Preface

Even now in the twenty first century, women’s vulnerability to various forms of violence based on the existing binary gender divide is still an observable global phenomenon. The Indian society is also no exception to this. Women in India are vulnerable to various forms of covert and overt violence, both in their public and private lives. The patriarchal set up of Indian society accords a constricted space to women; women are viewed as the “marginalised other” and subjected to various forms of violence. The rampancy of this crime against women in everyday life struck me. Meanwhile, I had become aware of the literary resistance made by a number of contemporary Indian playwrights by scripting plays which represent this issue. I started thinking about the close connection between drama and society, how drama can become a powerful medium of representing social problems, and also a means of resistance against the social evils. With a view to exploring this issue of violence against women further as represented in contemporary Indian drama, I approached Dr Asha Kuthari Chaudhuri. After reading my proposal, she allowed me to start my preliminary work. After a year of preliminary work: collecting information and watching performances in various parts of the state, I finally submitted my synopsis to the Department of English, Gauhati University. The synopsis was accepted and the work started formally on 12th February 2008 under the supervision of Dr Asha Kuthari Chaudhuri bearing the title *Performing Violence: Representation of Women and Violence in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar, Mahesh Dattani, Manjula Padmanabhan and Dina Mehta*. My supervisor not only introduced me to the vast and open world of performance, but also to the “felt-life” of the stage, the tangible relationship between the actors and the spectators, and the multiple meanings generated by a performance text. Gradually, I was drawn towards the world of live performance; hence the present study includes both textual analysis and performance analysis of “gendered violence” in the literary and theatrical texts. This dissertation contains a detailed analysis of nine plays - *Kamala, Kanyadaan, Silence! The Court is in Session*, and *The Vultures*, by Vijay Tendulkar, *Bravely Fought the Queen and Thirty Days in September* by Mahesh Dattani; *Lights Out* by Manjula Padmanabhan, and *Brides are not for Burning* and *Getting Away with Murder* by Dina Mehta. Given the constraints of the length of a PhD dissertation, I had to conclude my present study after reaching a particular point. But I hope to explore more along this area in the near future, and also would like to keep this study open for further incorporations.

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