so that she can fulfill her hidden desires. She is unable to express her desires. The Indian society more often restricts women in every sphere of life. Vidula has also been restricted; she is getting married to an expat boy who is unknown to her. In the opening scene of the play, her brother who is a social media professional, constantly monitor her. She has to give her best to fit in the frame of the marriage proposal. Meanwhile, the image of Vidula seems very meek and submissive but she subverts this image in the scene six. She led a secret life in the café relationship. She pays for having sex chat with a person from another country. She does this continuously and secretly in the name of religion. It shows that how she hides her sexual desires in order to be a perfect Indian traditional girl, who listens to Swami Ananga Nath. She is so desperate to leave for the café. In the conversation with her sisters Rohit asks:

Rohit: Goodluck! And don't let her enter in that Internet café.

Hema: Stop nagging her! (*To Vidula*) What to do you in that Internet Café?

Vidula: I listen to sermons by Swami Ananga Nath...

Rohit: She plays video games. She is crazy about them.

Vidula: ...so that I can forget about the wedding for a few hours. (28)

Vidula's visit to the internet café is a mode of escape from the burden of getting married to an unknown person. The sermons are the moaning sound which she hears and reciprocate. She wants an opportunity to express her sexual desires as she cannot reveal it to anyone. Even though the voice of the person with whom she had sex chat, calls her 'darkie', 'my Indian pea-hen', 'concubine' etc still she responds and reciprocates. She is in the want of last minute happiness. She longs for the temporal happiness. Another important point is she told the café about their last chat. She says:

Vidula: I have no choice. I am going away.

Voice: They have computers in even in Timbuktoo these days.

Vidula: I know.

Voice: Why are you saying bye then?

Vidula: I have been sold off. (64)

Vidula lies to the café person that she is not able to come online further as she is being sold off to a man. Ironically, her marriage to Ashwin is a gamble for her in which she has been sold off as his concubine for lifetime. Vidula is living double standard life. When she is being caught by the moral tormentors she screams on them and warns them to charge the rape case on them. On the one face she is innocent, gentle and submissive on another she is horny, desperate and bold. Srinivasan in the forward of the play *Wedding Album* comments that “Vidula is not exactly as he pictures her and that like any other modern, mixed up, unhappy, Hindu gal (timid is how her mother sees her), she leads a secret life. Whether willingly submitting herself as Kuchla the Jezebel to disembodied randy voice of Swami Ananga Nath the Bodyless, in a darkened Cyber Café or transmuted her guilt being found out into hysterical rage, screaming ‘sexual harassment’ to make her moral tormentors run away-she is resourceful enough to find herself a surrogate swami, a flesh and blood stranger to help her work her way through hopeless desire. The subjugation she seeks in her secret, erotic world can after all be served as well through man and marriage and to higher purpose.” (xi) Hence, Vidula can be seen as the one who reverts back to a private life of her own in which she seeks to break the traditional norms of Indian society and dully wants to assert her desire.

On the other hand *Halfway House* captures the broken marriage of Savitri and Mahendranath. The play throws light on the perspective of modern women. Savitri is the modern women, and is financially independent. It seems that she the one who carries the burden of the house. She is not happy with her husband Mahendranath. She is not satisfied with her life. She feels trapped in the marriage bond with Mahendranath. The couple didn’t seem to exchange any sort of love, care and mutual respect. Everytime they are busy in passing sarcastic comments and bullying each other. Being tied in the marital knot, her husband should fulfill her physical and emotional desires but he is an idler. R.L. Nigam in his critical essay *Adhe Adhure: A comment* remarks that “The only reference to the fragmented personalities occurs in

highly exasperated utterances of Savitri. To begin with she finds that Mahendranath is an incomplete being while others have their complete personalities.” (92) The incompleteness of her husband compels her search for a complete companion. In this process, Savitri subverts the traditional notion and emerge out as cynical self; who focuses on her choice and desires only. Even though time and again she exerts that she is the only one who does everything for the family but deep inside she transcends the role of a typical Indian wife and mother and search for someone who can understand her. Meanwhile, other man like Singhania provides her stability and she is relieved in their companionship. Hence, just like Vidula she longs for fulfillment of that hidden desire. Both the central characters yearn for recognition and accomplishment of hidden desires. It can be said that both of them are bold and passionate in their private self. On the one side, in the play *Wedding Album* Vidula has been considered as a simple girl from Saraswat Brahmin family who has ethics and morals. In addition, in the play *Halfway House* Savitri is generally portrayed as a woman of forty, working and homely. In the Indian society women are expected to follow certain norms, etiquettes and value system. But, in both the plays the central characters transcend all the value system. They break the monotony and find an escape in order to fulfill their desire. Vidula involve herself in the secluded café relationship and Savitri spends the time with her boss Singhania to cure her loneliness. In this way, both the central characters surpass the norms the Indian society, and move further towards their wish in their own way. The two characters can be compared to their nature of repulsion of Indian traditional notions. Patriarchy is deeply regimented in the Indian society. Both the plays deal with urban middle class family. There is a male figure in both the plays, by accessing the patriarchal control over women they want establish their authority. Rohit, the son wants to establish his authority over Vidula. He wants to overpower her and narrates her the way in which she should proceed. Also when Pratibha, the TV reporter enquires about her sister Vidula that is she happy being getting married to an unknown person? Rohit very subtly claims that:

Pratibha: She had no boyfriends? No affairs?

Rohit: No, No. She was a nice girl. (9)

Pratibha asks a normal question that Vidula is young and beautiful girl. She could have boyfriends or affair. But, Rohit bluntly denies the fact by exerting the definition of a 'nice girl.' He says that Vidula was very innocent and simple. She was 'nice' by having no affairs. Even though he himself is having affair with Isabel, a Christian girl and it can be a 'nice' experience but if her sister is having that it will not contribute to the definition of being 'nice.' Similarly, in the play *Halfway House* certain patriarchal setup is there. Singhania, the boss of Savitri seems to operate her. Even though she is financially independent, she is always in hands of her boss. Whenever he calls her, she has to be there. Here are some of the references which elaborate how patriarchy works in both the plays.

## **2. The role of setting in the *Wedding Album* and *Halfway House***

The setting of the drama plays an important role. It is very significant in the plays. It helps in initiating the backdrop and mood of the storyline. It is the environment in which the incidents occurs and proceed. The setting of *Wedding Album* is mostly in the living room of Nadkarnis' and in *Halfway House*, a disorderly room is the setting of the play. Both the settings are familiar spaces but in the case of the setting of *Wedding Album* the living room is orderly and structured in the particular way. All the things are kept in the proper way, just like the relationship and traditions and norms depicted in the play. They are properly structured and rigidly followed. But, in the scenario of *Halfway House* is different. In this play, the setting is disorderly and a dirty room. Things are shattered here and there just like the relationship among the family members and the broken marriage. 'Books are left over on the sofa' which could possibly mean that the intellect of the house has been vanished. 'A self of dilapidated' old books can refer to the disintegration of values and ethics. 'Over crowded effect' of the room possibly could signify the chaotic environment prevailing in the house. The air they breathe is being polluted by their constant fights and discord of marital relationship of Savitri and Mahendranath. Srinivasan in the forward of the play aptly comments that "Karnad takes the risk of locating *Wedding Album* in familiar space- Nadkarnis' living room." (x) Hence, the setting of both the play seems nearer to

similar from each other. They are very significant in their portrayal of the mood of the story.

### **3. Power structure in *Wedding Album* and *Halfway House***

This chapter aims to make a comparative study of the two plays *Wedding Album* and *Halfway House* on the basis of power structure and discourse subdued in both the plays. Firstly, Foucault defines discourse as,

“ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledge and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern.” (Weedon 1987.108).

In the western cultural practices, there is a major shift from sovereign power to disciplinary power. In the text, *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison* (1979) is a good example in which he had elaborated the transition from a top social control of power in the form of a physical coercion and it includes the process of ‘normalisation.’ Power, in Weedon's (1987) interpretation of Foucault is:

“A dynamic of control and lack of control between discourses and the subjects, constituted by discourses, who are their agents. Power is exercised within discourses in the ways in which they constitute and govern individual subjects” (113).

Basically, Foucault deals with three major key concepts in the essay which is Power, Knowledge and Discourse. He focuses on how discourses have been able to shape and deduce meaning that has achieved the status and currency of ‘truth.’ Jenny Pinkus comments that “Foucault's focus is upon questions of how some discourses have shaped and created meaning systems that have gained the status and currency of 'truth', and dominate how we define and organize both ourselves and our social world, whilst other alternative discourses are marginalized and subjugated, yet

potentially 'offer' sites where hegemonic practices can be contested, challenged and resisted" (1).

As explained by Foucault, power and knowledge are interrelated. According to Foucault's concept of power/knowledge, the dominant power structures working in the society determine and control the production and distribution of knowledge. The hegemonic, mainstream knowledge gets standardized. Not all, discourses are regarded as meaningful discourse; there are certain barriers to the articulation and expression of discourse like taboo, institutional ratifications and account of madness. For example, in some societies, talking about sex is considered a taboo. So even if one wants to express or articulate a discourse related to 'sex', he/she has to mold his way of articulation according to the needs and demands of that society. Thus, discourse gets controlled.

Marriage is the powerful social institution. In the two plays, *Wedding Album* and *Halfway House* the discourse is controlled by people in power or dominant members, only their discourses turn out to be as a meaningful discourse otherwise the rest of it is being referred to as just a useless discourse which is not considerable. In the play *Wedding Album* Rohit's discourses are regarded as important. As Vidula comments,

Vidula: Then Rohit, who is shooting this film. He is a writer-writes stories and scripts for teleplays. Then there's me. Rohit is the smartest of us all. (6)

Vidula confirms that Rohit is the smartest among them all which implies that his discourse is regarded as something powerful which she is obliged to follow. For instance, in the opening scene he directs her how to behave in a particular way to fit in the marital frame. In the whole play, he seems as the epitome of knowledge who knows everything. He has a strong opinion on each issue. For instance, in the conversation to Pratibha he asserts that, Vidula is a nice girl and she doesn't have boyfriends. Even though she is marrying to Ashwin, the expat boy being unknown to each other, for Rohit it is fine as he belongs from the same caste. In this way, Rohit's discourses are dominant and it is considered something important which should be followed. Similarly, in the case of Ashwin we can observe that his discourse acts as dominant discourse upon Vidula.

In the scene eight, Ashwin and Vidula are sitting in a restaurant. And, Vidula is listening expressionlessly. In the whole scene Vidula has no dialogues; she just listens to the Ashwin and sits idly. There are long dialogues of Ashwin where he can be seen as the one who exerts power and just expressing his thoughts and viewpoint. He is not bothered whether Vidula is listening through it or whether she is understands or agrees to his views. He asserts,

Ashwin: I want you to see this not merely as a marriage but as a mission. I would like you to be my partner in carrying the best of our spirited tradition to the West and save the West. Yes, I am not ashamed or afraid to say it- save it.  
(82)

From the above comments, it is very evident that Ashwin is clear in his thoughts. He is clear why he is marrying, he perceive marriage as a mission in which two people will carry forward the Indian tradition to the West. He is blunt and adamant in his sayings. From the word 'save it' on can derive that in Ashwin's dialogue there is certain power politics. His discourse is a dominant one. Vidula is silenced by this action. He adds that he had only two things when he came to US, "My Brain and My Charm" he explains. Through this sentence we can analyze that the discourse is being controlled by Ashwin who seems to overpower Vidula in his discourse. His language seems to be dominant and supreme. It is evident from his dialogues that he wants to assert power through this discourse and in this way he dominates Vidula both on the power structure and on the patriarchal note.

In *Halfway House*, there is rigid patriarchal and power structure prevailing throughout in the play. In the play, the central character Savitri seems to subvert existing notions of power structures as she is economically independent and her husband Mahendranath is unemployed. So the power in the family is owned by Savitri. Her discourses seem to overlap Mahendranath's one. As Mahendranath screams,

The First Man: I'm responsible for ruining my life, your life, all our lives! And, I still stick to this house, because I'm a parasite, because I like to living off my wife, because...

The Women: I don't know whether you really think so, or...

The First Man: I know I'm like dry rot in this house, eating away at its very foundations! But I'm no longer hungry. I'll never be hungry again! (27)

In this conversation we can trace that the discourse of Mahendranath is regarded as a meaningless discourse. Through these dialogues he is expressing his present condition and frustration but this discourse is only a scream to Savitri. Mahendranath's discourse is not a dominant discourse as he lacks social and economical agency. He is always surrounded by his friends and does nothing. He has no excess to the economical power unlike Savitri who has social agencies. She is autonomous and self-governing. Her discourse is an influential discourse. She is confident in what she desires. She comments,

The Women: I want... I want a man, not just a miserable... hanger-on! (71)

Savitri is so adamant in her desires. She wants a man who is independent and capable. She wants a man to have a sort of personality and strength of character. Through her discourse she is able to transmit what she means whereas Mahendranath lacks in this aspect. His dialogues are fragmented and incomplete throughout. Whenever he wants to assert something it is converted into screams not more than that. Hence, the contrast can be set from the two plays, Vidula from *Wedding Album* and Savitri from *Halfway House*, that one is being silenced by the dominant discourse of men and other is able to exert power through her discourse. The discourse of the character usually reflects their way of thinking and status in the family. The person in power who has access to economic agencies are being able to mould the discourse according to their will and thus, controls the power which is further regarded as 'normalization' by the society as suggested by Foucault. This is how discourse plays an important role and in this way power structure can be traced in both the plays.

#### **4. Central characters and their perspective of marriage**

In the play *Wedding Album* Vidula seems to accept the marriage proposal from an unknown boy. She is not exactly portrayed as she appears. She led a secret life in

order to fulfill her hopeless desire. Rohit comments that she probably plays video games in the Internet café and is crazy about them but Vidula interrupts,

Vidula: ...so I can forget about the wedding for a few hours. (28)

She emphasizes that she went to the Internet café to listen to the sermons of Swami Ananga Nath. She replies to Rohit that she wants forget about the wedding for few hours. These few hours may refer to the last minute happiness she wants to grab. For her marriage is all about shopping, ordering dresses, discussing gifts exchanges etc. She relates fixing of marriage to the identity of the girl. She doesn't want to be the laughing stock of the town if her marriage is broken. For her, marriage is a compulsion, which she surrenders.

In the play *Halfway House* Savitri is unhappy in her marital relationship with her husband Mahendranath. She had already felt the complications and consequences of marriage. Her marital life is on the verge of breakdown. Miscommunication and disharmony is prevailing in their relationship. She claims,

The Women: Let me tell you about the reality I know. Why does one get married? In order to fulfill a need... an inner... void, if you like; to be self-sufficient... complete. But that's not why Mahendranath got married! The object of his existence is... as if... he were there only to fill the gaps in the lives of others... whatever other people expect of him... or in whichever way they think they can use him... (69)

Savitri's perspective on marriage is very clear from the above statement. She highlights the fact that people who want to get married are in the search of a secure and stable life. Both the partners should be able to share inter personal feelings. According to Savitri the partners should able to erase the void between the two individuals. They must feel complete with each other. She is not satisfied with her husband. She is unhappy with Mahendranath as he cannot stand by himself. He always craves for support from his friends. Savitri is disturbed by the nature of her husband. He used to be extremely aggressive sometimes. He bears a hostile

behavior. Initially, Mahendranath and Savitri had a violent marital relationship in which he used to beat Savitri. As Binni remarks,

The Older Girl: When I lived here it was like being...you can't even imagine what it was like... Daddy rages when he tore Mama's clothes to shreds...when he gagged her and beat her up behind closed doors...dragging her by hair to the WC... (shudders) I can't even recount the fearful scenes I have witnessed in this house! (64)

Binni explains the fearful condition of the house where Mahendranath does violence against Savitri. He used to drag and beat her. The whole atmosphere of the house was chaotic and polluted with terror. We can trace that from this brutal incident Savitri lose the respect of her husband, and begin to rebel. She became independent and more individualistic. Though she is the bread earner of the house but she doesn't care much about the family. Her husband doesn't fulfill her emotional and physical needs, in order to get that she got acquainted with other men such as Jagmohan, Juneja and Singhanian. She discusses almost everything to her boss. They meet more often, even in the café shop on the same table as suggested in the text. Jagmohan calls her 'Cuckoo' and Savitri calls her 'Jog'. A pet name is usually given by relatives or close friends. In the play, it may signify the deep intensity of their relationship. Jagmohan and Savitri are that much comfortable with each other that they designate each other by a particular nick name.

In this way, we can conclude that Vidula pretends to be more submissive and gentle in her behavior than Savitri who is adamant and rigid in her thoughts. Vidula has also this set of aggression and boldness as reflected in the scene eight. While she was having sex chat with stranger, she caught by two people of Saraswat Brahmin community in the Internet café. They started to torment her and thus she screams very cleverly upon them so that she can be rescued. She screams:

Vidula (her voice rising): I have paid for the computer time. I have paid to be left alone in this room. To work here without being disturbed. What gives you the right to come in here? I'll do what I like here. Who the hell are you to question me?

Youth 1: We are here the guardians of our tradition, our ancient...

Vidula: You have no bloody right. You have no fucking right to harass me. (70)

The dauntless behaviour of Vidula can be witnessed in this particular scene. She was furious by sudden intrusion of the Youths then she rebels. Thus, Savitri can be seen as the alter ego of Vidula. Savitri can be seen as extension of Vidula's hidden self. Both the characters exhibits rebellious nature and they are fearless in their approach, but Vidula hides it somewhere and Savitri explores it.

In this chapter, both the plays has been critically compared and contrasted on different basis. The comparison of the central characters, Vidula and Savitri has been discussed in details with reference to their dialogues in the particular plays. Their situation and condition in the marriage frame has been highlighted. A critical comparison of the setting of both the plays has been depicted. The desire of female protagonists and how they perceive marriage is reflected. Both the characters has been compared and elaborated how they encounter power structure and subverts traditional Indian notions and establish modernity through focusing on their inner desire. Therefore, this chapter establishes its relevance by comparing both the plays from these perspective.

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## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The litmus test of any piece of art is time. Literature is the mirror of the society and reflects the traditions, culture, notions and values of the society. Marriage is a social institution in the society. It is an inherent part of the society. Human beings are social animals and in order to survive in a better way and to carry forward their lineage they need a partner. Marriage bounds two individuals in one single thread. It is expected that the bond never breaks and they will cultivate togetherness and love. The plays which have been studied under this dissertation deals with the primary theme which is Marriage. It functions as the main catalyst in both plays and the play revolves around its concept. The current study seeks to examine marriage as a social institution and its different perspectives prevailing in Karnad's one the famous play *Wedding Album*. The different perspectives are found by analyzing firstly the institution of marriage in the play *Wedding Album*. The treatment of marriage and how the different characters perceive about marriage in accordance with the Indian society has been derived from the particular play. In the play *Halfway House* marital disharmony, family facades and broken relationships have been studied in details with the reference to the dialogues of the characters in the text. The study attempts investigate the power structure prevailing in both plays, under the light of Michel Foucault's law of power and knowledge with the reference to the book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979). The detailed comparison of the central characters in both the plays; Vidula and Savitri has been discussed. The two plays are contrasted with respect to their treatment of marriage and desire of the central characters. This study explores the embedded patriarchal notions and the central character subverts the traditional norms. For instance, in the play Vidula sees marriage as a compulsion, according to her there is no escape from it. It is all about shopping and But she has a cynical self, there is subdued self-interest in the character of Vidula. She wants to accomplish the inner desire so craves for the café relationship.

The topic of the current study aimed to bring the two plays together on the same platform through the medium known as Marriage. It acts as the catalytic agent which

is dully subdued in both the plays. *Halfway House* can be the extension of the play *Wedding Album* as both the plays deals with basic fundamental theme of Marriage. In the first play, *Wedding Album* marriage is celebrated and its social relevance has been reflected. It reveals that Marriage is regarded as a 'market.' The notion of dowry and materialistic exchange has been discussed. In the second play, after effects of a marriage has been reflected. Due to miscommunication between the couples it becomes an unwanted relationship between Savitri and Mahendranath which eventually led to destruction of the whole family. One has shown the marriage market, as Vidula is marrying to an unknown person irrespective of her choice. The marriage ceremony is conducted out of compulsion. Marriage is a selling and buying process in the contemporary world. Financial stability comes first, emotional compatibility comes last. In the last scene of the play *Wedding Album*, Hema asks Vidula that she and Ashwin were in the same room for eight days, had something happened between them. Some kind of intimacy but Vidula nodes and comments that Ashwin says that they will get to know each other once she came to US and she finds it fairly enough. Vidula conveyed they barely spoke to each other. She pretends to ignore her choice very conveniently. Later, towards the ending Hema assures Vidula that she can come home anytime and leave Ashwin, if she is not happily married. Time and again we are reminded that Vidula is timid. So we can trace that Savitri is alter ego of Vidula. She has also the timidness like Savitri but she hides it in her personality. Savitri is ready to take challenges, if her marital life is not good, she rebels. She comments she can only bother about herself. So, there is a self-interest prevailing in both characters. In this way one play caricatures marriage as a social institution and its compulsion, in the case of Vidula and the other play attempts to show that how people like Savitri, experience it and pays for it. In this way, *Halfway House* is an extension of the play *Wedding Album*. Many scholars have worked and analyzed the two texts *Wedding Album* and *Halfway House* individually. The notion of marriage and family has been discussed in many scholarly works, but this perspective is still not touched upon. The combined study of these two plays is new in the field of literature and attempts to contribute fully in the following aspects.

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