

Elements of Universal Appeal in the Heroic Characters of Mrs. Warren and Ghasiram Kotwal

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Abstract

In this paper, we have gone on to analyze the character of Mrs. Warren in 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' and Ghasiram Kotwal in the play by the same name 'Ghasiram Kotwal'. Both these characters are among some of the strongest ones drawn by George Bernard Shaw and Vijay Tendulkar. Both the characters are the strongest characters of George Bernard Shaw and Vijay Tendulkar respectively. As Shaw was inspired from a true story of a lead poisoning case of Ms. Ann Jane in a white lead factory on the other hand, Ghasiram was a historical inspiration from the Maratha history of a man who was in charge of policing in Poona during the reign of Madhav Rao Peshwa under the aegis of the minister Nana Fadnavis. The two characters in question are some of the most versatile in terms of the emotional and dramatic hues they carry, besides being very pragmatic at times. They have a very vivid universal appeal because they are breakers of stereotypes in the most nuanced way. These characters show how men and women can transcend from the debate of Masculinity and Feminism when the ambition of men and women is held as the only guiding light to achieve success in life.

Index terms— universal heroism, morality, enterprise, independence, superior man, new women, gender consciousness. Mrs. Warren and Ghasiram both make decisions that are not acceptable on a moral compass; however they catapult them to a position of unimaginable power and control over the lives of others. Such power and control also bring with it the opportunity to do good for the people. Mrs. Warren claims to keep the women in her business more cared for than any other would, and In 'Ghasiram Kotwal', Ghasiram takes on to the role of a city Kotwal in charge of policing in Poona, and he is determined to purge the social evils and the immorality that had crept into the society of Poona especially the Brahmins of Poona. Ghasiram by taking strict control of law and order and bringing among the people of Poona fear of law, and ensuring legal and moral uprightness. His measures had paid off, and the Brahmin women should have been thankful to Ghasiram for that. Ghasiram's ways did not go well with the Brahmins of Poona as they were discriminate between a Poona Brahmins and Brahmin of Kanauj, and they plotted and waited for his downfall.

1 II.

Mrs. Warren as a Character Mrs. Warren in 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' is an independent woman, and she has drawn her independence by her sheer astute understanding of businesses. The idea of demand and supply thereby created a business that had many customers to lure. The profession was not respectable, of course; however, despite that moral disadvantage, Mrs. Warren happens to be one of the most impressive women in the works of George Bernard Shaw as she impresses us with her intellect, hard work, and her consciousness of her beauty. She builds an empire single-handedly when everything was at odds for her. She is determined to improve her economic status and refuses to live as a destitute like her sisters, one of whom died of lead poisoning working in a lead factory of the presumed 18th Century Industrialized England.

2 III.

3 Ghasiram Kotwal as a Character

Ghasiram kotwal, on the other hand, is the male counterpart when we compare the works of an Indian dramatist who drew inspirations from the middle and lower class Maratha cultures in the state of Maharashtra. The character of Ghasiram is a splendid art form expressed in the most meticulous dramatic touch. He is very important as he has hues of a being who, though, is a male has his disgust for the turpitude in male Brahmins. He lives for his ambition and marries his daughter to Nana, which presumably was the custom then that parents would give away their daughters in marriage, in their early teens. Ghasiram uses Nana's urge to fuel his ambition, which was partly a result of the humiliation he and his daughter had undergone at the hands of the Poona Brahmins.

IV. Evolution of the Superior Man and the New Women

The characters of Mrs. Warren and Ghasiram Kotwal are splendid examples of strong men and women who are needed in society to make a definitive change, and bring about a new modern order.

George Bernard Shaw had always advocated for the evolution of a superior man and the idea of the new women. These are universal ideas for achieving greater heights for humanity. George Bernard Shaw, through his characters, has shown that nature inherently works in the most mysterious ways to achieve its object. That object is the evolution of a superior man and humanity. The material desires of the society which are loaded with loathsome ideals impede the evolution of such superior man, and defeat the 'life force.' Mrs. Warren can also be seen as an ambassador of such thought when through her, Shaw wanted to show that though she was in a dishonorable profession, be that as it may, the grit of a superior man was in her. She braved all odds to overcome more so to disprove that this world is not a man's world alone. When advocating these ideals, Shaw was very holistic and took the superior man's evolution as not confined to the evolution of man alone but the evolution of man and women, in general, for humanity. Through the character of Mrs. Warren, Shaw can show that when gender consciousness is lost and with it are lost, all chauvinism which results in all the energy and spirit channeled into a productive space and hence, results into an achievement of nature's object of the evolution of superior men and women. Through these characters, Shaw and Tendulkar have shown that all our efforts should be to achieve the greatness of humanity, and we should not confine to representing man or woman separately as a gain for each is, a gain (reward) for mankind.

V.

4 Enterprise and Independence

Mrs. Warren is a woman who displays exuberant confidence that surpasses almost all the characters drawn by George Bernard Shaw. She has an exemplary business acumen and judges the expectation of the masses. Mrs. Warren knows her true worth and she is under rewarded. She chooses the ambitious path of building her enterprise and, in doing so, sets up a chain of comfort houses (brothels) for men, and earns a fortune out of those so much so that she uses the earnings from the immoral business to fund the education of her daughter Vivie Warren in the best of institutions of the time. She takes a bold step for the contemporary period shown in the drama as women were not so outgoing in those days, and Vivie, due to the vision of Mrs. Warren, had achieved the best that a woman in those times could get. She graduated in Mathematics from Oxford and, thereafter had already been offered a great opportunity at the office of 'Fraser and Warren'. Mrs. Warren gets the credit for the risk she takes to give her child the most modern education at the time albeit she was a single mother and it was not even sure who was her (Vivie's) father. Mrs. Warren is bold in the sense because she educates her child with the best education despite she was in a profession where education is never a consideration increasingly so as she was herself not very educated.

Mrs. Warren is in charge of the enterprise. She is not a dangling subsidiary but the main leading force of the enterprise. She ensures that she best utilizes all the energy and resources to get the maximum profits. She doesn't let her emotion for her daughter even to take away that spirit of doing well in business, albeit it was immoral. However, morals are only contemporary and seldom have a universal character. She values profit-making opportunities similar to Ghasiram as he, too, traded off the post of a kotwal by betrothing his daughter to the much older Nana.

Ghasiram Kotwal is also an independent and bold character drawn by Vijay Tendulkar, an Indian author with a lot of dramas (plays) in Marathi and 'Ghasiram Kotwal' being the English adaptation of the play with the same title. Ghasiram Kotwal is a Brahmin who had traveled to Poona searching for a better life, but in the course, it transpired that the Brahmins of Poona ridiculed him and his daughter as inferior Brahmins. This incident in the life of Ghasiram Kotwal was a turning point as he determined to revenge on the city of Poona.

Before Ghasiram arrived in Poona, the city of Poona had turned into an evil and morally corrupt society as the menfolk, especially the Brahmins who had been defiant to Nana, were indulged ceremonious debauchery under the guise of deity worship. The Brahmins make a curtain with backs towards the group of spectators. The curtain sings and moves and recites;

5 Ravi Shiva Hari Mukunda Murari Radhakrishna Hari

The street of Bavanna became for a while The garden of Krishna.” (Act I, [16][17] Credits: rupkatha.com/ghasiram-kotwal/ This excellent play analytically criticizes the lewd and snobbish character of the ruling class, explicitly the Brahmins of Pune. They consistently see themselves as the defender of social morality. The play additionally makes a solid dissent against the caste system pervasive in Indian culture.

In the first act of the play, sutradhar (Marathi Word for Facilitator) announces the entry of Nana. At night, life begins at Pune. Brahmins and Nana dominate the city. The Brahmins, go to Bavannakhani (Marathi word for a building complex) where Gulabi, a courtesan, entertains Nana and his followers with dance and song. The facilitator announces as a backdrop about the In this way, Nana and his subjects enjoy a wide range of disgusting exercises fixated on unbridled sex. Nana, having forgotten his duties towards the public busy in his enjoyment. Society is spoilt as the Brahmins who have a place with the higher strata act as lowly men. They are the defenders of religion and sacred scriptures, however they, themselves, were busy in spreading immorality. Busy in self indulgence, they used to relish the company of other women and neglected to realize what their women needed.

Nana meets Ghasiram’s little girl at a religious ceremony and is attracted towards her. The power turned the head of Nana and made him egoistic; he boasts to the girl.

6 ”All your dreams this Nans will fulfill ?no one in Poona today dares to watch the great Nana Phadnavis!(P.48)

The innocent girl points to the idol of Ganapati and says ”He will see.”

And a lecherous, Machiavellian politician with no moral scruples mockingly replies. ”that idol of holiness? That all holy Ganapati? The maker of Good? Look, he has two wives one on this side. One on that side. If you sit on our lap, he won’t say anything!”(p.48)

This negligence towards the religious institution and class, which, even though his unquenchable thirst for sex, symbolizes the wanton human values of the advanced society. The idol, a substitute for the formless god, is worshipped by people and is accepted to create amazement and dread among the miscreants and keeps men on the way of integrity. But, when man, out of childishness, plays god himself, the faction of idol revere loses all its importance and turns into a device in the hands of the so-called religiously high-grade people to sustain abuse and exploitation.

Ghasiram took on to these evils that had ravaged the women in particular and society, in general, and tried to bring the city in order. It is true that his rule as a kotwalship (Marathi word for Superintendent) became tyrannical because of his disgust flaming out his revenge that was breeding against the Poona Brahmins as he was humiliated and falsely implicated under the charge of pickpocketing.

7 VI. Dilution of Gender Consciousness

8 ”??Women have to pretend to feel a great deal that they don’t feel??.” (ActII-Location 1556ASIN: B002VRZPFO).

Mrs. Warren has taken on the men’s, and she works through it very efficiently to achieve success, and the dividends of this success further fuel her desire to succeed, and inherent in her is the belief that she is at least making the lives of the exploited women less unpleasant while she is in charge of the profession. She believes that if it were someone else would be concerned only about the profits while she is still like a mother for the forsaken women beyond the business, which ensures that women under her are not abused as they are so usually prone to abuse. Mrs. Warren, while running the business, has shed off her feminine concerns and evolves as universal gender which is just and rationale in the sad realities of practical life. She transcends from women to a hero because of her ambition and the resulting success.

Ghasiram shows the care and concern for his daughter only after she is dead and gone, but shows that he had the love and affection for his daughter except that he was blind in hate and revenge he had for the Brahmins of Poona. He transcends the role of a man and tries to put Poona in order when he orders that the city is freed from all evils and invoked the night curfew. Ghasiram was aware of the ill-treatment or negligence of women folk of Poona and, therefore, he did away with the lustful ceremony of ’Lavani’ which had corrupted the Brahmins of Poona and made it a city of Debauches. His hate and revenge had an instrumental role to play in his ambition to become the Kotwal of the city.

Before Ghasiram became the Kotwal of the city of Poona, the menfolk were busy in revelry and debauchery and moral turpitude. The religion was a tool of wantonness when rituals to the deities were planned and made customary to suit the lustful men of Poona and had very little to do with pleasing the Gods. Ghasiram, in such turbulence, had stood tall and was determined to purge the city of Poona of its evil ways of life.

Ghasiram begins watching through the roads of Poona during the evenings. The people need to remain at home around evening time and shouldn’t have extramarital connections. After coming to power, he adopts the most vindictive approach to torment the Brahmins of Poona. Because of the exacting burden of his guidelines,

12 B) BOTH ARE JUDGED BY THE SOCIAL NORMS WHICH ARE AT ODDS WITH MORALITY

9 "The city of Poona began to tremble at Ghasiram's name. Thieves and adulterers went straight! prostitutes lane was desolate/the chasing of women was halted. /Pimps turned into baggers./Counterfeit coins were worthless". (Act II, p.68)

Ghasiram grows haughty and tackling the people high handedly by imposing some strict rules, but sometimes he gets sinister and crazy. A Here Freud's Ego hypothesis can be actualized, which tells that an individual who knows morality does improper deeds to accomplish his objectives. He slaughters ethical quality to satisfy his needs. Ghasiram's character overlooks his emotions of superego and his love for his only daughter and uses her as a lifeless thing. It shows his proud and narrowminded nature; he has no regard for the person. In Super Ego, an individual knows the estimation of ethical quality just as the aftereffect of malice. Hence, an individual having super conscience emotions (superego) lean towards ethics rather than individual shrewdness or evil deeds.

10 VII. Spirit of Seeking Opportunity in Adversity

Mrs. Warren's character shows through her own account as one that had survived through the hardships of women working in the white lead factories in England and then going on to become a very successful businesswomen with her comfort houses spread across western Europe.

Ghasiram Kotwal, too, had faced extreme hardship as he was ridiculed by the Brahmins of Poona and charged with a false case of pickpocketing, which had defiled his ego to the extent that he had just one goal, and that was to revenge on the city of Poona. He eventually succeeded when he attained the favour of Nana and was appointed the City Kotwal. He used this position to assert his strength, of course, to some excesses, which caused a lot of discontent in the Brahmins who had become the subject of his ire as he had determined to turn Poona into a city of pigs. He was largely successful in doing so as he had punished men for the debaucheries they committed and imposed night curfews that improved the plight of women who were earlier reduced to mere objects of desire rather than human beings in flesh and blood.

11 a) Both as victims of exploitation by the people in possession of power and money

Mrs. Warren worked along with her two sisters in a white lead factory, and she had heard of many harrowing incidents of women dying of lead poisoning. When she was young, she was convinced that one of her sisters had jumped off the bridge and committed suicide. Later, she realized that she (her sister) had turned into, a comfort woman for the rich and wealthy men. Mrs. Warren's world view changed about the society and morals in general as she had realized that society and morals are only to enslave the poor, in contrast, the rich and wealthy have fun. They run over the norms of the society, and have been overrunning the morals of God.

Ghashiram is embarrassed repeatedly by the Brahmins, just as much as by police, and this insult makes him an angry individual. He is offended and persecuted for no true reason. He feels baffled because of the loss of his dignity. He blows up and takes a pledge to render retribution. He says in animosity. Even Ghasiram had realized it by the time he had started working for Gulabi, the city dame or the 'prostitute' who was thronged by the Poona Brahmins, who are traditionally the priestly classes and are supposed to be moral and close to God. On the contrary, Ghasiram realized that by visiting Gulabi, they had committed the greatest sin and therefore, it had shaken his belief in morality and societal norms. This realization may have been the reason that pushed him to become so heartless that he even traded his adolescent daughter in exchange for 'Kotwal' and sacrificed her to the pervert Nana.

12 b) Both are judged by the social norms which are at odds with morality

Critics have been harsh on Mrs. Warren and Ghasiram both when they state that both the characters have tossed the morality and Godliness to achieve worldly affairs. This criticism is not a fair criticism when we weigh them in the circumstances they were. While Mrs. Warren and her sisters were living in extreme poverty, it had pushed them to risk the hazardous white lead factory, Circumstances pushed Ghasiram into a rage to revenge on the Poona Brahmins due to the extreme humiliation he faced. This humiliation, and his poverty had a contributed to his character. Ghasiram chose to succeed at any cost and teach Poona City a lesson of morality.

There are enormous pretentions among the rich who rule, and they sometimes have their wickedness shrouded in mystery like the legendary freemasons secret society.

FRANK. Viv: there's a freemasonry among thoroughly immoral people that you know nothing of.

In 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', Mrs. Warren is still judged by her daughter as she discusses with Mr. Croft about the ill gotten fortune of her mother. A redefined morality in modern times, and increasing capitalism focused on profits has taken over the conduct of modern men and women. It also shows how with rigidity,

212 fortunes of men or women cannot be changed. Ghasiram's character, according to Tendulkar, ridicules the
213 corrupt mindset of the rich and powerful through him, he shows how one has to take extreme steps even sacrifice
214 a lot to bring about a great change in society, as society is hard to change otherwise. In both these characters,
215 there are elements of universal heroism. When they both show exemplary competence in the trade, they take up
216 their boldness to rising above the established norms of the society. They are universal because they transcend
217 gender consciousness which is evident from the way they are objective in achieving their ends without asserting
neither their gender nor seeking any sympathies from anyone and relying on merits solely.¹

Figure 1:

218

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**12 B) BOTH ARE JUDGED BY THE SOCIAL NORMS WHICH ARE AT
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