

CHAPTER: V



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Conclusion: A Comparative Perspective

The comparative study of “Naturalism in Stephen’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and Madhu Mangesh Karnik’s *Mahimchi Khadi*” enables us to note the similarities and differences in naturalism depicted in the plots of the selected novels of Crane and Karnik. The similarities and differences may be a result of the peculiar familial, social, religious, political and cultural traditions to which these writers belonged.

Both Crane and Karnik belong to different countries, different literary traditions, cultures and languages. But they have some similarities. Both writers are the significant writers in their literary traditions. Man is merely a higher order-animal, whose life and fortunes are controlled, determined by the heredity and environment. This is the common theme in both the novels. Use of vulgar language is also a common aspect of both the novels. The detailed analysis of Stephen Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and Madhu Mangesh Karnik’s *Mahimchi Khadi*, show that both these novels are about young girl’s fall and destruction in slum and have many of the distinctive elements of naturalistic fiction. Both have a slum setting and the theme of the over powering effect of environment. Both novels have one more similarity that is both have a woman as the central character. In *Maggie*, Maggie was forced to live a life of a prostitute and ultimately commit suicide. In *Mahimchi Khadi*, Jaya^{was} attracted towards the glamorous world and became a prostitute.

Jaya and Maggie and also Jimmie, Roshan and Bhika are spoiled by the slum environment. Heredity plays the more important role in shaping the lives of all the four characters Jaya, Maggie, Jimmie, and Bhika. Both Jaya and Maggie's father are drunkards and so their children later on likewise. Ganga, a double married woman and Mary, drunkard woman, failed to make their children morally descent person, because of environment and they themselves are the victims of that environment. Both Maggie and Jaya are fed up with the overwhelming poverty and eccentric atmosphere of their home, therefore both try to keep their selves away from it. To avoid home-hell both elope and untimely meet their tragic destiny. Both novels expose, to a great and perhaps overwhelming extent, that the people of slum are brutalized, hardened and victimized by social forces beyond their control.

Both, Crane and Karnik unwaveringly focused on the determinism of social and economic forces on the lives of individuals. As literary naturalists, both are interested in depicting the social ills of their times, showing that despite an individual's best efforts the forces of the society will overcome and determine one's fate.

There is little emphasis on plot in Crane's *Maggie* and Karnik's *Mahimchi Khadi*. Plots of these novels are simple and have a linear progression. This is because it seems that both are more interested to depict the inner struggle. Their aim and purpose is to study the working of human mind. For them, the exterior was not so much important as the study of internal response and reactions of a person. A neglect of plot was not uncommon in the naturalistic fiction and the same thing happened with these novels. The plot is reduced to a minimum in a cinematographic

way—cut, select, and pieced together by a kind of rapid and essential montage, which is more evocative and suggestive than descriptive.

The naturalistic universe falls under one single explanatory theory of all events. In such a universe one can either internalize the laws determining natural and social focus or be their victim. Crane and Karnik also fall into this grouping of writers and support this view in their novels. Both Maggie and Jaya have given two options upon arrival at the mental crossroads in their life. They can either submit to the social norms ascribed to their class or venture forth and fight them. Each choice comes with a consequence.

Though there are some similarities in both the novel, there are also differences. It seems that Crane's technique and method is that of obliqueness and indirection. Maggie herself, though she becomes a prostitute, is strangely untouched by her physical environment. She functions as an almost expressionistic symbol of inner purity uncorrupted by external foulness. Of course, none can prevent to a naturalist from using irony and expressionistic symbolism in his fiction, just as we can not prevent him from introducing a deterministic theme into a slum setting. But as we observe, in practice, the naturalist is usually direct to his depiction. Crane only suggests through the dialogue and description that Maggie became a prostitute. On the other hand Karnik in his *Mahimchi Khadi* clearly shows the fall of a girl into prostitution of the slum. He describes Jaya's prostitution business in the very straightforward manner. Jaya's relation with Chander and her intentionally visit to Kamthipura to flatter more and more customers, Roshan and Bhika's secret meeting and their sexual intercourse, all these events Karnik has described objectively and

boldly. His theme emerged clearly and ponderously from his full description of the inner as well as outer corruption of Jaya and from his “realistic” symbolism. Karnik uses many narrative and other devices to construct his fictional world. The main function of this device is to make plainly clear before our eyes the events and characters. The picture-like descriptions in colour present us the reality as perceived by the character or participant in an event. Karnik splashes his fiction with colour-strokes which gives us an impression of looking at a master’s canvas.

Crane’s technique of presenting characters is as types. It creates the sense in the reader’s mind, that the problems, faced by characters, are as faced by people of their class and status. The first scene of the novella, the street fight involving Maggie’s older brother Jimmie, typifies this strategy. Jimmie is not named during the scene. He is an anonymous boy who is treated with extreme brutality by boys of his age for no other reason than turf wars among poor children. Adults stand around watching the brutal fight. No adult tries to stop it; no adult even seems to be concerned about the boys. In fact, they seem bored. When an adult does come onto the scene, he makes matters worse by kicking the boys viciously. It is then that Crane reveals their identity as father and son, instead of revealing their names. By the use of this technique, novel made as a documentary film, a totally balanced depiction without any personal interference. Karnik, on the other hand tries to present each event in more details. He introduces all the characters with the details of their past and present life. He also used the documentary film technique like Crane, but his narration never goes out of the Mahim slum. He does not present the city life scene like that of Crane.

Most striking difference between two novels is, in *Maggie* the social code of morality played vital role in determining Maggie and other characters' behaviours and actions. It controls their lives. The tragedy of Maggie is not only because of environment or surrounding in which she grown up, but social morality is more responsible. The moral values held by the Johnson family are drawn almost entirely from a middle class ethic which stresses the home as the center of virtue, and respectability as the primary moral goal. She is cast out by her mother and brother for desecrating the Home, and her seducer, Pete, rejects her plea for aid because she threatens the respectability of the rough-and-tumble bar in which he works. Thus, social code of morality helps Maggie's tragedy along with unhealthy familial and economical environment. On the other hand, in *Mahimchi Khadi* economical forces played most important role. Jaya becomes prostitute, Bhika accepts to be her agent, Kashiram becomes eccentric, Shamu allows Chander to enjoy with his own wife, etc. are the result of economical situation. These economical forces are beyond their controls. He at the very beginning of the novel makes clear that in the slum there is no moral person. The economical forces are responsible for Jaya's tragic condition along with slum environment and her natural impulses rather than social code of morality.

Maggie's mother is also responsible for the destruction of her daughter. She always hates Maggie, heartlessly and rejects Maggie for the dating with Pete. Conversely, Karnik has described Ganga, as a mother, caring and nourishing her children. He also tries to show purely environmental and natural instinctive effect on the human lives, rather to presenting the moral code. It is so because in India, the familial ties are

more compact than in America, Jaya's mother again and again tries to bring Jaya back to home, though she is now a prostitute. She scolds Jaya, only for Jaya's immoral behavior. As we examined Maggie's drunkard mother is responsible for Maggie's destruction, but we can not say Ganga, Jaya's mother spoiled her daughter. This is the cultural difference in Indian and American family life that becomes obvious throughout the novels.

Crane's writings depict what he believes are the norms of the world. He molds himself after the dying form of realism but finds himself often giving naturalistic qualities to his work. Such is evident in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. Though this example of Crane's work is realistic, offering an accurate, detailed, unembellished depiction of life, it is written within a frame that can only be deemed as naturalistic. These shifts in writing form leave the reader wondering from which perspective did Crane approached the story, that of realist or naturalist; evidence supports that of the latter more than that of the prior. During the 1890th, Emile Zola was a powerful influence on the American Literature. Zola's Naturalistic philosophy of literature seemed to be more applicable to writing dealing with the growth of slum areas as a result of great industrial development. This philosophy of scientific determinism which laid emphasis on environment was in Crane's mind when he wrote his novel *Maggie*, a story of slum life. But he imbibed only some aspects of this theory and was untouched by fatalistic belief of the theorist and scholars. Crane made a synthesis and evolved a new creed which could be compared to that of Howells and Garland. His naturalism took another route and came closer to realism.

does not belong

Karnik is not belonged to any movement or the group of the writers. The term 'Naturalism' comes from France by and through Zola's writing and spread all over the Europe and the U.S.A. But it did not affect Indian writers much. Nor any movement emerged in Marathi literature for that purpose. But the detail study of the novel shows, that *Mahimchi Khadi* is pure naturalistic novel. It's slum setting, subject matter, plot construction and overall impression of the story makes the novel true naturalistic piece of literature.

It makes obvious that Karnik has written this novel out of his own desire to write something about the poor people of the Mahim slum, where he himself lived for a few years. The period of mid-twentieth century was a period of social unrest, industrial expansion and of excitement as well as of grimy slums and shocking exploitation of the labourers. The entire face of Mumbai (and other metropolitan cities) was transformed under the onslaught of the Industrial Revolution. Never before had man's environment, his image of himself, his attitude to himself altered so deeply in such a short span of time. All this upheaval in social environment and its effects on human lives were depicted in *Mahimchi Khadi* by using those like of naturalistic style.

The keen observation of the novel reveals that, the technique, used in the novel, is purely Karnik's own. Karnik's interpretations of life are spawned from his own opinions of the world. These opinions correspond with naturalistic train of thought. He makes use of an observation technique to show the natural law of the universe: One can either accept the laws determining social order or become their victim. In *Mahimchi Khadi*, Jaya

is used as a medium to paint the picture of the devastating consequences that befall one who attempts to violate this unspoken law, breaching the social and economic boundaries set upon them at birth. Karnik's views of the poor allow him to create his characters as self absent of conscious thought, leaving them susceptible to the ills of their environment.

Maggie and *Mahimchi Khadi* are the novels, set in two different cultural traditions, countries and languages and ages (periods). Yet, both Crane and Karnik have more or less, the same or identical perceptions of the life in slum areas. They have the same perspective of the human predicament that provides a great significance and relevance to these novels.

The moral ideals and ugly facts for human life are brought together by Crane and Karnik in order to present contrast between them. They have thus, presented the predicament of human life in an aesthetic way in the selected novels. The novels thus, are thought provoking and disturbing the readers' perception of human life. Man's quest for the ideal, moral and comfortable life and his involvement in the ugly, criminal and immoral activities are highlighted in the novels. This understanding and predicament of the human life constitutes the comprehensive vision of the two novelists—namely Stephen Crane and Madhu Mangesh Karnik.