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Chapter VI

Dramatic Technique: The Tools

6.1. Introduction

"... when human nature with its joys and sorrows, is depicted by means of Representation through Gestures, and the like (i.e. Words, Costume and sattva) it is called drama" (Natyashastra 16).

A work of art claims excellence when it has a dexterous balance of art and technique. The dramatic performance is effective only when exist in harmony with the ingredients of dramatic art and the elements of theatre as a collective identity and recreate the whole experience in the mind of the audience. The abstract emotions of various experiences become alive with the dynamics of artistic skills which eliminate the boundary between the real life experience and the artistic experience. Vijay Tendulkar, while converting an observation, a theme, a motif from life to art, enters the arena fully armed with a firm grip on the technique, treatment and style to create a perfect drama. His plays are a curious combination of theme and technique resulting in the strong intense characters in a bold spectacle. He created the dramatic characters with a vision of their presence on stage and was convinced that the dramatic communication is not a matter of words only but of a lively performance also. He explains in his lecture "The Play is the Thing" incorporated as "Characterization and Structure: Two Essentials for a Playwright" in Collected Plays in Translation that:

Theatre is a visual medium as much as it is a medium of words. This visual aspect needs to be used properly not only to create a relief in the barrage of continuously emoted words but also to provide powerful visual insights into the complex content of the play. A play staged in a theatre is not a radio
play- to be heard with closed eyes and enjoyed. The visual element in a stage play, if not used properly, can work against the magic of words and harm the play.(xxxvii)

He believed that a playwright has to be conscious of the strength of his medium in totality; and to forget the visual possibility while writing a play meant to forgoing a vital device in the theatre. The undercurrent or the theme only in coherence with stage, dialogue, setting, light, sound and the communication methods employed can create an impactful play. He was of the opinion that writing plays can be an individual activity but theatre is a collective medium and a play is performed collectively. The performance of the play should reflect the vision of the dramatist and should correspond to the consciousness of the audience in theatre and the technique should be an inseparable part of the performance. He states in "Characterization and Structure: Two Essentials for a Playwright" that:

I like to compare a playwright to a musical instrumentalist or a professional photographer. His technique has to become a part of his subconscious mind, and his instrument a part of his person like his fingers and his hand: an extension of his hand to say. It must function as naturally as his mind and body; like one extended entity, together. As long as he thinks of both superficially he will not be an accomplished musician or a professional photographer. (xxxiii)

The theatrical devices and technique form an integral part of a performance and this is emphasized when Tendulkar compares the rehearsals of the play to the actual performance. He shares that he used to watch the rehearsals of his plays and the plays of others. He admits that in the rehearsals the magic spell of the show is missing as there is no audience, no props or only bare props and no stage lights. He confesses in the Preface to Collected Plays in
Translation that during rehearsals: "The inner mechanisms of a play with its strong points and weak points is mercilessly laid bare and discussed to the last detail. (In the show will be covered up by intelligent theatrical devices.)" (xxiii)

Thus the theatrical devices should be used only to enhance the action of the play and not be mere decorative ornaments. The presentation of the play has to be complemented by various theatrical devices as setting, light, music, sound effect and others. The plays of Tendulkar have ample stage directions which makes the performance of the plays work wonderfully. He refuses to grant much liberty to the directors.

Several actors and directors have asserted that Tendulkar's plays are written with so much theatrical craft that a good production is assured by simply following his stage directions. Vikram Gokhale, the leading theatre artist who played Jaisingh Jadhav in Kamala makes an exhaustive statement on the subject:

There is 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 54)

The Elements: The elements of theatre assist the performance in several ways- sometimes by creating a sense of geographical location, a sense of period, or a specific mood or
atmosphere. Their use may be discreet, realistic, stylized or totally abstract. If successfully employed, they assist the performer in his task of communicating with the audience, whether that may be in the field of lofty intellectual concepts, low comedy, deep emotion, dazzling physical skills or simply as entertainment. The theatrical devices not merely involve the use of costumes or representational scenery, but, more importantly, consists of creating a special space, costumes lighting and props that combine to place the performer into what is considered to be the best possible relationship with the audience for a specific production. Their use may vary considerably depending upon the nature of the particular performance.

Historically, the existence of costumes is prior to that of stage settings. Ancient Greek vase paintings show the use of elaborate costumes and masks designed for specific theatrical performances, but someone must have decided what costumes were to be worn in primitive dance-ceremonies long before then. Later on, some kind of background to the stage action and machinery to create the magical effects were provided. There was no expectation of illusionistic or representational scenery in the theatres of ancient Greece, and no set designs were needed in the Elizabethan playhouses, for the stages themselves-with their balconies, doors and pillars - provided everything needed to stage most plays. No lighting arrangements were needed in the open air playhouses, of course, for artificial lighting was needed only when the performances took place indoors, in the great halls of palaces and stately homes. Initially, this was provided by means of candles, later by gas, and eventually by electricity, but the modern theatre, in addition to stage setting, costumes, colors, lights and props, require devices for more specialized fields such as sound, make-up and special effects.

The Ancient Indian Theory of Drama: *Natyasastra*, a treatise on ancient Indian dramaturgy and histrionics, deals with meaning of 'natya' in detail. It explains that the terms like *natakam nanrtub* (they danced a play), *sattam naccidavvam* (a sattaka is to be danced or acted), *rupaka* or *rupa* (representation) and *preksa* (spectacle), all denoting dramatic works,
characterize ancient Indian drama and unlike the Greek drama, laid emphasis more on the spectacle than plot. With reference to tragedy, the most typical of the Greek dramatic productions, Aristotle lays emphasis on the fable or the plot and considers decoration to be unimportant. On this point the philosopher says:

Terror and pity may be raised by decoration - the mere spectacle; but they may also arise from the circumstances of the action itself, which is far preferable and shows a superior poet. For the fable should be so constructed that without the assistance of the sight its incidents may excite horror and commiseration in those who hear them only; . . . But to produce this effect by means of the decoration discovers want of art in the poet, who must also be supplied with an expensive apparatus. (Ghosh xxvii)

In case of ancient Indian drama the decoration (i.e. costumes and make-up) along with other elements like gestures and postures (angika), words (vacika), the representation of the sattva, equally gives the natya its characteristic form. In the theatre of the Greeks, it was a different case. In the performance of tragedies, for example, they did not care much for the spectacle, if the declamation was properly made.

Whatever aspect of a play was emphasized, the aim of communicating with the audience had been the prime objective in both Greek and Indian tradition. Earlier the ancient Indian theorists focused on dramatic representation and enquired about the exact place of realism or its absence in connection with the production of a play. This is clear from their very sensible division of the technical practice into 'realistic' (loka-dharmi, lit. popular nature) and 'conventional' (natya-dharmi, lit. theatrical nature). By the realistic practice, the Natyasastra means the reproduction of the natural behavior of men and women as well as the other cases of natural presentation.
The Theory of Sentiments (Rasa) : Plays, being essentially things to be visualized, should be judged by the people called upon to witness them. This was not only the ancient Indian view, even the modern producers, in spite of their enlisting the service of professional (dramatic) critics, depend actually on the opinion of the common people. The theory of success discussed in Natyasastra explains that the judgment of a play depends on spectators. According to this theory, the success in dramatic performance is of two kinds : divine (daiviki) and human (manusi). Of these two, the divine success seems to be related to the deeper aspects of a play and comes from the spectators of a superior order i.e. cultured and educated persons and the human success related to superficial aspects that come from the average spectators who are ordinary human beings. The spectators of the superior order were not satisfied merely in appreciating the play. They wanted to know the philosophy behind it. It was not enough for them that the spectators enjoyed witnessing a successful dramatic performance. They were also curious to find out the process through which it provided enjoyment to them, and discovered what may be called the psychological basis of this enjoyment. Without a knowledge of psychology neither the playwrights could build up characters in a play nor could the actors represent these on the stage for evoking Sentiments in the spectators. The theory of Sentiments, according to Natyasastra, may be briefly stated as follows :

Men have as many as forty one Psychological States (bhava, lit. feeling) such as love, mirth, sorrow, anger, energy, terror, disgust, astonishment, discouragement, (physical) weakness, apprehension, envy, intoxication weariness, indolence, depression, anxiety etc. But among them, only the first eight have a durable (sthayin) effect on the human personality and constitute the basis of sentiments (rasa) while the remaining thirty one have only a complementary (vyabhicarin lit. casual) effect on it, and it is by strengthening the effects of the Durable Psychological States that they play their part in the evocation of Sentiments. The
Durable Psychological state affect the human personality in such a manner that the person concerned forgets for the time being all the things in or around him (e.g. love and sorrow). Hence each of the eight Durable Psychological states of a person gives him an experience of singular spiritual freedom. This condition, ideal though it might be, does not last very long and due to various reasons and may have afterwards complications which are far from pleasant. But the matter becomes different when a cultivated spectator witnesses the Durable Psychological State of the hero of a play reproduced on stage by an able actor. Here the relevant representation of the Durable Psychological State acts as a stimulus in evoking in the spectator a verisimilitude of such a psychological state, which is then called a sentiment. The sentiment being a vicarious experience does not affect him in any other way and bringing in its wake a spiritual freedom, it may be said to purify his soul. It is probably a consideration like this that Aristotle spoke of Catharsis in connection with witnessing a drama of tragic contents which are similar to the Pathetic, the Odious and the Terrible Sentiments.

For appreciating the theory of Sentiments, it is necessary to remember that, both the Durable and Complementary Psychological States relate primarily to characters in a play, generally a hero or a heroine. The process through which his or her Durable Psychological States grow receive the attention of the audience next. For instance, consider the case of Pathetic Sentiment which is evoked by the Durable Psychological State of sorrow. This state may grow from an affliction under a curse, separation from dear ones, loss of wealth, some ones death, captivity or similar other misfortune. Now all such things are called Determinants (vibhavas lit. causes of bhavas). But this is not enough for the appreciation of the Durable Psychological States, for the spectators must witness this to be reproduced on stage. This means that the effect of all these determinant upon the hero or the heroine should be made manifest through acting. As a natural consequence of the determinants the characters concerned would shed tears, lament, change their color or show drooping limbs etc and these
being the effect of the Durable Psychological States are called consequents (anubhavas).

The Complementary Psychological States are so called as they come along with the Durable Psychological States and strengthen them. For instance, in case of Pathetic Sentiment which there occur the following Complementary Psychological States: indifference, anxiety, yearning, excitement, delusion, fainting, sadness, dejection, illness etc. As these disappear after strengthening the Durable Psychological States they are called Complementary. But Durable Psychological States do not disappear like this and may indeed encumber the memory for a long time, if not for life. This relative strength makes them the vehicle of Sentiments (rasa). The place of the Sattvika States in the theory of Sentiments is not clear from the Natyasastra. In spite of the learned theory of Sentiments, the specialists in dramatic production never forgot that this was basically a social amusement and as such depended a great deal for its success on the average spectators. Hence any theory or a fixed set of rules were at no times considered enough for regulating the criticism of a performance.

The Dramatic Technique in the Select Plays:

The social realities that are presented in the plays of Tendulkar are not merely card board representations of the social forces but are a sort of mutual conversation with the audience in which the whole environment becomes lively to expose the inner self of the characters. Each gesture of the characters, complete or incomplete statements, the various sounds, the patches of light and the internal vehemence speaks for itself and makes the theatre a living experience for the audience. In such an enlivened theatre, language does not remain the only means of communication as the spectators enjoy the performance from the gestures and presentation.

Being an ardent advocate of naturalism, Tendulkar avoided formalism and rhetorical expressions. He was aware of the impact that can be created by strong visuals but at the same time, he also knew that if used unnecessarily, they can spoil the whole aura of the show. As a
realistic playwright, he suggests in "Characterization and Structure" that:

The added visual aspect in a wordy play can work wonders or havoc. On the other hand, if produced with blind reverence, such plays, being theatre, have an unnecessary and unavoidable visual element like the stage, the set, the property, the actors, their composition, which hampers or works against the impact of the words. In such plays even the essential minimum visuals distract than add.(xxx)

Here, his vision resembles the thesis of Sykes Devis as quoted by Beena Agrawal in Dramatic world of Vijay Tendulkar, who accepts that, "theatre audience is less disturbed by an actor fumbling for his words, or speaking them boldly than by hearing what it takes to be interfering voice of prompter who is the representative of author's control" (217).

Tendulkar has written most of his plays in naturalistic manner as naturalism demands a realistic treatment, the setting and performances, except in Ghashiram Kotwal, is not flamboyant or theatrical. This mode of writing also emphasizes everyday speech forms, plausibility in writing, choice of subjects that are contemporary and reasonable, extension of social range of characters and social conflicts. An influence of 'epic theatre' which is closely associated with Bertolt Brecht, can also be traced as Tendulkar's plays echoes Brecht's words that 'essential point of epic theatre is that it appeals less to the spectator's feelings than to his reason'. In the same line, Tendulkar's plays do not cause spectators to identify emotionally with the characters or action before them but provoke rational self reflection and a critical view of the action on stage.

Like Brecht, Tendulkar in his own way, wanted his audience to recognize social injustice and exploitation. He persuaded them to come out of their complacence and move forth to effect a change in the outside world.
Characters: The characters Tendulkar created are mostly 'flat' as they do not change in the course of the play. Tendulkar admits that his characters are developed firstly on the stage of his mind. He tries to create an exceptionally original version of his characters and aims at their mental exploration as in most of his plays the dramatic tension emerges out of the conflicting social situations in which his characters are placed. He tries to explore and analyze the hidden reservoirs in their psyche that govern their actions in such situations. The characters he created are not an idealized version of life but are individuals who are endowed with different attributes that reflect the nature of their sensibility. He weaves a fabric of abstract ideas and concrete artistic equivalents so that his self conceived image of a specific character can be perceived by his audience as it existed in his mind without any distortion. He asserts in Preface to *Collected Plays in Translation* that: "The character must come to life at the most in a minute after it enters the stage. It's general get up and even the gait can certainly help as a kind of visual description and can tell something about the character; but after that the character will speak for itself. Means the dialogue" (xxii).

Dialogues: About his dialogue writing, Tendulkar pioneered short, realistic simple and meaningful dialogues on Marathi stage for which he was initially criticized as it was many times comprised of 'unfinished/broken' sentences ending abruptly. In due course, this style was to become a norm in Marathi theatre so much so that the Marathi experimental theatre came to be labeled in jest, as a "theatre with broken sentences" (Sathe 18). His theatre language is unpretentious, simple and without 'theatrical overtones'. This worked because of his mastery over language and clarity regarding content. Vijaya Mehta reports, as quoted by Shanta Gokhale in "Tendulkar on his own Terms", that:

> For the first time Tendulkar attempted to show that an unspoken meaning lay beyond the spoken word. People loved teasing us in those days, saying, 'your Tendulkar writes only half sentences'. But these half sentences had the power
to create something quite tremendous. That is why I feel that the acting idiom I was exploring found its perfect match in Tendulkar's writing. (Gokhale 56)

With such dialogues, he changed the definition of 'theatricality' which was prevalent till the 1950s and revolutionized the Marathi theatre which was infested with bombastic, ornamental and totally unrealistic dialogues. His commitment to realism pursued him to make use of, what is normally called, 'foul language' and to refer openly issues like sexuality through his dialogues. Another noteworthy implication in the select play is stichomythia, which are dialogues of alternate lines, especially employed in drama, highly effective in the creation of tension and conflict.

**Silence and Pauses:** In addition to words and visuals, one more technique that has been beautifully employed by Tendulkar in the select plays is the use of silence and pauses. He believed that silence is very important to make words effective. He asserted in "Characterization and Structure" that one who speaks words should learn when and where to be silent:

> Silence in the theatre can be as expressive as the dialogue or the words. 'Pauses', as this device is known in the theatre slang, can enhance the power of the emoted words considerably if the playwright knows how to use it. . . . a pause at the right place in a dialogue can do the work of a hundred words. It can take the audience beyond the words and make them 'feel' a situation.

(***ii*)

According to him a playwright has to be perfect in the art of creating silent moments in his play in appropriate places.

**Lights and Sound:** Like other modern dramatists such as Beckett, Ionesco, O'Neill,
Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee, he makes use of light and sound technique to induce a concentrated effect related with the inner consciousness of the characters. He was of the opinion that if used properly these elements can prove to be the best dramatic resource to establish an imperishable bonding with the audience. He explains in "Characterization and Structure",

In fact a big screen can show a two or even three dimensional image as a character while in a theatre production of a play you have live characters moving and emoting in front of the footlights and you do get an impact of a strong close-up in a theatre performance with the help of an imaginative placing of your characters on the stage, controlled lighting and of course, the words.(xxx)

**Stage Setting:** Tendulkar, with his dramatic genius expanded the horizon of Indian theatre by making a realistic and convincing representation of the social problems that have been the subject of discourse in post colonial India. The stage settings in which the plays have been enacted prepares a ground for communicating the themes. Most of the select plays have undermined the concept of the social institution of family as a place of security therefore the stage setting mostly consisted of creating a 'home' where most of the dramatic action has been executed. It was a trend in the post independence drama to use 'home' as a literal and symbolic place. Aparna Bhargava Dharwadkar, as quoted by Beena Mahida in *A Critical Study of Vijay Tendulkar's Major Plays*, writes in the book *Theatres of Independence*:

Vijay Tendulkar's drama of ideas represents perhaps the most substantial exploration of the symbolism of home because his customary method is to translate social and political conflicts into personal dilemmas and resituate them within the domestic sphere. The material-visual 'look' of a home in his
plays is always replete with the signs of class, ideology and cultural positioning. Home is the domain of private experience but the social consciousness of its inhabitants is entangled in the problems of caste, class, gender, community, marriage and the family. This involvement threatens every one of the relationships on which the family is founded, especially those of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister. (Mahida 66)

He was convinced that effective and relevant drama is that which appeals to the consciousness of audience and for this it has to be designed in such a way so as to seek the synthesis of the reality of society with the art of theatre.

Tendulkar's expertise in playwriting, established him as a combative and controversial playwright who was far ahead of his time and foresaw the situations more vividly than any of his contemporaries. His creative writing transcended the aesthetic and political limitations and his plays portrayed the culture-dropouts, vagabonds, subversive elements marginalized by the social structure. Tendulkar, as a skilled writer, brings all this to life without any unnecessary romanticization. This asserts the master playwright's dexterity as well as mastery over the craft of expression and technique.

6.2. **Silence! The Court is in Session**

The play, presenting the middle class society in a microcosm, is set in a village hall. N.S. Dharan observes the play to be in the nature of 'discussion play' as the social issues discussed are not organically integrated in the plot,' but expounded in the dramatic give and take of a sustained debate among the characters. 'The style adopted by Tendulkar is 'demotic' modeled on the "the language, rhythms, and association of ordinary speech"(60) The play has
The play opens with the description of the faulty door bolt and Benare's initial dialogues with Samant, where she shares her plight to a total stranger, placing her hand on her stomach. These are the hints at the events that are to follow shortly. This whole episode is a sort of fore shadowing - an intentional effort on Tendulkar's part to suggest events which have yet to take place in the process of narration.

The 'mock-trial', which reminds one of 'the play within a play' structure of the Elizabethan playwrights, is employed as a device in the play to cause the terminal 'reversal' - the accusation of infanticide brought against the protagonist at the beginning of the trial which turns into the verdict at the conclusion. This reversal in attitude expresses the basic hypocrisy and double standards of the middle class society. On the surface, Tendulkar seems to have adopted the model of naturalistic drama but the play-within-the play structure creates an added dimension by often blurring the demarcating line between the real and the virtual. The hostile behavior of other members which would not have been tolerated under normal social code of conduct becomes permissible in the ethical world of the mock trial. This so-called game has been used as a medium for deliberately exposing and dissecting Benare's private life in public. As Arundhati Banerjee puts it in Note on Kamala, Silence! The Court is in Session, Sakharam Binder, The Vultures, Encounter in Umbugland, "Their characters, dialogues, gestures and mannerism reflect their petty, circumscribed existences fraught with frustrations and repressed desires that find expression in their malicious and spiteful attitudes towards their fellow beings" (571).

As a consequence of the hostility of her fellow actors, Benare takes refuge in silence and totally withdraws herself from the situation she has been placed in. It is this imposed silence that gives the title Silence its unique significance. Before the commencement of the mock trial, Benare is shown as possessing a natural lust for life, as a picture of poise and
vitality. Her snipes towards her co-actors are sharp and personal and she laughs at their discomfiture. They are provoked to gang up against her and she is ruthlessly hunted by them. Tendulkar's mastery over building the 'dramatic moment', the 'tension' that is the soul of theatre, is amply evident throughout the play. The play becomes a thesis of power- power operating as a silencing force. The play here changes from dialogues to monologue.

**Benare's monologue:** Initially Tendulkar was reluctant to assign Benare the monologue. He was of the opinion that the play would be more successful if the structure of ruthless cruelty that society habitually displays to its margin is retained without the speech. He believed that Benare's monologue would lace the play with a sentiment that freezes the potential of her reactions. Shanta Gokhale has documented Tendulkar's initial reluctance to add Benare's self justification, probably the most intense moment in the play:

> Tendulkar argued stubbornly . . . Benare, the character that he had created, would never make it and the impact of the brutal verdict would in fact be reduced by its presence . . . finally however (Sulabha) Deshpande won the round. Tendulkar allowed himself to be literally locked into a room to write the speech. His craft then came into play, and instead of a speech he wrote a kind of an internal monologue which could be taken as a speech in self defense but was actually an articulation of all that she had thought, felt and lived through. (Gokhale 107)

The monologue is fascinating as it meanders a range of emotions,' Storms raged one after another about my throat . . . No one can understand." She then asserts the value of life" But when you can't lose you realize the value of living. You see what happiness means. How new, how wonderful every moment is."(116) She asserts her individuality as a person, "My private life is my own business. I'll decide what to do with myself; everyone should be able to
Tendulkar has punctuated the monologue with a lot of paradoxical statements, especially, when she talks of her love of life: "... Throw your life away- and you realize the value of having it. Guard it dearer than life-and it only seems fit to throw away..." and "... life is a very dreadful thing. Life must be hanged" (116). She asserts her social responsibility as a teacher and expresses the love that she has for her pupils, "I cried inside, and I made them laugh. I was cracking up with despair, and I taught them hope... Regarding the demands of the body she says," This body is a traitor! I despise this body- and I love it! " (117, 118)

The moment of defiance, however, turns out to be a pathetic realization- a defensive plea," He must have a mother... a father to call his own- a house-to be looked after- he must have a good name!"(117) Benare seeks to break out of the stereotype, but ultimately accepts social norms. Such paradoxes have lend the monologue its dramatic richness, sophistication and a certain enigmatic intensity. When the monologue is delivered, with the music from somewhere in the background, the change of light, and the whole court 'freezing', and the sharp stylistic break in tone, the spoken becomes a projection of the unspoken and naturally unheard by the other players. As Arundhati Banerjee observes: "It is important to note here that Tendulkar leaves us in doubt as to whether or not Benare at all delivers the soliloquy, thus suggesting that in all probability what she has to say for herself is swallowed up by her silence imposed upon her by the authorities" (572).

Earlier in the play, Tendulkar the astute craftsman, has drawn a series of similar but shorter 'barely heard' asides, the most moving of these comes in Act II, when Samant notices," She seems to fallen asleep. Miss Benare, I mean'. And Benare replies, 'her eyes shut': 'I'm awake. I can never, never sleep just when I want to. Never.' Not only asides but
dialogues also exhibits the genius of the master playwright. An idiosyncratic use of syntax characterizes the dialogues. Most of the utterances are short, with abundant pauses, marked by dots and dashes. Here is an instance of the demotic style which is uttered by Rokde: "So, then - so then I said - 'This isn't proper. It's not proper ! - I - I don't like this at all - it doesn't become you, - That's that's what I said!" (102).

Anyone can judge from the manner of the statement that Rokde is lying. Apart from the dialogues, the songs assigned to Benare are also of great dramatic significance. The song she sings in the opening scene anticipates the revelation of her love for her maternal uncle at the tender age of fourteen in the third Act.

Oh, I've got a sweetheart
who carries all my books.
He plays in my doll house,
And says he likes my looks.
I'll tell you a secret--
He wants to marry me.
But mummy says, I'm too little
To have such thoughts as these,(58-59)

The second song, a nursery rhyme, in the same scene is significant as it indicates that she has nothing that she can call her own except her intellect.

The grass is green,
The rose is red.
The book is mine
Till I am dead! (62)
The more significant composition than the above two is the Marathi poem by Ms Shirish Pai which helped Tendulkar in shaping the central character of Leela Benare. The poem reveals that Benare has accepted the fact that she is destined to be defeated at the end.

Our feet tread upon unknown
An dangerous pathways evermore.
......................................................
And the wound that's born to bleed
Bleeds on forever, faithfully.
There is a battle sometime, where
Defeat is destined as the end.
Some experiences are meant
To taste, then just to waste and spend . . . (63)

Another ballad type verse that Benare sings to herself towards the end of Act I and repeats it again at the end of Act III where it is supposed to emerge from an indistinct source in her own voice is heard

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. (74)

The 'parrot' in the poem is suggestive of Samant and the 'nest' may refer to her dream of having a home and children of which she has been denied by Damle's betrayal. The crow seems to be no other than the selfish professor Damle. The song also highlights the instinctive sympathy that is drawn by Tendulkar through Samant for Benare. Samant's point of view offers a different angle towards Benare's circumstances. Tendulkar has, in many ways, used
Samant as a surrogate of the audience. He, being an outsider to the world of Benare, introduces a different perspective through which Tendulkar creates other possible modes of interpretation to her plight.

Samant becomes a conscious theatrical device used, as a vehicle for audience, by Tendulkar in many ways. This rustic character is the first to arrive and the last to leave the stage along with Benare. He steps into the hall and paradoxically, "sidles in and stands looking around as if seeing the hall for the first time."(55). Samant's curiosity about the performance when he says, "in other words some fun to do with a court" (59). resembles the curiosity of audience about the thematic concerns and the generic uncertainties of the play. Like him, the audience feels uncertain about what to expect - a play with a social message or something beyond. Tendulkar leads his audience through Samant into a false trail thereby intensifying the complexities of the play. He is also implied for the introduction and exploration of other characters through Benare. Samant's non participation in the execution of cruelty and violence towards Benare creates the space of possibility where human sympathy can exist. While others leave Benare with the usual justification of," it's a game! That's all"(119). Samant is profoundly disturbed and Tendulkar plays upon his discomfort with a lengthy stage direction:

Samant by the door watching her. Embarrassed, he comes in diffidently from one side and quickly picks up the bright green cloth parrot that he had put there earlier. He starts going back towards the door. Then unable to restrain himself, he stops some distance from Benare. Looking at her, he is overcome by feeling. He can't think what to do.....since there is nothing else he can do, gently, affectionately, and with great respect he puts the green cloth parrot in front of her, from a distance. (120)
This is not merely a stage direction but is one of the most important parts of the play. Samant's initial gesture of leaving the room with others signifies his parity with the rest of the group in judging Benare as guilty but his return to her and offering the toy parrot gently and affectionately and above all, 'with great respect' opens up the possibility of re-approach, sympathy and acceptance towards Benare. This point also underlines Tendulkar's use of props and symbols in the delineation of the play.

Symbols: Like other dramatists of naturalistic plays, Tendulkar also uses certain dramatic symbols in the play to bring forth the innermost realities of the experiences of life. The purpose of using a symbol is primarily communicative. As a creative artist Tendulkar uses symbols and props to express his innermost feeling in terms of something that is relatively concrete. He uses them to make his readers and audiences understand what he feels for the thing, object or situation. For instance, he could have easily ended the play with the motionless body of Benare and the song in the background but Samant's placing of the toy parrot near her underlines his acknowledging Benare's desire for motherhood and validating it. He sensitizes the audience to alternative practices and methods of judgment and acceptance. Thus, both the green toy parrot and the lullaby that she sings, assume symbolic significance at the resolution of the play. Similarly, when the stage set up is described, the audience is told about 'a clock, out of order, on the wall.' The clock symbolizes the topical nature of the play. The situation in which Benare is placed is not related to the boundary of time and place, thus the play acquires a contemporary significance.

Benare is not given any opportunity to counter the accusation of infanticide and as suggested by the text, she does not enter the wooden dock willingly but it is placed around her. 'Karnik and Rokde silently bring the wooden dock and arrange it around her' (74). The wooden dock symbolizes a kind of metaphorical trapping in which she has been placed. This indicates that the women do not have a free will and the society can forcefully make them
accept the unwritten laws of conduct. This situation is underlined when Tendulkar deliberately takes care of not presenting Damle even once in the whole scenario. During the trial, Benare remains the prime accused as the unwed mother of Damle's child while he is only called as a witness in absentia, denoting his total withdrawal of moral and social responsibility from the situation in which he has placed her. Before the commencement of the trial, Samant is asked to bring cigarettes and 'masala-pan' which again signifies masculinity. This is followed by the pan spitting contest which becomes symbolic of the farcical exchange in the mock court, by which, Tendulkar underlines the nature of social justice, how it is handed out, and the way social strictures blatantly silence any plea for justice and mercy. The mishandling of the door bolt due to which Benare physically locks herself into the hall where she is persecuted by her tormentors is also symbolic. This is an externalization of the 'no escape' plight in which she has been placed in her real life. Moreover, the weak links and lapses like missing props and absent actors are the symptoms of the fragility of the group. Equally important in the play are the gestures in communicating the unspoken meaning beyond the spoken. The macabre in the human nature is vivified in the gestures when:

"The door bolt does not open. She pulls at it. It will not open. She starts tugging at it hard. It is locked from outside. She bangs on it with vehemence. And louder. But it is locked. A peculiar joy begins to show on every one's face but Samant's" (95).

It is interesting to note the gestures that describes all the other characters at this moment. Kashikar furiously picks his ears, Sukhatme's eyes gleam with perverse excitement, Rokde is now very daring, Mrs. Kashikar starts pulling a terrified Benare along forcibly- all related to their predatory instincts. Tendulkar's description of Benare as her,' face reveals the terror of a trapped animal' and his usage of imagery of hunt to describe others reduces the play into an experience where power governs human conditions and the victim is reduced to silent and abject terror. Samant's non participation in the 'hunt', once again, creates a
possibility for the existence of human sympathy. The other characters, after thoroughly
harassing Benare, immediately change their tone and gesture pretending that whatever
happened was just a 'game' but Benare is completely devastated by the experience. Her
response testifies that the play was not a play but was a trial sanctioned by society. As
Shayista Aamir Khan in her article "De-Silencing the Silence: Legal Institutionalization of a
Woman's Victimization" puts it:

*Silence! The Court is in Session* is a self-reflexive play highlighting the
theatrical aspects of the drama. The plot is that of a play within a play, toying
with the idea of play/performance and reality . . . The play succeeds in
shocking the audience because it is played out in the realm of aesthetics. This
realm is still regarded as the liberal and the radical space and therefore the
depiction of conservatism and narrow-mindedness questions the radical
potential of such a space. The play brutally demystifies the aura of the
aesthetic. (72)

### 6.3. *The Vultures*

Shubho Ray, in his article "Vijay Tendulkar's *The Vultures*: An Interface between
Feminist Critique and Existential Angst" comments: "The symbolic setting, the diabolic
characters and absence of linearity in narration make the play intensely gripping. The sordid
theme of violence is further reinforced by the lurid play of light effects and the screeching of
the vultures" (98).

*The Vultures* is the most savage manifestation of man's bestiality. The title of the play
itself is a device which indicates the dark theme and the characters of the play. Tendulkar
begins the play by specifying the time of staging as, "Time: any time". (201) This is followed by an elaborate description of the stage setting. The set has three sections: 'the centre and right' of the set constitute the main section which is the interior of the Pitale household; the extreme left of the stage is the second section which is an old garage where Rajaninath 'now' lives; and a garden passageway that bifurcates the set and passes between the garage and the house forms the third section of the set. Rajaninath, being the illegitimate son of Hari Pitale, has not been accepted as a family member and is compelled to live as an outcaste in the garage which symbolically signifies his position of being both within and without the family. His position is the best to comment on the rotten condition of the Pitaes and henceforth he will act as a voice of dissent: he is through and through the commentator on the prevailing decaying state of affairs in the Pitale family. This initial stage direction also clears that Tendulkar compares this household to 'a house that reminds you of the hollow of a tree' (201) as vultures reside in such hollows. The symbolic import of this is that the Pitale house has become hollow-morally, ethically and spiritually just as a hollow which is formed within a dead tree. This also prepares a ground for the violent theme which is soon going to be unleashed by the playwright. As Aparna Bhargava Dharwadkar writes in the book *Theatres of Independence*:

> The main stage setting in Gidhade is "the interior of a house . . . that reminds you of the hollow of a tree" - an apt visual and tactile symbol for a family that has filled the void created by its loss of economic status with uncontrolled emotional and physical violence. The living room of the house is the scene of incessant and grotesque confrontations between Papa and his three adult children, a room above the garage is the sanctuary where Rama, an innocent married to Ramakant, tries to find temporary solace in a relationship with her husband's illegitimate brother, Rajaninath. (qut. in Mahida 66)
The stage craft plays a pivotal role in the modern theatre as it supports the presentation of emotions of the characters and the theme of the play. This initial stage setting also hints at the financial status of the family. It is a lower middle class set up which is attested by the 'knotted, worn-out furniture' (201) in the drawing room. Moreover, Rama's bedroom, too, has in it only a bed and some cases and trunk. The only positive thing presented here is the existence of the 'tulsi-vrindavan' but again, to delineate the moral and spiritual bankruptcy of the Pitales, Tendulkar describes the Hindu totem as 'a feeble strand of basil.' (201). This symbolic setting is enhanced by the light effect which has been clearly mentioned in the stage direction. 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) Light and sound effects are quite crucial in the scheme of things as implied in The Vultures. Shubho Ray opines: "They (light and sound) are to the stage what salt is to food: a pinch less makes the scene the scene tasteless, while a pinch more mars the effect that is required, tarnishing the intensity by turning things melodramatic" (106).

The lighting effect is symbolic here. The green light symbolizes life while the grey light is synonymous to death. Thus, a ray of hope and life is expected in these two sections of stage (the garage and the tulsi-vrindavan) illuminated in green light while the grey light in the Pitale house projects violence, immorality and decadence. The tender relationship between Rama and Rajninath, the only relation that provides solace to her, develops in this greener side which serves as a refuge for her from the greyish morose wasteland.

When the play opens, Rama and Ramakant are shown collecting luggage and packages in the bedroom and drawing room respectively. Ramakant puts a lock in the front door and they both exit carrying suitcases. Ramakant in front and Rama behind him. Rama stops suddenly at the door of the garage where her poet brother-in-law now lives, and then goes on across the passageway. This virtually insignificant act of hers emphasizes the
existence of a sort of special relationship shared between the two that forced her to pause before leaving the home forever with Ramakant, 'her master'. The storm raging within her and the futility prevailing in the house is well corresponded with the storm outside, as the stage direction informs: "While all this is going on, there is a constant sound like wind howling over a plain. When the two have disappeared, there is a shrill screeching of vultures for some time. Then the passageway is drowned in darkness" (201).

This is followed by the maiden monologue of hundred and ninety lines delivered by Rajaninath. While Act I scene I ends with 'the loud screeching of vultures', scene II opens with 'a cuckoo calls out hopefully. And suddenly ends on a strangled note'.(206). Rama approaches the altar of basil and ' starts praying devoutly to the basil', when 'suddenly there is an uproar outside the house' where her husband is cursing Jagannath, the gardener, in extremely foul language calling him, "Ungrateful bastard! . . . Asking for money, the bastard! As if it is your father's money! . . ." and is later joined by Umakant saying," Kick the bastard in the balls! . . . Slam him!" (206, 207). Rama is disturbed and 'can't concentrate on her prayers any more. She somehow or the other hurriedly finishes them'.(207)

Samik Bandopadhyay in Introduction to Collected Plays in Translation comments on the situation as:

The birdcalls serve as a non-human sound reference, offering sound transfers/translations for the human acts which have lost their humanity altogether. While the first scene closes on 'the loud screeching of the vultures', the second opens with a cuckoo call that 'suddenly ends on a strangled note', presaging an 'uproar' breaking rudely in upon Rama's prayer to the basil in the courtyard. The obscenities, 'exchange of shouts', 'the sounds of blows . . . of beating' do not allow Rama to 'concentrate on her prayers anymore'. The
disruption of a sacred act in a way intimates the violent destructive process at work stifling and strangling the normal rhythm of relationships working through a family. (I)

Tendulkar was criticized for the use of vulgar and foul language with regard to *The Vultures*. In fact, the use of such lewd, ribald and filthy language in dialogues was essential to highlight the moral depravity and abnormal behaviour of the devilish members of the family. He has assigned a normal decent language to Rama and Rajaninath. In addition to dialogues, Tendulkar has also assigned monologues and soliloquies to the characters. The structure of the play is punctuated with poems and in these sequences, the chronological movement of the play is also suspended. This gives an interesting twist to an otherwise conventional structure.

The maiden monologue, in the form of a poem, of hundred and ninety lines delivered by Rajaninath provides an insight into the journey of Rama in the Pitale house and explains why *Gidhade* is an appropriate title for the play. This poetic monologue is implied as a dramatic device by Tendulkar through which the past and the present of the Pitale family is presented. It is from this monologue that the audiences understand that twenty two years have passed during which the incidents narrated in the play took place. Rajaninath remembers the day of Rama's marriage with Ramakant. Then: She was like a doe. An innocent doe, untouched. As loving as the earth. (203). She crossed the threshold of the house at a very tender age:

But it was no home
Not a home, but a hole in a tree
Where vultures lived
In the shapes of men.
A haunted burning ground
Surrounded by evil ghosts. (204)
Rama was the only person in the house who cared for him and shared a relationship with him. Rajaninath remembers:

Once when I found

No food for my hunger,

Stifling my coming tears

Within a pillow,

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

She came and passed her fingers

Fondly over my head. So-

So gently through this hair.

Scared. But longing to pour out her love. (204)

Rajaninath, in this monologue, also describes the agony of Rama- her tortures and their neglect of her but;

I (Rajaninath) stood,

A living corpse, a watchful stone.

Like a worm, I watched and watched her.

For twenty two long years.

All her hopes, her expectations

Were scorched, uprooted where they grew.(205)

Apart from the songs by Rajaninath, Tendulkar has used monologues and soliloquies to give voice to the psychological turbulence of the characters. The most moving speech in the form of a monologue is the one uttered by Rama in Scene II Act II in which she gives a vent to her agony and frustration. She expresses the anguish at her tormented life in the house of vultures as:
. . . Every day, a new death. Every minute, a thousand, million deaths. A pain like a million needles stuck in your heart. Blinding you, maddening you with pain. . . You can't endure them. But you can't pull them out. You can't support them. But you can't throw them away. . . A million, million needles like that, each second. Endless seconds like that each day. And endless days like that each year that each long, long, unending, endless, never-ending cruel year.

When Umakant informs Ramakant about the real source of Rama's pregnancy, he breaks down and expresses his frustration in scene VII of Act II. The whole scene is constituted only by his soliloquy. In addition to soliloquies and songs, Tendulkar has employed the device of juxtaposing parallel and contrasting characters for the delineation of his dramatis personae. Papa, Ramakant, Umakant and Manik are embodiment of man's vulturine instincts like avarice, selfishness, cruelty and viciousness whereas Rama and Rajaninath represent the humane and tender aspects.

The play is also rich in its use of symbols. Tendulkar's craftsmanship in the use of appropriate symbols and images can be summed up in A.P Dani's comment given in the article "Vijay Tendulkar's Gidhade and John Webster's The Duchess of Malfi”,

The murky dilapidated, den like house stands for corrupt values of the family and psychosis of the raving megalomaniacs. The ringing telephone brings in complaints stressing the disharmony of the wicked characters with the outside world. The deep drunkenness of the vultures, intensifies their criminality . . . One feels disgusted and horrified at the henious and monstrous characters forcing one another's ruin; the images of preying birds, hunted animals, repulsive insects, ghosts, evil spirits, demons, goblins, darkness, death, poison,
corpse, carcass, rites of black magic, aggravate the abominating and awesome evil in the play.(116)

Echoes of existential philosophy, which believes that human beings simply exist in a universe that does not have any overarching moral order, can be traced in the theme of *The Vultures*. Human beings are not essentially good or bad, they are what they make of themselves and are what they choose to believe. Existentialists believe that nothing can be explained in this universe and argues that man determines his future by his choices and actions and is free in ways in which other entities are not. Existentialists do not believe in values and ethics. This is reverberated in Rajaninath's final poetic speech in the final scene:

......For they have no other
Future left to them.
There is no hope.
And yet, perhaps,
There is no escape for them.
No....there is none.
For there is no escape
For them.....
Or for anyone.....(265)

The playwright does not clarify at the end whether the child has been really pushed out of Rama's belly. This uncertainty is a brilliant dramatic achievement of Tedulkar's sheer dramatic craftsmanship.
6.4. *Sakharam Binder*

Beena Agrawal, in her article, *The Vultures: A Tragic Satire on the Aesthetics of Cruelty*, observes: "In *Sakharam Binder*, Tendulkar adopts a character centric approach but through the socio-psychological spectrum of the character he has searched out the sickness existing at the centre both in social conventions and in personal relationship" (101).

The play *Sakharam Binder* has an opening which reminds one of 'in medias res' which means into the middle of things'. This is a method of beginning a story in midst of the action at some crucial point allowing the author to shuttle back and forth in time between inter-related incidents. In *Sakharam Binder*, dramatic situations are developed through the unconventional ways of the protagonist. Sakharam, Laxmi and Champa survive in two spaces simultaneously- one reveals their past and the other reveals their present response to the personal relationships but their collective struggle exposes the harsh realities hidden behind the virtually convenient social conventions. In order to portray life on stage, the technique of the combination of naturalism and realism is adopted by Tendulkar. The extensive stage directions by the playwright help to create vivid and lively picture of the neutral spectrum of economically weaker sections of society. This portrayal of the lower strata of society is a departure from the mainstream Marathi drama that mostly dealt with the privileged sections of society.

The three acts of the play have a definite structure in harmony with the development of its action. The first act contains twelve scenes which are devoted to the delineation of the relationship between Laxmi and Sakharam. The two characters are presented in all the scenes interpolated by another character Dawood Miyan. The second act contains ten scenes in which Champa and Fouzdar Shinde are introduced. This act depicts the relationship between Sakharam and Champa. With the commencement of the third act, the play takes a new turn
with the reappearance of Laxmi. This act depicts the triangular association among the three. Thus, the play exhibits a wonderful symmetry of construction.

*Sakharam Binder* is one of those plays of Tendulkar in which he has been highly realistic not only in the delineation of characters and human relationships but also in the depiction of the setting in which these characters enact the drama of their lives. The locale is a mofussil town and the action takes place in a lower middle class home. The elaborate stage directions help to create a detailed picture of the interior of an economically backward household. The central action of the play takes place at the house of Sakharam which is 'an old red tiled house, the sort one finds in the alleys of small district towns' (125). There are two rooms—an outer room and a kitchen. Both are visible to the audience. The shouts of children can be heard in the background. Like the background of expressionistic plays, the shouts of children and setting work as an appropriate background to stir the rage of Sakharam. His very first statement is an outrageous shout which provides a penetrating insight into his fragmented psyche: "Hey, you! What the hell's happening here? What're you gaping at? You think we're dancing naked round here? Move on, get the hell out of here! I'll shine your bottoms for you, I'm warning you, the whole lot of you! Now, get out!" (125).

The language used is extremely coarse, rugged, laden with abuse but is equally crisp and colloquial. The choice of such a medium for the dialogues makes the play even more alive and realistic. The skill with which the playwright catches the rhythm, idiom and vocabulary of the social class to which Sakharam belongs without interposing any alien note gives a vitality and authenticity to the roughness of the language.

Tendulkar's depiction of a character who challenges the norms of a decent society and uses an extremely vulgar and outspoken language raised the brows of the traditional middle class audiences. As stated earlier, the dramatic tension in the play is developed by portraying
the socially castoff characters and delineating the consequent struggle that they undergo in order to stay alive and come to terms with life. The authenticity of the play lies in its characterization. Sakharam, Laxmi and Champa are not merely types but are symbols of astounding creativity.

The characters in the play torment and destroy each other, none of the characters indulges in self pity. They cause compassion in the audience but there is no sense of identification. Like Brechtian theatre, the playwright succeeds in constantly maintaining a sense of distance between the audience and the characters as too much emotional closeness may open up the possibility of a sentimental response. The play exhibits plenty of irony as the three major characters of the play have ironical traits in them. Sakharam, at one hand accuses husbands for their hypocrisies but on the other hand he, himself is as tyrannical and hypocritical as husbands. He thinks that he is the saviour of the helpless women thrown out by their husbands by providing them food, clothes and a shelter. In return, he expects them to become his slave and satisfy his 'appetite'.

Laxmi is presented as an embodiment of the ideal Indian woman-loyal, docile, religious and tender hearted who ironically turns out to be vicious when her survival is threatened by Champa. After Champa's murder she is the one who shows greater ruthlessness and presence of mind in covering it up. Champa, gross, sensuous, brazen on the surface, shows kindness and generosity while convincing Sakharam to give shelter to Laxmi. Champa's husband, Fouzdar Shinde's friendly relation with Laxmi asserts the inherent affinity between their characters. The least complex character of them all is Dawood Miyan. His admiration for Laxmi and infatuation to Champa emphasizes fundamental nature of the two women. Moreover, his comments and observation with regard to Sakharam's relation with the two women reveal the essential difference between the relationships that he has with them. The presence of Dawood also adds to the dramatic conflict in the play. He exists as a
sort of dramatic device through which Tendulkar indicate the frequent changes of moods in Sakharam. He shares his mind with Dawood which reveals that he is a hypersensitive individual who fails to cope up with the hypocrisy of society.

SAKHARAM [bursting out]. . . People! What do I owe them or their bloody fathers. Did they feed me when I went hungry? . . . Don't talk to me about people, Dawood. Run after whores themselves, and carp at others. Nobody in this place can be cleaner than me. Every single one of those damned fellows is soiled, filthy. Trying to look clean outside. Stuffed with dirt inside. Don't talk to me about people. If there's anyone better than us, it's those whores . . . Not much difference between those whores and your people? Except that the whores are honest, and your people-they are all fake. (173)

The naturalistic mode, in which Sakharam Binder is written, is very demanding and Tendulkar has to constantly evolve theatrical solutions to the scripting problems in Sakharam Binder. As the play is based on a character centric approach, he has used some objects and certain episodes to reflect the inner self of the characters or to juxtapose the contradictory situations in which they are placed. One such prop used to display Sakharam's subconscious and unconscious mind is the Mridanga that he beats at certain occasions. This playing of Mridanga by Sakharam is used as a dramatic device by Tendulkar to display his mental state as his suppressed desires, joys, discontentment and anguish finds an outlet through the sound of the Mridanga. It is shown that Sakharam loves to play his Mridanga after getting his heart filled with 'ganja' and falls into a trance. The situations in which he plays the Mridanga are either of extreme happiness or of dissatisfaction. The Mridanga reveals his happiness when he plays it for the first time after Laxmi's arrival. When he forces Laxmi to laugh the sound of Mridanga is heard at the background. Sakharam is shown as beating the Mridanga furiously when he decides to break up with Laxmi. When Laxmi comes back again Sakharam begins to
play the *Mridanga*. Before he starts playing it, he wipes off the dust deposited on it which proves that it had been left unused for a long time. It is important here to note the conversation between him and Dawood:

DAWOOD. Heard the mridanga, and I felt as if the old days had returned.

SAKHARAM. What old days?

DAWOOD. When you had the other bird-Laxmi. (186)

Thus, the sound of *Mridanga* makes one to peep into the inner self of Sakharam- the function which cannot be performed by words. It is the skill of the playwright to use the same object to reflect the opposite moods of the protagonist. Beena Agrawal in her article *Sakharam Binder: Affirmation of Private Morality* observes: "Like the screeching sound in *The Vultures*, in *Sakharam Binder*, it is the music produced by *Mridanga* that is used to project the internal crisis of Sakharam" (89).

Similarly, when Sakharam disturbs Champa while she is eating, she asserts," I'm warning you. Don't trouble me when I'm eating" (171). Sakharam remains unmindful to her suppressed rage and continues to impose his authority on her asking for sexual pleasure. Champa tries to neglect him and maintains the balance of her mind but suddenly loses her temper and in a wild rage throws her plate away. The plate whirls and clatters loudly to a rest. This clattering of the plate becomes an external manifestation of the turmoil existing within Champa. She forces Sakharam to drink and laughs hysterically. The horrors and poignancy of the situation is intensified by the sounds of laughter and moans in the darkness. There are a quick shifts of short scenes which are successfully synchronized to record the quick flow of the consciousness.

Another striking device used by Tendulkar is Laxmi's conversation with a black ant. Talking to an ant is not a normal thing. Such unusual things happen when a person is in
extreme emotional stress. In Laxmi's case, it is the hardships of life due to which she is deprived of any kind of emotional bonding. Laxmi's pathetic condition is revealed in her talking to an ant, an ant but failing to have a warm relationship with Sakharam. Laxmi talks to the ant:

. . . . You're getting spoilt, aren't you? No you won't get anything now. I told you, didn't I? No. Nothing. Don't look at me like that. Get away from here. Get away. Didn't I tell you to move off? Pawing me all the time. Go on. Don't come anywhere near me. Can't you hear? [ Laughs as if tickled] Oh' don't! Now watch out! I'll really hit you if you get into my lap. Go away. Get away, you leech! I'm not going to give you anything today. You've become a regular pest. Get off me first. [She giggles] Get off me, you hear? Oh, dear-why're you after my blood, you? (136)

The way in which Laxmi talks to the ant makes Sakharam think that she is with somebody. He is about to explode and looks suspiciously all over. He looks round the room searchingly. It becomes a symbolic challenge to Sakharam's authority. Laxmi's boisterous laughter appears to Sakharam as an image of his own humiliation and the negation of authority. On discovering that she is talking to a black ant, he blames Laxmi's husband for her irrational behavior and desperately points out," The one used to hug her husband's shirt. This one talks to ants. Just think what this damned husband's do to their wives". However, this 'autonomy of self' expressed by Laxmi becomes unbearable for Sakharam. In a wild rage he shouts, "All this madness must stop at once; I'll knock your brain out" (139).

The wild laughter of Laxmi has a strong dramatic significance as it is a challenge to the imposed authority of Sakharam. This laughter is a symbol that communicates the invisible but irresistible force of human consciousness. In scene v, Sakharam retaliates by asking
Laxmi to laugh in his company in the same manner as she laughed with the ant. Laxmi is in extreme pain as her foot is burnt by a coal and even in that condition she is forced to laugh. The laughter becomes a metaphor to protect his ego, a compensation for the loss of his authority. This echoes in his assertion: "You laugh for the ant. But you won't laugh when I ask you to. I'll twist that foot of yours, you get me? Now sit up. You're not to sleep. Wake up" (141). He does not allow her to sleep. The ferocity and wildness with which he compels her is a sort of external manifestation of his internal turmoil and a fractured psyche. The dynamic language adds a force to enhance the impact of the dramatic situation and gives an insight into the restlessness of the character.

It is definitely the skill of the playwright to have portrayed such complex characters with complete objectivity, avoiding all sorts of moral judgments. Like other naturalistic playwrights, he believed his characters to be the product of the environment in which they grew. The mingling of the social and psychological factors gives rise to strong dramatic tensions in the play. Critics declared Sakharam Binder as a non-artistic and crude play that had destroyed the sanctity of the Marathi stage. The objections were high pitched and Tendulkar was shocked at this viciousness. Shanta Gokhale, in her article, "Tendulkar on his own Terms" recalls:

Tendulkar admits in an interview that he had expected the play to be ignored by the mainstream, cast aside by critics as yet another failed attempt of his, and rejected by the audience. 'Every play is not for everybody,' he says. 'Those who like what a play has to say, like the play; those who don't like its content don't like it.' As for artistry, he says, 'A play is a work of art when it reveals its theme and essence exclusively through its mode and attendant detailing rather than through statement and speech. 'Sakharam Binder fulfills this criteria, and therefore is an artistic play.(51)
6.5. **Ghashiram Kotwal**

Santosh Chakrabarti appreciates Vijay Tendulkar in his article "Tendulkar's Dramatic Art in *Ghashiram Kotwal*": saying: "Tendulkar's dramatic art peaks in *Ghashiram Kotwal* with a perfect blend of Marathi folk forms, modern stage techniques, split stage apparatus, repartee, spicy dialogue, song, dance, percussion effect, sarcasm and irony. Tendulkar's proclivity for novelty and his mastery over dramaturgy go hand in hand in this play" (10).

The play has a periodic setting of the Peshwa times of the eighteenth century Maharashtra. Neela Bhalla, in her article, "*Ghashiram Kotwal: Text and Sub-text*" observes: "The playwright has evoked folk theatre of the Peshwa times to blend in with characters and setting, fusing elements of the *Dashavatara, Khel* and *Tamasha*"(133). The following conversation between Samik Bandopadhyay and Vijay Tendulkar elaborates the reason behind the choice of the folk form for this particular theme. Samik Bandopadhyay questions: "Why did you choose the form of the musical for this play? Just because you wanted to experiment with the musical, or because you felt that the folk musical could give history just that bit of de glamorization that you needed for this subject?"

Tendulkar answered:

Not that I was not interested in a musical but I cannot think of a form first and then look for a subject that will suit the form. I have had a couple of folk forms (not the popular ones) in my mind for the last few years and yet have not been able to do anything with them. *Ghashiram* started with a theme, then came the specific 'story' or incident which was historical and then the search for the form began. I knew that the usual naturalistic treatment was out of question. By a series of accidents I discovered the present form which is a combination of a variety of ingredients from different folk forms of
Maharashtra.

Though the incident was historical I did not have a historical play in mind. The context had a universal and timeless quality.

The take-off point was contemporary. There was no conscious calculated thought of using the present form to deglamorize the historical incident. The urgency was of finding a form in which a class or a multitude could become the central character. (The present title came only to suggest the incident and not the character Ghashiram Kotwal). Deglamorization of the historical incident incidentally happened because of the form and I liked it. I mean it.

The play has a two act structure interlarded with dance and music, all performed by a twelve member Chorus and the Sutradhar. The sub sections of the acts are marked by the entrances and exits of the chorus and also by the shifting moods of dance and music. The Sutradhar is at once an actor and commentator. The productions are made lively by the Theatre Academy by using several folk theatre traditions like the Khela, the Dashavatara, the Tamasha, the Gondhal, the Bharud, the Bahurupee and the Waghya-Murli. By carefully interweaving crafted forms, specific mode of recitation and storytelling ethnic to Maharashtra, Tendulkar has prepared a fluid and flexible structure that bridges the gap between the traditional folk theatre and the modern theatre. Tendulkar has built an impressive master structure taking recourse to some of the traditional mainly folk forms of Maharashtra such as Dashawatara, Khela, Bharud, Kirtan, Lavni, Abhanga, Bhajan and semi-classical stage songs. The play opens with music as the chorus of twelve Poona Brahmans sing hymns to Lord Ganpati for the success of the play. Lord Ganpati comes dancing who is later joined by Goddess Saraswati and Goddess Laxmi. Such musical opening brings in mind the tradition
of classical Sanskrit drama.

*Gashiram Kotwal* exhibits an unparalleled combination of the ready wit of the Tamasha with the mime and music of the *Dashavatara* plays to explore a contemporary political problem- the emergence of 'demons' in public. The *Dashavatara* is the folk dance drama which is performed in Konkan and Goa after harvesting. The Sutradhar informally introduced the drama. The speeches are extempore and color powder is thrown with much noise and jumping. The play also borrows from the folk form *Tamasha*. *Tamasha* is believed to be born in the eighteenth century out of *Kirtinia (Kirtan)*, an oral tradition with different forms of music. A roving troupe of seven to eight members comprising of a dancer, a comedian, a main actor and a chorus performed it. The *lavni*, performed by the dancer, constituted an essential part of it. The comedian or the songadya played with words and the accompanying musical instruments were the *dholki* and the *tuntune*. *Tamashas* were patronised during the time of Sawai Madhav Rao Peshwa and Baji Rao II. The five divisions of the Tamasha are:

1) *The Gan stot*
2) *The Gaulan*
3) *The lavani*
4) *The Vag*
5) *The Mujra*

The use of many of these elements can be traced easily in *Ghashiram Kotwal*. For instance Tendulkar's sutradhar reminds of the *Songadya* of the traditional *Tamasha* whose quick repartee and use of words with double entendre maintains the crisp pace and adds humor to the dialogues.

Like Sanskrit drama, Sutradhar is a significant dramatic tool in *Ghasharam Kotwal*. The traditional function of the Sutradhar is to introduce the characters and initiate the events
as well as comment on the action. Besides its conventional role, Tendulkar's Sutradhar is an innovation in the sense that in spite of being a neutral observer he is present on the stage from the opening scene till the end of the play actively participating in the action. He acts as an interlocutor connecting the different and disparate scenes of the play. In the beginning of the play he introduces the characters constituting the human curtain with emphasis as, "These are the Brahmans from Poona." Here is an instance how Tendulkar has employed Sutradhar as an effective theatrical device to expose the corruption and sexual aberrations of the Poona Brahmans. A Tamasha type quick repartees between the Sutradhar and one member of the swaying human curtain trying to sneak offstage takes place where Sutradhar curiously enquires about his destination at which the Brahman becomes irritated as he does not want to reveal the secret.

BRAHMIN. Nowhere, nowhere. It's all right.

SUTRADHAR. Where is nowhere?

BRAHMIN. Just near somewhere.

SUTRADHAR. Somewhere is near where? (363)

The conversation continues:

SUTRADHAR. Ho! Ho! Bhatji buwa, Bhatji buwa.

BRAHMAN. Now, son of a bitch, what do you want?

SUTRADHAR. I need a fourth genie. Will you come?

In the bottle? No, no, not in a bottle! In Bavannakhani?

Where the girls are? Dancing? Singing?

BRAHMAN. What! How did you know? Just you wait! I'll slap your face. I'll get you! (364)

Sutradhar's dialogues with him make him accept that he is going to Bavannakhani.
The way he interacts with him reminds one of the folk element and reveals the discomfiture of the Brahman. In *Tamasha*, the comic character known as *songadya* 'generally has the upper hand over the sutradhar' but here Tendulkar has attempted a role reversal- the Sutradhar taking on the role of *songadya*. He again stops three Brahmans from going to 'the temple to hear religious discourses'. By asking incisive questions he makes them admit that their destination is Gulabi's place. The playwright employs the human curtain as an excellent theatrical device to display the licentiousness of the Poona Brahmans at Gulabi's place. Here, the stage direction represents the prevailing atmosphere of adultery: "The Brahman curtain is transformed into a group sitting in Gulabi's hall in Bavannakhani. A dancer dances. The dance is erotic . . . All are involved in the erotic mood, attentive to her. They hum: It's like Mathura. Bavannakhani. . . . After the dance, they whistle and throw turbans in the air" (367).

There is the sacrilegious denigration of the myth of *Krishnalila* by a blatant identification of the Bavannakhani with Mathura. The Sutradhar continues to be the part of the action by actively commenting on the episodes. In the opening scene he presents the political unrest in the state through his song. Moreover, his ironical songs expose the corrupt ways of Brahmans in the name of religion.

SUTRADHAR (to the beat of the *dholki* drum)

Night comes.

Brahmans go

To Bavannakhani.

They go

To Bavannakhani.

They go to the cemetery.

They go to the kirtan.
They go to the temple—as they have done every day.

The Brahmans go to Bavannakhani. (367)

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

SUTRADHAR. Brahmans go to Bavannakhni

And the Brahmin wives stay at home.

They stay at home.

Oh, they stay at home.

They wait.

They cannot sleep.

Do you know what's happening in Bavannakhani in the house of Gulabi, the Courtesan. (367)

When Ghishiram is imprisoned, the Sutradhar accompanies him as a fellow prisoner. Again through his song as discussed in Chapter III, he ironically exposes the brutality of the Police. At other times, the Sutradhar is present as a part of the chorus. Nana's first meeting is also reported by the Sutradhar who then appears as Haridasa, a religious story teller, singing an *abhanga*, a religious song. Nana remains indifferent to his song and ogles the women. The *abhanga* gradually changes to *lavani*, an erotic love song and Haridasa also starts singing a *lavani*. The conversion of a religious song into a love song signifies use of religious hypocrisy as an effective foil to underline the triumph of lust and deterioration of values. In fact, Nana's obsession for Gouri is also informed by Sutradhar as: Nine court Nana only thought of Gouri . . . and further confesses, "For Nana no labour, just lust" (382). His comment, "Gauri dances, Nana dances, Ghishiram got his chances." suggests the decadence prevailing in the city of Poona. As Beena Agrawal observes: "Sutradhar in *Ghashiram Kotwal* is not only a part of dramatic mechanism but it has a serious moral function. His anticipations and observations on different events have deep moral suggestions and these
suggestions created havoc in the society after the first production of the play" (161).

Sutadhar announces all the orders of Ghashiram, revealing the atrocity of the kotwal. It is remarkable that general information is given in dialogues and the special information are given in songs accompanied with the rhythm of mridangam. This echoes the resemblance of chorus of Greek tragedies and has a far reaching effect in folk tradition. Nana's wedding plans are also revealed by the Sutradhar.

An account of Ghashiram's final humiliation and punishment is also provided by him. Even the end that 'And in the end came the end' is declared by him. The Sutradhar thus plays multiple roles to accomplish multiple functions. Participation from the audience is a characteristic feature of the folk theatre. Following the tradition the Sutradhar and Ghashiram directly communicate with the audience. Another element that has been liberally adopted by the playwright is the use of mimes taken from the folk form Khel. For instance, the pulling out the nails off a Brahmin's fingers, the placing of a red hot iron ball in his bare hands, disinterring of the bones of Gauri by Ghashiram, pulling out of the cell the corpses of twenty two Brahmans, the stoning of Ghashiram to death by the mob are few mimes repleting the scenes of violence on stage.

The central theatrical device employed in the play is the chorus of Poona Brahmans. This chorus serves as a stage apparatus for effecting scene changes. They form a sort of human curtain which ceases to exists when its back is turned towards audience. When required they also enact as houses, temples, halls, doors and palaquins on stage. They 'turn their backs', on the spectators or on the action on the stage as a functional device. They sometimes act as props. For instance when Ghashiram is made the kotwal, the first culprit he catches is no one but the Sutradhar. Then Ghashiram turns to one of the Brahmans in the human wall and knocks on his back. The Brahman turns around suggesting that the 'door' has
opened. This is explained by the Theatre Academy in a production note as quoted by in
Samik Bandyopadhyay in Note on Ghashiram Kotwal in Collected Plays in Translation:

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 ceases to exist when its back is turned to the audience. The
Sutradhar or Narrator interposes in the proceedings to keep the audience
abreast of things, the actors switching parts with perfect timing. A touch of
opera with verse, music and prose fusing into one another in a strange,
compelling alchemy. The ballet, blending with the traditional folk dances, sets
the mood and tempo of the decadent and bawdy era. (589)

Conventionally the chorus serves the purpose of refrain in Marathi folk drama but in
Ghashiram the role of chorus goes much beyond repetition and commentary. Here, besides
the conventional role assigned to it, the chorus actively participates in the action by
alternatively shielding and revealing the scenes of decadence and intrigue of the era. It
sometimes hides the action and sometimes provide glimpses of the action within. This
singing and dancing chorus participates in the action in threefold manner. Occasionally they
break off from the human wall and perform some specific minor roles. Secondly, they behave
as props by enacting like doors, arches, trees and temples. Thirdly and most significantly,
they act as the vehicles of satire. This is done in two ways-directly by slyly altering a word
here and there in their refrain and indirectly by undermining the action on stage. This chorus
of twelve Brahmans either functions as a unit or may temporarily act as individuals as
required.

This chorus is present at all the important junctures of the play witnessing and
commenting neutrally on them. They are the witness of the installation of Ghashiram as the Kotwal of Poona, of his being stoned to death and of the three days celebration of his death. Their intermittent chanting of "Shri Gajaraj Nartan Karen, Hum to Poona ke Brahman Hain" and their utterances are an integral part of the play. Samik Bandopadhyay comments in a Note on Ghashiram Kotwal:

The human wall serves as an excellent symbol of the mechanism of secrecy, hiding and revealing happenings by human device. It is the wall again that as the singing chorus uses the chant of saints and gods names as yet another screen of complacence or consolation cast over the yawning horror of corruption and tyranny. Institutionalized religiosity are brought together into an unholy complicity in the reiterated image of Bavannakhani, the red light district turned into the pleasure garden of Krishna. (589)

One such instance is the following stage direction where an ironic juxtaposition of the chanting of Radhakrishna with the adulterous conduct of Brahman women has been constructed by the playwright: "Radhakrishna Hari, Govinda Murali'- in front of the curtain of Brahmans humming this comes a Brahman woman with a saucy air. She waits. A sardar (Maratha landowner) comes in a Maratha turban. He knocks at an imaginary door. She opens the door. He goes in. They embrace, and go further inside" (368).

Thus Tendulkar assigned a polyvalent role to the chorus. This is a variation of the Chorus of ancient Greek plays. In Greek tragedies, as in the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the Chorus-a group of people- served mainly as commentators on the dramatic actions and events who expressed traditional moral, religious and social attitudes. However the Marathi Tamasha may be said to have a faint replica of it in the form of the singers known as jheelkaris who repeat the refrain after the main singer in the initial gan-gawalan
part and subsequent musical compositions in the show. The Marathi ballad performance also has a main singer and a chorus that repeats the refrain. Tendulkar retains the function of the Chorus of the Marathi folk drama in the utterance of the refrain, he transfers the function of Greek chorus to the Sutradhar:

SUTRADHAR. Ghashiram Kotwal gave an order.

OTHERS. Gave an order.

SUTRADHAR. All the orders will be implemented

OTHERS. Implemented strictly. (386)

In the following lines, the chorus is supplementing the Sutradhar:

SUTRADHAR. Revenues.

OTHERS. Increased.

SUTRADHAR. Crime.

OTHERS. Decreased.(398)

Almost all the folk forms are accompanied by music dance and mimes. Ghashiram Kotwal being no exception to this has a strong musical undertone which makes musicians like Vasantrao Deshpande (a classical singer and composer) call the play," the first 'sangeet natak' in the real sense of the term"(Agrawal 157). The use of traditional songs along with dance prepares an atmosphere of high sensation suitable for the final decadence of power. The musical background works both as a relief and reinforcement. The play has effectively employed folk dances and traditional songs like Malhari, lavani, abhang for highlighting different passions in the play. Satish Alekar, the assistant director to Jabbar Patel, the director explained that the introduction of the Malhari song, after the ordeal by fire reinforced the tense atmosphere, created by the sequence.

This is the play where Tendulkar has made a fully fledged use of Brechtian techniques which
can be summarized as:

The Brecht wave of the seventies did not bring much Brechtian policies to Indian theatre. What it did bring was a fresh look at our own traditional and folk forms. Indian (and Chinese for the matter) folk forms, which would have been otherwise continued to beat the pre-modern path were used for modern and subversive purposes by Brecht in his theatre. Modern Indian directors seen to have used Brechtian techniques more as celebrations of Indian national forms. In a way therefore we depoliticized Brecht and turned his penchant for using pre modern forms and techniques for modern, political purposes on its head (qut. in Biswas 368)

This is also endorsed by Manoj Bhise who had been playing the lead role in Ghashiram Kotwal. Regarding the technique of the play. He admits in an Interview with V.M. Madge:

This technique of course derives from 'the epic theatre' of Piscator and Brecht. Of course, Tebdulkar has Indianised the technique. And such a use of folk-art is quite a novelty on the Marathi stage. It certainly enlivens the performance. As an actor, I particularly cherish one moment : the outburst of Ghashiram when he hears of his daughter's death. This moment, for me, almost acquires the dimensions of Brechtian verfremdungseffekt. (148)

The song and dance sequences are mostly attributed to the Sutradhar and the chorus, characters like Ghashiram and Nana are also presented dancing almost at every crucial juncture in the play. The extensive use of lavani in the play not only sustains the erotic atmosphere but also exposes the affinity between politics and sensuality. Similarly the mingling of lavani with abhanga represents religion and sensuality, the two contradictory
elements of human nature. The juxtaposition of the *lavani* with the *abhanga* brings to the surface the contradiction in social values and norms.

The music and dance of the play also works like a structural device which comes into play at every crucial situation. The play has a musical opening, secondly music dominates the middle part of the play. There are significant dance sequences attributed to Ghashiram. His introduction is given by Gulabi, the courtesan as," He dances with me." All the important events like Nana's first meeting with Ghashiram, Ghashiram's war dance, Nana's first meeting with Gouri, the celebration of Nana's seventh marriage all are accompanied by music and dance. The final punishment resulting in Ghashiram's death also has a musical celebration. In fact Tendulkar's accepted that the musical form has its advantages and disadvantages, like all other forms. He could not think of an alternative when he had to write the play *Ghashiram Kotwal* as the form had a certain inevitability.

The singing and chanting accompanied by powerful drum beating serve as a stark antithesis to underline the macabre:

There's only one Nana
The rest is na-na-na
Radhakrishna Hari Ho! Govinda Murali
Ram Shiva Hari Ho! Mukunda Murari . . . (380)

The chanting serves like a salvaging refrain that reassures that 'God is in heaven and everything is fine with the world.' As discussed in Chapter III, the characters are mostly flat and nameless entities in the play. The play also exhibits Tendulkar's skill of dramatic irony to its utmost effect. When he barters his daughter with Nana in exchange for power, he is unaware of Nana's intention behind the deal. Nana admits:" . . . We just raised a dog at our door to the position of the Kotwali. . . . What'll happen is that our misdeeds will be credited to
your account. We do it; our Kotwal pays for it" (385).

N.S Dharan calls *Ghashiram Kotwal* 'a musical historical' as the basic plot of the play is derived from received history depending on songs and dances for effect. Apart from the controversial historical background, the other most significant feature employed in the play is its unique dramatic folk form which has no precedence in the history of the modern Marathi theatre. *Ghashiram Kotwal* proved to be a milestone in the Indian theatre as it presented a specific historical event with political undertones, through a clever blend of the folk forms of Maharashtra with modern devices. When Gowri Ramnarayan, in an interview, asked the playwright what had driven him to use the folk forms in *Ghashiram Kotwal*, he told that he did not want the narrative fabric for the play and explained that the folk framework had given him the freedom to combine fable and history (133).

**6.6. Kamala**

N.S. Dharan comments that:"Both Silence and Kamala are powerful satires of modern society. It should be underlined here that Tendulkar does not launch any frontal attack on the subjects he ridicules in these two plays. He resorts to the employment of the device of 'indirect satire' in which the characters make themselves 'and their opinions ridiculous by what they think, say, and do. . . . " (59).

The renowned journalist Jai Singh Jadhav constantly endeavors for worldly fame throughout the play. Despite his initial success, his efforts prove futile at the end as he loses his job and lands in a situation in which he finds himself to be ditched by his boss, Sheth Singhania. Like Kamala, Jaisingh also appears to be a subaltern as he becomes the victim of the hegemony of elitists. In this regard, the playwright's comment, in one of his interview
with Sunil Shambay, as quoted by Beena Agrawal, is interesting: Kamala after a time becomes a symbol. The wife of the journalist becomes 'Kamala' and ultimately even he becomes 'Kamala' (Tendulkar: The Sunday Observer, 1982) (Agrawal 61)

The way Tendulkar treats the subject does not allow extensive use of techniques. But a close reading brings to light certain techniques employed in the play. Kamala is a two act play without any scene divisions. From the point of view of dramatic structure, Act I, besides being the exposition of the idea, elaborately describes the characters. The second act of the play deals with crisis- the crisis arising due to Kamala's presence which has adversely affected Jai Singh's professional life and Sarita's personal life. The plot is expertly structured so that the denouement unravels itself as 'reversal'.

The play follows the three classical unities of time, place and action. The action begins with a scene in the morning and continues till the next morning. The whole drama has been enacted at the posh bunglow of Jai Singh, particularly in his drawing room. Luhardaga, the place from where Kamala has been bought and the venue where the press conference has to be organized do not form a part of the actual scene of the play and have not been presented on stage. They have been just referred to and commented upon by Jai Singh during his conversation with Kakasaheb and Jain. What has happened at the press conference is informed to the audience by the conversation among the characters. Indirectly the play fulfills the condition of the unity of action. The observance of the three unities supports the staging of the play without the any extensive use of techniques and devices. The other structural features of the play are summarized by N.S Dharan in the following quote:

In Kamala a two-act play, we find almost all the structural features that we find in Silence! except the 'play-within-the-play' motif. It is a more compact play dealing with lesser number of characters and issues. There are in Kamala,
brief but highly significant spells of silence, registering the sensitive
tragectories of thought processes in the minds of the characters. Added to
certain other structural features of Silence!, we have in Kamala the motif of
the hectic phone calls which contribute to the principal theme of the play.
Moreover, there is a deliberate manipulation of lights to indicate the passage
of time which we do not find in the former play. (64)

The most striking device employed in the play is the intelligent use of telephonic talks
which has been used as a major backdrop of the dramatic action. The opening lines of the
play itself is a telephonic conversation which render few initial details to the audiences:
"Hello, whom do you want? . . . Yes. This is Jaisingh Jadhav's house. . . He's gone out of
town. . . He's not in Delhi, he's gone away . . . He may come back today. . . Yes, today. . . "
Sarita is presented as an ideal housewife who is ordered by her husband to write down the
detail of each phone call along with the name of the caller. She accepts: "That's the way you
see it. My husband sees it differently. If I say they didn't tell me their names he gets angry
with me for not asking" (3).

These opening lines indicate Jai Singh's domination as a husband over Sarita - a
theme which is going to be unleashed by Tenulkar. This also emphasizes that Sarita's
existence is reduced to a claustrophobic and docile one. The repeated calls and Sarita's
mechanical response make Kakasaheb irritated. In irritation he suggests Sarita, " Why don't
you make Kamalabai sit by the phone?" These recurrent phone calls are dramatically
significant as they indicate how busy and well known Jai Singh Jadhav, the journalist, really
is. Some of the phone calls are even life threats for Jai Singh which make Kakasaheb react
impatiently," Is it necessary for Jai Singh to write all these things under his own name? Can't
he write them ' From Our Correspondent'? (7)
Thus, the phone calls prepare a background for the later actions. These calls continue to remain a crucial part of the action on stage by serving as a device to assist the playwright to present on stage several important events through indirect suggestions. For instance, the most significant event— the Press Conference' where Kamala was about to be presented as an irrefutable evidence of human trafficking by Jai Singh is not presented on stage. Jai Singh arranges the Press Conference over phone and on his return from the Conference he is being congratulated on the phone by many informing the audience about its success.

Similarly, lighting in the play has also been employed skillfully in the play to indicate the passage of time. Darkness descends on stage, at one point in the opening scene which indicates that it is afternoon from morning. The lights gradually grow dim in the middle of the second Act to indicate that Sarita, sitting alone in the drawing room, is deeply withdrawn into her inner self and hence shut out from the daylight world outside. The conversation between Sarita and Kamala that transforms Sarita from a docile wife to an assertive and defiant woman also takes place in this dimly lit room. This self realization makes her strong enough to confront her husband when he declares that Kamala will reside in an orphanage. The play also provides certain examples of stichomythia, for instance:

SARITA. You are taking her to the orphanage, aren't you? How can it be nicer than here?

JAISINGH. I'm telling her that so she will feel better.

SARITA. You're deceiving her!

JAISINGH. It's not so bad there. She will like it.

SARITA. How do you know? (41)

Like Silence!, in Kamala there are frequent spells of silence and incomplete sentences
marked by a series of ellipses . . . hinting at the conflicts and the communication gap existing between the characters. There are also spells of short pauses in the conversation between Sarita and Kamala in Act II indicating their perplexed mental state:

SARITA. What are you thinking, Kamala?

KAMALA. [Still lost in thought]. Nothing.

SARITA. You must be thinking of something. Tell me.

KAMALA. Uuh- hunh.

Sarita. [Waits a little, and then] Come on, tell me. (35)

The dialogues between them, characterized by laconic questions and symbolic answers are have immense dramatic significance:

KAMALA. It's got everything. Just like a dream. Really. [Pause.]

Where does he sleep?

SARITA. Who?

KAMALA. He-the one who bought me.

SARITA. In the room upstairs.

KAMALA. Then the room upstairs must be finest of all. . . .No little ones?

SARITA. What little ones?

KAMALA. Children.

SARITA. We don't have any. [Kamala falls silent.] Why? Why are you silent?

(34)

The stage directions are elaborate to reveal the mental conflicts of the characters. Jaisingh is tensed throughout the play. His anxiety and confusion is reflected in the abruptness of his action and words:

JAISINGH. Kamalabai! Just bring Kamala's clothes-quickly.
Kamalabai enters with Kamala's bundle.

SARITA. [Rather determinedly]. Kamalabai, take them back.

[Jaisingh tenses up. Kamalabai in a fix.]

JAISINGH. Give them to me... (42)

Kamala has a compact structure and there is not a single instance where the playwright indulges in anything for the sake of sheer theatricality. The plot evolves and unfolds itself rather imperceptibly. The audience look forward for the next turn to take place. The play is a pure aesthetic delight for its audiences and readers.

6.7. Kanyadaan:

Kanyadaan, a naturalistic play, has two acts and five scenes. The most striking feature of the play is that though it explores grave issues like caste divide, failure of idealism, domestic violence yet the complete action takes in the drawing room of Nath Devlalikar. The drawing room is adorned with the pictures of Mahatma Gandhi, Acharya Narendra Dev, Yusuf Meherali and Sane Guruji to highlight the intellectual influences on the family and endorse their liberal point of view. The play throughout has an undercurrent of violence as Arun is presented as a violent husband who kicks and abuses his wife even during her pregnancy yet a single scene of violence is not presented on stage. Abuses and beatings are reported through Seva.

The play ends with Nath in a pathetic state as he is disillusioned regarding his faith in Gandhian principles and Idealism. In order to suggest his despair and internal turmoil Tendulkar uses the sounds of huge buildings hurtling down in the background: "... Sounds of huge buildings hurtling down. Spotlight on Nath's face fades and he staggers in search of
light. The crashing of buildings gets louder. The sound inspires a deep dread. . . " (566)

The 'breaking down' of Nath arouses pity and fear in the audience. 'Pity' for his pathetic state which he definitely do not deserve and 'fear' that the same may befall on anyone who believes in Idealism. Thus the play brings out 'Hamartia' in the classical sense of the term.

6.8. Encounter in Umbugland

Encounter in Umbugland is a work of entirely different nature which underlines the astonishing range of Tendulkar's dramatic genius. Here, the playwright builds a powerful satire dressed in a political allegory. The setting of the play is the fictitious royalist regime of Umbugland. The political scenario of India in the sixties is portrayed in an allegorical way in the play. The work has the usual three-act, multiple-scene structure in which a systematic evolution of power politics and gender politics has been explored effectively. Beena Agrawal, in her article "Encounter in Umbugland: Reaffirmation of Human Values against the Nexus of Gender Politics and Power Politics gives the credit of dealing the theme successfully to Tendulkar's journalistic background. She observes: "The exceptional awareness of public opinion on the various political intrigues inspired Tendulkar to create a powerful political allegory in the form of Encounter in Umbugland" (122).

The play is the journey of Princess Vijaya to Queen Vijaya but this does not mean that the play is bereft of human emotions. The most humane aspect of the play is the relation between Vijaya and Prannarayan, the eunuch. Tendulkar has assigned the function of a sutradhar or that of a chorus to Prannarayan. He introduces the play and act as the neutral and patient commentator throughout the action. Besides being an observer commentator, he is a
philosopher as well. His unique position is beneficial as:

I am as I am and will remain so. A man to touch, but a woman in appearance.
A being of flesh and blood, and yet a shadow. Besides, it has its advantages.
Like a bat hanging from a branch. I get upside down but complete view of the world. And the funny thing is, that from this upside-down position, one sees the truth of the world the right way up! But let it go. (317)

This sutradhar acts as a mouthpiece for Tendulkar who is the distant observer but makes a commentary on the different events without being personally involved. It is through him that the playwright uncovers the central concern of the play 'empowerment'. Besides, there are two 'pen-bearers' who consistently remarks at the development of the political situations in Umbugland. Regarding the structure and technique of the play, Arundhati Banerjee observes in Note on Kamala, Silence! The Court is in Session, Sakharam Binder, The Vultures, Encounter in Umbugland,

The play has the usual three-act, multiple scene structure, but Tendulkar uses an interesting device in the play which also acts as a jibe against the media, to which, incidentally, he was professionally attached at different stages of his life. The theatrical function of this device is to create interludes where information regarding the political feuds are provided and apparently objective observations are made on the recent developments in the political situation of Dambadwip. Tendulkar uses two masked actors, armed with outsized pens, who arrive at regular intervals mouthing hackneyed remarks set in free verse in a sing-song way. In their observations, one can hear an echo of the cynical tone of the headlines published daily in our newspapers- ultimately meaningless statements that resolve nothing but aggravate existing problems.
The play begins with Prannarayan's introductory speech about the sixtieth anniversary of the coronation of the king. The pen bearers come with huge pens like scepters. Here, the symbolic use of the scepters signifies that pens in democracy has the same power as scepters have in Monarchy. Tendulkar, in his stage direction, mentions that the pen bearers bang their pens on the ground thrice like a scepter and congratulate the king. At the death of the king, the two appear clad in black to moan the death accompanied with low drumbeats. This is followed by the chorus who moans from inside: 'Long live the memory of King Vichitravirya.' This also reminds the tradition of folk theatre where chorus used to communicate the hidden message of the various events with the sound of drum.

The most remarkable aspect of the pen bearers is that instead of the earlier speeches in prose, they make use of rustic and humorous forced rhyme that in spite of its crudity is effective to seek the involvement of audience in the main chain of events. When they announce the news of official mourning of one month in the memory of king Vichitravirya, there is a fine mingling of sarcastic humor in the obituary as they admire and criticize the autocratic and the dictatorial attitude of the king at the same time. They declare:

The king was just in inspiration
All the rest was prevarication!
Self was his only consideration
His love for the country, a mere fabrication!
He made puppets of cabinet men
He made a cake of the government!
Of democracy he made a noise.
Threw sixty years dust in our eyes!
Autocratic without exception of opposition - not a mention

For sixty years, just one illusion

Either the king or rank confusion!

One tradition, one incarnation

"The king is the administration" (283)

The two pen bearers try to summarize the situation and evaluate the characters of the ministers who are responsible for creating the political crisis in the regime of Umbugland. They announce in union: Whom to give the power to? / Each one's a rascal (291)

These observations of the pen bearers are not only informative but interpretative also. The humorous criticism containing the rhythmical repetitions sustain the interest of the public. As the playwright assign them an objective position, they are free to make comments on different characters without any prejudice or personal conflict. They evaluate the characters of the ministers and indirectly prove their worthlessness at the time of crisis. The characters of the five ministers as observed by them is:

Vratyasom's arguments are reasoned,

Karkashirsha's are well seasoned.

Pishtakeshi's not deficient,

Bhagadanta's quite proficient,

Aranyaketu is sufficient (292)

The Act three of the play is devoted to the actual encounter between the cabinet and the queen. The two pen bearers are again presented to comment critically on the situation. This time they stand on stage holding giant pens. A declaration is made by them:

Unique confrontation!
Historic confrontation.

The Ruler of the Palace
And the leader of the Nation!

Constitutional crisis. (327)

They not only try to present the information about political development but also stir the public consciousness against the hidden political intrigues in the encounter. Their mode of announcement echoes the news clipping which is extremely an innovative technique in the realm of Indian drama. The statements are left with a 'dash' to be filled with the suppositions of the public. Nothing can be said to be consistent and stable in the game of politics. The conclusions depend on the personal interpretations and reactions of the public. The pen bearers conclude their announcement with the following observation:

The occupation of Politics is totally without reason!
No one knows what's going to emerge in the coming season.
Read our Next Edition! Mean while one understands.
The trump cards are all in ministers hands. (329)

The phrase "Read out our next edition" confirms the use of the technique of journalism in theatre. It becomes more significant that in political affairs the 'power of press' is treated as 'third estate' and it works a potent tool to mold public opinions. This definitely is a credit on part of Tendulkar to use the art of journalism so skillfully in treating the topical theme of political crisis that to so effortlessly. As Beena Agrawal observes: "Being a journalist, he perceived the possibilities of using the art of journalism for theatrical effectiveness and it helped him to break the theatrical colonialism and the philosophical creed practiced by the dramatists of the first generation" (122).
6.9.  *A Friend's Story*

In *A Friend's Story*, Tendulkar makes a successful attempt to deal the sensitive subject of lesbianism compassionately and offers a totally different point of view towards the issue. He has avoided the use of complex stage mechanism in order to sustain the gravity of the subject. The play has a three act structure without any scene divisions. The play begins with a monologue delivered by Bapu, the chief narrator who tries to narrate the love story of his friend Sumitra Dev. In the opening stage direction, Tendulkar presents Bapu standing downstairs and communicating with the audiences directly. Bapu recalls his unconventional friendship with Mitra, a lesbian, which ended with Mitra's unfortunate suicide. The chain of events are, thus, revealed with the help of flash back technique and the action shifts to the past. In flashback technique, the time sequence is generally altered, taking characters back to the beginning of the tale. Here also, Bapu unveils the mystery of Mitra's suicide by narrating the story from the very beginning.

The play is about the mental conflict of Mitra whose love for Nama does not fit in the socially accepted code of personal relationship. The predefined social codes of conduct comes in direct confrontation with her personal drives. Throughout the play she is placed in this conflicting situation. To give voice to her mental anguish, Tendulkar assigns her dialogues which are incomplete, comprised of broken sentences and marked with pauses to highlight her perplexed state of mind. When she gets the first confirmation of her being a homo, she attempts suicide. She expresses her plight to Bapu as:

She ... decided to meet him ...( Swallows hard.).... decided ... resolved ... got ready .... and he got to know ... and she got to know .. this is not for her .... she's not among those who ... it was impossible for her to go through ... she was different ... she could never become a man's partner in this ... never (A
turbulent storm racks within. It passes. She stubs out the cigarette and flings it away. Now the tone is dry.) The girl resolved to die. She swallowed tablet after tablet.......(433)

Similarly, when an encounter between Mitra and Dalvi takes place at Bapu's place and Nama meekly leaves the room with Dalvi, her frustration is revealed as:

(Sumitra stands immobile for a while. Humiliation makes her more savage. In a fit of uncontrollable rage she begins throwing things around. Rips a bed sheet to pieces. Still unable to calm down. Bangs her head against the wall. Strides back and forth in a terrible fury. Exhausted, she slumps down. (456)

Before this, Mitra is described as 'alert like a wild animal' while Dalvi 'looks like a hunter'(456). She imposes her authority without any voice. Her silence becomes a method of calm and passive resistance but she is infuriated at her humiliation. The way she reacts, after Nama has left with Dalvi, can be taken an equivalent to the strong turmoil of emotions taking place within her inner self. Here, Tendulkar achieves success in finding out the objective and concrete manifestation of the storm raging in her inner self.

The bold attempt of enliven the unconventional character of Mitra on stage was completely a challenge. This challenge was accepted by the renowned and accomplished actress Rohini Hattangady. She has shared some of her experiences about the efforts they made to make Mitra's character convincing in a Note on A Friend's Story:

As a middle-class Maharashtrian-the woman's attire should be a sari.
(Tendulkar also has this in mind). Mitra in sari should look 'manly', so I kept the 'pallu' tied tightly around my waist. The collared blouse was slightly longer. No jewellery, just a wristwatch, and a 'shabnum' bag hanging from the
shoulder. The colour of the sari was off-white; after meeting Nama, it would be pinkish. Sometimes, I would be smoking a cigarette. (595)

The technique of representation assists in communicating the meaning of drama and evoking the Sentiments (rasa) in the spectators through suggestive use of colors, light effects, costumes, props, symbols, make-up of the actors, sound, gestures and postures of various kinds. A theatrical performance is said to be successful when the richness and the sublimity of the vision of the playwright is complemented by an organized use of the techniques. Without a harmonious blend of these two, drama cannot evoke the desired transformation in the psyche of the spectators. But this does not mean that a work of art is merely a tour de force, a mere triumph of technique. Instead it tries to convey some meaning, gives a message. The dramatic techniques employed by Tendulkar in the select plays are definitely subservient to the solid themes chosen and interpreted by him. Drama is different from poetry and fiction as it is not only a matter of words but of performance and communication also. Vijay Tendulkar, with his dramatic genius, visualizes a dramatic structure in which both the verbal and non-verbal symbols work effectively to externalize the inner consciousness of the characters on stage. As Beena Agrawal, in Dramatic World of Vijay Tendulkar observes that: "Vijay Tendulkar was one of those sensitive artists who made churning of the deep recesses of his mental reactions to search out the artistic equivalents appropriate to the experience and also the appropriateness of the requisites of genre of drama" (37).