



KINSHIP AND GENERATION GAP IN ANNIE BAKER'S SELECTED PLAYS

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ABSTRACT

Annie Baker is an American playwright. She wrote eight plays that *The Aliens*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *Body Awareness*, *Nocturama*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Flick* and *Johns*. Above all these plays focus on psychological aspects of all characters where they performed on the stage. Her characters are from different categories. It means the characters are different ages and from different background. Sometimes her characters belonging to teen ages, sometimes her characters belonging to middle ages, sometimes her characters belonging to old ages and

both male and females. There is no any sort of discrimination in between men and women.

KEYWORDS: *Generation Gap , Annie Baker's , Circle Mirror Transformation.*

INTRODUCTION

Annie Baker's works include *The Aliens* (Obie Award), *Body Awareness*, *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Obie Award), *Nocturama* and an adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*. Her works has been produced at more than a hundred theatres in the U.S. and in more than a dozen countries. Recent honours include a

Guggenheim Fellowship, the Steinberg Playwright Award and a New York Drama Critics Circle Award. She is a resident playwright at Signature Theatre

Man does not live alone in society. From birth till death he is surrounded by a number of people. Some of these people are his relatives, some are friends some are neighbours while all others are strangers and unknown to him either on the basis of blood or marriage.

The relations based on blood or marriage may be close or distant. The bond of blood or marriage which binds people together in group is called kinship.

There are two types of kinship, Affinal kinship and Consanguineous Kinship. The bond of marriage is called affinal kinship. When a person marries, he establishes relationship not only with the girl whom he marries but also with a number of other people in the girl's family. Moreover, it is not only the person marrying who gets bound to

the family members of the girl.

Second type of kinship is Consanguineous kinship is the bond of blood. The consanguineous kin are related through blood whereas the affinal kin are related through marriage. The bond between parents and their children and that between siblings is consanguineous kinship. Siblings are the children of the same parents. The concept of sibling relationship is introduced by D. H. Laurence in his novel, 'Sons and Lovers'

Generation gap is nothing but certain psychological and emotional gap between parents or elder people and the younger ones. Bulging generation gap creates misunderstanding and lack of attachment between the parents and children. The success of parenting lies in how effectively they avoid the generation gap or ignore the differences with kids.

Generation gap is the result of the fast paced development of the society. In earlier times two or three generations live in the same lifestyle and environments as the development was so slow. But today, nearest past is very much outdated and the world is more advanced each day. Parents do not even know many of the modern technologies and equipment children use.

The *Circle Mirror Transformation* is the play of only four characters. All the characters have different ages that Marti and James are in old age and Schultz and Theresa are in between middle ages and Lauren is a girl of teen age. All the characters come in the circle before mirror at the time of their performance in the play that we cannot find any sort of gap in between them. All the characters behave horizontally in communication. There is no difference in younger and elder among them. They give respect to each other though they are senior and junior in age gap. Annie Baker does not care about age gap. Her characters are not thinking about age and not thinking about relationship whether anybody of them is younger or elder. All the characters are involved with joyfully and enjoyed the life together. They made laugh to their audience. She presents humorous comedy in the play.

The Aliens is the play of only three characters. Two characters are in middle aged and one is teen age as Evan. Senior characters or aged characters Jasper and KJ and Evan was a character of seventeen. Initially, Jasper and KJ are friends but later meet them Evan. After few days, Jasper died in the play and Evan weeps of his death. Death of Jasper is the sad situation in the play. At the beginning, Evan met both Jasper and KJ in the tea shop when they neglected him to involve between them. Later, someday Evan becomes a good friend of both Jasper and KJ. At first in dialogue conversation reader observes generation gap among them. Evan was a younger boy than they two Jasper and KJ.

Nocturama is an example of kinship and generation gap in the characters. Kinship is the relationship between members of the same family. It is the person he comes from blood relation. Judy and Skaggs are mother-son relationship and Judy is step father of Skaggs and Amanda is an African-American girlfriend of Skaggs, later lover of him. Gary and Skaggs' relation is not good. Gary requested to Skaggs, 'hate me not I am your mother partner. But Skaggs blame on him, Gary is not good man. Gary is an immoral person; he has not helped Skaggs' mother. Skaggs' complaint against is the matter of generation gap in between them.

Annie Baker's contemporary playwright Will Eno's, 'Thom Pain' (*based on nothing*) is a rambling monologue in which the protagonist, he has suffered a lot in his life, tells the story of a bee sting, a boy with a dog that died, and his experience with a woman. Amanda is the best example of monologue used in the play, *Nocturama* by Annie Baker.

Amanda is the character of monologue. She was admired to the age of Puritan that the age before last three generations. Distinction between Puritan and New England Puritans' age in Amanda's own words:

"Did you know that most New England Puritans kept a diary? They always had to be introspecting and evaluating everything because, literally, the day of reckoning could come at any time. This compulsive self-analysis is what is often referred to as the, um... (she makes quotation marks with her fingers)

... "Puritan Drama of the Soul" And we can look at this tendency in Elizabeth's family, this tendency to worry and talk about everything... what Winnie Rosebath called the "Collins Instability" ... and we can see how it was clearly in many ways sort of dying Puritanism inherited from Elizabeth's father Samuel and his father Josiah, who was actually a great orator and minister in Boston before he moved the family up to Vermont in 1810. To call Elizabeth herself Puritanical would be a stretch... she stopped attending church in her young adulthood. But we

can see from her poems that she's always looking for redemptive meaning in the world. And yet she's always unable to find enough of it! Her poems aren't so much spiritual quests, as endless, um, disputations. Um ... okay. Let's move onto the parlor". Page no.233 from *The Vermont Plays*.

Gary and Skaggs communication evidently shows that mismatched in between them. In their communication we find mismatched because Gary is an old man but immoral and Skaggs was a young man with moral sense about living himself. Therefore, Skaggs hates to Gary and helps his mother Judy. Skaggs and Judy living together from long time but when Gary came in between them Skaggs dislike him that we see about their dialogue conversation bellow:

SKAGGS: Hey, Gary. Can I check email for a second?

GARY: I just started playing Nocturama.

SKAGGS: Please? My laptop is being really weird.

GARY: Hold on. I have to pause it.(pause)

OK.

(Gary stands up and steps aside. Skaggs dashes over and starts typing. After a second, he stops and looks up at Gary.)

SKAGGS: Thanks.

Gary shrugs. Skaggs stares at the computer.

page no. 463 to 466 from, *The Vermont Plays*

Body Awareness is an Annie Baker's play of total physical and mentally awareness. High reputed characters are in this play like Phyllis a professor, Joyce is a high school teacher and Frank has hobby to capture photographs of nude women and little girls. Another important character Jared is a psycho patient like childhood minded. Joyce and Jared are in blood relationship. They are mother and son in relation. Frank was an old man of fifty nine but his nature was free and frank like his name. Phyllis was a gay like woman and girlfriend of Joyce. Joyce and Frank are comes near for taking the nude photographs. Later, Joyce become ready to give nude photo to Frank meanwhile their discussion taken place that given below:

Joyce: When do I take off my clothes?

Frank: Whenever you want.

A pause.

Joyce: I have a confession.

Frank: Yeah?

Joyce: I, uh, I shaved my legs this morning.

Frank: What's wrong with that.

Joyce: I shaved my legs because I knew I'd be doing this.

Frank: I don't understand.

Joyce: The point of it is, like, this is what real women look like, and I'm gussying myself up? It kind of defeats the point.

Frank: I really wouldn't worry about it.

Joyce: I also plucked these little bellybutton hairs I have.

Frank: Joyce. It's okay.

Joyce: And I ... I trimmed my pubic hair.

Frank: I think most women probably to that before they pose for me.

..." page no. 463 to 466 from *The Vermont Plays*.

Above discussion in between Frank and Joyce proves their similarity in thinking, emotions, interests and feeling because of the same age. They both are teachers. Their fields are same but Frank has been doing more extra activities simultaneously with his job. There are the differences in between both characters in attitudes and performances. Both Frank and Phyllis are teacher but Frank has good hobby that to collect photos of the nudes.

In short, kinship and generation gap is the current issues of the 21st century's huge problem. Compactness of the family is the solution of that divides and be separation and sometimes isolation and alienation.

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