



MAN -WOMAN RELATIONSHIP IN THE PLAYS OF VIJAY TENDULKAR

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Abstract

This article exposes the man woman relationship in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar based on Silence! The Court is in Session and Sakharam Binder. The play Silence! The Court is in Session highlights the complexity of human relationships and it contains a latent critique of modern Indian society, mainly middle class and lower middle class. In this play the men who have accused Benare , the protagonist of the play, are themselves the frustrated flops of the society who are lashing out their failure in an assault on a young woman. In Sakharam Binder Tendulkar exposes the women of lower middle class society. Sakharam is a binder who indulges in sexual affairs with different women, who came to him for shelter and help. The two women in the play Laxmi and Champa are two different from each other but each is dominant in her own way and Sakharam swings from one to the other. In the characters Laxmi and Champa Tendulkar has deviated from the traditional idea of an ideal woman and portrayed them as realistic characters of the contemporary society.

Key Words: *Isolation, Morality, Hypocrisy, Individuality, Feminine Exploitation*

Narration

The image of women in contemporary Indian literature has changed drastically. No more is woman considered or portrayed as a weak person, or falling at the feet of her husband or trying to please his always. Traditionally, a good woman is synonymous with a good wife. This is reflected in the most popular and well-known myths about women, for example in the stories of Savitri and Stayavan, Nala and Damayanti and above all in Sita-Rama legend. Others like Draupadi, Gandhari, Arundhati and Ahalaya are all seen in the contexts of their husbands. So overwhelming is this pattern that one is struck by the fact that the mother-child relationship features in the classical mythology, in spite of

motherhood being considered a crucial factor in the shaping of feminine identity.

Modern writers have tried to transform this image of woman as seen in the myths by portraying them in a more realistic manner. One such writer is Vijay Tendulkar- the avant-garde Marathi playwright. In his plays Vultures, Silence! The Court is in Session! Sakharam Binder and Kamala, he has given women different roles to play- very different from the roles played by women in traditional literature.

Vijay Tendulkar, the prolific Marathi playwright, has become a name to be reckoned with not only as far as Marathi stage is concerned but also in Indian theatre. A journalist by profession,



Tendulkar has tried his hand at various genres during the last forty years as a creative writer. These include articles, short stories, one-act plays, dramas, screen-plays and dialogues, literary criticism and translations. Though he has been successful in whatever he has tried but his forte remains drams. An excellent wielder of the pen, he has won the SangeetNatakAkademi Award, the Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay Award and the Padma Bhushan.

For Tendulkar, the inspiration comes from the society around him. He is a keen observer of human relationships especially in lower and middle class society. He has written twenty-eight full-length plays and in almost all of them, women play crucial roles in the plot. Whether it is Sakharam Binder, Shantata! Court ChaluAahe ,Kmla, Gidhade, Baby, GhasiramKotwal, MitraciGosta, Kanyadaan or EkHatti of sympathy towards the women characters created by him. In Shantata Court ChaluAahe, although Tendulkar is looking closely at the tangled web of human relationships, yet in the end it is the heroine who comes out to be stronger than the male characters.

In Shantata! Court ChaluAahe and Sakharam Binder, Tendulkar raises several questions about love, sex, marriage and moral values prevalent in the society. It is society which asks everyone to confirm to its own yardsticks of decorum and propriety. The writer makes ample sue of irony, satire, pathos and even mock-element as in Shantata! Court ChaluAahe to highlight the

hollowness of middle class moralities. These moralities might be having slight variations but at all times and all ages they remain the same. An Individual is not supposed to take the "Primrose path of dalliance" as Shakespeare put it. Confirm or else---all hell can break loose. Irregular of abnormal behaviour is not to be tolerated. No reasons are good enough to justify and find alibis for a person's erratic behaviour.

Tendulkar's plays show his concern for modern man's anguish. His plays, so different in form and content, are pointed towards this important human predicament which is in itself a tribute to the questioning, probing spirit of Tendulkar. His plays share two tendencies of Modern Indian Drama: they make use of what are considered the modern trends in theatre, and they go back to myths for their themes and techniques. Tendulkar's plays vary from purely naturalistic plays and stark tragedies to farces, from full-length plays to one-acts. Thematically, in his plays there is the exploration of man-woman relationships and he depicts in them the social individual tensions and the complexities of human character.

His drama Silence! The Court is in Session shows brilliantly how men like kashikar ,Sukhatme, and others gang up against the protagonist of the play ,LeelaBenare and torture her through a mock trail. This exposes the hypocrisy of the male dominated tradition and society and its hostility against women .Through the depiction of violent response of the male dominated world, pre marital



relationship and motherhood, the dramatist holds a mirror to our social response to such things. It is pre-eminently male biased. The play brings out the hypocrisy of the society the excuses men and prosecutes women for the same offence. Benare's maternal uncle nowhere appears as an accused for committing incest with her. Similarly, prof. Damle makes love with Benare leaves her pregnant and withdraws easily from all responsibilities. But he is merely a witness in the trial of the case, whereas Benare is an accused of the society and of law too. If Benare has committed a crime, Prof. Damle has committed dual crimes- one against Benare, another against his wife from the same social standard that the men apply for Benare and withdraws for Damle.

Silence! The Court in Session portrays the rehearsal of a play in an untidy old room of a small village by a theatre group. The play, thus rehearsal, is an illusion of a grave social problem of unmarried motherhood and men's attitude to her. The illusion turns out to be the real care with Ms. Leela Benare the protagonist is the play. Benare, a school teacher, is self-reliant, bold, successful working lady, having her individuality, leads her life in her own free way. But she falls victims of male's ego of superiority, lust for flesh or body. She is deflowered by her own maternal uncle when she is barely 14 years old. She was later duped by Prof. Damle, a married man with family. He leaves her pregnant and disowns responsibility. She wants to give birth to this illegal child and the name of his father. No one is ready

to accept her. She stands isolated and alienated by the society and is hailed as a slur on the face of the society. Benare's long monologue at the end, explains what she feels about the people around her. She begins "yes, I have let to say ... she admits that 'my life was burden to me.' she thinks that the trouble, the difficulties, etc are because of this body only.

She says: 'my private life is my own business. I'll decide what to do with myself? Her ideas are very clear'. She is not a hypocrite. "My life is my own. I have not sold it to anyone for a job. My will is my own. My wishes are my own. No one can kill those--- no one. I'll do what I like with myself and my life. I'll decide" But this individuality of hers is destroyed by a male.

Kashikar, the judge declares his judgement with some remarks on morality. "Marriage is the very foundation of our society's stability. Motherhood must be sacred and pure. This court takes a serious view of your attempt to dynamite all this." The last sentence of the judgement hurts Benare very much. Therefore, he says "this court hereby sentences that you shall live. but the child in your womb shall be destroyed." She is motionless, silent and serious. She says, NO, NO! NO! I won't let it happen--- I won't let it happen".

The world around her is full with hypocrites and the persons who are waiting to take disadvantage of her. She knows the consequences of her face



the world. The man- woman relationship is tendulkar's favourite theme .the urban middle class cannot tolerate benare's way of living . Benare 's views on men can be seen in her last monologue. She says about men their lips are full of lovely worn out phrases! And their bellies are full of unsatisfied desires. This strongly worded last monologue throws light on the true nature of prof. Damle.

Tendulkar's Sakharam Binder is an expose of the hypocrisy, jealousy, and lust of the middle class male. Sakharam binder was staged on 10th march 1972. For the first time , perhaps, the bold portrayal of characters like Sakharam and Champa stormed the stage. The play shocked the conservative society. It is the most famous and influential drama by Tendulkar. The play is about Sakharam , a womanizer who uses women and then discarded them. He is a disbeliever in the institution of marriage .He picks up other men's discarded women , cast off wives who would otherwise be homeless, destitute and takes them as domestic servants and sex partners. He rules his home like a tyrant, yet each woman is told that she is free to leave , where she likes. He will even give her a sari , fifty rupees and a ticket to wherever she wants to go.

The play centres around three main characters – Sakharam, Laxmi and Champa at the very outset of the play sakharam , a coarse yet forceful person , enters , accompanied by laxmi clutching a bundle of clothes to his bosom. Sakharam sternly tells her what to expect. He is poor, but she will get two

square meals , clothes and a roof over her head. She will have to be a wife to him and he will brook no nonsense.

Sakharam:"This is not a royal palace. It's Sakharam Binder's house. No free and easy ways here see? I am hot headed. When I lose my temper , I beat the life out of people . I have a foul mouth...I will get you two square meals , two saris to start with and then one every year. I won't hear any complaints later. If you are careless I will show the door. May be I am a rascal, a womaniser, a pauper. I am the master here .And one last thing.. you will have to be a wife to me."

He is frank and outspoken his rough idiom seems the right vehicle for the values he has evolved for himself. He tries to work out an independent philosophy of life , with no sense of false obligations. Laxmi is a helpless woman, steeped in traditional morality but compelled to submit to Sakharam . She does the household things under the exacting eyes of Sakharam .At the time of Ganapati festival Laxmi objects to Sakharam 's muslim friend Dawood participating in the aarti. Infuriated by her attitude, Sakharam beats her up. The scenes which follow show a deterioration of their relationship. In spite of her reluctance to leave, Sakharam drives her away from the house. In the second act of the play ,Sakharam enters the house with Champa. He repeats the same formula which he had applied to



Laxmi. But Champa is a vibrant , earthy being his words have a hallow ring. Sakharam is not able to gain ascendancy over her. When Champa's husband enters the house ,Champa cannot control her fury. She attacks him. When Sakharam asked her for an explanation of her action , she tells him that her husband had ruined her life .He wanted to make a whore out of her. But unlike with Laxmi, Sakharam is infatuated by Champa. When Champa is asleep in the kitchen , he approaches her but she resists him. However when he threatens to throw her out of the house, she comes to him only under the influence of the drink. After this there is always a note of savage despaire in Sakharam 's manner of making demands on her. And she can submit to him only by numbing her sense with liquor.

In the words of Veena Noble Dass the character of Laxmi is portrayed in a realistic manner when compared to the ideal mythic character of Savitri in the savitri-satyavan story in Mahabhrata it might seem strange that Laxmi , deserted by her husband and living as a kept woman with another man , is suggested to be the realistic type of Savitri, but a careful examination of Laxmi 's attitude towards Sakharam roves the validity of this suggestion. For, LaxmiSakharam is husband who gives her shelter . But when Sakharam kicks her out of the house and brings Champa , from Laxmi's

point of you champa is immoral , bcauseshe has deserted her husband. This simplistic yet clear-cut distinction makes Laxmi feel very righteous and lets her consider herself as chaste and champa a tramp. Tendulkar in the character of Laxmi has portrayed a woman belonging to lower middle class and living morals and is capable of protecting herself as well as her lover. At the end of the play we find Sakharam a different kind of man- an impotent and a murderer of champa.

Conclusion

Silence! The court is in session and Sakharam Binder are ample testimony to Tendulkar's wonderful insight into the relationship between man and women and the interrelationship between the human mind, psyche and body which are the tripods making up a personality.

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