Class-Cultural conflict and identity crisis in ‘Collaborator ’.

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**Abstract**

The present paper deals with the changing scenario at which India has changed that suggests a cultural ambivalence over how these changes bear implication that camaflouge which have placed over the cracks that have accompanied such rapid social and cultural development in the existing society. When cultural development is being discussed we can’t ignore the fact that Liberalization, Privatisation and Globalization policies which were implemented in 1992 had a great impact on the life of the people and to be precise on the existing society. The replica of which can be seen in the play and on the life of the characters which is well discussed throughout the play. The segregation between husband and wife these days is a common phenomenon of the twenty first Century irrespective of which class they belong to high class, middle class or lower class. This paper attempts to portray the relations between the married couple and their changing perspective regarding marriage institutions which depicts the imagery of class cultural devoid and the impact of the social events on their relationship. The characters suffer due to the Identity Crisis, class conflict and class hierarchy as per the changing time.

**Keywords:** Camaflouge, Proliferated, family, marriage, class-cultural, traitor, concomitant.

**Introduction**

Indian English Drama presents a grim picture of humanity; the plays written in the first decade of the twenty first century manifest the same evils of human life. The plays written and staged before 1990 depict the picture of society that prevailed under the intoxication of freedom in spite of the ups and downs in the life of people. The period from 1990s is considered to be a neoliberal era, and the plays written and staged dealt with the issues like liberalization, privatisation and globalisation. The twenty first centuries plays gave remarkable height to these subjects. Contemporary Indian English Drama is deviated from Classical and European models. It is experimental and innovative in terms of thematic and technical qualities. History, legend, myth, religion and folklore in Indian English Drama are reinvestigated in context to the modem socio-political issues.

Collaborator is a play written by Ramu Ramanathan. Collaborators implies varied meanings in this case, the word has both a positive and negative implication that the playwrights has employed to the best in the story. It is concerned with the nature of self-destruction, emerging through various forms of power, corruption, repression and abuse. The complex relationship between these four characters husband [Kranti], Wife [Arundhati], Man [Himanshu] and Woman [Shivani] exposes how human beings are leading their common life from simplicity to complexity they proved that they are haunted by their past and they try to refresh their present with their soaking past.

The strength of the play lies in the ability to fluctuate between the fragility of the post and its place in an equally elusive present. According to Kristeva, the past oscillates between visibility and invisibility in the sense that characters names or place in the World carry a whole range of cultural and social significance and are historically contextualized; invisibility in the sense that the characters find the notion of loss a force to contend with a loss which stems from the past and of which they are fully aware but cannot seem to process. The theme of objection, is attributed in Julia Kristeva’s Power of Horror: An Essay on objection is the through line that links each scene of the play. The play is divided into sixteen scenes; the playwright violated the traditional technique of dividing the play into Acts and Acts into scenes but the playwrights’ finds case in portraying typical Indian situations into scenes instead of acts. As Deepa Punjani states: ‘Collaborators is a poisonous combination of dark humor of an internally seething apprehension waiting to blow up all the customs of polite society, ethical policy and civil order.’

Kranti the protagonist of this play confronts with a community doing its balancing act amongst the rigors of communism, poverty, social inequality, dullness and the irregularity of perfect procedural equity. Kranti rejects his identity like Maursalt from Albert Camus’ THE OUTSIDER, this rejection of identity is nothing but a sign of family disturbance. In Collaborator a society is shown at the stage where economic improvement has come at the price of social dislocation. Collaborator is deeply concerned with the inadequacy of day to day living and the inability to articulate experience. The most powerful dimension of the play and its spectators is its continued reference to the nature and significance of human society. Shivani was married and had a baby named Purshottam but she decides to leave her husband, family and her hope and for the sake of her dream. She decides to lead a life of single parent which was considered to be a victory, as she refuses to submit to the demands and patriarchal interdicts set down by the society.

The first scene of the play exposes the plight of the protagonist, and the secret behind his name Kranti. He even introduces his wife and how his life changed since he returned from the prison. Himanshu had sent three letters from Switzerland, Amsterdam and Brussels to Arundhati but she didn’t give any response to those letters and she avoids answering to Himanshu’s questions. While coming to Arundhati’s place Himanshu finds that things have change, the slums have proliferated along with the number of people. This represents the changing Indian Society scenario that considers and adopts themselves to the western class society. Scene nine is the most striking and dissolving it deals with the death of Mr. Mahalanobis. Arundhati is not even aware on which floor Mr. Mahalanobis resides. She is amongst those who show ignorance of the people of who don’t feel necessity who their neighbors’ are. Shivani shares her opens- of her grandfather’s death and how she managed everything. The death of Mr. Mahalanobis influenced so much that all of them are under depression. She diverts the attention of the fellows and tell them to look at the full moon. She thinks that the moon is a poor thing, alone and isolated trying to create a space for himself. The frail nature of Arundhati and supportive nature to her frailty by Himanshu and Shivani shows how the modem generation is losing human values and just giving value to formalities. The next scene deals with the failure of electricity. In this play failure of electricity discloses various angles of every character. Arundhati thinks that the city is going to the dogs, which shows how her surrounding is passively changing. Himanshu fears his city is becoming like Bihar. Kranti experiences the mental situation of Humayun, who was sandwiched between a mighty tether Babar and a mightier son Akbar. In the same manner, Kranti is sandwiched between the dominance of Arundhati’s father and excessive expectations of his wife Arundhati. He finds way to get rid of such condition by listening to the songs of Bade Ghulam Ali. It seems from this scene that everyday uses darkness to resettle an order because it is impossible for each one to be normal in the light. In scene eleven Kranti shares his father’s experience when he had been called to give a key note on the occasion of the Birth Anniversary of Lala Lajpatrai. After the keynote, the organizers had arranged lunch. His father couldn’t bear their custom to serve women after men. So he decided to break down such a disgusting custom by arranging another new custom. Since he was not called for such program, but he succeeded to establish a new order to allow women to have lunch along with men. The patriarchy and the socio-cultural conditions in the society can be well understood from this incident.

Ramu Ramanatham suggests through his play a tendency to leave the old culture behind and embrace the new should be viewed cautiously. The play depicts many of the problems that lie beneath the camaflogue of liberalization, privatization and globalization, locating them in the contexts of repressed identities and cultural disillusionment. As per Ramu, the processes of identity are ingrained in the past, but their impact is always present and sifnificantly powerful. Collaborators examine the repressed family atmosphere propelling the protagonists mapped by a conflictual continuum of personal and social paranoiac and phobia.

Ramanathan’s imagination is oriented towards presenting family system as a fragile web of ties that influence theme, characterization and language. Ramu dealt with the issues of overcrowding and of personal privacy emerged during the explosion of the homogenous, tight living spaces that populated India's urban landscape have after 1990. The play could be defined us a piece of post-modern sensibility in the sense that it exposes the dislocation of the individual from a received and shared sense of community, society and culture in terms of value systems, together with the resonance of a post-colonial consciousness thot carries elements of insecurity and mistrust. Ramu's complex blend of the post-colonial and post-modern presents a volatile and self-annihilating subjectivity demonstrated within the interior world of the characters. Representations and aspects of identity in the play whether that of middle class women Arundhati, corrupt industrialist Arundhati’s father, traitor or displaced mother Shivani, present the subject occupying a peripheral position. Kranti experiences an analogous culpability Ed exclusion. The characters are astutely aware of their isolation, but it is their journey towards self- destruction that carries with it a peculiar self confidence. Shivani knows well that her husband is engaged with Gayatri, henceforth she travels to self destruction by marrying Himanshu.

His characters strongly react against the family systems and adopt the new blossoming culture in which they live. Ramu ploys with the word ‘Collaborator’ with its multiple meanings, travels between past and present, and poses grave problems amidst very ordinary situations like the middle class English speaking characters playing bridge while real politics unfolds in the hinterland of eastern Uttar Pradesh.

In this play the concomitant femineity is a dominant concern, but consideration of masculinity also features in this play. The play moves from an absurd style to a naturalistic mode of expression. This is a play in the anti realist tradition as the playwright himself sates in the introduction of this book - a play with a beginning, a middle and another beginning.

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