AMAZING ARTISTRY
CHAPTER - IV

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Suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature. (Shakespeare Hamlet 117)

The universal appeal of drama is not based on the longevity of the form, but on its naturalness. It is not pure literature like poetry and fiction but is a performing, co-operative, and collaborative art form. The simplest definition of drama is “Lyricism + Mime. If lyricism refers to the words on the printed page of a text, mime refers to the action on the stage” (Ramaswamy 272). The plot and action must be highly selective, relatively bold, and reasonably clear to accommodate what Shakespeare calls “the two hours’ traffic of our stage” (Watson 11). Theatre is precision. The selectivity of the plot and the brevity of the action make for economy, intensity, and a satisfying sense of interconnectedness and causality. Drama in performance is “human life put onto a pedestal to be exhibited, looked at, examined and contemplated” (Esslin 43). Theatre is a place of excitement and every moment of dramatic action is a direct visual and aural sign of a fictional or reproduced reality. The ultimate objective of the whole enterprise of making or creating a play is “the evocation in human beings of laughter, pity and fear, compassion, vicarious experience of the whole gamut of emotions and sentiments and the ultimate catharsis” (Esslin 32). Plays can indeed be explosive “when the social and political content is married to dramatic artistry” (Griffiths 54).

Drama, the most immediate and intense form of literature, is three-dimensional in its nature. The text is meant to be “translated into sights, sounds and actions which occur literally and physically on a stage” (Boulton 3). It combines the characteristics of narrative poetry and the visual arts. It is “a narrative made visible, a picture given power to move”
It does use all the other arts: “Painting, sculpture and architecture to represent the environment, music to provide mood, rhythm to represent the practice of music and literature in the widest sense, for its verbal element” (Esslin 28). Since this genre draws on the other arts and fuses them into a new whole, it is regarded the most hybrid or complete synthesis of all the arts. Richard Wagner called it, “the total work of art” (Esslin 28). An amalgamation of all the arts added with competent acting on the stage results in the metamorphosis of the fictitious scene springing to life, and its effect is terrifying.

A playwright’s prime duty is to hook, retain and intensify the interest of his viewers. “A great part of the secret of dramatic architecture”, writes William Archer, “lies in the one word ‘Tension’. To engender, maintain, suspend, heighten and resolve a state of tension is the main object of the dramatist’s craft” (Griffiths 23). Theatre, through various means like setting, grouping, lighting, costume, and colour can create its own poetry. Artaud proposed a theatre where music, dance, mime, pantomime, gestures, chantings, and incantations are more important than words. He thought that an actor was an “exerciser of feelings” for whom gestures, movements, and expressions were more important than simple words. A performance with such features will have a gripping and searing impact on its audience leaving them mesmerized and enthralled.

Tennessee Williams, in his Afterword to Camino Real, compared the printed script of a play to that of an architect’s blueprint of a house not yet built. According to him, “the colour, the grace and elevation, the structural pattern in motion, the quick interplay of live beings, suspended like fitful lightening in a cloud, these things are the play, not words on paper” (Ramaswamy 273). The combinations of the different aural, visual, and verbal structures that make up the overall shape of a dramatic performance determine the power and effect of it on its audience. “The rhythmical structures of interweaving strands of signifiers are the true ‘texture’, that keeps a dramatic text alive” (Esslin 120) and holds the audience’s attention focused, alert, and constantly renewed. A dramatist’s creative imagination prompts him to make bold innovations and fruitful experiments resulting in the exhibition of his
brilliant craftsmanship. Through innumerable ways, the playwright aspires for and achieves architectural harmony in the arrangement of the different parts of the play. Drama is a process, happening, an event, and action. So, the imposition of form on such a constantly changing and protean experience is not only a challenging craft but a difficult and specialized one.

Dramatists of various periods have exploited different conventions and evolved unique devices which make an imperishable influence on its watchers and dance upon their inward eye. Theatre of any society is represented by two distinct genres of theatrical activities namely commercial and experimental. Commercial theatre represents the sensibility and sensitivity of its audience while experimental theatre its intellectual pursuits. It looks out for new ideas and experimentation in techniques. It “has relation with thoughts and thought processes of human mind” (Dubbe 59-60). The traditional function of theatre is to amuse and divert its audience. Playwrights like Harold Pinter, Edward Albee, and Vijay Tendulkar have desired to bring in a drastic change in the function of theatre and have vigorously searched and introduced new themes, new subjects, and new techniques. They do not want their audience to merely plunge deep into the action and lose themselves in this make-believe world but aspire to disturb their conscience “by raising unsettling questions about human relationships and human existence” (Dubbe 60).

With such a new mission attributed to theatre, Tendulkar’s art is marked by innovations in technique and subject. His plays vary from purely naturalistic plays and stark tragedies to farces, from musicals set in traditional folk modes to absurd drama and from full length plays to one-act plays. The inevitable conflict between “tradition and modernity, conventions and unorthodoxy, a fixed system and the unchequered course of individualism, social restraints and freedom creates the tensions in his plays and contributes to their basic forms” (Shahane 244). Shyamala Vanararse points out that, “the structures are firmly rooted in the web of themes that the author wishes to express. The web is not stated, it is expressed through the very structure that rests upon it. The web defines the ‘purpose’ of choices, details and
relationships included or excluded from the work” (37). His plays are the “expression of the totality of his vision” (Shahane 246). He excels marvelously in forging the unity of theme, characterization, and structure which has prompted Manisha Dixit to aptly state, “experimentation and novelty in expression characterize Vijay Tendulkar, the dramatist” (Kasture 148).

Among the modern playwrights, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, Mohan Rakesh, and Girish Karnad are some Indian dramatists who have created powerful plays which are successful both at the theatre and with the publisher. There is proper combination and perfect blending of “theatrical suitability and literary reading” in their plays which has earned them international reputation. Vijay Tendulkar’s constant touch with theatre right from his childhood has offered him plenty of opportunity to catch every nuance of dramatic expression and to excel in it. When he was a small boy, he accompanied his father for the rehearsals of the plays directed by him. Men, even with moustaches, would take up female roles without proper costume or make up but with slightly overdone feminine gait and mannerisms in the light of a lantern. The boy found them to be funny, puzzling, and mystical. During the actual performance, with the efficient inculcation of intelligent theatrical devices, he was wonder struck at the vital transformation from crude to polished and from the improvised to the finished with occasional applause and laughter from the audience. He was greatly excited and amazed. He discloses:

It also produced a sense of wonder. The change was unbelievable. What I had seen in the rehearsals was here and yet not here. Everybody looked different. Now they looked unnatural, acted funnily and yet the audience was with them. Especially in the tragic scenes. If I giggled, others around me snubbed me. [...] At times even I was carried away and cried with them. (Tendulkar Preface xiii)

He revels that it is his first exposure to and experience of the mystique of the theatre. He has developed a curiosity for the performing art. He admits, “There could have been a
subconscious and unquenched desire to explore by myself the magic and the beauty of this form" (xiii).

Through the brain-storming rehearsal sessions, he has grasped that in order to lure the audience to develop a sense of “willing suspension of disbelief”, a playwright must possess two skills, the skill of characterization and the sense of structure. This realization has dawned on him when he watched the rehearsal of Ionesco’s theatrical masterpiece The Chairs. When he read the play, he had found it repetitive, annoyingly show, boring, and utterly confusing. During the rehearsal much to his astonishment, he witnessed the clear revelation. His experience is delineated as follows:

In the very first rehearsal as the play slowly began to unfold with faltering improvisations of the long and repetitive stage-directions I sensed a calculated and measured structure under its absurdist surface and then in the rehearsals that followed I realized fully the exciting and innovative theatricality of the masterpiece with its theme of boredom. [. . .] I learnt many lessons in theatre craft by watching that single production from the first readings to the shows. (Preface xxiii)

It is through that rare opportunity he has learnt the crucial lesson that structuring in a play is vital to the total impact of the play.

During his apprentice days, he had been watching as many performances as possible which, he declares, has helped him to internalize the technique of playwriting and enactment. His experiences as a journalist, short-story writer, ghost- writer, and a copy-writer offer him chances to observe the subtle variations available among human beings. He is not a mere writer but an actor on the stage of his creative mind wherein he has been fantasizing real life situations and people. He acknowledges with great zest that his “early grooming, opportunities to make mistakes and correct them, a basic curiosity about people and life around me, a skill to internalize details of human behaviour at different levels and in different circumstances and good pick up of mannerisms of speech”(Preface xxvi) are his capital in this medium.
Tendulkar’s clear perception regarding the structure of the performing art has distinguished him from the playwrights of his time or of his predecessors. The structure of this communal art is not to be seen but felt. He proclaims, “A performing structure is not static. It flows. It has a fluent and steady movement. Its base is the undercurrent of the performance; . . . or the theme or the essence or the binding element of the play which makes it one-piece and unique and unlike all other plays” (xxxii). A play, with a strong undercurrent, will make a fresh and lasting impact because it holds the form with its content. Tendulkar has created plays with strong structures, which, with their tremendous and relentless tension, tight plot-construction, absolute precision of words and movement and with its directness, have shattered and startled the audience. He is acclaimed as a great playwright due to his total involvement in this medium for a longtime and his internalization or appropriation of it. He admits that playwriting is very enjoyable, full of discoveries and therefore exciting. It has helped him to analyze life, his own and the lives of others. It has led him to make newer discoveries in the vast realm of the human mind which still defies all available theories and logic. Above all, it has made him grow as a human being.

The sensitive human being in Tendulkar cannot turn a blind eye to the existing state of his society and he has exploited the writing medium to exhibit his genuine concerns regarding the woes and ills of the society. He has earnestly attempted to unveil the disturbing issues in life. The major concerns of this inimitable playwright are depicted through, the unenviable status of women in the male dominated urban middle class society, the hypocrisy, lust and violence latent in the Indian psyche, the unmistakable ambivalence inherent in the words and deeds of both the promoters and beneficiaries of dalit upliftment programmes, the Machiavellian manipulation and absurd hero worship that characterizes Indian politics and the cut throat competition and resultant foulness that permeates sensational journalism. (Dharan on the blurb)
These shuddering issues find an exhaustive and effective expression in his plays through the realistic characters and unique techniques. The magnitude of his creative genius is exemplified through the variegated themes and the diverse forms employed by him.

Each of the eight plays undertaken for the analysis deals with a specific theme that has been projected with the most appropriate technique that grips the attention of the audience and disturbs their conscience by lingering in their minds for a long time. For example, *Silence!* shakes the theatre-goers with its mock trial. *Ghashiram* bewitches its watchers with its dazzling display of dance, music, and the human curtain. Mere hectic phone-calls blast away unforeseen devastations in *Kamala*. The cataclysmic issues prevalent and prominent in the society like casteism and lesbianism exposed through *Kanyadaan* and *A Friend's Story* respectively agitate and alarm the onlookers through the efficient employment of words, light, and sound. The ruthless domestic violence exhibited in *The Vultures* and *Sakharam* has inherited the hue of eeriness and repulsion not through any naked display but through the brilliant blend of narration with haunting sound segments that unnerves the audience. The successful encounter of Princess Vijaya in *Encounter* mystifies her ministers but enlightens her audience with the diplomatic adaptations of the chorus and with its distinct and striking fusion of the sound to the action.

While *Silence!* and *Kamala* are treated as discussion plays, *Kanyadaan* and *A Friend's Story* are deemed as problem plays. Though political intrigue is the focal point in both *Ghashiram* and *Encounter*, there is sharp contrast between the two as the former is a dance drama and the latter is a political allegory. *The Vultures* and *Sakharam* are surrealistic plays that unveil the bestial nature inherent in human beings. While the sustained tension is heightened by the sudden reversal in the denouement in *Silence!*; *Kamala*, *Sakharam* and *Kanyadaan*, the disclosure of the protagonist's fate in the very beginning itself in *A Friend's Story* and *The Vultures*, kindles the curiosity of the audience to get acquainted with the factors that precipitated the end. The uniqueness of Tendulkar's creative genius is exemplified through the different strategies invented for each play to achieve the desired end.
The episodic structure embedded in *Silence!*, the naturalistic sequence utilized in *Kamala*, *Sakharam* and *Kanyadaan*, the flash-back technique in *A Friend's Story* and *The Vultures* (wherein the zigzag pattern of going back to the past yet remaining in and reminding the present is deftly maintained in the former, it is a complete flash back in *The Vultures*), the charismatic movement and the kaleidoscopic display of the swaying human curtain under the able leadership of the multifaceted Sutraddr in *Ghashiram* and the employment of a eunuch to narrate and comment on the cunning activities of normal human beings with the assistance of two pen-bearers in *Encounter* speak volumes about the inventive ability of Tendulkar. Tom Alter applauds the meritorious contribution of Tendulkar as, “Tendulkar is a gripping story-teller, a genius . . . . Reading his plays leaves one spell-bound and shell shocked” (*Tendulkar Two Plays* on the blurb). If mere reading creates such a magical effect, the watching of them with all aural-visual theatrical aids and devices would surely make it an alluring and electrifying experience.

There are certain perceptible common and similar devices or symbols used by the playwright but with a different function in each play. Telephone, for example, thrusts its inevitable and vital presence in *Kamala*, *The Vultures*, and *Kanyadaan*. In *Kamala*, the motif of hectic phone calls contributes to the principal theme of the play. The whereabouts of Jaisingh Jadav, the lurking danger for his life, his arrival, his plan to conduct the most significant ‘Press Conference’, its remarkable success, and the way he is being celebrated by others for his successful accomplishment - all such crucial factors are conveyed through indirect suggestions in the form of telephonic conversation. The playwright manages well through this device to indicate how slavish and claustrophobic Sarita has been reduced to, having been married to Jaisingh Jadav.

In *The Vultures*, the bestial and barbaric nature of Ramakant is revealed through the various modes but his miserable failure in the business, his futile endeavours to establish him and his deceptive means to run the business are conveyed only through his various replies over phone. These vultures establish their contact with the external world only by this tool.
In Kanyadaan too, telephone plays its own vital role. Nath’s anxiety to be the ‘repairer of the world’ is very naturally brought out from the very first conversation that he has over phone. When Mrs. Indira Gandhi’s intention to impose Emergency is conveyed over phone Nath responds describing that to be her hoodwinking tactics to threaten and subdue others which ironically coincides with Arun’s shameless and blatant attempt to cut his hand that has harmed Jyoti. The invitation, extended over phone to Nath to chair a session for a public discussion on Arun’s autobiography, forebodes the awaiting doom that would expedite the miserable end - that is his daughter’s snapping the bond with her beloved and revered father. The consequences of the artificial and insincere delivery of speech made by Nath can be immediately perceived by Jyoti when Seva’s answer over phone reveals the exhausted and worn-out state of Nath.

Telephone, a mere tool for communication, has thus become in the creative hands of Tendulkar a crucial and powerful device to exhibit the inner turmoil, expose the hypocrisy, and hint at the helplessness of human beings. Another similarity is that there is a general ambience of moral and spiritual degradation. It is like Eliot’s waste land and the existing hollow men resort to all sorts of immoral activities. In The Vultures, for example, the daughter and the two sons drink without any apprehension regarding the rightness or wrongness of their deed. In their mad zest to fill their pockets, they dance to entertain their father and fill his glass to the brim with intoxicating drink only to throttle him in the end threatening to kill him. The claustrophobic atmosphere forces the father to spit out the truth regarding the hidden little savings much to their glee. Ramakant’s cool drinking in the last but one scene in the play is an excellent theatrical device which functions as a prelude to the ravaging disaster, the ensuing storm is about to create.

The bold lesbian Sumitra Dev in A Friend’s Story has been converted into a miserable drunkard for only in that intoxicated mood, she can give herself to others. The climax of the play that is the revelation of Mitra’s true notions regarding Bapu as her confidant, mother, and a great friend blasts out only during her drunken moment. It is this hidden but now
disclosed and unanticipated truth which begins to obsess and haunt the mind of Bapu as has the albatross done in Coleridge’s “Ancient Mariner”. The playwright, through this short scene has adroitly brought out the true nature of Mitra - her feeling heart behind the iron curtain of haughtiness, her high esteem of Bapu’s friendship, and her unshakable faith in him.

Arun’s eloquent discourse on the brewing of illicit liquor for survival in Kanyadaan hints at his callous disregard for elders and manners. He does not merely stop with preaching the advantages of it but asserts in his drunkenness his audacity, conjugal right to be a potential wife-beater, artifice by pretending to cut his arm, his legitimate claim over Jyoti and his incorrigibility. His yelling “I am what I am . . . and shall remain exactly that” (540) hints at the domino effect his ruthless determination is going to cause.

Sakharam, in Sakharam, prides in being a foul mouthed drunkard and womanizer. After his discovery that the titillating Champa can be enjoyed only when she consumes liquor, he forces her to drink as often as he intends to have her. Consequently she becomes a perpetual drinker which is unapproved by Sakharam. His reaction betrays his true identity, the conventional man that he actually is. He grieves, “Drunk so early in the morning? […] This is not right. Champa, you should not drink on a holy day like Dassera. […] On a holy day the woman of the house should look all clean and tidy” (174). The other drunkard is Champa’s desolated husband, Fouzdar Shinde, whose drunkenness very vividly projects his hapless sadomasochism.

In Kamala, Jaisingh, the celebrated journalist, casually enjoys drinking liquor. Sarita’s revered worship of her husband as the tireless crusader against the woes of the suffering lot undergoes a drastic change during his drunken revelry with his friend Jain wherein his true motive in conducting the press conference is plainly revealed. It is, in fact, a shattering revelation for Sarita to realize that her husband is not a great advocate of freedom but a cold blooded exploiter and opportunist with absolutely no concern for anyone or anything.
However cunning, diplomatic, hypocritical, and manipulative the people are, their well hidden motive - in other words, the naked truth about themselves - gets exploded in an unguarded moment, in the above cases during their drunken behaviour. The latent violence inherent in all is excellently revealed through this device. People of all social classes and both gender have fallen prey to this habit which has eased the task of the playwright, who has vigorously attempted to depict the complex nature of the human psyche.

The next impressive point about Tendulkar's plays is his sui generis method in the employment of chorus. Generally the major function of the chorus is as commentators on the action. It also serves as "the author's vehicle for communicating to the audience exposition about its subject, offstage events, and setting" (Abrams 23). There are also Choric characters that "stand largely apart from the action and by their comments provide the audience with a special perspective (often an ironic perspective) through which to view characters and events" (Abrams 24). Eliot in his Murder in the Cathedral and The Family Reunion has used choric characters not as an artificial embellishing device but as an integral and inevitable part to reveal explicitly the inner dilemma and embarrassment. In A Friend's Story, The Vultures, Encounter, and Ghashiram, Tendulkar's use of the choric characters deserves a special mention because his efficacious and skilful incorporation of them has made his plays distinct. Flash back is a very well known method but Tendulkar can sustain the interest of his audience throughout, despite the disclosure of the climax in the beginning itself because of the function of the choric characters in A Friend's Story and The Vultures.

The narrative method devised in A Friend's Story is quite arresting. Like Coleridge's Ancient mariner, Tendulkar's Bapu directly enquires the audience and exposes his poignant memories of Mitra, his girl friend. When he contemplates, "why do we live through somebody else's love story as if it were our own?" (420), he draws the attention of the audience and immediately jolts them with the next question, "why do we go through death when they die . . . ?" (420). This question, which discloses the end, does not mar the interest of the viewers but brings them to the edge of their seats as it increases their anxiety to know
why and how someone has died. A plot depends on causation. E.M. Forster stresses, “The principle of causality is essential to drama” (Griffiths 17). As Bapu commences to narrate, there is gradual unfolding of a logical chain of cause and effect, with one scene leading on to another, in a sequence which has an organic growth that makes the viewers sympathize and become passionate. It carries them along in a strong current to the inevitable end. Depicting the problems of a lesbian, a socially sensitive issue, is quite a bold venture and Tendulkar has achieved it in an unparallel manner. It is like a long narrative tale and as Bapu narrates a particular event, the narration fuses with action and the event is enacted. In accordance with the views of Brecht’s epic theatre, Bapu’s direct addresses to the audience, in-between the stunning display of the actual occurrence, enable them to both involve and distance themselves from the action.

In this three act play, Tendulkar fictionalizes the life-changing moments in Mitra’s struggle to cope with being “different”. Yet he chooses not to focus primarily on Mitra’s lesbian love affair but on her friendship with the central character and narrator Bapu. The scenes unfold within a variety of faintly textured private spaces in and around Bapu and Mitra’s college campus. Tendulkar “diminishes the background details of place and setting to intensify Bapu’s and Mitra’s tense and often contradictory inner states” (Aldama 89). The play moves by its own inner necessity and is driven finally by its own inner logic.

The story of The Vultures, on the other hand, begins with the vivid stage directions, which create multifarious effects on the audience. “A human home mutating to the hollow of a tree, a nest of vultures, is an essential element of the play, in which Tendulkar was at a subconscious level trying to depart from straight realism” (Bandyopadhyay xlviii). As Ramakant and Rama disappear, there is a shrill screeching of vultures for some time and the passageway is drowned in darkness. Only at this point, the garage ‘a small shack-like structure’ is lit up and Rajaninath, speaks in poetry. His report as a chorus in scenes i and iv in Act I, and viii in Act II, provides yet another “rhetorical extension beyond realism, turning the reality of a family unit . . . to a battle ground of savages” (Bandyopadhyay xlviii-xlix).
Through his long prologue like poetic speech, he unfurls the violent disintegration of the family. He bears witness to it but maintains the coldness that allows him to record the cruelty without interfering in it.

Rajaninath's poetic speeches give what is “essentially a quarrel a cosmic dimension, his words conjuring up a universe of injustice and exploitation” (Watson 16). The very opening lines substantiate the statement:

So Rama went away.
A statue of emotions chilled to stone.
Alive, she followed after
That living death, her master,
with the dogged loyalty
of a barren beast. (201-202)

These lines just hit the nail on the head by very effectively disclosing the environment. The subsequent lines “The true companionship / To a leper / of a mangy dog / on the road to hell” (202) paint in true and perfect shades their infernal existence. His verbal images comparing Rama to an innocent doe, himself to a living corpse -a watchful stone, and the home to a hole in a tree, to a ‘haunted burning- ground surrounded by evil ghosts’ aptly set an eerie and unnatural background. Words carefully selected, arranged, and repeated, create images, associative thoughts, and emotions. The verbal imagery creates “a kind of meta-language behind the logical language of plotting and characterization” (Griffiths 89). As a matter of fact, “it is Rajaninath,” observes Bandyopadhyay “the poet as maker, who, at the end of his first monologue, conjures the vultures into existence, his words punctuated with pauses, virtually bringing to view the grotesque tableau of the ‘five vultures’, in ‘spot light on the passageway at the rear’” (l). In the last scene, after the vultures have fed on each other’s flesh, Rajaninath through his poetry makes an earnest appeal to show them some compassion which will redeem the sinful soul and help it take its ‘first free breath’. Rajaninath’s recitation of three poems adds a special dimension to the play. Arundhati Banerjee observes,
"The innate compassion of the dramatist, who remains an objective onlooker for a major part of the play, neither condemning nor judging either the characters or their actions, finds expression in the lines of these poems. His deep empathy for the victims of human viciousness flows like an undercurrent throughout the play (xiii)."

Tendulkar punctuates the two-act structure with Rajini’s poetic expressions, with which he suspends the chronological movement of the play. "This gives an interesting twist to the otherwise conventional structure" (Banerjee 576). The poetic prose achieves two objectives. It locates Rajaninath “at the spiritual end of the matter - to - spirit spectrum of life and also in the shared cultural ethos of the playwright-performer-audience” (Gokhale 194). His poetic exposition has actually softened the brutality and repulsiveness of the various bestial and ghastly verbal images like death-heads, skeletons, and rotting noses that portray their disgusting existence. Tendulkar justifies that violence comes as a natural way of life and admits, “I try to take the audience with me in this exploration. At its best it can provide insights into the great jig-saw puzzle of human existence and enrich your understanding of life around you” (Gupta 5). Tendulkar particularly through the words of Rajaninath, conveys with deadly insistence the idea that man in his cruelty and barbarism automatically reels back into the beast. The shock experienced at the take-off by the audience, gets more intensified as they are transported from their well acquainted human world to the less known animal world.

The amusing portrayal of political intrigues in Encounter fascinates the viewers. Prannarayan, Princess Vijaya’s eunuch attendant, is the choric personage, whose reports, depictions, and direct addresses to the audience keep them abreast of everything so as to sustain the fascination till the curtain drops. It is through his divulgence of the oath-taking ceremony, during which Vijaya’s persistence that the legs of the throne ought to be cut short, that traces of Vijaya’s evolution from a self-willed and playful girl into an ambitious dictator are glimpsed by the audience. The portrayal of Prannarayan as of the ‘third sex’ and with the choric function has dual advantage. He considers himself ‘a bat hanging on the tree of life’.
He bluntly declares, “I only saw the world upside down. And the amusing part is that, from upside down the people of this world seem the wrong way up, but I see the truth straight!” (356). The political satire of the play derives mainly from this ‘batman’ vision of life. His keen observation and eloquent expression make a realistic depiction of the off-stage events while the two pen-bearers’ narrations make it possible for the audience to get a bird’s eye view enabling them to perceive the various actions and consequences taking place simultaneously all around the state. Their following report is a classic example.

EXTRA EDITION! EXTRA EDITION!

NEWS OF REVOLT! EXCITING EDITION!

(Turn by turn.)

From youngest to oldest,
From good to dishonest,
From rich to oppressed,
From east to west, . . .
From far to near

Subversion in the atmosphere!. (346)

While Prannarayan’s verbal exposition bears the mark of realism, the style adopted by the pen-bearers is poetical in its structure. The highest flights of the human imagination are to be found in dramatic poetry and the repetitive mode does not mar the effect of the play instead the variations in utterance and voice modulation enhance the desired effect.

The most striking innovation of Tendulkar is the creation of the swaying human curtain in Ghashiram. This play is a “blend of spoken verse, varied music and highly original choreography” that has given “to the Marathi theatre an artistic experience worth cherishing for a long time” (Pandey 10). Tendulkar has admitted that the multitude and not Ghashiram is the central character. He has fused ancient folk tradition and modern experimentation in this play and this is considered a new and remarkable achievement. His explanation is, “I did not want the narrative fabric. The folk framework gave me the freedom to combine fable and
history. [...] I am no faddist. Anything that suits the content is welcome. You can find a structure very western to say something very pertinent to us here” (Ramnarayan 171). The Times, London, applauds it for its “evocation of eroticism and torture without recourse to ‘western nudity and violence’” (Bhalla 2).

The Theatre Academy says “the basic structure of the play is a human wall which is basically a singing and dancing chorus, impersonally commenting on the episodic developments. But it also breaks into smaller tableaux, grouping and regrouping endlessly. The human wall switches parts with perfect timing and ceases to exist when its back is turned to the audience” (Bandyopadhyay 589). The human wall with its narrator, the Sutradhar as its leader, serves as an excellent symbol of the mechanism of secrecy, hiding and revealing happenings by human devices. The Sutradhar too functions with similar flexibility. He addresses the audience directly. The group serves to indicate numerical strength, conformity, spread of an idea, and take physical shapes indicating physical locations like a garden, temple or palanquin and moods such as joy and celebration. Different members of the chorus individuate into characters in the created events. Their other major function is “to create the content of the play” (Varanarse 68). As members of the Punekar society, they express “the group feelings and comments, they behave appropriately in the group scenes, and they twist the traditional repetitions in the most interesting, entertaining manner and contribute to the formal and meaningful aspects at the same time” (Varanarse 68). Their flexible structure enables them to easily get into the shoes of various roles, and photographic illustrations of the human curtain and its swift juxtapositions into a fierce mob and a garden are presented in figures 29, 30 and 31 respectively.
Girish Karnad has observed aptly, "From neutral commentators, they slide into the roles of voyeurs who enjoy the degeneration they condemn, of courtiers who perpetrate atrocities and the populace that suffers the harassment" (Babu 74). The human curtain is not a mere theatrical device but is an inextricably integrated part essential and appropriate to the creation of an environment of intrigue, hypocrisy, greed, and brutality. The multifarious roles and functions assigned to the chorus have ultimately resulted in the creation of a "text so totally theatrical" (Gokhale 206).

Captivated by the beauty, potency, and magic of the communal art, drama, Tendulkar's obsession is to explore and exhibit both the external turbulence and internal conflicts that afflict humanity. As an explanation to his own statement, "I am impartial" in the projection of the various traits of life, Tendulkar has stated, "I am trying to grasp shattering situations and behaviour, and to achieve some balance. Yes, it is possible. Try to think of a system of human existence where even human folly has its place" (Ramnarayan 173). The inner contradictions of his complex characters are accepted as they are without ever trying to adjudge their goodness or evilness. He is well aware of the facts that play writing involves craft and that language, a vital ingredient of dramaturgy, has tremendous potentiality.

Like Harold Pinter, John Osborne, and Samuel Beckett, Tendulkar is also not interested in inventing and manipulating a chaste language of rational enlightenment and has gone in for the language of common man with all its nuances to paint the existential anguish of modern man in perfect shades. His dialogic design is deft for all its economy, simplicity, precision, and compression. This also "demonstrates his surprising range of inventiveness in attaining the exact verbal idiom with its precise echo, sound, sense and rhythm" (Lahiri 165). He deals with the submerged selves of men suffering from an acute existential agony. Under its pressure man is forced to slip inside the hard crust of a snail's shell, which he creates around by his word fences and word trenches. His words defy his sense and sensibility. Tendulkar's deep desire for the visualization of real characters has been actualized mainly through the verbal exchanges aided by gesture and movement. The verbal exchanges between the
characters reveal not only a surface, window dressed reality that everyone tends to take for granted but also the hidden reality of secret emotions which often contradicts the surface reality, alters it, and imparts psychological intensity to the characters. He focuses his lingual lens on man’s self scrutiny. The verbal interactions between his characters, carried forward by precise dramatic idiom, “convey to audience the inward life of the characters where they are pretty much alone” (Lahiri 165). As there is a victor-victim entanglement dealt within his plays, the suppressed and silenced victims give full eloquent vent at full throated ease to their innate anguish, unfulfilled desire, and existential dilemma through carefully designed verbal filigrees like the soliloquies, monologues, and the long speeches. Their verbal idiom registers the frivolity and frailty of their existence.

“Long speeches in the hands of a master dramatist are never ‘mere talk’” (Griffiths 86). They are dramatic necessities. A long soliloquy or monologue in a play is still drama – generally the “drama of self-confrontation” (Griffiths 86). Despite their miserable and marginalized state, Tendulkar’s protagonists attempt to register their protest in their monologues and dialogues. “All art is protest. Protest as art projects a multiple experience, agitating, energizing, ennobling and yet delighting all at the same time” (Agnihotri 26). Protest here means a “deliberate, conscious expression of disgust at and disapproval of situations, the horrid web of tensions and dilemmas the common man finds himself in. It analyzes, exposes, agitates against and assault the system responsible for man’s present day plight and suffering” (Agnihotri 26). Protest as such thus has immense artistic potential.

The inner turbulence and the anguished cries of the agitated souls are strikingly displayed through the long monologues of Benare in Silence! and Rama in The Vultures respectively. The opening scene, which comprises Sakharam’s monologue in the play Sakharam, discloses how behind a mask of aggressive boastfulness and animal behavior he covers up his cowardice, helplessness, and loneliness. In the last scene, where Laxmi summons all her waning strength to bury Champa, she affirms through her monologue her steadfast and
trustworthiness. The splendid glory of Vijaya in *Encounter* and the dreadful fate of Ghashiram in *Ghashiram* are deftly conveyed only through their monologues.

Benare's monologue is punctuated with sighs, groans, and moans. Sulaba Deshpande affirms the artistic validity of this monologue as it is, “so full of Benare’s internal turbulence, her world view, her rebelliousness, her rage against a society that is happy to live in a rut without aim or purpose, her bitterness at the harassment she has suffered at its hands, the resulting helplessness and her determination to bear it” (Gokhale 108). It consists of paradoxical statements that contribute for its “dramatic richness, sophistication and a certain enigmatic intensity” (Dharan 64). For example her deep-seated caring love for her pupils gets revealed when she passionately pours out, “I cried inside, I made them laugh. I was cracking up with despair, and I taught them hope” (*Silence* 117). For the various issues raised, allegations framed, accusations made and charges levied, Benare’s interior monologue offers clarifications and justifications that are highly convincing to the audience but which miserably fall on the deaf ears of her co-actors because the skilled craftsman Tendulkar suggests that in all probability what “she has to say for herself is swallowed by the silence imposed upon her by the authorities” (Banerjee ix). As this is an interior monologue, her thought flow crosses the boundaries of time and space and her reactions reveal one to get glimpses of the inherent split personality. The following lines very vividly and graphically present her angst.

What’s anyone else to do with these? (*At once, in the light, playful mood she has at school*). Hush! Quiet there! Silence! What a noise! (*Comes out of the witness-box and wanders as if in class*). Sit still as statues! (*She is looking at each figure frozen still.*) Poor things! Children, who are all these? (*Light illuminates each face one by one. They all look fearsome, silent, ghost like.*) These are the mortal remains of some cultured men of the twentieth century. See their faces - how ferocious they look! Their lips are full of lovely worn - out phrases! And their bellies are full of unsatisfied desires. (*Silence!* 117)
This monologue is really a projection of the unspoken and naturally unheard by the other players. The ending of the play, being framed with the music from somewhere, the change of light, the court freezing and sharp stylistic break in tone, is sure to haunt the minds of the spectators.

It is not only Benare’s monologue but also Rama’s in The Vultures which is “poignant, sensitive and highlights the vulnerability of women in our society” (Banerjee ix). The famished womb’s burning desire is poured out in all earnestness by Rama through her monologue. Her disappointment and frustration are poignantly divulged to Rajaninath. Her meekness, servitude, and passive resignation are well exhibited in the previous scenes and she is painted as a saintly woman devoid of any longings and desires. She flings off the reins on her speech and projects her harrowing experiences and disappointed expectations by emphatically raising valid questions. Her intense hatred for her husband caused by his drunkenness, superstitious beliefs, failure to realize the truth and inability to perceive her anxiety, and her icy impotent rage get exemplified through the following question, “If the seed’s soaked in poison, if it’s weak, feeble, lifeless, devoid of virtue - then why blame the soil?” (241), the living death of her wifehood and her growing desire either to get rid of or to get away from her husband are revealed through this monologue. Behind the apparently humble Rama is a woman of deep desire and clear perception. By disclosing the well known miserable fact with due accuracy and authenticity, she melts the “living corpse - the watchful stone” - that is Rajaninath and attains motherhood.

In Sakharam, as the curtain raises, what immediately strikes the audience is the thundering voice of Sakharam. He makes himself physically present after a while accompanied by a woman. Much to the shock and bafflement of the moralistic audience and frightened woman, Laxmi, each of his brutally frank expressions gradually unfolds his crude philosophy of life, his contractual co-existence, his deep rooted hatred for the hypocritical husbands and the servile wives, his high-handed authoritativeness, his religious faith, his unhappy childhood, his so called honesty and his sexual appetite. All his peculiar traits are exemplified through
Fig. 32 Laxmi’s prompting

As Rama’s deepest desire in *The Vultures* is to become a mother, Laxmi’s innate longing in *Sakharam* is to breathe her last in all glory like a wife with her head on the lap of her husband. Her intense religiosity prompts her to regard Sakharam her husband, herself a virtuous woman but Champa a sinner. This attitude makes her firmly believe in her own moral infallibility. When Sakharam is terribly shocked and absolutely frozen after his strangling Champa to death, the dumb Laxmi’s earnest endeavours to protect Sakharam, her deep rooted malice for Champa and her unshakable belief in her purity get exhibited in the final monologue. Her very first reaction is, “Hush! Don’t shout. Not a word. Anyway she was a sinner. She’ll go to hell. Not you. I’ve been a virtuous woman. My virtuous deeds will see both of us through. I’ll stay with you. I’ll look after you. I’ll do what you say. And I’ll die with my head on your lap. Yes” (196-97). Through this assurance, she nullifies the contractual co-existence and binds herself inextricably with Sakharam. While the boastful Sakharam’s feet are fixed to the roots, the timid Laxmi infuses great moral courage and confidence by constantly highlighting her steadfast loyalty while simultaneously magnifying Champa’s notorious treachery. She proudly proclaims that she is virtuous. She firmly believes that her actions are watched over by God and are approved by the Almighty. Her vigorous effort to justify his cruel act is captured in figure 32. Repeatedly affirming her moral rectitude, she promises that his reckless act can be justified. Showing her mangalsutra, she sermonizes, “the man, who tied the first one, broke the bond, himself. I didn’t break it. She - she left her husband. She was unfaithful to you. You are a good man. God will forgive you. I’ll tell him. He listens to me” (197).

Laxmi is not afflicted with any incongruity to bolster up the courage of Sakharam, the murder, because she firmly believes that what has been done by him is judicial execu
and not murder. Hence, she hastens the boastful, but now fallen and dazed, Sakharam to act at once to exhibit them clean. Though only a weak and fragile woman, her resilience, quick wittedness, and presence of mind prompt her act faster than Sakharam. This monologue reveals the multifaceted dimensions of Laxmi. Her offer of human assistance and assurance of divine mercy especially when Sakharam is in soup, seem to have cemented their bond and earned him for her ever.

Tendulkar’s yet another master-stroke is Queen Vijaya’s monologue towards the end of the play Encounter. In this play, the complications due to the political intrigues and the diplomatic solutions are unfurled as interestingly by Tendulkar as is done by Shaw in The Apple Cart. This monologue deserves a special mention not because it very effectively portrays Queen Vijaya’s diplomacy, shrewdness, presence of mind, and power of adjudication but because it trumpets the thumping defeat of the cabinet and the crowning glory of the Queen. The significance of the Queen’s speech is two-fold. While the ministers, consumed with impatience, die to know the actual happening, the queen dramatically narrates her thrilling experiences with the crazy mob. The second significance is the revelation and assertion of her complete mastery over the cunning and disloyal ministers. As they stand stock-still, she picturesquely puts forth her daring venture. She says scornfully, “It was a thrilling moment. [. . .] we realized that something had to be done at once. The crowd was still unsated. We shouted, “Down with the (Kadamba) Plan – and the Ministers who made it!” It was a thrilling experience. . . . They shouted it deafeningly” (354).

When the ministers stand petrified at the unexpected boomerang effect the commotion has created, the Queen, in great joie de vivre, throws open the trump card kept up her sleeve which paralyzes them. Her following declaration horrifies them. “While the crowd were shouting your names, we promised to hand you over to them and left to the sound of cheering. [. . .] Now it is our cabinet’s turn” (354). This monologue of Queen Vijaya is as exciting, electrifying, and riveting as Browning’s “My Last Duchess”. Queen Vijaya’s “Now it is our cabinet’s turn” (354) creates the same nerve racking effect sending a chill down the
spine as does The Duke’s reference to his command and the resultant “all smiles stopped” (129). This monologue trumpets not merely Queen Vijaya’s triumphant accomplishment but her maker Tendulkar’s efficient achievement of the desired result through the perfect blend and effective presentation of the various emotions associated with such a tense moment.

Ghashiram’s insolence of power in Ghashiram breeds tyranny in him and his cruelest methods to straighten Pune have invariably tortured all and sundry. As violence begets violence, the irate mob beats and disfigures him once Nana’s green signal to do away with him is at glimpse. Ghashiram’s painful last moments, which are as awesome as his violent living moments had been, are wonderfully put forth through his monologue. From the time of his entry until the final exit, the play revolves around him depicting his audacity during his humiliations, rise, loss, and fall. He firmly remains the same even during the time of his brutal death. He infuriates the hot-tempered crowd by inviting them haughtily. He jeers, “Come on, you. Cowards. . . . Stone me, Cowards, Pig shit! Come on and beat me. . . . I danced on your chests but I wasted the life of my little daughter. I should be punished for the death of my daughter. Beat me. Hit me. Cut off my hands and feet. Crack my skull. Come on, Come on. Look! I’m here. Oh, that’s good. Very good” (415).

Ghashiram willingly accepts death as the most befitting punishment for his cruelty especially for the injustice caused to his daughter. The immediate reaction of the subjects and the audience is not intense grief but immense relief because the devil at last had his due. Nana’s verbal imageries, comparing Ghashiram to a threat to the great city, a disease and a demon, serve to intensify the general hatred and the resultant celebration at the control and conquest of them enhances the jubilant and triumphant mood. Good and effective monologues should make the viewers share the character’s inner turbulence. The spectators should also be caught in what he or she is trying to do and be infected by his or her passion. The sample monologues of Tendulkar are undoubtedly “soul reflectors” that bear the marks of the effective ones.
Roman Ingarden distinguishes the text of a play into the “Haupttext” (main text) and the “Nebentext” (subsidiary text) (403). The latter consists of the stage-directions, while the former comprises the words that are actually spoken on the stage by the actors. Drama represents its world by “1) events that are wholly indicated by visual and other means, 2) by elements which are indicated both verbally and visually and 3) by events that are indicated only in words, as, for example, narrations of events that have happened out side the spatial or temporal ambit of the action” (Ingarden 405). Monologic speeches and soliloquies are the prominent devices to exemplify the third point stated above. A soliloquy occurs when a character is either alone or isolated upon the stage and speaks aloud his / her thoughts. Soliloquies are of two kinds: the public and the private. In the first one, a character openly addresses the audience. In a private soliloquy, “the audience is not addressed but listens into, or overhears, the innermost thoughts of a character” (Gill 153).

The soliloquies in Tendulkar’s plays are as amusing, arresting, revealing, and appropriate as those in Shakespeare’s dramas. The soliloquies of Bapu in A Friend’s Story, Prannarayan in Encounter, and Rajaninath in The Vultures - all the three of them are choric in their function - are public soliloquies which enlighten the audience with their disclosure and report of the various vital information that were withheld from the audience’s notice. The prominence and appropriateness of their soliloquies were already analyzed when their choric function was discussed.

The private soliloquies of Laxmi in Sakharam and Ramakant in The Vultures flash brightly and brilliantly their manipulative skill and complex nature. In Sakharam, it is not Champa, who is as aggressive and outspoken as Sakharam, but Laxmi, a timid and ostensibly self-effacing woman with her tenacity and devious conventional mind, who is a real complex character. Initially she is almost like a dumb creature and a woman of very few words. She turns out to be very eloquent and in fact erotic too when she had been playing with the black ant feeding it with sugar. Her peals of laughter, in figure 33, as the ant
crawls over her body and the fondness with which she chides it to get away from her create both suspicion and jealousy in Sakharam resulting in his merciless demand in the midnight and her maniacal laughter. This soliloquy brings out not just Laxmi’s humaneness but her romantic imagination and friendliness which though confined to the sub-human world help her attain innocent and instant ecstasy. Laxmi’s belief, that the ant she has fed with sugar really understands her, proves that she is given to fits of wild imagination resulting in the creation of a fantasy world in which reality gets distorted.

The second and third soliloquies are inter-related and have great significance as they reveal certain vital traits of Laxmi. In the second one, she discloses Champa’s afternoon sessions with Dawood. Flabbergasted at Champa’s disloyalty, she regrets in agony over her helplessness. Through this soliloquy, she asserts her moral infallibility, superiority, and religiosity. She pours out her anguish over the affair as shown in figure 34 and condemns:

For me this one was my husband. [. . .] if I have to die, let me die on his lap - in full glory like a married woman. (She's overwhelmed with emotion.) How could she do it to him? [. . .] This sort of thing behind his back with that Muslim - Oh, God! . . . Evil! Sin! She’ll go to hell for this. Let her! What about him? Because of her even he has - (Shudders.) They’re always drinking day and night. Wasn’t so bad when I was here. I wouldn’t have allowed it. And now . . . What’ll I do now? (187-88)

One convention regarding soliloquies is that in them the speaker tells the truth. From Laxmi’s entertainment with the ant, it can be inferred that she is endowed with powers of creative imagination. Brijraj Singh argues that a woman of such romantic conception is capable of inventing any story and believing it completely. He asserts, “There is no conclusive evidence that Laxmi has made the story [Champa’s affair] up. But equally, there is no evidence that her story is true. The playwright leaves the whole question unanswered;
and this, far from being a defect in the play, is one of its strong points” (37). It is not actually
Champa’s disloyal affair, but her affair with a Muslim that is indigestible to Laxmi.

The third soliloquy is once again a confession in front of the pictures of God after being
warned by Champa not to double cross her and to act straight. Champa’s brutal manhandling
of her husband and direct threatening ravage Laxmi’s mind.

Laxmi’s impotent rage, clearly exposed in figure 35, gets burst out revealing her inner most thoughts and designs. She
launches a bitter diatribe condemning Champa as, “She’d be happy if he died. She’s fool. She’s evil. She dared threaten me! What can she do to me? I’m a good woman. Right’s on my side. I’ve always been virtuous. She can’t do a thing to me. (Swallows) Don’t ever forgive her, God. She’s evil” (192). Tendulkar has depicted Sakharam as a man of violent verbosity and brutal physical action to exemplify his
authoritativeness. Champa’s peculiarity is highlighted through her haughty manners,
merciless thrashings of her husband and drunkenness. But the seemingly docile Laxmi’s prominent complexity, that triggers the inevitable end, is competently sketched within a framework of these three soliloquies. They signify her potential moral strength that will wriggle her out of any crisis.

Among Tendulkar’s soliloquies, his artistic tour de force is the exploding ravings of Ramakant in The Vultures. Ramakant’s intense cravings in life are to father a child and to lead a luxurious life. While the utter failure in the professional experiments has shattered all his fascinating dreams of a luxurious life, the revelation of the origin of the seed has crushed and prodded him into a ravaging beast. Victimized by selfishness, hatred, and jealousy, this victim of “unfettered passion”, in solitude exposes his mental anguish, despair, frustration,
and damnation with elaborate stage directions for the character’s enactment aided with appropriate sound effects. Tendulkar has efficiently used this soliloquy “not only for the progress of events but also for voicing the psychological turbulence emanating from the self-conflict in the character’s equivocal predicament” (Dani 115).
With the constant sound of a heavy and steady down pour at the background, drinking all the while in solitude and tormented by various passing fancies, Ramakant's desperate plight and inner anguish are poured out like the torrential rain with the same thunderous effect. His obsessive and irrational jealousy over his brother's rising prosperity in contrast to his ignominious failure infuriates his frustrated mind. His superstitious belief accounts for his brother's tremendous success the aid of a ghost/spirit.

Dr. Faustus adopted irrational means and attained impermanent universal glory. His realization that the wages of sin is damnation causes inexplicable agitation and mental agony. His growing apprehension about the awaiting doom at the fatal hour is deftly presented by Marlowe. Equally effective and impressive is the projection of the pent-up frustration of Ramakant caused by his fear of legal punishment and rigorous imprisonment. Though these two factors torment his mind incessantly, he loses his equilibrium when the truth regarding the genesis of the foetus is let known. This bitter and unendurable fact makes him grow hysterical. Ravaging like a mad elephant, he raucously swears to tear it apart. He curses, "The child isn't mine! It's his, that bloody son of a whore's! Nursed up my step brother's bloody offspring... He's not mine. I'll abort him... Don't want you, son of a swine!... I'll finish off the bastard. Push him out of her belly. Tear him out!" (264). This soliloquy both bewitches and horrifies the reader as well as the audience because the potent words, the graphic details regarding the scenic background, the fusion of the shuddering sounds, the revelation of the painful bitter facts and the ultimate impending doom leave them stupefied and panic stricken.

People like Ramakant are not idealists but are men of wild action. They use vicious physical force to achieve their end and act impulsively. The inner conflicts of the elite intelligentsia, who are ruled and overpowered by principles and ideals, are sorted out and shaped up through valid verbal arguments. They spare the rod but their words with sharp edges foreboding the awaiting doom, inflict similar or greater pain. It is through such long conversations the plots in Kamala and Kanyadaan evolve and unfold rather imperceptibly.
There are three significant long verbal expositions in Kamala. Using the form of a mere dialogue, Tendulkar subjects to “clinical satire social institutions like marriage, politics and journalism and holds them all to ruthless sarcasm” (Dharan 50). The first heated argument is between Kakasaheb, the country news reporter and Jaisingh Jadav, the urban high speed journalist. Kakasaheb’s genuine concern over Jaisingh’s safety, his numerous satirical hints on the pseudo-idealism practised in the “high speed” journalism, and its meaningless craze for “eye-witness report” are brought to the vicinity. He anxiously points out:

My dear, it’s not the facts of an occurrence that are important. But the topic is.

Discuss that. Comment on it. Suggest a way to stop it - suggest that. After all, any murder, rape or arson is like any other. What difference can there be? . . . What sort of journalism is it that smacks its lips as it writes blood thirsty descriptions instead of commentary? It’s business, isn’t news - it is bloodshed! (6).

Tendulkar’s personal experience and direct involvement in the field of journalism enables him to clearly demarcate between the ideals proposed and the actual selfish gain achieved in the field. Kakasaheb is his spokesman and he boldly unmasks its reckless self-centredness thus. “They’ll use all those methods of running around, tapping secret sources and so on. [...] Every day new movements, new exploitations, new intrigues, exposures, and counter-exposures. Higher circulation, more advertising, more income” (23). Tendulkar brands that to be another form of “mercenary journalism”. He suggests through Kakasaheb to “write the people’s language first. Speak it. Then try and teach them” (24).

Having disclosed his notions and the necessary changes to be brought in journalism, Tendulkar’s slings of arrows are aimed at the revelation of the characteristic suffering of Indian women and the disgraceful deterioration in their status - from wives to slaves. The conversation is between Sarita, a highly educated and seemingly enlightened woman, and Kamala, an apparently uncivilized tribal but misconceived to be an ignorant woman. While Sarita with great compassion and fellow-feeling encourages the reluctant Kamala, a bolt descends on her when Kamala astounds her by equating Sarita to herself and treating her as
yet another highly paid and barren so unworthy slave. Sarita cannot brush her comment aside as the insignificant and ignorant blabbering of a simpleton. Kamala's "How much did he buy you for?" (34) is an eye-opener and unveils the painful truth. The subsequent dialogue between the two in the play is of immense dramatic significance and is subtly framed with apt short pauses, spells of silence, "laconic questions and pregnant utterances". Sarita's pride in being the soul mate of the committed journalist vanishes into thin air because of the latest awareness that she is in truth his "lovely-bonded labourer". It is, in fact, a painful awakening but she owes her indebtedness to Kamala. This sudden yet momentous realization metamorphoses her from a timid dependent into an assertive individual.

The third long dialogue between Kakasaheb and Sarita brings to the limelight the realized soul's intense anguish to liberate from fetters but its practical inability to implement the same. Her inner perturbed state finds its expression as

I saw that the man I thought my partner was the master of a slave. [...] Slaves don't have any rights, do they, Kakasaheb? [...] Dance to their master's whim. Laugh when he says, laugh. Cry, when he says, cry. When he says pick up the phone, they must pick it up. When he says, come to a party, they must go. When he says, lie on the bed— they (she is twisted in pain). (46)

These words of Sarita very clearly bring out the plight of married women in the Indian soil. Malti's words in Nissim Ezekiel's Don't Call it Suicide echo the same point confirming the characteristic suffering and status of Indian women. She admits:

I'm nobody and nothing since I got married. I can't call my mind my own. I can't even call my body my own. Hari can do anything with it whenever he wants to. [...] (with dogged helplessness) I am his slave, and wife. What I have become is a happy slave. It is better than being an unhappy slave. The choice for all of, those millions of woman in our country, whom you mentioned, is between being a happy slave or an unhappy slave. There is no other choice. (18-19)
Sarita’s uncle, Kakasaheb, convinces her by pointing out that it is an unpleasant truth but if the world is to go on then marriages must go on and it will go on like that. Sarita demands for a change in the general attitude and claims equal status to all, who do manly things irrespective of the gender variation.

Jaisingh, keen on establishing the existence of the slave trade, has unwisely committed a grave mistake by crossing the path of the wrong people - the seasoned politicians. His proprietor, working with his hand in glove with them, has played a safe and sensible game by dismissing him. His dismissal is unforeseen, treacherous, and unethical. It saps him of his pride and confidence. Kakasaheb points out, “this is the mistake men make. That manhood makes” (51). Sarita’s determination to be a free being is assuaged for the time being and she is reconciled to work in unison with the established norms but with unfailing optimism for a better tomorrow. Such long speeches very vividly present the prevalent perennial issues in all societies and express the playwright’s deep desire to bring in the necessary changes to make life more lovable and livable.

Tendulkar, in Kamala, has utilized the slave drive as the battleground to wield his sword against the social institutions like journalism, marriage, and politics. Casteism, yet another vital perturbing issue, is his next stance and he establishes how it hinders the actualization of social and communal harmony. The possibility and the feasibility of a casteless society is analyzed by advocating inter-caste marriage in Kanyadaan. He projects its bitter aftermath and the innate hypocrisy inherent in man. The entire play is endowed with verbal combats and each argument highlights the vital traits of Nath’s family and its members’ personalities.

The very first debate, which follows after Jyoti’s declaration regarding her intention to marry Arun, signifies the healthy democratic trend established among the members of Nath’s family. The second significant conversation between Arun and Jyoti glaringly projects the incompatibility and foreshadows the forthcoming disillusionment. During the next session between Arun and Jyoti’s mother Seva, Arun insolently makes his rough edges and perverse delight obvious, much to Seva’s annoyance. The next one is between Seva and Nath which
enables the blindfolded Nath to visualize Arun’s diabolic deceitfulness. The subsequent brief debate between Nath and Jayaprakash trumpets the bitter fact, “yesterday’s victim is today’s victimizer” (547). Arun’s sudden invasion and emotional black mailing under the guise of an invitation reveal his hoodwinking tactics crystal clear and Nath’s entrapment. Though all these verbal combats are highly revealing and absolutely appropriate, it is the last fiery and debilitating diatribe, launched by Jyoti against her defenceless father Nath, which is poignant, absorbing, and heart-rending.

All through the play, Jyoti has been willingly tormenting herself to experiment her father’s ideals and emerge successful. As it is only her firm religious faith, which has given Laxmi in Sakharam her unfailing continuing strength to fight with hard life, it is Jyoti’s deep rooted convictions in her father’s principles that led to her unbreakable bond with Arun. Immensely influenced by her father’s unswerving and uncompromising nature, she adores him for this inherent virtue. But at last, when being buttonholed by Arun, Nath yields to flatter his autobiography. Jyoti has been revering her father’s words as gospel and this change of his colour, makes her perceive the unpalatable truth that he too is a hypocrite. Her verbal darts, aimed at Nath, exemplify the difference in her stand. Her former absolute adoration, filial worship, and unshakable faith are converted into intense hatred, absolute disregard, and utter loss of faith. She is deeply offended by her father’s camouflage and her suppressed feelings flood out. She makes him understand that his ideals, so deeply tattooed in her mind, will never allow her to sneak away from her present as well as perennial predicament but will insist her practising his preaching. She pours out:

It will not happen, Bhai, because you yourself have taught us that one must not turn one’s back upon the battlefield. It was you who always taught us that it is cowardly to bow down to circumstances, […] you taught us those poems which said: ‘I march with utter faith in the goal’; ‘I grow with rising hopes’ and ‘cowards stay ashore, every wave opens a path for me’. […] This drug, Bhai, has entered and mingled with our blood. The poison has numbed our entire consciousness we cannot run away. […] even if
running away was the general rule of conduct, we shall continue to recite ‘March on, oh soldier and continue to lose our lives as guinea pigs in the experiment, and you, Bhai...you will go on safely rousing the god sleeping in man. (564-65)

Deeply offended by her father's hypocrisy, she openly condemns, “I thought: Why did this man have to inject and drug us every day with truth and goodness? And if he can get away from it at will, what right had he to close all our option?”(565). Nath, who has been exerting for the evolution of refined and perfect human beings, is shuddered to realize that his principles have evolved his own children into cripples and is disillusioned. It is not only Nath, who is grief stricken, guilty, and staggered, but also the dazed audience.

Unlike the verbal combats of Shakespeare’s Beatrice and Benedick in Much Ado about Nothing which are amusing and enlivening, the verbal exchanges in both Kamala and Kanyadaan are thought provoking, enlightening, and gripping. They pressurize the spectators to ruminate on the plights of people and if possible to resolve them. Tendulkar's plays uncover a “world of diminishing human communication and a growing absurdity in life, throwing light on menacing existential reality” (Lahiri 18-19). While Gauri in Ghashiram gets absolutely no chance, the other female characters in his ambit are provided with only limited opportunities to voice out their yearnings, objections, justifications, and demands. The strangled notes of the suppressed female voices are made audible mostly through the “appropriately contrived language patterns” (Lahiri 47) like soliloquies, monologues, and long speeches. Meaning emanates by degrees, activated by word deployment which creates the necessary ‘tension’ that precipitates the end. Tendulkar’s aesthetic endeavours, thus, result in the effective exploitation of everyday life experiences as potent sources for his artistic creations.

Tendulkar’s plays realistically express deep and intense human problems. His stage dialogue underlines a disintegrating society, by giving a “grotesque and distorted picture of a world which is out of tune with the rational equipoise” (Lahiri39). The sharpness and power of the real life dialogue exhibit Tendulkar’s unmistakable possession of an accurate ear for
recording the banalities, cadences and syntax of human speech, used in day-to-day
correction. His effective handling of dramatic dialogue has exhibited an amazing
dimension of theatre language. His plays show that his dialogues have a smooth flow, a
meaningful depth, and an elemental naturalness suitable to his characters. They express the
character’s mental conflict, frustration, dissatisfaction, and the resulting anger in a unique
manner. His dialogue furthers the plot, illuminates characters, creates an appropriate
atmosphere or tone, and enables the audience to grasp the underlying theme or moral idea of
the play and does all these things simultaneously. In his unique way, he has made the
“theatre speak to the contemporary people in the contemporary idiom, staring them straight
in the face, and not surely by stealing a glance” (Lahiri10). His plays also pinpoint that all
such language spoken between persons fails to divulge and establish total communication.

Many dramatists have skilfully exploited silence to convey eloquently the mood and state
of the speaker. Iago’s tight-lipped refusal to explain himself, at the end of Shakespeare’s
*Othello*, adds the final touch of horror to a superb portrait of malevolence. Becket, Pinter,
and Brecht are especially experts in the use of dramatic silence for effects of poetry or
menace. One of the finest dramatic examples of agonized silence is that of Brecht’s Mother
Courage who, when brutally presented with the body of her dead son, Swiss Cheese, dare not
admit to recognize.

Oppressed aggressions are subtly and deftly released through silences, pauses, and
incomplete sentences in Tendulkar’s plays too. His pauses, broken utterances, and silences
strongly suggest an undercurrent of latent, heavily condensed, and highly charged dramatic
meaning. Tendulkar regards silences and pauses to be “total and spontaneous expression of
the mind and the personality of the character” (Tendulkar xi). When used aptly, silence can
be more expressive and explosive than words. It is a dead stop. It falls “when confrontation
at the psychological level becomes quite extremely heated up” (Lahiri38).

Sakharam’s dazed stupefaction, at the sight of Champa’s dead body, exposes his
cowardice. Benare’s stoic numbness, at the revelations of her humiliating attempts begging
for alms of marriage and of her loss of job, projects her pitiable plight. Arun’s loutishness, which imposes silence on Seva, exemplifies the beginning of his high-handedness. The miserable and merciless exposure of his camouflage leaves Nath dumb struck. Sarita’s embarrassing silence, due to her deep contemplation on the hit the nail on the head question raised by Kamala, hints at the traces of her metamorphosis. The stunned Bapu’s silent struggles exhibit his vicarious guilt and his entrapment into everlasting doom. Vijaya’s complete sway over the ministers is deftly and marvelously projected through their servile dumbstruck surrender. Ramakants’ non-responding vicious silence, towards the end observing and listening to the knocks and shouts of his brother with malicious glee, ascertains his incorrigibility and creates uneasiness in the horror-struck audience. Tendulkar thus has picturesquely projected in all these plays how one’s power of articulation fails during moments of crisis and the resultant telling silence conveys eloquently the afflicted soul’s suppressed emotions. The more acute the experience, the less articulate is its expression.

Tendulkar, the sensitive man and sensible playwright, in his plays, deals with existing universal problems and his characters are very realistic as they are modeled on real living personages. Realism and naturalism are the solid foundations over which he has erected his dramatic structure. His plays are not merely ‘texts’ but are successful ‘performances’. Every aspiring dramatist, including Tendulkar has perceived the inevitability of scene contrast to sustain the interest of the audience. Griffiths states that the following juxtapositions will hold the attention of the viewers. They are “a scene of violent action followed by one of calm reflection; a scene in a serious mood followed by one in a lighter vein; a scene which raises hope followed by one which instills fear; a scene of high emotional intensity followed by one which eases off the pressure” (46).

Without compromising the basic dynamics of a play and naturalism, Tendulkar has incorporated in the midst of tensed scenes certain lighter ones, which serve as ‘comic relief’. Even the celebrated Shakespearean comic scenes and characters, for example the drunken
porter in *Macbeth* and the grave digger in *Hamlet* seem to be thrust in order to offer the necessary breathing time for the audience to be immediately engulfed by yet another stormy scene. The contribution of these scenes for the evolution of the plot or characters is quite negligible. Tendulkar, on the other hand, has introduced such light scenes which are well integrated with the main plot and expose certain vital traits of the characters involved.

The pan-spitting context in *Silence!*, the dance sequence by Manik, Ramakant, and Umakant in *The Vultures*, Laxmi’s encounter with the black ant and Fauzdar Shinde’s drunken episode in *Sakharam* are noteworthy relievers. In *Silence!* throughout the first Act, Benare has been taunting others by mocking at their failures, laughing at their follies, and imitating their mannerisms. While it looks as though she has brought them under her thumb, their mutual sense of embarrassing victimization leads to a skilful conspiracy and they catch her unawares especially by hitting at the most sensitive point that is with their charge of infanticide. It does attack where it hurts most and she is unable to recover from the awful shock at once. The atmosphere is extraordinarily sombre and she stands numbly like Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Hester Prynne in *Scarlet Letter*, not knowing how to react. At that crucial moment Samant, the villager, accidentally comes to her rescue by offering pan and cigarettes to all. This timely intrusion provides Benare the much craved diversion.

The time required to spit the pan juice and the permission sought from the judge to do the same entertains everyone and most obviously enables Benare to regain her poise, characteristic cheerfulness, and vibrant self. In addition to the function of a comic relief, this pan-setting episode provides Tendulkar opportunities to exemplify the actor-members' hypocrisy, Benare’s crucial state and the necessity to initiate Samant into court formalities. This short diversion provides them ample scope to sharpen their wits (claws), to pounce on the prey from all corners and to inflict severe pain on their common scapegoat. The pan-spitting event is, thus, not an embellishment but an essential comic interlude to relieve the sudden gloom of the immediately preceding sombre atmosphere. The playwright does not
want Benare to lose the battle at its very outbreak. This interval offers her some respite but only to be swayed away and uprooted by the forthcoming violent whirlwind.

Tendulkar's *The Vultures* does not offer any significant hilarious relief. Rajaninath's verbal painting creates a gloomy atmosphere which attains greater mortification when his word picture unfurls into violent action. Regarding the goriest projection, Tendulkar ruminates and discloses that the very creation of the play itself is quite accidental and unanticipated. At that time, he had been vainly attempting to write a play for Rangayan. His mind then was highly perturbed and distressed. He admits, "I was very disturbed. That's when this play Gidhade got thrown out of me in a kind of frenzy... I feel that all my agitation, my inner disturbance, all that I had never expected to encounter in middle-class life, has all been expressed in this play" (Gokhale 200). The brutal shock, that he has experienced on seeing the life, outside the confines of the middle class society, is passed on to the theatre-goers in the same vein through this play.

*The Vultures* projects a middle class family "steeped in avarice, gross sexual perversion and cruelty" (Dharan 23). Every move of these characters eloquently expresses their measured selfish design. "Their unbridled lust for power, money, and passion ruthlessly preys on the impotent rival's spoils" (Dani 114). The shrewd Manik smells something fishy in the sudden appearance of their uncle Sakaram. Act I, Scene iii ends with the plans of the siblings to deduct the truth. Next scene exposes the innocent intimacy of the two outsiders of this family - Rama and Rajaninath. Immediately after this quiet scene, explodes the loud recorded music accompanied by the dances of Ramakant, Manik, and Umakant. They have been dancing and drinking entertaining their father and celebrating their uncle's pathetic flight. Hari Pitale, the unsuspicous father, rejoices not knowing that it is only a deceitful display of the filial debt.

The audience well aware of the fact that it is not genuine "celebration" but cunning "cerebration" wait with a thumping heart for the disclosure of yet another merciless manipulation. Through this "violent melodramatic presentation with the abusive and obscene
expressions of the schizophrenic characters” (Dani 114), their dark and diabolic traits are
deftly delineated. Their dances and subsequent quarrel between the brothers are
preconceived designs with which they do not “catch the conscience” of their father but detect
his craftily concealed treasure trove. This miser’s wealth is to be squandered by his selfish
heirs. Since desires have no end, the aged father’s fear, cry, bleeding head, and miserable
plight are mercilessly ignored and they coerce him to speak out the truth. This dance
sequence, supposed to be a lighter moment has, in fact, powerfully brought out the inherent
ferocity, cunningness, heartlessness, and greediness of the members of the vulturine family.

In Sakharam, Laxmi’s encounter with the black ant is a real amusement. Her affectionate
voice, chiding and caressing the black ant, springs as surprising as the unexpected but much
awaited summer shower amidst the acidic growlings and commands of Sakharam. His initial
fury and jealousy as he could not make out the actuality and his bafflement at the discovery
that she had been fondling with a sub-human thing really entertain the audience. She unveils,
“No body believes me. Ants, sparrows, crows - they all talk to me. Why do you talk to me?
Eh? Why must you talkee - talkee to me? Go on . . . tell me . . . You naughty little fellow . . .
Tell me . . .” (139). This scene hints at her power of creative imagination which prompts her
to believe that she is in communion with all living creatures.

Driven by masochistic desire, Fauzdor Shinde, husband of Champa, goes in search of her
even after her desertion. His cries and pleadings remind Champa at once of her awful
experiences in the hands of her impotent husband, which have ultimately turned her frigid.
The physical torture and the resultant unendurable moments come back alive in her memory.

So, the moment her eyes fall on him, she grows hysterical,
reprimands him severely and beats him brutally much to the
astonishment of Sakharam and Dawood and the figure 36
represents the scene. A wife’s contemptuousness and violent
thrashings of her husband give scope for low comedy but Tendulkar’s intention in addition to
that is to add a new dimension to the relationships of others. Shinde is a “comic and, at the
same time, pathetic male version of the weak and cringing Laxmi” (Singh 34) but the weakness of Laxmi attains the texture of great strength when “contrasted with the shameless exhibitionism and gleeful self-abasement of Shinde” (Singh 34). This crude treatment received by a husband in the hands of his wife is quite indigestible to the conservative Laxmi which is yet another vital reason for Laxmi’s hatred for Champa. Such scenes of lighter veins in the plays of Tendulkar prove to be quite inevitable relievers and intensifiers with their revelations of various subtle shades. They unfailingly lead to a visible point of convergence with the main plot entertaining as well as enlightening the spectators.

Theatre mostly offers a very strong visual experience. Drama, at any moment, communicates multi-dimensionally an almost inexhaustible amount of information and meaning. The ability of drama to work through non-verbal means has been wonderfully manifested through the various aural-visual images. Every master playwright deliberately and brilliantly employs them to establish and enhance communication. He has been able to encapsulate theatrical reality in words, space, time, action, sound, gesture, and movement. The various sound segments fused with appropriate spectacles and exhibited through gripping action create a violent and searing impact on its spectators. Tendulkar, aspiring to bring life into the theatre and theatre to life, is well aware of the essentiality of aural-visual elements for the successful display of a theatrical extension of reality. His judicious permutations of the various aural-visual components have significantly contributed for the tremendous success and appeal of his plays leaving his audience mesmerized, enthralled, and contemplative.

Sound, if efficiently deployed, will create the desired environment, mood, and effect. It can either be actor-operated or recorded beforehand. In Silence!, for example, the banging of the gavel is actor-operated but the ringing of the telephone in Kamala, Kanyadaan, and The Vultures are taped ones. Whenever Mr.Kashikar, the pseudo-judge in Silence!, bangs the gavel, he bungs up Benare all opportunities to defend herself. Each time the sound of the latch-key operation and the subsequent door opening is audible in Kanyadaan, shocking
revelations are due for both the actors and audience. Every phone call in Kamala either cheers or shakes the inmates of both the house and the auditorium. The intermittent harsh screeching of the vultures and the miserable strangling role of the cuckoo in The Vultures signify the mad ravings which deeply affect and persistently haunt the minds of its watchers.

Sakharam’s playing on the mridanga, with a cloudy countenance as illustrated through figure 37, exposes his discordant life and frustrations. Though music is the food of love for Orsino in Twelfth Night, its use in the bar scene in A Friend’s Story is to publicize the deterioration of Mitra from an obstinate girl to a miserable prostitute.

Ghashiram, a tale full of sound and fury, demystifies the Machiavellian ways of the merciless rulers through the fascinating musical display. The pen-bearers’ trumpets, in Encounter, trumpet the various happenings in Umbugland and the ever growing glory and power of Queen Vijaya.

Sound, when perfectly fuses with action, conveys even subtle emotions explosively and enslaves the audience. The knocking, at the gate of Macbeth immediately after King Duncan’s murder in Macbeth, turns not merely Macbeth and his wife numb for a while but the spectators too, who have been witnessing everything. Having fallen upon the thorns of life, Lear in King Lear, struggles for sustenance in the stormy weather and makes his audience also stagger in the howling gale. Tendulkar has deftly utilized the sound segment mainly to highlight the debilitating effect and it unfailingly projects the doomed state of his protagonists, who are ensnared in a life of crime or moral devaluation.

Exposure to hard and bitter realities of life leaves Tendulkar’s protagonists crestfallen and disillusioned in the end. Their confrontations with absurdity, the senselessness of life, the distinctly felt devaluation of human values, and the subsequent feelings of helplessness and victimization are realistically delineated in all its multifarious dimensions through the perfect blend of the appropriate sounds that befit the state of mind to be exposed with actions. Tendulkar, like Girish Karnad, looks at the reality critically and presents it with a
vision. The embedding of the apt sound to such paintings exposes his clear conception and power of expression.

In *Silence!* the mask of cool self-possession, that the sarcastic and carefree Benare dons to hide her hurt and disillusionment, crumbles and she stands exposed in the end in all her vulnerability. The final collapse of this "self-consciously independent, vehemently assertive and immensely cheerful" (Dharan 51) woman due to the merciless dissection and malicious grilling of her co-actors is poignantly put forth by the playwright through the perfect fusion of less sound towards the end of the final scene. Overwhelmed with their successful accomplishment, the co-actors withdraw from the scene with silent steps. Benare's motionless figure, the silent stage, the bright green cloth parrot by her side, and the mellifluous voice of Benare from the background singing the poor little sparrow's irrevocable loss, with bright focus light flashing the brutally hunted Benare filling the rest of the stage with darkness create a mixed feeling of pity, horror, and mystery. The naked display of the innate savagery in all and their callous disregard for the woes of a fellow being affect and haunt the minds of the audience.

*Sakharam* is a play with its measure of horrifying moments. It is about outcastes who "form their social islands which are dramatically discovered to be too weak to stand the stormy pressure of traditions, conventions, relationships and man-made moral values" (Mathur 38). The disgust underlying the play intensifies the theme. Its power lies in the exploitation it has created in man's heads. In the last scene, the constant sound of digging unnerves the audience. Laxmi's efforts to dig a grave to bury Champa and Sakharam's dazed condition signify the establishment of an indissoluble bond between them. Laxmi's struggles to shield Sakharam from his own stinging conscience and from the world are highlighted through figure 38. He has lost his bluster and energy and become "an empty shell of a man without will or volition" (Singh 32). The play ends with the following stage direction:
Once again, she begins to dig with all her might. More rapidly now. The shovel rises and falls in quick rhythm. Along with its blows come her muffled grunts. The knocking at the door continues. Champa’s husband is still calling, but his voice is becoming fainter. [...] Sakharam stands beside Laxmi. All the sap has been squeezed out of him. He’s just an empty shell. [...] Outside the door Champa’s husband sets up an eerie howl for Champa, a feeble, terrifying and monotonous whimper. It goes on and on and on. Night reigns. (198)

As the sprightly daffodils keep flashing upon the inward eye of Wordsworth, the digging sound and the howling demand of Fauzhdar Shinde are sure to reverberate around the psyche of the spectators even after they left the theatre. Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni declares, “For many decades, no play has created such a sensation in the theatre world of Maharashtra as this play” (32). Kate Leowald’s confession confirms its universal impact. She admits:

The play haunted me. I find it difficult, disturbing, human and compelling. [...] Tho’ rooted in a specific culture the play asks every one of us today to look within her own life and society, examine some very complex aspects of human nature. The play remains relevant because the issues of sexuality, violence, morality, woman’s rights and religious conflict continue to exist everywhere. Nor will audiences find Ten’s play exotic. It is rooted in a specific place and culture but the concerns are universal. I can imagine this story unfolding anywhere. (3)

The penultimate scene in The Vultures is one of the noteworthy scenes. It sings the glory of Tendulkar’s brilliant craftsmanship. When the curtain rises, it is night. “A steady rain is pouring down. Lighting. Thunder. The drawing-room. Ramakant is sitting there: drinking. His face is sluggish, ugly. His rifle is lying beside. The door bell rings” (262). Despite the persistent knock at the door, deriving morbid pleasure at the discomfiture caused Ramakant coolly remains in his seat. Umakant’s strenuous attempts to get into the house end as futile endeavour. With the sound of a heavy and constant downpour at the background and with the accompaniment of a rain drenched dog’s piercing howl at a distance Ramakant begins to
give an emotional fiery outlet to all his mental anguish, conflict, despair, frustration, failure, and doomed state. Towards the end of the scene, when he climbs up the staircase to tear out the growing life in Rama, the amalgamation of sounds make the audience hold their breath and the auditory and video graphic details given enable even the readers to hear distinctly and envision clearly the scene. Tendulkar depicts:

Stumbling along, he exits through the door. His shouts. His ravings become indistinct, and are mingled with the sound of the pouring rain. And there is a deafening crack of lighting. Cracking sharply, it falls no one knows where. Then there is the even sound of continuous, torrential rain. Fade-out. In the darkness the shrill screeching of a single vulture. (265)

When the play ends with Rajaninath’s pleading to lend a merciful hand to such sinful souls and prophesying no escape for them or for anyone, the audiences too shiver and stagger with a feeling of helpless desolation and damnation.

Yet another master stroke of Tendulkar is the last scene in Encounter. The cunning ministers instigate the infuriated mob against their crafty queen. Their cowardice forbids them to venture boldly and they watch the mad ravaging of the rioting mob by safely staying indoor. Instead of through any direct or live display, using only the various reactions and observations of the ministers appropriately aided with the required natural sounds, Tendulkar is able to amuse and astound his audience and they naturally move and stick to the edges of their seats. When the mob becomes uncontrollable, the Queen offers to throw herself to satiate the mad cravings of people for vengeance. The outcome is thus projected:

They go out, Prannarayan in front and Vijaya behind. The Ministers are consumed with impatience, with delight. The lights fade. Darkness. The noise of the crowd swells and becomes deafening shouts. Roaring. Bullets. Cracking. Screams, then slogans, chanted indistinctly and deafeningly. Gradually the noise lessens and dies away. The Ministers are still where they were. They have long faces. […] They
open the window and look out. Huge uproar from the crowd. It is deafening. A stone flies in. Vratyasom shuts the window. (352)

Tendulkar, through this scene, projects adroitly the hypocrisy of the Ministers while highlighting simultaneously the daring nature of the Queen.

The Ministers cannot help but appreciate the Queen's devotion to duty and courage. Believing that she was torn into pieces, they generously sing the glory of her. At that time descends a bolt from the blue in the form of her entry. Consumed with terror, they are dumbstruck and stare at her dying to know the actual happening. Reading their pulse, the Queen deliberately makes them wait. Her subsequent monologue, which discloses the entire incident with all subtle nuances, is yet another remarkable scene that singles out Tendulkar as a deft craftsman. This report, with all the aural visual elements duly mixed causes inexplicable emotions and impact on the Queen's listeners and the audience cheerfully applaud the diplomacy of the Queen and her Creator.

Equally explosive, impressive, and effective is the last scene in Kanyadaan which exhibits poignantly the disillusionments of Jyoti and Nath and the resultant desolation. The mental agony of the afflicted and agonized Nath and the violent effect of his beloved daughter's direct charges regarding his speech as a hollow, hypocritical, flat, and meaningless drivel are delineated in their true shades. Feeling crucified he is stung with a sense of vicarious guilt. He feels shattered into pieces. The crumbling feeling of the pathetic Nath, which is as terrific as that of the narrator in Poe's The Fall of the House of Usher is promptly exposed in the following manner. “Jyoti goes away. Drained of life, Nath looks in the direction of Jyoti’s exit. Background score rising to fury. Spreads. Sounds of huge buildings hurling down. . . . The sound inspires a deep dread. Nath breaks down and buries himself in the sofa. He shrinks into it. The crashes continue and the terror mounts to a fever pitch” (566).

Every reader, as he goes through the scripts, cannot be an objective or a cold observer of the events but is immersed in them and loses himself in the perfect fusion of apt sounds and the required light with the breathtaking display of the action. If mere reading can trigger
their creative imagination and prompt them to surrender so as to be swayed away by the efficient manipulation of the words on the page, the effective enactment of the same on the stage, for certitude, will have profound and lasting effect on its spectators. The endings of Silence!, Sakharam, and Kanyadaan to name a few, have long-term debilitating effect with their reversals, not only on the staggering protagonists but also on their spectators, who are in a catatonic trance due to the ruthless display of the bare truth about human nature.

Another admirable distinctive trait about Tendulkar's plays is his stage directions. They are self-explanatory and offer a comprehensive view pertaining to all the aspects of a play to be staged that even a novice can make a successful maiden attempt with confidence and ease. Several actors and directors have asserted that Tendulkar’s plays are written with so much theatrical craft that a successful production is assured by simply following his stage directions. Vikram Gokhale makes the most exhaustive statement about it:

There’s an invisible director in Tendulkar who keeps making a variety of suggestions to the adventurous playwright in him from time to time. Once in a while, the sensitive spectator and the ruthless critic in him also prick and prod the playwright. That is why the playwright walks along the straight path of truth to the predetermined end, strewing brackets as he proceeds, before, between or after dialogues, filling them with the most valuable stage directions. The guidance they provide to the director, actor, and reader is of great help. It is my belief that even a moderately intelligent director or actor would do a good job of a Tendulkar play. The more gifted of course, would reap immense success. (Gokhale 110)

His plays, right from their first production, prove to be successful whenever staged. The very fact that they had been continuously staged denotes his achievement as a highly accomplished dramatist. His abiding social and artistic concerns enable him to be highly discriminative in the choice of themes as well as devices.

Incorporation of songs in a naturalistic play is considered an embellishing and entertaining device. Tendulkar, as is usual with him, having comprehended the potentiality
of this source, uses songs in *Silence!* to bring out poignantly the vibrant Benare’s mute cry. Benare’s grief is “a stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief, which finds no natural outlet, no relief in word or sigh or tear” (Coleridge 92) but is only hinted through the seemingly happy songs that she sings. These sweetest songs, in truth, reveal her saddest plights and are of great dramatic significance. Her following song in the opening scene, “oh, I’ve got a sweet heart/who carries all my books [. . .]” (58), discloses her fruitless love for her maternal uncle. In the same scene, she recites a poem written by Mrs. Shirish Pai which, Tendulkar acknowledges, has enabled him to conceive and depict Benare, the central character. It goes as follows:

```
Our feet tread on upon unknown
And dangerous pathways evermore.

.................................

And the wound that’s born to bleed
Bleeds on for ever, faithfully.

There is a battle sometimes, where
Defeat is destined as the end.

Some experiences are meant
To taste, then just to waste and spend . . . (62-63)
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This poem predicts how despite Benare’s strenuous and humiliating efforts to seek and find a father for her unborn child, she will be destined to yield and surrender. Her ultimate defeat is foreshadowed through this poem.

The next song is sung towards the end of the first act. Ironically Benare is very fresh after the face wash and is least suspicious about the conspiracy. She sings melodiously:

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The parrot to the sparrow said.

‘why, oh why are your eyes so red?’

‘oh, my dear friend, what shall I say?
Someone has stolen my nest away’.
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Sparrow, sparrow, poor little sparrow! (74)

Her troubled psyche, ruminating on the possibility of a safe life to the growing foetus inside her womb, attempts to give vent to her anguish but even before her affected feelings are considerably assuaged through the song, she is cunningly and mercilessly ensnared. The inexplicable woes, expectations, and the ultimate loss of an expectant but unwed mother are highlighted in this way. Depriving her freedom of speech, her co-actors torment her forcing to suffer in silent solitude. Towards the end of the play, when the same song is audible from the background, the audience as well as the reader who are well acquainted with her conflicts and the complexities in her life are as stunned, stupefied, and helpless as Benare and experience the violence of silence.

These few songs in Silence! are inextricably interwoven into the structure of the play as the playwright is able to bring to light the private affairs and poignant moments in Benare’s life through them. Their purpose is different in Ghashiram. Ghashiram, a “Sangeet Natak” renowned for its music and dance, makes one exclaim like Caliban in The Tempest who in wild ecstasy pours out, “this isle is full of noise, sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not” (Shakespeare 198) but the readers and audience of Ghashiram are not merely delighted but are deeply hurt because this play proves that the rarer action is in vengeance and not in virtue. It aspires to expose the exploitative, corrupt, and hypocritical ruling community by narrating the “story in verse, music and dance set in a historical era” (Bandyopadhyay 124).

Shanta Gokhale admires, “nothing in the history of the written play in Marathi could have foretold a text so totally theatrical. There is not one line, word or movement indicated in the text that does not resonate theatrically” (205-06). Every song in this play adds meaning, every word indicates gesture or tone of voice, every speech pattern marks character, and the juxtaposing of scenes provides ironic comment. Tendulkar has used a traditional semi-classical form, Dashavatara, to investigate a contemporary political problem. Gripped by the urgent desire to express his concern over the rise of political monsters, encouraged and
nourished by those in power for their own ends, he has conceived a concept and gone in search of an appropriate form. "It serendipitously found its vehicle in the narrative form of the Konkan coast called Khele" (Gokhale 114). The playwright admits, "By a series of accidents I discovered the present form which is a combination of variety of ingredients form different folk forms of Maharastra. (Ramnarayan 16)

Tendulkar has been an avid listener of Hindustani classical music. This accounts for the rhythm and fluidity of the spoken word which is keyed up to move into song and the way the rhythm of word matches the movement of characters in Ghashiram. He "musicalizes speech with short, internally rhymed sentences as a build up towards the songs" (Gokhale 115). He has integrated the songs into the narrative. The songs cannot be separated from their context without causing damage to the text. They present the audience with a "series of conflicting signs" (Gokhale 212). This form has offered him opportunities to use bold strokes to delineate his protagonists and it is flexible enough for satire, subversion, humour, brutality, and pathos. Tendulkar has invented a new self sustained and scintillating stage form, which makes the play an unprecedented achievement. He has not cast the dialogue and acting of the play in the tried and tested moulds of Marathi theatre. His creative imagination has used a variety of functionally effective theatre forms such as mime, dance, music, and dialogue in verse, all invested with apt folk association. "He has blended this mixture with an artistic touch which is incomparable in the annals of Marathi theatre" (Nadkarni 23). Realizing his significant contribution Karnad applauds thus: "What he did was to sensitize us to the potentialities of non-naturalistic techniques available in our own theatre" (15).

Tendulkar merely uses history to depict a recurring human and social condition. The historical background serves him well because it frees him from any obligation to render his social analysis in naturalistic terms. His "choice of the 'Tamasha' framework is particularly appropriate because it offers possibilities and sanctions for a non-realistic treatment of time and place, plot and character" (Dass 65). The historical plot and folk conventions do not damper the contemporary appeal of the play or its theme. Its dazzling display of how society
corrupts, uses, and then discards individuals will certainly engage and interest modern theatre-goer.

Ghashiram is a circular play and comes back to the position from which it started, with songs juxtaposing the godliness and the profanity. A distinctive folk rhythm, derived from the Marathi “Tamasha” is used in this musical composition. Theatre Academy, in its production note states, “A touch of opera with verse, music, and prose fuses into one another in a strange, compelling alchemy. The ballet, blending with the traditional folk dance, sets the mood and tempo of the decadent and bawdy era” (Badhpopadhyay 589).

Tendulkar’s swaying human curtain (whose swaying movement is visible in figure 39), basically a singing chorus, tremendously contributes to the success of the play. The songs sung are not mere indicators of mood but vehicles of comment, most often ironic which introduce an additional viewpoint. Every song in this play is scene, poetry, and action fused into one.

This ‘Sangeet natak’ commences with a ‘Naman’, a song of invocation. The main deity is Ganesh, the first one to be addressed seeking his blessings for the successful accomplishment of any ritual, performance, or celebration. The second song is sung by the Sutradhar to the beat of the dholki drum. With the rhythm, rhyme, and alliterations, he is able to highlight the pervasive immorality. As night descends, Poona Brahmans go to Bavannakhani - the red light town. Their moral devaluation is clearly put forth when he sings, “They go the Kirthan./They go to the temple - as they have done everyday./The Brahmans go to Bavannakhani” (367). Their deceitfulness and deterioration get exemplified through the following lines:

Ram Shiva Hari
Mukunda Murari
Radhakrishna Hari
The street of Bavanna became for a while
The garden of Krishna. (Figure 40)

Bavannakhani
Mathura avatarli. (367-369)

In the midst of such loud chanting, the Gulabi, the courtesan sings a lavani and dances amidst and after a while with all of them. The juxtaposition of Bavannakhani, which means fifty two rooms, with Mathura, where Lord Krishna danced, sang, and played with the cowgirls, “underlines the hypocrisy of the Brahmins who pray piously by day and play lasciviously by night” (Gokhale 115).

The next song is a Kirtan which narrates a religious tale. The Sutradhar as a Haridasa - a special kind of religious story-teller-singer during Ganesh festival, narrates a sacred story to the accompaniment of drum and shennai. The moment Nana enters and sits, there is a perceptible change in the environment because he begins to ogle the women. The shift of attraction from sacredness to gross physical is skilfully depicted by the complex turning of an ‘abhang’- a devotional song, into a ‘lavani’- an erotic song. A whole aura of hymns and religious ceremonial provides the ironic screen that is pierced through and through by the crudest exercise of power. Without any qualms about misrepresenting symbols of religious mythology, Nana makes shameless attempts to satiate his carnal desires in the temple itself, which is represented through the hunter-hunted dance sequence in figure 41.

Played out “against a background of political and moral decadence and degeneracy, with sexuality impinging strategies of power” (Bandhyopadhyay 587), Tendulkar brings out the cunning manipulation of Nana, who has brilliantly used the deceptions of deputation too, like ceremony both religious and secular, as a device to achieve the desired end which prompts the Sutradhar and his group sing signifying his omnipotence, “There’s only one Nana. The rest are na-na-na” (380).
The second act of the play displays terrific pictures of unimaginable violence. The agonized cries and screams of the affected persons are craftily drowned by the swaying human wall with their loud chanting of “Radhakrishna Hari Mukunda Murari”. This is yet another “screen of complacence and consolation cast over the yawning horror of corruption and tyranny” (Bandhyopadhyay 589). The last song is sung while an elaborate scene of the marriage ritual is being performed asserting Nana’s ascendance over the absolutely outwitted and devastated Ghashiram.

Tendulkar’s perception of power operations in contemporary society is delineated through this “song-and-dance” tale much to the amusement and amazement of both the ruling and the ruled. “Music / song can provide an important structural element with inserted songs breaking the flow of the action and punctuating moments of deep feeling” (Esslin 89). The songs employed in Tendulkar’s plays certainly do not break the flow of the action but are inextricably fused with it to establish the emotional continuity.

Tehdulkar, the master craftsman, has finely and perfectly blended the various sound segments in all the plays under study which undoubtedly enhance their power of expression conveying the exact feelings or moods or reactions of the characters concerned. The theatre is a “sensually concrete show-visual and auditory” (Baradi 318). This sensual concreteness of movements, compositions, tableaus, and finally rasas are experienced by the spectators, who translate them into senses of touch, smell, and taste. The architectural frame of a performance, the actors and the actions, the sets, costumes, and the lights are all visual sign systems that are the fundamentals of all drama. The spirit of drama is not in reportage but in the visual application of events. The “visual image projected at any given split-second in time to the audience will contain a multiplicity of different signs, items bearing bits of information and meaning” (Esslin 38).

Drama is endowed with the power to communicate multi-dimensionally at any moment an almost inexhaustible amount of information and meaning. Three fundamental elements are used in creating the visual effect required in the theatre namely set, props, and lighting. The
set is the scenic background and surroundings for the play. ‘Props’ is the theatrical term for the countless objects that are used during the course of the play. Lighting is either to create or enhance the scenic effect. The subtle ways in which these visual components are mixed with action determine the quality of a play. In the hands of a brilliant and dedicated theatre activist, they will unfold as a superbly mounted entertaining and enlightening spectacle which shakes and shocks the spectators prompting them to be contemplative about the prevalent woes and miseries.

Except *A Friend’s Story*, the rest of the seven plays commence with a vivid passage, describing the nature of the scenic background to be established and the properties required for the successful display of the theme and action. These sets with the properties enable the theatre-goer to frame his opinion and impression at a glance regarding the nature of the character and the life to be delineated shortly. The appropriateness of the set and props and their symbolic significance enlighten the audience dispelling all barriers and obstacles in the comprehension of the plays.

Sakharam in *Sakharam*, for example is a poor binder. The playwright exposes the nature of his livelihood through the following stage direction. “An old red tiled house, [. . .]. There are two rooms — an outer room and a kitchen with a window at the back. Both are visible to the audience” (125). The props are few rags, quite a few utensils, pots to fetch and preserve water, a mridanga, chillum and pictures of god. They exemplify his poverty stricken life highlighting his habits. The actual set framed during the performance can be witnessed through figure 42.

In *The Vultures*, the playwright’s focus is on an unusual family. Tendulkar has clearly defined its peculiarity and eccentricity with the following description:

The set before you has three sections. The main section centre and right is the interior of a house. A house, that reminds you of the hollow of a tree. A drawing room full of knotted, worn – out furniture. In it, a telephone. At its left, the front door and a staircase leading up to a concealed door on the first floor. In the centre another
staircase leads up to a platform that suggests the upper floor. This is Rama’s bedroom. In it, a bed and some cases and trunks. In the drawing room a door to the right bends out to a small courtyard, where there is a tulsi - vrindavan [an altar of sacred basil]. In it grows a feeble strand of basil. The second section: to the extreme left of the stage, is a small shack like structure; the old garage, where Rajaninath now lives. The third section: a garden passageway that goes between the garage and the house. It curves and rises so that it can be seen behind Rama’s bedroom. When the curtain rises, the lights on the garage and the tulsi – vrindavan are green. Those on the drawing room and bedroom, a dirty grey, almost black. [201]

This opening scene, like an overture, introduces the theme and all the symbols and significances which the play is going to elaborate upon. The good and bad characters are clearly demarcated as in a melodrama. The symbolism of the spaces they are associated with makes this obvious. The garage and the tulsi shrine, at either end, are surrounded by green, the colour of growth. The rooms of the house are grey - black, the colours of putrefaction and death. Thus “the two ends of the stage represent the sacred and the creative, while the centre represents sin and decay” (Gokhale 194). Moreover the locating of the sacred, creative spaces in the two corners of the stage indicates “Tendulkar’s vision of a world where these qualities are marginalized and the dominant position is held by those who grab, destroy and live off the dead” (Gokhale 194).

Tendulkar’s inventive ability aided by his innate perceptiveness and clear vision enables him to opt for stage properties which are highly essential to exhibit the theme effectively. They are not artificial assemblage but indispensable essentials. The wooden dock, stool, tik 20 bottle, green cloth parrot, the gavel, and the dictionary in order to set a mock - court in Silence!, the telephone, the rocking chair, and the liquor bottles to highlight the claustrophobic life in Kamala, the photographs of the national leaders hinting the utopian visions of the principled people in Kanyadaan, the pooja plate containing elements pertaining to liquor clearly exposing the unprincipled attitude in The Vultures, and the bicycle and the
rasagoola tin underlining the complex human nature in *A Friends’ Story*, to name a few, have their own crucial roles and their presence significantly contributes for the attainment of the craved stage effect. In *Ghashiram*, a folk musical, and in *Encounter*, a political allegory, the virtual stage property is the actor himself who has to communicate every peculiarity, complexity, and consequence through telling body language. The stage paraphernalia used in the plays of Tendulkar, stimulates the curiosity of the audience. Their adept use, as the competent use of a mere hand-kerchief in determining the destiny of the characters in Shakespeare’s *Othello*, exemplifies the creativity of the playwright.

The appropriateness and essentiality of the setting and props can be illuminated through lighting, one the most vital theatrical elements. The visibility, concentration level, the focusing of particular actor’s mood, atmosphere and overall impact are materialized with this aid. Lighting is also one of the most powerful techniques because it has the means to change the stage environment before the eyes of the audience. The effects of this element are limitless. Lighting style, the best “visual metaphor” for the play, calls for “sculptural illumination” which helps to concentrate the attention of the audience selectively on chosen areas of the stage action and to create atmosphere. Sculpting and atmosphere imply light and shade, which is absence of light. Hence, the most potentially powerful use of light “in a theatre designer’s visual vocabulary is at war with light’s most essential contribution to life - visibility” (McCaffery 36) because light is used not only to reveal but also to conceal.

Tendulkar, being a clever theatre artist, dramatizes his themes successfully and effectively through his efficient fusion of the vital ingredients of drama. Lighting, in his plays, is a means of ensuring visual communication as well as visual learning. The general function of light in his plays is to denote scenic demarcation. The curtain is neither drawn nor dropped at the end of a scene but is hinted by allowing darkness to descend gradually. The passage of time and the change of space are also indicated through this means. Light plays a deeply significant role in *Kamala, Silence!, Kanyadaan*, and *The Vultures*. 
Sarita’s steadfast faith in her husband’s humanism in Kamala begins to oscillate after witnessing his heartless disregard for Kamala’s discomfiture. She is deeply withdrawn. Sitting alone in a rocking chair in the dark, she contemplates on the situation. Predictably, she is in tremendous psychological turmoil. It is into such “acute isolation” (Jain 93) that the tribal slave Kamala intrudes which ultimately ends in the occurrence of the crucial moment of identification between Sarita and Kamala. This conversation, taking place in darkness, has its own special significance. It flashes how the bare ugly traits of men are buried from vicinity, while their inhumanistic achievements are magnified as revelatory marks of their genuine concern for humanity. It further signifies how women are dwarfed being treated as servile creatures. They have to miserably wait in darkness as are they doing in figure 43, hoping for a bright future.

The most important function of light in dramatic performance is “deictic” (Esslin 76). It is the lighting that can direct attention to the focal points of the action, almost literally an ‘index’ finger pointed at the area of maximum interest. A spot light may keep the action in a “chiaroscuro throughout or plunge it into varying and glaring clarity” (Esslin 76). Benare’s inert figure, in the end of Silence!, with the spot light focusing on her, burying the rest of the entire stage in darkness, brightly illuminates the exciting change caused by the merciless manipulators in the effervescent and emboldened Benare. The song at the background, like Robert Bridges “Nightingale” voicing out the inarticulate sufferings and tortures of Philomela and Procene, poignantly portrays her inexplicable woes. This suggests the conspirators’ conspicuous success in publicizing Benare’s private affairs. The bright focus light revealing the motionless figure and the heart rending song from the rear subtly delineate the irreparable frustration of life’s potentialities and their fulfilment.

In Kanyadaan, darkness pervades at the end of every scene symbolically foretelling the gradual invasion of unhappiness settling down permanently on this happy family. In the end, as Ibsen’s Nora shuts the door against her husband stressing her snapping off her ties with
him, Jyoti shuts the door against her father declaring herself a scavenger declining all her contacts with her father’s family thereafter. In great psychological trauma, Nath convulses and gropes. “Spotlight on Nath’s face fades and he staggers in search of light. . . . The light that Nath manages to reach goes out. He moves towards the faint lights which are still on. He stands still. The light comes and goes” (566). The psychological crisis of Nath is akin to that of Macbeth in the eponymous tragedy in which he tries to catch hold of the mysterious dagger that is visible but evasive and unreachable. Consequently Nath, terrified at the unprecedented consequence, breaks down, buries himself in the sofa and shrinks into it.

The potentiality of a single light in projecting the emotions experienced at the innermost recesses is best illustrated in these scenes. In The Vultures, through appropriate colour lights, Tendulkar has aspired to demonstrate not the inner conflicts of an individual but the utter devastation of an entire family. At the end of every scene, the lights fade. The stage becomes dark and silent and after a while either the loud screeching of vultures or the hopeful note of a cuckoo and its pathetic strangled note is audible. Tendulkar’s skilled craftsmanship is finely exemplified in the choice of the colour lights in The Vultures. The garage in which the creator Rajaninath lives, and the tulsi shrine, which is a sacred spot, are highlighted with bright green colour light, a colour of growth. The rooms of the house are befittingly lit in grey-black to symbolize the inmates’ decaying and decomposing state of life. The playwright’s apt and judicious use of this visual component, appropriately aided with the aural sounds, makes the audience feel “disgusted and horrified at the heinous and monstrous characters forcing one another’s ruin” (Dani 116). Lighting, an overall part of the visual production, plays an important part in Tendulkar’s plays, in designing shapes, colouring and texturing surface, and emphasizing actors and actions.

Excelled in theatre craft, Tendulkar has used aural, verbal, and visual structures judiciously in order to sustain and stimulate the curiosity of his audience by intertwining them to display the action. Action is drama’s most mysterious element. The action of a good play has often been compared to a “wave making towards the sea shore: small at first,
swelling higher and higher with a steady rising and falling movement, at its highest peak breaking and crashing on the shore, then the sudden final falling away” (Griffiths 12). More than the physical action, the emotional and mental actions are to be concentrated upon. Acting skills are closely connected with associated skills such as dancing, singing, storytelling, miming, and others.

Tendulkar’s earnestness for a different approach to the art and the craft of writing plays has resulted in the brilliant juxtaposition of the aural, verbal, and visual properties with action, which in turn, has culminated in the creation of compelling plays. His creative endeavour has capacitated him to invent a mock-trial to expose hypocrisy, a folk-form to display power manipulation, naturalism to analyze critical social issues, surrealism to display the bestial behavior etc. Through such varied devices, his attempts to powerfully portray the futility of life, the animal instincts of humanity, and the prevalent violence have attained fruition.

The structure of Silence! is “a measure of Tendulkar’s innovative talent” (Shahane 246). The mock trial of Benare, as shown in figure 44, is ingeniously conceived and so powerfully portrayed that the effect of dramatic irony and social satire is fully achieved. This play is widely acclaimed for this technique because the “violence of the play is superbly sugar-coated with it” (Reddy 41). The spectators are unable to make out when the reality and fiction lapse into each other, “heightening the mock-seriousness of the serious and the seriousness of the mock serious; and thus heightening the absurdity of Benare’s condition in the play” (Chari 33). The claustrophobic atmosphere is deftly created with the innocuous latch which “irretrievably traps her in her immediate environment” (Chari 33) and makes it convenient for the co-actors to shed the social masks and reveal the ugly, vicious leer lurking under a smug surface thereby forbidding her opportunities to escape. The craft that went into the plotting of the play is conceived as a mere game and the idea that all that is happening on the stage is “part-mock, part earnest
gives it a theatrical edge” (Mehta iv). What began as a game has evolved into a hunt. Benare is “the quarry and the group, accuser and judge rolled into one” (Mehta vi). Her inert frame stirs a little to communicate poignantly what she knows about men who profess love, but, in fact, their hunger for the flesh.

Kamala, Kanyadaan, and A Friend’s Story, like Silence!, explore the psyche of the characters and exhibit the psychological harassment. The tension cultivated and the resultant crises are communicated mostly through discussions and the telephonic conversations in Kamala. The transformation of Jyoti in Kanyadaan from a sensitive and delicate Brahmin girl to an insensitive and hardened dalit woman is made perceptible through the verbal structures and various physical postures. She subsumes herself to her suffering, to her husband’s communal or casteist frustration and wife beating rage. Instead of a measurable uplifting, there has been a dramatic downgrading to achieve social equality which has been movingly depicted through verbal violence. A Friend’s Story is a valid study of a highly complex personality at odds with the world. It is “a well made play breaking the unities of space and time to produce a gentle introspection ‘memory play’ on stage” (Multani 108). Rasa theatre’s Uzma Rizvi observes, “It is well written, thick with context, expositional giving the director and actors a lot of scope to develop character” (4). This is achieved through long monologues aided with minimal physical action in concord with its type as a memory play.

Sakharam and The Vultures are surrealistic plays which deal with eccentrics. The language is rugged and full of unconventional swear words. Like O Neill’s Desire under the Elms, these two plays are also condemned to be obscene, immoral, and even dangerous. Physical and verbal violence are in equal proportion in them. The novelty of Sakharam lies in the language and its theme. The roughness of the language and the skill with which the playwright has caught the rhythm, idiom, and vocabulary of the social class without interposing any alien note have given the play its vitality and freshness. The play’s power lies not merely in the ways sex and violence are treated and exposed but the explosion they have created in men’s heads. Critics like Frank Thakurdas feel the repetitive speech of
Sakhamram a faulty structure but his unconventionality, his "exalted notion of himself and his love of showmanship" (Madge 121) are disclosed through this harangue only. Nadkharni’s opinion is that the first two Acts are singularly lacking in depth or drama. He yet applauds it as a "glorious failure because it has become a cause celebre in the current fight against puritanical and middle-headed stage censorship" (Nadhkarni 32). Sakhamram’s encounters with women of different natures, timid and pious Laxmi, and bold and unconventional Champa, bring to surface his "inner conventionalism, even obscurantism" (Madge 125). The conflict and struggle for survival are projected through violent thrashings and kicking on and off the stage and the murder.

The Vultures, like Sakhamram, has ruffled the middle class sensibilities and has confirmed Tendulkar’s image as a "radical and an iconoclastic dramatist" (Madge 128). He attempts to explore the meaning of man’s life victimized by selfishness, hatred, jealousy, and cupidity. The vulturine nature dominating the relations of middle class family members is the leitmotif of this play. "The violent melodramatic presentation with the abusive and obscene expressions of the schizophrenic characters outwitting and torturing each other permeates the lurid atmosphere of the play" (Dani 114). The realistic presentation of the dark and diabolic traits of man is quite shuddering. The brothers strike Manik violently to break her leg in Act II, Scene i. In Act II, Scene iii, after letting out a loud piercing cry, Manik appears on the stage with her while sari smeared with blood, indicating her brothers’ success in kicking out the foetus. Though such scenes are considered "hideous, horrific, and repulsive melodramatic actions" (Dani 115), the experimental dramatist pleads his inability and their essentiality as his purpose is to "manifest the unspiritual, arid, desolate sensitivities stemming from the pervasive alienation of devastated and devastating middle class man" (Dani 115). The images of preying birds, hunted animals, repulsive insects, ghosts, evil spirits, carcass, and rules of black magic, in consonance with the shocking artifact of the dramatic experience, aggravate the abominating and awesome evil in the play.
The intricacies involved in the palace life are manifested in *Encounter*, mostly through the reports given by the pen-bearers and Prannarayan. A scathing satire on the contemporary political scene, it “occasionally scuttles the form of a political skit and raises fundamental questions with regard to the nature of power and what it can do to human beings” (Mardhekar 106). The evolution of a playful and an innocent girl under the tutelage of a eunuch, into a seasoned, unscrupulous manipulator with absolute suzerainty over the council and the masses is diplomatically dramatized with mimes, background sounds, and with cut outs of vehicles like car.

Neela Bhalla in her analysis of *Ghashiram* has realized that a plurality of significances is inherent in all texts. This play too in its irreducible plurality, she affirms, “defies categorization and shares elements of the musical dance-drama, folk theatre, historical play, and revenge tragedy” (109). True to her observation, features of all these forms are perfectly blended to highlight cruelty, sensuality, decadence, laziness, sycophancy, and dishonesty. The existential tragedy of a power seeker is demonstrated by focusing on Ghashiram’s psyche, agony, betrayal, ambition, rise, and fall. Tendulkar achieves this by combining the ready wit of the Tamasha with the mime and music of the Dashavatara plays. The mime, adds to the brisk and fast pace.

Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty strives to give vent to man’s repressed animal desires and instincts beneath the veneer of civilized behaviour. Tendulkar, much inspired by Artaud’s theory, has chosen this folk form to expose man’s inherent nature. The whole sequence has to be supported by acting devices of “mime, group composition choreographed for the effect of rising fury, quick change of locale and the mob behaviour appropriate for the creation of the event” (Vanararse 61-62). The theatrical richness that the script contains is amazing which poses a tremendous challenge for the actors who have to sing, dance, mime, and create characters almost instantaneously. The pace of the play is enhanced by the song, dance and action which offer a compact and rich picture.
Tendulkar after watching Marcel Marceau has found mimes to be enthralling. He has perceived the unlimited possibilities of this visual to convey and express a lot without uttering a single word. Its magical effect and its power to create a reality where there was actually none have enabled the spectators to get to the heart of what theatre is. They are both absolutely captivated and convinced. The goriest scenes are mimed in Ghashiram whereas mimes or gestures are sparingly used in other plays. Each mime in Ghashiram is an exquisite and exuberant visual treat. The scene of the ordeal of the Brahman is thus displayed visually in figure 45 and described verbally as follows. “The ironsmith mimes lifting out a red hot ball. He approaches the Brahman . . . The Brahman’s hands are brought forward. They are trembling. . . . mime of placing the ball forcibly in his hands. Brahman yells. Mime of the ball falling off. The Brahman falls to the ground and writhes in agony. Ghashiram watches, enjoying it all. He smoothes his moustache (396)”.

Scenes like pulling the corpses out of the prison, and Ghashiram’s death are efficiently conveyed through mimes. Ghashiram’s death, for example, is worked out bit by bit. The mob relishes the sense of justice in killing Ghashiram who has made their life miserable and the gruesome effect is brilliantly displayed only through mimes as in figures 46 and 47. The playwright depicts, “Ghashiram, one hand tied behind his back, comes on stage. He has been beaten. Disfigured. Bloodied [. . .]. The Brahman line crouches like hunters. Once in a while they give a shout or mime an action such as throwing stones. . . . Suddenly Ghashiram shields his face as if a stone hit him (415)”.

More than half of this text contains instructions for movement, expression, and gesture. A fascinating display of them on the stage lures the senses of its watchers. Geetha Kumar sums up:
Incantations, Ganesh-Saraswathi dances, songs, quick repartees by the cheeky Sutradhar, musical instruments like cymbals, drums and shehnai being played, whistling, lavni, erotic gestures and dances, puja, qawwalis, kirtan, abhang, ogling, leering, lazim-playing, processions, people with masks, Rangapanchami celebrations, chanting of marriage and vedic rites, death-dance by Ghashiram, groans and cries from the wings—all seem to deluge the spectators' senses to create what is called tota theatre. (73)

By choosing the folk forms, Tendulkar has used the song and dance possibilities to a great extent. This play entertains at the same time creates possibilities of self-examination also. The most remarkable point about the play is that it is historical but does not glorify history. It has used folk forms but without a moralistic stance. It is "a modern experimental play without being adverse to entertainment" and (above all) it is Tendulkar's play without being focused upon an oblique psychoanalytic vision" (Vanararse 70).

Tendulkar's innovative technical devices account for the universal appeal of his plays. The combinations of the different visual, aural, and verbal structures make up the overall shape of his dramatic performances and determine the power and effect of them on its audience. The structures are firmly rooted in the web of themes. His plays with strong undercurrent create a fresh and an everlasting impact on his startled audience. The appropriateness of narrative techniques like mock-trial, play within a play, and swaying human curtain and the significance of narrative methods like flash-back, episodic, natural sequence, and reversal speak volumes about Tendulkar's mastery over the theatre craft. Scene contrasts like comic reliefs serve both as intensifiers and relievers.

The innate anguish and existential dilemma of the characters get an eloquent vent through the carefully designed verbal filigrees like monologues and soliloquies. Oppressed aggressions are subtly and deftly released through silences, pauses and incomplete sentences. The incorporation of the chorus and choric characters makes Tendulkar's plays distinct. The choric elements like the swaying human curtain and the penholders are not mere
embellishing devices but enlightening captivators which are well integrated to reveal explicitly the inner dilemma and embarrassment.

A great part of the secret of dramatic architecture depends on the tension it creates. The main object of a dramatist's craft is to engender, maintain, heighten, and resolve a state of tension. Tendulkar through various means like setting, grouping, lighting, and sound has created his own poetry. The ability of drama to work through non-verbal means has been wonderfully manifested through various audio-visual components like song, music, dance, mime, gestures, chantings, incantations, and recorded sound effects. As a symbolist, Tendulkar uses selective lighting which facilitates the audience to concentrate on chosen areas of the stage action. It enhances visibility, mood, and atmosphere. All such dramatic devices used by the playwright are neither superfluous nor decorative but functional in the delineation of the theme.

Tendulkar's creative genius has naturally guided him to amalgamate the aural, visual, and verbal features of theatre with action through various ways which have spontaneously resulted in the creation and recreation of truth and freshness in his performances. The achievement of theatre is to create the temporary illusion that what the audience have seen and heard, are real events and to achieve this magical effect, Tendulkar has successfully experimented with various distinct devices.

Tendulkar, an astute craftsman, possesses to a great extent "the power of vision, faculty of thought, calmness of depth, placid joyous strength and the crystal clear level of mind" (Carlyle 49). He has displayed the greatest power of understanding in the constructions of his dramas. The manner, he has treated his sources for his plays, speaks of his great insight and intellect. His plays are sensitively complex existential documents of everyday lives. They are theatrically effective and crystallized projection of all the prevalent attitudes, vague feelings, and undefined frustrations gnawing at the hearts of urban middle class. The strength of his plays has been, as Balwant Bhaneja in his Introduction to Two Plays by Vijay Tendulkar has stated, to compel the audience to critically look at their emotional responses
and work out by themselves the impact of the theatrical experience. The spectators, seeing
the complex responses of the human soul, are left with no other option but to engage with his
protagonists and the emotional world they inhabit. Such is the power of Tendulkar's brilliant
juxtapositions and deft alternations of the features of drama that has contributed for his
outstanding quality, amazing artistry, and appreciable quantity, in short, for the variety
spectacle.