CHAPTER IV
THE LITERARY INTERFACE BETWEEN VIJAY TENDULKAR AND TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

The previous discussion focused on the literary achievements of Vijay Tendulkar and Tennessee Williams as individual playwrights. The present chapter compares both the playwrights and tries to showcase the parallelisms and contrasts embodied in their works. Such comparison would enhance the possibility of interpreting their correlatedness and literary intertextuality that transcended the constricted parochialism and established a distinct mark of affinity. These links between the two playwrights, Indian and American, are not arbitrary – rather they mark the evolution of an extraordinary theatrical cluster across historical periods, cultures, languages and create a distinct cosmopolitanism of non-European theatre. In the textual and performative fields of post-independence Indian theatre, ancient, premodern and modern, Indian and Western, dramatic and narrative works coincide, interpenetrate and reflect each other. This trajectory of appropriation and influence is premised on several injunctions. First, the cultural assimilation or appropriation of any literary work or element is necessarily configured as a parallel but substantially different body of work from the original. Second, such transference is not merely translingual but also transcultural and third, the writer not only accommodates or recreates the specific features from the original but modifies them to suit his own culture and period, allotting a potential individuality and authenticity to the work. Such a work is self sufficient in its own right despite its simultaneity of reference to the other.

As the postmodern art reflected new aesthetic arrangements of social attitudes, the new social arrangements elicited a new artistic openness and surpassed provincialism. The interaction and symbiosis between the margin and the mainstream nurtured the acceptance of new voices. Probably this should have been the reason that Western and American literature goaded Indian writers to the act of translation in theatre. Translation not only meant exposure to the alien context but also assimilating the ‘other’ into the native and developing intimacy through cultural and literary exchange. “All acts of
Translation are an attempt to mediate between cultures, texts and nationalities” (Satchidanandan 1999: 173). Translation especially in a multi-lingual country like India has deep cultural implications. Translation enlarges the scope of the work of art by increasing its availability in other languages. Moreover, Tendulkar’s interest in translation highlighted his intimacy not only with the western writers but also to the other regional writers. Tendulkar’s fascination for western literature was attested by his translation of some of the western plays into Marathi. Last Days of Lincoln (1959) by Mark Van Doran was translated by Vijay Tendulkar as Lincoln Yanche Akherche Divas (1964), The Streetcar Named Desire (1959) was translated as Vasanachakra (1966) and Patrick John’s Hasty Heart (1945) was translated as Lobh Nasava Hi Vinanti (1972). The post-second world war period marked the age of disintegration and chaos in the lives of modern man. The need to eradicate racialism and animosity was prioritized by great leaders like Lincoln who not only dedicated his life for a grand social cause but even inspired the noble cause in his death. The play, Last Days of Lincoln records the turmoil of Lincoln and his concern for humanity at large. It equally lays bare the political maneuverings and insecurity that lurked around during the last phase of his life. Tendulkar’s translation of the title Last Days of Lincoln as “Lincoln Yanche Akherche Divas” noticeably indicates his respect for the great humanitarian in his use of the Marathi form of address that denotes respect and accolade. It serves as a scathing satire on the prevalent socio-political scenario where ironically a bullet ended the life of Lincoln. The man who preached the doctrine of peace worldwide was violently shot down. It is a bitter comment on the cold, unscrupulous world that fails to recognize the benevolence and glory of its saints and curses them who relentlessly shower blessings. By translating the play, Tendulkar made an attempt to introduce Lincoln’s matrydom and his universal message for peace among the Marathi folk.

Vijay Tendulkar translated Streetcar named Desire as Vasnachakra (1966) into Marathi which at once testified to his interest in American literature and his affinity to Tennessee Williams. He also translated Hasty Heart by John Patrick that equivocally demonstrates his curious interest in the western dramatists. Tendulkar’s aesthetic interest in translating plays that placed a demand not only on his time and energy but also shifted his literary focus from creating new literature defines his extraordinary interest in
western literature that consciously and unconsciously percolated in his works. His artistic feat is definitely not imitative but accommodative which enhanced his artistic mastery and opened up new avenues for creation. One crucial query that lurks at the back of mind, needs to be addressed and demands clarification is—‘why did Tendulkar select only these three plays from the multitudinous western repertoire?’ Why did these plays capture the interest of Tendulkar of all the available western literature? Such an enquiry would serve a special purpose, as it would facilitate all the readers to comprehend his aesthetic perspective.

*The Streetcar* is a play that has domestic set-up and the entire action takes place within the precincts of four walls of the house. It is a play that displays the characters within the space of family intersected by threads of violence. It was in 1966 that Tendulkar translated the play when he had already penned *Grihastha, Shrimant, Manus Navache Bet, Madhlya Bhinti, Chimnicha Ghar Hota Menache, Kavlayanchi Shala* preceded by *Mi Jinkalo, Mi Harlo and Sari ga Sari*. All these plays written during the first phase of Tendulkar’s writing, prior to *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe* were plays that centered on family and marriage as institutions of social significance. Obviously Williams’s theme fascinated the writer who was dealing with similar material. Though violence had not become the complete thematic pattern then, Tendulkar’s plays dealt with the conflict between individuals, internal conflict or dilemma and primarily the discrepancy between illusion and reality that was the root cause of all the sufferings. These thematic concerns found a perfect embodiment in Williams whose private and literary sphere intertwined to figure an imaginative enterprise that cast a dominating impact on American drama.

The theme of arrival and departure was already at the core of Tendulkar’s plays *Shrimant, Kavlyanchi Shala, Chimnicha Ghar* which reveal that arrival of an outsider can instigate significant changes in the lifestyle of the hosts. These changes further modify or clash with the prevalent values and norms of the family. Such conflicts form the nucleus of *The Streetcar named Desire*, the peculiar situation in which Blanche enters the Kowalski’s family and the later acceleration of events is highly dramatic and absorbing. Probably the arrival of Blanche during the pregnancy of Stella, though unplanned and unpremeditated, is quite a common situation in the Indian milieu, where
sisters often visit the household of the married siblings to help them in the hour of need. Stanley’s bestiality is a product of the working class background to which he belongs. This background also bespeaks of the familiarity of situation found in the bourgeois families in India. Williams’s play is entirely balanced on the characters that form a triangular relationship with each other where Mitch provides a minor breakthrough in the sequence of action. Tendulkar’s enthralment for these plays seems to be quite natural for his plays too project strong and influential characters who exercise superb control over the action. Another noteworthy effect of Williams’s play seems to be its theme, and its relevance to the Indian culture and Tendulkar as a translator has deftly taken liberty to incorporate certain essentially Marathi words that convey the local cultural flavor - Yamraj, masanvat, dabola, and stotrapathan etc. that enhance the dramatic effect for the Marathi readers and confirm his literary sensibility as a indigenous writer. While Tendulkar retains the similarity in names, situation and setting, certain colloquial terms that add specific Marathi cultural tinge are employed. The play also sabotages the relations of host and guest. Stanley, the host exploits Blanche on getting the opportunity. This theme carried extraordinary implication in the Indian context where, ‘Atithi Devo Bhav’- Guests are treated as Gods, is the aphorism and protection of the guest, hospitality are most notable virtues. The play completely shattered the image of the host and questioned man-woman relationships. Stella’s calculated indifference to the facts in order to save her marriage is quite appealing to the Indian mindsets where blood relations are secondary to matrimony. Several such factors made the translation relevant to the Indian context and supported Tendulkar’s efforts to avail the Marathi audience of a masterpiece that awakened the world to brutality of men and vulnerability of women as a universal phenomenon.

*The Hasty Heart* as the title suggests, configures the anxieties and fears of developing relationships. Written in 1945, precisely at the time of the ending of the Second World War the play fabricates an atmosphere of cosmopolitanism. It revolves around Lachie, the Scottish young man who is on the brink of death as he suffers from a serious illness; harbors egotistical pride and derives sadistic pleasure in humiliating others or hurting them whenever he gets the opportunity. Interestingly the play is characterized by youngsters belonging to various countries: Georgia, Australia, New
Zealand, England undergoing treatment in a British General Hospital. These men along with Margaret, the nurse are able to transform Lachie from a snobbish, offensive, self-centered man to a polite, refined person who undergoes a radical change and begins to love the world. Margaret’s love gradually works as an antidote that cures the hostility in Lachie. This comedy that marks the metamorphosis of Lachie and his attitudes in a light vein, certainly carries quite a serious message as the subtext- it is the rejuvenating power of love alone that can heal the world of violence and antagonism. Not surprisingly then, a noted critic like Kanekar commented on the translation by Tendulkar as a remarkable feat and placed it among the noteworthy plays (Kanekar 1971: 184). At the backdrop of war is the essentially worked out philosophy that love alone can eliminate the hostility and end the wars by the spread of peace globally.

Tendulkar’s appreciation of Williams is crystal clear. It is worthwhile to comprehend their inter-relatedness and compatibility. Tennessee Williams and Vijay Tendulkar dominated the national theatres for a considerable period of the twentieth century and responded to the economic, political and social realities of the age. The new materialism bred its own discontent and the fears of “alienation” infiltrated the drama with concomitant despair and pessimism. Grappling financial crises both turned to journalism as a vocation but were dissatisfied and sought refuge in writing. Their plays remain highly charged, dealing in violence, sexual tension, in violations of the body and spirit. Being prolific writers, they exercised their artistic talent through various genres: short stories, one-act plays, full length plays, novel etc. Williams and Tendulkar attributed much importance to the lyrical, musical qualities and finesse of language although dealing with raw, rough, thematic material; both were highly sensitive to the subtleties and nuances of language. Both refused to be cowed down by the critics and were successful in fusing various theatrical forms as a part of their dramaturgy. Williams created his own “plastic theatre” whereas Tendulkar’s basic mode was naturalism with a combination of expressionism, existentialism, mode that potentially suited the pattern and texture of the theme. Focusing less on the story and the plot each developed a gallery of portraits appealing and memorable in the repertoire of American and Indian drama. Each playwright proved to be ahead of the times by bringing to surface the hitherto concealed truths, disrupting social taboos and vehemently defying the hypocritical claims
of modesty and morality. Both the dramatists depicted violence and sexuality boldly in their works and challenged the orthodox, rigid conventionality of the masses. These eminent dramatists whose reputation was jeopardized by their turbulent and controversial works, Tennessee Williams and Vijay Tendulkar not only braved the storms of critical commentaries and hostility but as experimental dramatists tried to reinstate modern drama to its central position and produced proliferous writings that established a new idiom in the American and Indian theatre respectively. It is interesting to observe the affinity between the two dramatists whose fundamental preoccupation with ‘violence and sex’ as thematic motifs granted a liberty from conventional moral concerns as also shifted the focus of the stage from the melodramatic world to psychosocial fragmentation, urban angst and women’s issues primarily woven around sex and morality. The present analysis probes into issues of violence and sex in its various manifestations as portrayed by these chroniclers of transition and deals with their mutual relationship as a comprehensive study of dependency and influences. Curiously these playwrights have much in common and seem to nurture a strange association in their personal as well as literary pursuits. A synoptic view of these parallelisms and relations can enhance an understanding of their theatrical contribution.

At the outset, Williams’s and Tendulkar’s authorial statements with regard to ‘characterization’ as a part of their dramaturgy on equivocal tones strike a chord of resemblance.

Williams explains:

You may prefer to be told precisely what to believe about every character in a play... Then I am not your playwright. My characters make my play. I always start with them; they take spirit and body in my mind. Nothing that they say or do is arbitrary or invented. They build the play about them... I live with them for a year and a half or two years and I know them far better than I know myself...
(Williams in Day and Woods 1978: 72-73)
On similar lines, Tendulkar voices his views:

I was never able to begin writing my play only with an idea or a theme in mind. I had to have my characters first with me—though not all of them, the ones I needed to begin writing the play—living persons leading me into the thick of their lives where they would give me the theme. At least symbolically speaking I did not lead my characters; they led me. They showed me the way and I followed on their trail (Tendulkar 2003: xxi).

Both Williams and Tendulkar manifested a transparency in their notions and thoughts, unhesitatingly shared their views and ideas and envisaged a monumental change in the theatrical world through their drama. They very consciously exercised their artistic autonomy to sketch their characters and also their thematic design. Tendulkar’s works unabashedly deal with the themes of sex and violence as do Williams’s plays. Contemporary drama gives a brutal account of the social and political realities that unravel the violence of our times. “Violence in myriad forms has set the stage on fire. It’s a bloody stage” opines Alka Saxena (Saxena in Tandon 2006: 27). The violence is multifaceted – physical, moral, mental, emotional, overt or covert, subtle, oblique and sometimes direct. In Tendulkar’s plays *Gidhadhe* (Vultures), *Ghashiram Kotwal*, *Sakharam Binder*, *Kanyadaan*, violence manifests itself in physical form. Such plays challenge the complacency of the tame, civilized people who claim to be sophisticated and decent but find themselves unmasked; expose the latent savagery and bestiality beneath the veneers of civilization. Tendulkar accepts the occurrence of human violence, which he does not find loathsome or ugly. Elaborately dealing with the theoretical aspect of violence in his project ‘Emerging patterns of Violence’ he unearths the innate propensities for violence that lie dormant. Violence is triggered by angst in his writing.

Dramatic or spectacular changes in the society around us charge a heavy toll on the individual lives and psyche. A feeling of being uprooted, deracinated and buffeted by external forces beyond control makes man a puppet exposed to evil. Such moral upheaval leads to the formation of a new social order clearly disjunctive with the old moral order,
ways of life and familiar gods. Vague angst, anomie, anxiety form the new self and the aftermath is wide-ranging, unpremeditated, seemingly unprovoked violence. Very few would venture to delve into such quagmire of evil that castigates men to action, where often the ‘will’ denies corresponding with action. The social and political sensitivities, demands of sophisticated societies, prevalent systems of education prevent individuals to directly deal with it and obliterate any possibilities of contact with violence. Such violence then deliberately ignored, does not cease to exist but is twice as much orphaned; it is neither accredited nor calculatedly reported.

Tennessee Williams and Vijay Tendulkar are certainly writers of extraordinary mettle who ventured to portray the benumbing effects of violence. Tendulkar himself remarked “Unlike Communists, I don’t think that violence can be eliminated in a classless society, or, for that matter, in any society. The spirit of aggression is something that the human being is born with. Not that it’s bad. Without violence, man would have turned into a vegetable” (Tendulkar in *India Today* 1980: 157). Tennessee Williams also articulates his feelings fervently “We are all civilized people, which means that we are all savages at heart but observing a few amenities of civilized behavior” (Williams 1971: 3). In yet another interview Tendulkar stated “I think anxiety has become part of existence today, triggered partly by the endemic violence. In India, the more we claim we are spiritual people, the more violent we seem to get” (Tendulkar in *Frontline* 1992: 25).

Williams explained the role of violence in his plays “But having, always to contend with this adversary of fear, which was sometimes terror, gave me a certain tendency toward an atmosphere of hysteria and violence in my writing, an atmosphere that has existed in it since the beginning” (Williams 1971: 4).

These speculations on violence attest the interest of both the playwrights and mark the parallel modes of contemplation on issues of socio-political significance. Edward Said makes an illuminating comment that the violence and incomprehensible beauty of the deeply shattering and disruptive events have reconfigured an already absurdist landscape into an entirely new topography (Said 2006: 76). The violence unequivocally central to the work of both the playwrights primarily seems to be postulated on three basic assumptions. First, the violence portrayed may be free-floating,
without being rooted in any causative factors where evil lurks everywhere and is omnipresent and the terror of the situation is so gripping that the characters involved are completely victimized and benumbed under its pressure, incapacitated to act or speak. Second, the violence issues from self-reproach or self-hatred that is provoked by being victimized by the circumstances. It is propelled by the hatred at meekly surrendering to the aggressors. Such violence erupts in class conflicts, communal riots or victims of racial or ethnic conflicts. Third, the victims of violence themselves sabotage the hegemonic order and become aggressors. As a result of oppression or torture, the sufferer retaliates and becomes the perpetrator, giving outlet to his pent-up feelings of hatred, envy or injustice. This kind of violence stems from the psycho-social processes of vulnerability. Finding themselves cornered or culpable, objectified the resultant self-denigration leads to targeting the people that are close by. Often such kind of violence erupts in domestic spaces or work places where women, children or the subordinates are morally or physically assaulted by the superiors.

Tendulkar’s play *Vultures* can be discussed at the outset. The play revolves around interpersonal relationships and the commodification in a consumerist world where relations and kinship are exploited for material gains even at the cost of torture or physical assault. Umakant and Ramakant hatch a conspiracy first to thrash up Manik, their sister, viciously abort her foetus and then contemplate about the gains they would make by burning her as a Sati, on the funeral pyre with her lover Raja of Hondur.

Ramakant: Brainwave! First class scene! 108th week of Amazing crowds! Our little Manik – sitting on the brat in her belly – Commits Sati! In bloody Technicolor! Flames leaping to the bloody sky.

Ramakant: Technicolor! We’ll sell tickets for it! Make money, dammit! Pay off our debts. A house, brother, a car … bloody posh!

(247)

The sheer villainy and depravity of the two brothers is revealed in their physical assault –

Umakant: Let’s knock him out! The Raja in little Manik’s belly! One kick – that’s enough!

Ramakant: An idea, dammit! Let’s abort him! Let’s knock him bloody out! Let’s kick him out. A bastard breed, dammit – come
on brother. Come on! Let’s finish off the Raja’s bloody offspring …. Let little Manik scream till she bloody bursts! (247).

Ramakant: Come on, I’ll give such a kick; he’ll fly up to the bloody skies …. Come on…..

[ …. ‘Manik, open the door! Open, the door, Manik!’ All this rises to a crescendo. Then, in a moment, there is a horrific scream from Manik. In another moment, Manik, screaming terrifyingly comes half-crawling down the stairs, one leg in plaster. Her white sari is soiled with blood ….. At the other end of the passageway stands Papa, laughing].

Father Papa Pitale also ruthlessly becomes an accomplice in the crime. Later he too is beaten up by his sons and forced to leave the house. Sheer violence pervades the entire play, each character except Rama and Rajaninath is steeped in lust and avarice and intent on grabbing the wealth by hook or crook. This play epitomizes absolute malignancy and inhuman cruelty latent in human beings.

Similar gluttony is at work in Williams’s treatment of generational strife and dynastic succession in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* but contrary to Papa Pitale who loses his control and authority over his warring sons, Big Daddy Pollitt is an economic predator whose cancer drains some of his old time fervor, but eventually he reinstates his control over the household and the play proceeds to portray the emotional, psychological complexities of Brick’s and Maggie’s relationship rather than turning violent. Big Daddy asserts:

I made this place! I was overseer on it! I was the overseer on the ole Straw and Ochello plantation …. I quit school at ten years old and went to work like a nigger in the ‘fields. An’ I was rose to be overseer of the straw an Ochello plantation. An ‘ole straw died an’ I was Ochello’s partner an’ the place got bigger an’ bigger! …… Well I’m just about to tell you that ….. You are not just about to take over a gooddam thing (Williams 1971: 77).

Williams’s thematic concerns seem to be considerably different from Tendulkar’s although overtly the subject seemed to be akin at the core. Williams’s interest was primarily on the portrayal of sexuality, rather homosexuality whereas in Tendulkar it is chiefly disastrous violence as the title itself implicates, despite the underlying issue of fertility and child birth of Rama and Maggie being an important strand in similarity of the plays.

141
A.P Dani piles up negatives to discuss the bottom-line of *Vultures* when he compares it to John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* but is not averse to the drama as a whole: “*The Vultures* is a dramatization of deep-seated unmitigated depravity, perversity, greed and diabolic villainy reflected in the ravenous members of a middle-class family. These characters symbolizing the rapacious vultures and betraying their avarice, vices and immorality evince the repulsive sensuality and domestic violence, manifesting the infernal atrocities of devilishness” (Dani in Madge 2007: 113).

Certainly the play is replete with lurid scenes of violence but it is not for its own sake or merely part of the playwrights’ gimmicks to sensationalize the events. Rather Manik’s appearance on the stage in a blood-stained sari provoked the morally conscious Marathi audience and invited the wrath of the critics and censors as well. The director of play, Dr.Tiriram Lagoo was forced to change the color of the bloodstain from red to black to appease the audience. Although the obscenity of such a presentation could have been curbed to comply with Indian cultural norms, it was integral to the dramatic leitmotif of the hideous and macabre and Tendulkar, being an experimental dramatist was endeavoring to present the deeply rooted vulturine instincts in human beings.

The modern cultural profanity and barrenness that has led to unbridled lust for power, money or passions could also encompass the devastating struggle for survival as in Tennessee Williams’s play *Gnadiges Fraulien* (1981). A strange peculiarity marks the genesis and production of both the plays *The Vultures* and *Gnadigis* that they were written at least a decade before they were actually produced on the stage. Probably both the plays had to wait for the congenial time and the ripened maturity of the audience response. However Williams’s play surpassed Tendulkar’s projection of the gory and macabre and imbibed greater complexity by defying explanation. The *Gnadiges Fraulein*, translated as “gracious young lady” is a once famous vaudeville performer, former member of a famous artistic trio: the trainer, his trained seal and herself. She would toe dance between the two while coveting the equipment for the seals’ balancing act, which climaxed with him catching a fish in his jaws. Once the overambitious Fraulein ventures too far and catches the fish in her own mouth. The surprise intervention leads to the collapse of the house and the successful trick is incorporated in the show until at a final performance the seal attacks her and deals a blow that ends her career.
This grim arrangement is described by Molly to Polly, a reporter. In the course of narration Fraulien makes several scavenging forays to the off-stage docks and each time returns more wounded and debilitated. In her quest for fish, she is, it turns out, in competition with the vicious cocaloony birds, which are unforgiving to a human rival. They violently attack her every time she runs the risk for making both ends meet and by the end of the play, she is horribly tattered, bloodied and blinded in both eyes. The play spins around the cruel disintegration of the Fraulien at the hands of the brutal birds.

While animals and animal imagery are pervasive in Williams’s drama, The Gnadies is unique in the Williams canon for its attempt to delineate animality as an extended metaphor. The play in its refusal to engage modernism’s various connotations of the non-human, directly presents literalism as one of the crucial aspect of post-modern animalizing. It is surprisingly one of the few plays to include an actual animal in the list of active characters, not to suggest that it is actually a play “about animals”. Actually Williams explicitly contested (and bemoaned) the reading of The Gnadies as “a play about terrible birds” insisting that the real subject was “the tragicomic subject of human existence on this risky planet” (Preface 1981: 95). The world of the play is conspicuously devoid of any reliable or definitive discourse. The language is convoluted full of comic reversals, peppered with rhymes and sardonic wit:

Molly: I’m dead serious, Polly.
Polly: It’s natural to be serious when you’re dead (225)

Then towards the end of the play:

The Gnadies Fraulien appears on the sidewalk in terrible disarray but clinging tenaciously to her tin bucket containing a rather large fish. Great flapping noise of cocaloonies in pursuit is heard. She crashes through the picket fence and scampers around the side of the house, disappears.

Polly: What’s this?
Molly: Oh, my God, they scalped her! (259)

By now the birds have plucked out both her eyes and her face is half covered with bloody bandage. Her tutu is shred apart, her tights are stained with blood but she
triumphantly holds forth her fish. The play ends, astonishingly, with a feast, a ritual incorporation that “invites a participatory animality as emotional response” (Bleakley 2000: xii). The invitation is accepted: the other characters are “swept away”, to quote Deleuze and Guattari, “Molly moos like a cow, Polly awks and Indian Joe struts like a cocaloony. The slapstick tragedy ends not with death or defeat but with perseverance. Though blood-soaked and blinded, the Fraulein keeps flapping her skinny arms like wings, awkwardly performing the awkwardness of survival on “this risky planet”. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 65). This animality that is literally articulated in Williams’s play is figuratively worked out in Tendulkar’s Vultures. Nevertheless the bizarre sequence of horrendous acts although repelling is central to the thematic pattern that envisages the lowest level to which mankind has stooped driven by purely mercenary tendencies. It is a comment on the purely modernized, utilitarian world that is governed by materialistic needs.

The bizarre inventions and grotesque images contribute significantly to the originality of the Gnadiges, for the fact is cognizant that the exploration of “becoming-animal” is narrativized, recognized and investigated as an autonomous process. As a transition play, Alean Hale locates it temporally and hermeneutically to the decade in which it was written. “Although he (Williams) cultivated the image of his “stone age” (the death of Frank Merlo that led to deep clinical depression) and the play reflects his desperation at that time, “he was aware of the trauma and upheaval of the sixties – the race riots, the protest marches, Vietnam, the Kennedy and Martin Luther King assassinations. If the Gnadiges Fraulein has components of sadism and savagery, Williams was living in the same world” (Hale in Kolin 2002: 45). In an interview with Charles Ruas in 1975 the playwright explained: “Let’s say that the work has become darker. It began to become dark in the 60s and it became so dark that people find it painful” (Williams in Devlin 1986: 287). Williams’s lurid colors of violence seem to have a larger socio-political context but Tendulkar also contends the same views about violence and finds it all around. He asserts in unequivocal terms:

Violence is all around us. It is the culmination of festering elements in many areas. Why talk of assassinations? In a city like Bombay, one can be finished at any moment like fly. It costs you
Rs.500.00, probably less. Here there are professionals who survive by regularly killing other people.

Man is a complex phenomenon; any attempt at simplification through generalization would be foolish. I fear it also falsifies the picture. I wouldn’t do that. It’s an obsession with me to capture human behavior, elusive and ever hanging. At every stage, what I perceived has been reflected in my work. It’s not that I am writing now on a conclusion reached long ago” (Tendulkar in Frontline 1992).

Evidently both the playwrights reproduce the cruelty and violence that is phenomenal in the society, much as it is to their literary works not merely as a spectacle or random events but to provide fresh insights into a terror beyond rational expression. Williams and Tendulkar in their own ways have elaborated ideological constructs from Antonin Artaud’s ‘theater of cruelty’.

In The Theater and Its Double, Artaud proposes a ‘theater of cruelty’ that does not involve “the cruelty we can exercise upon each other by hacking at each other’s bodies, carving up our personal anatomies…but the much more terrible and necessary cruelty which things can exercise against us. We are not free. And the sky can fall on our heads. And the theater has been created to teach us that first of all” (Artaud 1958: 79).

Artaud is not directly interested in violence per se but rather in the impulse behind the violent act, the primitive instincts and desires in their purest states before being suppressed by culture that emerge in the most distorted or sublimated forms. In ‘The Shudder of Catharsis’, Elin Diamond analytically comments that Artaud favored:

An immediate and physical language”, which would penetrate its spectators, act…upon [them] like a spiritual therapeutics.” Artaudian cruelty is a theater of “total spectacle” intended to destroy barriers between “analytic theater and plastic world, mind and body”- a theater composed of and addressed to the “entire organism”…For Artaud, the bubonic plagues of Europe provided the best metaphors for physical, psychical and cultural transgressions. (Diamond in Parker and Sedgwick 1995: 165).
Such representation of brutality certainly added an entirely different perspective to the performative aspect of the play that forced the audience to speculate on hideous aspects of humanity that are deliberately repressed but cannot be refuted or denied.

Annette J. Saddik offers an enlightening comment on Artaud’s representation in Williams’s play “Artaud’s emphasis on gesture over language in the theater as well as Williams’s similar emphasis in Gnädiges Fraulein do not offer us an escape from the futility of trying to make connections, but they do powerfully highlight the illusion of rational language that this connection (“communication”, “expression”) can occur unproblematically. Artaud sees a “rupture between things and words, between things and the ideas and signs that are their representations, at the root of social and metaphysical confusion and like Williams, who aimed to present the cruelties of the human condition through his tragicomic “slapstick tragedy” seeks a theater which will address that rupture or gap” (Saddik in Kolin 2002: 15). Befittingly the guttural utterances in Gnädiges or the idiom of malignancy and threat dominate in The Vultures. The physicality of violence breaks down the barriers of linguistic expression and expresses a “metaphysical fear” (Artaud 1958: 44). The scene of Manik’s foetus being aborted is horrendous and repelling, later the same victimized Manik becomes the perpetrator and derives a sadistic pleasure by aborting the foetus of Rama in The Vultures. Tendulkar depicts the violent tendency of egotistical man and likewise self-centered society. In a daring move, both the playwrights attempted to invert the conventional moral code of good and evil and hence whatever was deemed “good”- culture, self-control, repression, modesty, decency, abiding the law was presented as potentially evil and conversely sexuality, lust, power, violence that was banned by social taboos and considered evil was encouraged through their art. Indisputably, the eruption of violence in Williams’s and Tendulkar’s plays is an indication of fear and exasperation of being trapped in language and hence the physicality of the theatre offers a perfect medium of expression to explore the anarchy let loose by that violence.

In Tendulkar’s play Kanyadaan violence exposes the irrational, primeval instincts in man which unleash bestial energy in the prevalent social-economic conditions. The play employs language that is coarse and crude to the refined tastes but is in consonance with Artaudian concept that makes chaos prevail beyond rational constructs.
Arun: Will you marry me and eat stinking bread with spoilt dal in father’s hut? Without vomiting. Tell me, Jyoti, can you shit everyday in our slums village toilet like my mother? Can you beg, quaking at every door, for a little grass for our buffaloes? Come on, tell me! (513).

Later as the play advances the stage directions tell us: [Before Jyoti can guess what’s coming, Arun grabs her arm and twists it. Jyoti moans in pain. Shock greater than pain. Arun does this in a split second. Jyoti doesn’t know how to react. She is confused and hurt. Lump in her throat she tries to blow upon the arm to reduce the pain.]

Arun: Sorry …. Don’t know what came over me. So sorry, give me any punishment you like …. I’ll take it …. When anyone throws a challenge at me, I lose all control … (515)

Arun’s aggressiveness although he justifies as irrational and later shifts the blame to Jyoti stems from a complex psychological, social situation. His recurrent serio-comic rhyme that he uses to allure Jyoti and allay her fears “It’s a jolly game, caught Brahmin dame’ betray a greater cause. Arun’s dalit background could possibly involve a feeling of injustice that demands a reversal of the hierarchical caste structure. Nevertheless Tara Bhavalkar censures the playwright for a melodramatic portrayal of the characters in the play (Bhavalkar 1997: 75 translated) and questions the authenticity of such depiction of characters: “If the animal in man is powerful and pops his head out constantly then is the playwright trying to suggest that such an animal is in dalits alone? Or in all the mankind in general? Then it should be powerful in the so-called upper castes also” (Ibid: 77 translated). However such a reading circumspects the larger issues of psychological complexities and Dr. Bhavalkar herself admits towards the end of her essay- “Does Arun’s behaviour truly verge on the bestial level? He deliberately fosters sorrow, tortures and harasses her. Beasts are not like that. Beasts are primarily motivated by their biological needs. Is the writer trying to conjecture that the changing Dalit youth is turning into a perverse” (Bhavalkar 1997: 79 translated).

Clearly Bhavalkar’s statements are self contradictory. She herself admits that Arun’s cruelty verges on perversity. It is not merely bestiality. Moreover the play focuses on the rift between ideology and reality; it does not comment on racialism. As the play
progresses, Arun’s abnormality reveals itself bifocally, it is not only his uncouth mannerisms but a kind of sadism that causes him to kick and thrash up his pregnant wife mercilessly. The schism in his personality is not only shattering but repelling.

Nath: Such behavior towards a pregnant wife! What happens if she dies? Such heinous behavior by someone who wrote this beautiful autobiography? How can he? Here in these pages he describes the humiliations he has undergone with extraordinary sensitivity … and the same man kicks his pregnant wife on her belly? How...? How dare he do it to her? How dare he? (543)

Nath is full of regret for sacrificing his own daughter at the altar of his high socialist ideals but he does not criticize Arun for belonging to a particular caste, contrarily he retains his faith in his socialist ideology and firmly articulates his convictions when he is forced to preside the publication function of Arun’s autobiography.

Nath: … But the book has not even an ounce of truth in it, it is a hoax. It is a crafty sanctimonious artistic hoax. Nothing is real in that book. Neither the man nor his values. At best it is good fiction and therefore, Seva, most dangerous. Because this kind of hypocrisy marks a rank opportunist. The devil lurks within that opportunist. That book is no autobiography; it is pulp fiction based on half truths. No. Not all dalits can be like that. They know what suffering is. They have paid a high price to be counted as human beings. They understand their own sufferings; therefore they will certainly know the sufferings of others. (556)

These words of Nath testify that he is disillusioned not by marrying Jyoti to Arun but by the irrational, barbarism to which she is subjected through a hypocritical life-partner. Aparna Dharwadkar makes a valid point: “These collisions in Kanyadaan are not thinly veiled generalizations about the sociology, psychology, and politics of caste, but the price particular human beings pay for a socio-politically determined idealism” (Dharwadker 293). Nath’s agonizing reassessment of Arun resists a “political” elucidation and instead seems to be a politician father’s impinging sorrow for his idealistic daughter’s fate and his futile efforts to regain power over his private domain.
Violence is discernible in the illogical, sadistic demeanor as though it erupts from the realm of the ‘id’, defying explanation. Anshul Chandra speaks about Tendulkar’s perspective on violence in *The Vultures* being bifocal: “violence tends to become an end in itself. It is the easiest way left for many ordinary citizens to cope with their fractured selves and problems of living. No longer does violence come from ideology, faith or even self interest. On the contrary it seeks outlet through ideology, faith and perceived self interest and latches on to these “causes” to find public expression and legitimacy. In this paradoxical world, violence is prior to its causes” (Chandra in Tandon 2006: 157-58). What Chandra says about *The Vultures* is equally valid for *Kanyadaan* also and anticipates the permeating violence in Tendulkar’s other plays as well. C. Coelho makes an enlightening comment on Tendulkar’s portrayal of violence:

His primary concern in plays like *Sakharam Binder, Vultures* or in *Ghashiram Kotwal* and *Silence! The Court is in Session* is then failure human relations due to his fellowmen. There is nothing superficial or exaggerated in his depiction of the vital and often violent stages of man in our society today. In his plays he reviews the innate violence of the so-called civilized beings in an urban industrial set-up (Coelho in Commonwealth Review 1993-94: 34).

The sheer villainy of *Ghashiram Kotwal*, another significant play of Tendulkar is in keeping with the playwright’s obsession with violence. Ghashiram in his quest for power confronts Nana Phadnavis, intent to avenge his humiliation and unscrupulously barters his own daughter for gaining authority. Ghashiram Savaldas is not an individual from the late eighteenth century Peshwa Empire but is a universalized figure that belongs to all phases of human history and his steady downfall is symbolic of the raging evil and corruption that stimulate violence in the society. In his ruthless execution of power, Ghashiram decrees a Brahmin to hold an iron hot ball.

Ghashiram: The ordeal shall be done. The ordeal shall be done. You heretic! Bring that hot ball over here. Hold his hands tightly. If he yells, don’t let go. Let his hands burn. You should smell them burning. Smell them!

The play characterizes deplorable brutality of Ghashiram, focusing on the metamorphosis of Savaldas from a victim to a pervert executioner; the rise of a humble man into a hubristic power crazy monster. Armed with the newly acquired power, Ghashiram transforms Pune into a police state with draconian laws that cause physical and mental torture to the common, innocent people. The playwright elaborately uses mime to illustrate Ghashiram’s excesses; the mime of the dead body that is carried to the crematorium but disallowed the last rites for the lack of permit, mime of the hot iron ball placed in the Brahmin’s hands. The events that begin in bizarre and grotesque mode harbor embarrassment and humiliation when Ghashiram’s perversity in public sphere encroaches upon the private lives of the Brahmins, a Brahmin is disallowed to share moments of privacy with his own wife and when Ghashiram conducts a public investigation to confirm the authenticity of the Brahmin’s wife, he certainly crosses all the legitimate limits of decency.

Turned into a cold, insensitive, heartless villain Ghashiram is a product of the prevalent socio-political circumstances. His atrocities cross all the limits. Ghashiram threatens a Brahmin to confess guilty to a crime he has not committed and once he is satisfied, he orders – “Go. Cut off his hands and drive him out of Poona. I’ll see to it that no Brahman steals! (397). Now a hardened executioner, he callously punishes Brahmins for stealing a fruit from his garden and derives sadistic pleasure from it.

Sutradhar: “Ranba, the cell is too small and there are too many people, I think, I had to pack them in. They didn’t fit until I shoved them in – like this. What days! Not enough, prison cells in Poona. This is the Kali Yuga, the Dark Age. Come on, let’s have a pipe and sleep till morning. Someone imitates a howling dog. And another. A third imitates patrol cry. The sounds become faint. From the cell ‘Help me. I’m dying. Can’t breathe. Let me breathe. Mother! somebody help .. ‘ Noise of suffocation (410).

It is later reported by the Sutradhar that “twenty-two dead, the rest half dead.” (411). Overcrowded cells lead to the suffocation and deaths of the Brahmins. Although conscious of the inhuman crime committed, Ghashiram is unapologetic about his capricious conduct. Finally with the consent and orders of Nana, Ghashiram is thrown before the furious mob of Brahmins who stone him to death.

Ghashiram’s ignominious downfall strikes us partly because towards the end, he is again transformed into a weakling who can neither resist the infuriated mob nor shield himself from their wrath, and partly because unconsciously Ghashiram is victimized by the greater vile, Machiavellian system embodied by the machinations of Nana. Again Ghashiram’s death is not the end of a life but a critique on the social order and the value system that is defunct and indifferent to the larger issues of justice and morality. “What we have on offer in the popular perception is pure and simple skullduggery, spicy entertainment, acrimonious persiflage and venomous maligning of a certain heroic figure in Marathi history and of a certain section of Poona Brahmin society” (Chindhade in Barbuddhe 2008: 88) are the charges against Tendulkar’s portrayal of Ghashiram. Notwithstanding the charges Ghashiram does have a moment of recognition. In an ironical turn of events he glides down from the heights of prosperity to irrevocable failure with a shocking revelation. His hubris leads to an ignominious downfall, though he is more of an anti-hero than a tragic figure. Ghashiram accepts his death and defeat as penitence, retribution for wasting the life of his young, harmless daughter but the greater culprit goes unheeded. Nana who is the corrupt, exploitative manipulator remains in power and continues his supremacy over his subjects.

Significantly like Williams’s play Camino Real where Gutman emerges the dictatorial, tyrannical authority, Nana, the emblem of power is paradoxically the persecutor. In fact Kilroy’s death enacted on the stage has quite the same dramatic effect as Ghashiram’s death although both meet their tragic downfall for different reasons. Kilroy’s death leads to resurrection and is viewed as a sign of honor whereas Ghashiram’s death is the chastisement for his irredeemable and irrevocable crimes. Interestingly in both the plays this climactic moment is enacted in the same way. First both Kilroy and Ghashiram challenge their murderers and then the actual death is represented mimetically on the stage.
Kilroy: Come on! ... Come on! ... COME ON, YOU SONS OF BITCHES! KILROY IS HERE! HE’S READY!
[A gong sounds].
[Kilroy swings at the Streetcleaners. They circle about him out of reach, turning him by each of their movements. The swings grow wilder like a boxer. He falls to his knees still swinging and finally collapses flat on his face] (577).

In Ghashiram Kotwal the action progresses on similar lines:

[The mob shouts. The drum beats loud and fast. Ghashiram begins to move in a sort of dance as if dying to the beat of the drum. Falls, gets up, falls, growls like an animal. Crawls, jerks in spasms. Falls and falls again while trying to rise. Death dance. The crowd’s shouting continues. Finally Ghashiram lies motionless...] (415)

The parallelisms in the use of mime to depict violence succeed in liberating the spectator from a reliance on plot and its linguistic constructs, creating through sound, gesture, and spectacle, the cruelty of the real which remains linguistically “untranslatable” (Artaud 1958: 71). Jacques Derrida usefully untangles Artaud’s explanation of the primitive and pre-logical nature of the theatre of cruelty as not a representation but “life itself, in the extent to which life is unrepresentable. Life is a non-representable origin of representation” (Derrida in Murray 1997: 42). This oxymoronic statement brings out the essence of the linguistic and theatrical experimentalization of both Williams and Tendulkar who have been vocal about the presentation and stylistic innovations they have employed to focus on the irrationality and complexities of human existence. The duo has emphatically used ellipsis, bizarre sounds and music, pauses to express their modernistic concerns. Smita Mishra makes a precise remark about the portrayal of Ghashiram: “The play, though inherently violent, never for once, deteriorates into a melodrama. There are in it scenes of torture and violence, but they do not manifest physically. It is shown through the physical gestures of the chorus and through the words of the Sutradhar” (Mishra in Tiwari 2007: 64). The end of Ghashiram is certainly not cathartic, but it stimulates and provokes the audience to reckon and contemplate on the issues related to the normal, poised development of human society that is vilified or threatened by the ‘Ghashirams’ it creates. As a political allegory it is a comment on the
socio-political scenario emphasizing the corruptive influence of power. As M.Sarat Babu aptly comments “Ghashiram is a political Bhasmasur created by political leaders for their purpose” (Babu 2003: 20). Girish Karnad opines, “a decade after the play was written in Punjab, Sant Bhidranwale and Mrs. Indira Gandhi seemed to be re-enacting the theme in real life in horrifying detail” (Karnad 1994: 15). This unquestionably places the play in a larger socio-political context and underlines its relevance to the national political situation.

Thus violence is all pervasive and an intrinsic part of society. Even in the most silent play *The Glass Menagerie* by Williams which is categorized as a catastrophe without violence, hostility is very much implicit and lurks close to the surface, ready to be exploded in which the class war is dramatized in stark form. Tom speaks of the lightening in the sky, of the impending disaster of war and bloodshed. Williams’s hero or heroine is precisely a fugitive trapped by the harsh pragmatics of the modern world clearly seen in his plays like *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Sometimes one marvels about the theatrical panache with which Williams flings his characters under the knife, gun and blowtorch to delineate their precarious existence and devastating end. Incidentally none of the good is rescued or survive at the end. Even the innocents are made to suffer and sacrifice. The most glaring projection of mutilation in Williams’s work is the ceaselessly intriguing *Suddenly Last Summer* in which Catherine Holley has been locked up in a mental institution by her aunt, the fearsome Mrs. Venable, who threatens her with lobotomy for daring to narrate the awful truth of a nerve-racking, gruesome incident.

The setting of the play at the beginning at once sets the spine-chilling mood of the play.

*The set may be as unrealistic as the décor of a dramatic ballet.*

...*The interior is blended with a fantastic garden which is more like a tropical jungle, or forest, in the pre-historic age of giant fern-forests when living creatures had flippers turning to limbs and scales to skin. The colours of this jungle-garden are violent, especially since it is steaming with heat after rain. There are massive tree-flowers that suggest organs of a body, torn out, still glistening with undried blood; there are harsh cries and sibilant hissings ans thrashing sounds in the garden as if it were inhabited by beasts, serpents, and birds, all savage nature… (349).*
At a resort Cabeza Del Lolo, Catherine has witnessed her cousin Sebastian’s murder by cannibalism and the details she furnishes are petrifying and horrendous.

Again it is at the backdrop of music- “instruments of percussion” and strange guttural sounds like “oompa, oompa” the orphaned boys seek a revenge for Sebastian’s sexual predation.

Catherine: The oompa-oompa of the - following band – They’d somehow gotten through the barbed wire and out on the street, and they were following, following!- Sebastian started to run and they all screamed at once and seemed to fly in the air, they outran him so quickly. I screamed. I heard Sebastian scream, he screamed just once before this flock of black plucked little birds that pursued him and overtook him halfway up the white hill (421).

Hesitant, exasperated Catherine continues her incredible tale:

when we got back to where my cousin Sebastian had disappear in the flock of featherless little black sparrow, he – he was lying naked as they had been naked against a white wall, and this you won’t believe, nobody has believed it, nobody could believe it, nobody on earth could possibly believe it, and I don’t blame them! – They had devoured parts of him. Torn or cut parts of him away with their hands or knives or maybe those jagged tin cans they made music with, they had torn bits of him away and stuffed them into those gobbling fierce little empty black mouth of theirs. There wasn’t a sound any more, here was nothing to see but Sebastian, what was left of him, that looked like a big white-paper-wrapped bunch of red roses had been torn thrown, crushed against that blazing white wall…. (422).

Mrs. Venable erratically tries to strike Catherine with her cane but the doctor forbids her and the denouement of the play proceeds with the ghoulish game of blood. She orders “Lion’s View! State Asylum, cut this hideous story out of her brain! Steven Bruhm amplifies Catherine’s vision and grapples with another duality: “The [Cannibalism] scene collapses the barrier between the city and the jungle … The city had tried to transform the primal need for consumption – including sexual consumption – into an orderly, regulated system of trade. But by collapsing back into its primal, repressed form, the jungle exposes the underside of consumption upon which the city is founded”
(Bruhm 1991: 533). This clearly indicates that the facts are crystal clear but too ugly and hideous to be accepted and innocent Catherine is condemned to undergo a hazardous brain surgery.

The violence and bloodshed that perpetrates itself in the works of Williams acquires greater magnanimity compared to Tendulkar whose interests are chiefly psychosexual. Williams’s plays replete with symbolism present acute images of death and decay and being primarily autobiographical, are a curious admixture of self-revelation and concealment. Annette Saddik’s views reiterate the same comments:

Like Artaud, Williams was no longer interested in the exploration of psychological problems of individuals commonly associated with realism, nor was he completely committed to the politically charged emphasis on social transformation through the motivations of intellect that other critics of realism such as Bertolt Brecht emphasized. Instead, Williams’s Artaudian plays are concerned with aspects of theater connected to the unconscious mind, favoring intuition, feeling, and experience over reason and the cataclysmic celebration of these sensory functions through ritualistic presentation (Saddik in Kolin 7-8).

These plays do not strike the tragic note; instead present the bleak and pessimistic world where as Steiner points out the “tragedy has led to ‘stiffening of the bone’ in our imaginations and our very language, emptied out by a century of atrocities” (Steiner 1961: 351). Raymond Williams adamantly opposed the conceptualization of ‘modern tragedy’ because ‘our philosophical assumptions are non-tragic’.

Man can achieve his full life only after insolent conflict; man is essentially frustrated and divided against himself. While he lives in society; man is torn by intolerable contradictions, in a condition of essential absurdity. From these ordinary propositions and from their combination in so many minds, it is not surprising that so much tragedy has in fact emerged (Raymond 1966: 189).

This is best illustrated in Williams’s earlier plays like Orpheus Descending and Sweet Bird of Youth that showcase characters like Val Xavier and Chance Wayne whose actions are oriented by passionate feelings and dictated by heart rather than by the reasonable intellect or logic of mind. Dissolution and decline is embedded in chastity
conceding to corruption, a sanctuary or safe harbor is invaded by harsh judgment and
denunciation. In Williams’s *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*, the autobiographical
commemoration of Williams’s affair forty years earlier with the dancer Kip, the authorial
character August implores: “God give me death before thirty, / Before my clean heart has
grown/ soiled with the dust of much living, / More wanting and taking than giving”
(Williams 1995: 23). Similar peace and purity, serenity and completion are desired by
Val and Chance but both are exposed to the greater tyrannical designs and are ultimately
doomed to death and castration, which becomes a metaphor of death.

In *Orpheus Descending* Jabe shoots Lady Torrance and Val hardly gets any
opportunity to save himself from the Sheriff and his men.

Jabe: Buzzards! Buzzards. [Clutching the trunk of the false palm
tree, he raises the other hand holding a revolver and fires down
into the store. Lady screams and rushes to cover into motionless
figure with hers. Jabe scrambles down a few steps and fires again
and the bullet strikes her, expelling her breath in a great “Hah!”
He fires again; the great “Hah” is repeated …. He descends and
passes them, shouting out hoarsely:] I’ll have you burned! I burned
her father and I’ll have you burned! [He opens the door and rushes
out onto the road, shouting hoarsely]: The clerk is robbing the
store, he shot my wife, the clerk is robbing the store, he killed my
wife! (339).

Later voices of men are heard who blowtorch Val who is trapped in the
confectionery.

[A jet of blue flames stabs the dark. It flickers on Carol’s figure in
the confectionery. The men cry out together in hoarse passion
crouching towards the fierce blue jet of fire, their faces lit by it like
the faces of demons.] (340-341).

The demonic power exercised by the Sheriff’s authority and Jabe’s cruelty as a
husband are emblematic of the patriarchal set up that ruins the fragile dreams and desires
of the young who seek to violate its pre-figured and deep-rooted norms of conventional
morality.

Chance and Val in some ways resemble each other. Both are young men who
have consciously chosen the easy path of “corruption” in life that would eventually
perish and decay at the ages of twenty-nine and thirty. Both genuinely engender love for
a woman but are weak to combat the massive forces – the political force of Boss Kinley who castrates Chance for personal reasons and the small town and its denizens who gang up on Val for a mistaken breach of conduct. However Kinley’s forces are even more lethal than the townsfolk in Orpheus Descending, as Kinley stirs up state wide racial hatred and his domineering political influence and prominence disapprove the match of Chance Wayne and Heavenly. Though Chance gets an opportunity to escape the fateful desexualization his own misguided ideals bring about his precipitous downfall. Heckler who publicly voices his dissent and challenges the authority is roughed up by the men, an incidence of mob violence and at the end; the menacing members encircle Chance ensuing to the conclusion in emasculation. Chance or Val do not appeal as true tragic heroes for the moment of recognition or anagnorisis never comes. Val is mature in his vision and never nostalgic about the loss of time but Chance realizes too late that youth and charm are ephemeral and hence both strike us as pathetic rather than tragic figures.

In The Sociology of Modern Drama (1909) George Lukacs defined “the heroes of the new drama” as “more passive than active.” Their heroism, he observed, was one “of anguish, of despair, not one of bold aggressiveness”. The dramatic conflict generated by such a retiring kind of hero was that of “man as merely the intersection point of great forces, and his deeds not even is own” (Lukacs 1965: 149-51). Accordingly modern protagonists reveal greater complexities and their demeanor poses a challenge to simple interpretations or naïve reading. If Val and Chance are entrapped by external agents of action and incapacitated to retaliate in the given situations, Tendulkar’s Sakharam Binder, the eponymous hero of the play asserts himself as the patriarchal monarch in his microcosmic household but looses his grip and undergoes conversion under the pressure of the circumstances. He beats Laxmi when she disallows Dawood to perform the Ganesh Puja and opposes him.

[Sakharam slaps her hard. She lifts her hand to her face in pain. Sakharam hits her again and again / Sakharam takes a belt off the peg / Sakharam lashes at her with the belt]

Laxmi: If you want to beat me, beat me inside. Not in front of God! He’s only come to the house today.
Sakharam: All right. Come in. I’ll fix you.
[She turns and goes in. Sakharam follows with the belt. Dawood remains where he is. From within the dark kitchen the sound of blow upon blow. Laxmi’s agonized moans, but no whining. Dawood, unable to bear it, goes out. The beating continues] (144).

The play shows Sakharam as a cold-blooded, perverted person who is determined to exercise absolute control over the derelict women he brings in his house. Sakharam’s violent assault seems to stem from a deliberate gesture to conceal his weakness. As in case of Williams’s Shanon in *The Night of Iguana*, Sakharam’s monstrosity, unfettered aggressiveness is deeply ingrained in the painful and agonizing childhood. “The cruel, prejudiced treatment of Sakharam by his parents has caused him to behave rebelliously in order to overcome his powerlessness and joylessness” (Babu 1997: 90). Shanon too rebels to defy the authority of his mother and her repeated admonishing. Getting distraught with jealousy and unable to face the reality of his impotency, Sakharam becomes wild with rage and strangles Champa to death. However Laxmi coerces him into action, it is she who uses the trump card of Champa’s infidelity to Sakharam as her last resort. E Renuka finds Sakharam ‘a dehumanized brutal wretch’ (E. Renuka 1984: 138). It is an impinging reality that Sakharam is a product of our times, our dehumanizing culture. Tendulkar implores “Even in plays like *Sakharam Binder* and *The Vultures*, the theme is not violence. Violence comes as way of life, a natural way of life if you consider the background of the characters. It is there as part of the functioning of a character” (Tendulkar in *Indian Express* 1983: 5). Certainly violence is not the only string in these plays and accepting such a perspective would deny the play of its efficiency and subtleties, yet unquestionably it is one of the prime aspects of the plays.

Some other instances of violence are evident, precisely mob violence in *Encounter in Umbugland* and physical violence in *Niyaticya Bailala* by Vijay Tendulkar. In the former play Princess Vijaya with the help of Prannarayan turns out to be a shrewd manipulator and in a subtle reversal of fortune, exposes her ministers’ conspiracies and bullies to throw them amidst the infuriated mob.

[The noise of the crowd swells and becomes deafening. Shouts. Roaring. Bullets. Cracking. Screams, then slogans, chanted indistinctly but deafeningly. Gradually the noise lessens and dies away. The Ministers are still where they were...] (352)
In *Niyatichya Bailala*, presented in a surrealistic mode, the Chief Minister exchanges his identity with B, facial masks are interchanged. Later in an attempt to forcibly recover his identity he cheats and brutally beats up his rival but what emerges is a distorted, damaged mask that cannot fit the minister and he is left alienated. He is deprived of the benefit of power since the faceless A gains power as the new Chief Minister. These plays incorporate violence as a scathing satire on the prevalent debauchery and unbridled corruption in the power games and which has turned the lust for power into a penchant for blood.

The plays discussed so far deal with physical violence, however the macabre instances can take a more masked and subtle form of emotional and sexual violence that often takes place within private spaces and remains unacknowledged, the truth being gagged to preserve the facade of culture. The post-war period marked by its negotiation with modernism, re-appraisal of old values and ceaseless advance towards individualism led to fragmentation of family as an institution and radically marked the isolation of the individual. The rise of the emergent class as a result of urbanization and industrialization brought to the fore the dichotomy of the new social class that embraced new urban lifestyle but clutched on to old ideologies and mental set-up, led to a schism in the personalities. Invariably it is the predicament of such human beings that experimental writers like Williams and Tendulkar brought to the stage, through their art in the post modern context. Williams pronounced that, “Art is only anarchy in juxtaposition with organized society. It runs counter to the sort of orderliness in which organized society apparently must be based” (Williams in Bigsby 1984: 25). The rift between tradition and modernity, selfhood and community is dynamically depicted in their plays. Tendulkar articulated his fixation with violence in clear terms

Curiosity about violence – not as something that exists in isolation, but as a part of the human milieu, human behaviour, human mind. It has become an obsession. At a very sensitive level, violence can be described as consciously hurting someone, whether it is physical violence or psychological violence… Violence is something which has to be accepted as fact. It’s no use describing it as good or bad. Projections of it can be good or bad. And violence, when turned into something else, can certainly be defined.
as vitality. Which can be very useful, very constructive. So it depends on how you utilize it or curb it at times (Tendulkar in Roy 1993).

Modern times have severed the umbilical cord between the individual and the society and the unguarded freedom, sense of insecurity and loss, feeling of estrangement have brought the dormant tendencies towards violence and cruelty to the exterior.

Leela Benare, the enthusiastic and vivacious heroine of Silence! The Court is in Session is defiant and spirited in the beginning and is quite assertive about her private space “My life is my own, my will is my own. My wishes are my own. No one can kill those – no one! I will do what I like with myself and my life!” (58). But this seems to be a fleeting pleasure for she realizes in the course of the play that people around her can make her gullible. They can gnaw at the most private moments of her life and trespass upon her privacy in the most heinous manner. Benare is quite sarcastic and mischievously enjoys her dig at other members of her amateur theatre group; she calls Mr.Kashikar, Mr. Prime objective and Mrs.Kashikar, Mrs.Hand-that-rocks-the cradle. The comment on Mrs. Kashikar is poignant as she has no children. She teases Mr.Rokde as a failed lawyer, Mr.Ponkshe as a great scientist-inter-failed, and Prof Damle as a great intellectual who runs and hides his head when faced by a real-life problem. Ironically all her mischievous pranks boomerang on her when the same group compels her to play the role of accused in the mock trial. Swiftly the jovial atmosphere becomes somber and serious. Being completely trapped in a claustrophobic atmosphere, Benare drops her false bravado, as she is stunned by the charges of immorality leveled against her. Her relationship with Damle is the sore point and the entire malicious group has touched upon a raw nerve of hers. Bravely she tries to brazen out when they pounce upon her. She desperately struggles to safeguard her public image as a dedicated teacher which is being tainted by her illegitimate involvement with a married man, Prof. Damle. She is intent to protect her child that will be born out of matrimony, considered to be immoral by the society. The barbed tongues unleash a series of accusations against the targeted Benare who makes feeble attempts to foil the pangs of humiliation and torture. It’s a unilateral throwing of charges and accusations at her one by one. Mrs. Kashikar makes a caustic remark: “Just look at her face! She must be over thirty Four!” “What I say is our
society should revive the old custom of child marriage. Marry off girls before puberty. All this promiscuity will come to a full stop” (98). Mrs. Kashikar dotes on Benare’s unmarried life. She attributes the reason for remaining single to financial independence, as a sly fashion that grants unrestricted liberty to women who seek all pleasures without marrying. Her remarks become more prickly and venomous “Should there be no limit to how freely a woman can behave with a man? Look how loudly she laughs! How she sings, dances, cracks jokes! And wandering alone with how many men day in and day out!” (100).

The lawyer Sukhatme grabs hold of the opportunity to point out Leela Benare’s outrageous behavior, “she held Rokade’s hand on one occasion”, he claims “Milord, this means that the accused committed an outrage in a lonely spot on a boy like Rokde, much younger than her almost like her younger brother – she tried to cover up her sinful deed”. Benare can only timidly deny saying “It’s a lie” (103). A simple, harmless gesture becomes a means of emotional exploitation. Later Ponkshe insinuates Benare, for her marriage proposal to avoid disgrace caused by her pregnancy. Karnik further aggravates the situation by alluding to Benare’s affair with her maternal uncle at the unripe age of fifteen. Sukhatme terms it “immoral relationship” and Kashikar adds that it is “just one step away from total depravity”. The conclusion is, “The present conduct of the accused is totally licentious… But it now seems that her past too, is smeared in sin.” What these pack of civilized crusaders of morality do is orchestrated as “It is a game! A mere game” which takes an ugly turn, for Benare unable to face the accusations and cornered is utterly defenseless and emotionally drained, so that she can neither strike back nor escape. Choked and agitated Benare tries to consume poison from the Tik-20 bottle but is prevented by others. Flabbergasted by the allegations, she unburdens herself by confessing:

It’s true, I did commit a sin. I was in love with my mother’s brother. But in our strict house, in the prime of my unfolding youth, he was the one who came close to me. He praised my bloom everyday. He gave me love … How was I to know that if you felt like breaking yourself into bits and melting into one with someone if you felt that just being with him gave a whole meaning to life (117).
She vehemently asserts that she insisted on marriage to realize her dreams but the brave man turned tail and fled and she was left forlorn to bear the responsibility of the sin at the innocent age of fifteen. Second time she fell in love with Prof. Damle “I offered up my body on the altar of my worship and my intellectual god took the offering – and went his way” (118). Benare yearns for genuine love but is unfortunate in winning it.

Benare’s pleas go unheeded and the persecutors announce that such a woman bears the stigma of immorality and is dishonorable to continue her profession and must abort the child born of illicit relationship. “This traumatic evening, which has just been a game for others, would be like a never healing ulcer for her for ever” (Kumar in Pandey and Barua 1994: 24). The very title that codifies “Silence” operates as a component of social mechanism of “Justice” that paradoxically converts itself into an unjust, cruel, powerful instrument of absolute tyranny and chokes and strangulates the enunciation of truth. The play within the play becomes an ominous, sinister game that suggests the embedded violence at the mundane level which dictates everyday encounters of people where the power structure seems to function vertically rather than horizontally. Each of the assailants like the later protagonist Sakharam from Sakharam Binder gather their strength in an attempt to conceal their powerlessness and try to exert authority and control over the other feeble, subordinate characters they find, in each case being women.

Samik Bandyopadhyay credits the play: Silence! The Court is in Session as:

The first significant modern Indian play in any language to centre on woman as protagonist and victim that locates its heroine Benare not at an acquiescent receiving end, but at a point of conflict where as aggressive-transgressor of the sexual mores of her community, she challenges the executors or power in absentia. It is part of Tendulkar’s dramatic strategy that Benare’s immediate persecutors in the play are as powerless as she, and all their exertions to cut Benare down to size are more their striving after power than a real exercise of power (Bandyopadhyay in Tendulkar 2003: xiv).

These subtle maneuvers that re-define the asymmetrical power structures are at work in the play.

Tendulkar’s own remarks are quite illuminating:

As a social being I am against all exploitation and I passionately feel that all exploitation must end. As a writer I feel fascinated by
the violent exploited-exploiter relationship and obsessively delve deep into it instead of taking a position against it. That takes me to a point where I feel that this relationship is eternal, a fact of life however cruel, and will never end. Not that I relish this thought while it grips me but I cannot shake it off (Tendulkar 1992).

Hence in a classic juxtaposition, the silences become more eloquent and ‘words’ blur the contours of the dramatic world. It is the physicality of the woman, her “body” that collides against the institutional “body” or power set up and the subsequent friction ushers unregulated violence with varying intensities. This new “avatar” of women blasted the theatre and overawed the spectators.

Julia Kristeva cites the destabilizing effect of modern history upon the traditional “place” of theatre. “Since no set or interplay of sets is able to hold up any longer faced with the crises of State, religion and family, it is impossible to prefer a discount – to play out a discourse – on the basis of a scene, sign of recognition, which would provide for the actor’s and audience’s recognition of themselves in the same author” (Kristeva 1977: 131). Thus, Kristeva declares that the modern theater governed by an irresistible scopic drive, can do nothing but chain itself to the normative ideologies to which the failure of contemporary social sets, and perhaps, even the failure of the human race, affixes itself. “Only in” the silent theater of “colors, sounds and gestures,” in which the semiotic “encompasses” the symbolic, can the more advanced playwrights and actors “develop a technical arsenal of ‘alienation’ and ‘demolish’ an antiquating society’s antiquating fantasies”. In such silent space, Kristeva thinks, “a new subject” can be born.

The analyses of Kristeva describe a continuous line of dramatic theory that is pertinent to Williams’s plays and which in turn clearly influenced Tendulkar’s works. Williams’s plays A Streetcar named Desire and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof can be studied as a source of inspiration for Tendulkar. As the title suggests ‘Streetcar’ embraces the metaphor of movement, more specifically it conotates, public transit, it engages a world infested with problematic private relations. The play opens with Blanche’s arrival and closes with her departure.

As a girl, Blanche had been “tender and trusting,” until her first love at sixteen, a “blinding light” but she is “unlucky, deluded” and the short lived pleasure is suddenly
extinguished by a tragedy. This is followed by her “intimacies with strangers”, as Blanche seeks security in moral escapades through love making: “People don’t see you – men don’t – don’t even admit your existence unless they are making love to you. And you’ve got to have your existence admitted by someone, if you’re going to have someone’s protection” (109). These lines bring out the superficiality of relations that are skin-deep and are clearly echoed by Benare when she says-“And my intellectual god took the offering- and went his way. He didn’t’ want my mind, or my devotion-he didn’t care about them! [Feebly] he wasn’t a god. He was a man. For whom everything was of the body, for the body! That’s all! Again, the body! [Screaming] This body is a traitor! [She is writhing with pain]. I despise this body- and I love it! (118).

This classic expression of the infatuation to physical love elucidates a peculiar reworking of Blanche’s assertion of the importance of sexual charms to exercise power or control over men. But Benare clearly voices the futility to wield power over men once their selfish ends are satisfied.

Blanche tells Mitch “After the death of Allan-intimacy with strangers was all I seemed able to fill my empty heart with … I think it was panic, just panic, that drove me from one to another, hunting for some protection – here and there, in the most – unlikely places” even, at last, in seventeen year-old boy but - somebody wrote the superintendent about it-“This woman is morally unfit for her position!”(137). These words signify the resemblance between Blanche and Benare who are traumatized by their unrequited love and seek comfort and security from strangers in panic. Benare too makes pathetic attempts to convince Balu Rokade, Ponkshe to marry her and absolve her of the social criticism for bearing an illegitimate child, but is mercilessly turned down as earlier done by her own Uncle and later her intellectual lover Damle. Benare also faces legal action from her school and is made to forfeit her job.

The blunt declarations coupled with Blanche’s invitations to sexual violence and Stanley’s brutal nature result in the catastrophic rape of Blanche in *The Streetcar*. Violence manifests itself in myriad forms and is all-pervasive in the play. Stanley right from the outset is uncouth and coarse in his mannerisms and actions. He throws a bloody packet at Stella, he bangs the doors, smashes the radio, beats Stella, howls at everyone, commands respect as the alpha male of the tribe of primitive, uncultured friends. When
Stella tries to pacify Blanche, suggesting that Stanley was at his worst, being drunk, Blanche retorts: “On the contrary, I saw him at his best! What such a man has to offer is animal force and he gave a wonderful exhibition of that! But the only way to live with such a man is to – go to bed with him! And that’s your job – not mine!” (103).

Blanche is quite audacious and blatant about her sexual life and she provokes Stanley by laughing at him, spraying perfume, teasing him, treating him like a young boy and even flirting with him which he aggressively wards off saying “I don’t go in for that stuff” (278). Elia Kazan rightly interprets Blanches’ demeanor:

Blanche Dubois comes into a house where someone is going to murder her. The interesting part of it is that Blanche Dubois is attracted to the person who’s going to murder her. That’s what makes the play deep. So you can understand a woman playing affectionately with an animal that’s going to kill her. So she at once wants him to rape her, and knows he will kill her. She protests how vulgar and corrupted he is, but she also finds that vulgarity and corruption attractive (Kazan in Ciment Michel 1974: 71).

Although the play moves inexorably towards the friction between Blanche’s romantic illusions and Stanley’s boorish realism, Blanche’s rape is Stanley’s triumph over her fragile dreams. Murray Schumach comments on the objection of the Hays Office to the rape scene and Williams’s reluctant consent to alter the play, Williams wrote to Breen:

Streetcar is an extremely and peculiarly moral play, in the deepest and truest sense of the term... the rape of Blanche by Stanley is pivotal, integral truth in the play, without which the play loses its meaning which is the ravishment of the tender, the sensitive, and the delicate, by the savage and brutal forces of modern society. It is a poetic plea for comprehension (Schumach 1964: 75-76).

Nevertheless Blanche like other Williams’s heroines remains a peculiar amalgam of virginal fragility and flirtatious insolence. These inherent contradictions add a tinge of charm and grace to their youthful presence. Like Alma in Summer and Smoke Blanche does not voluntarily give in to her undoing but is too weak to protest.
Incidentally Tendulkar’s Leela Benare has fascinating affinities with Blanche and so does Anji in Chiranjeev Saubhagyakanshini. Both Blanche and Leela Benare are school teachers who have to face action by the management on account of immoral behavior. Blanche has had an early affair that materializes into a hapless marriage at the age of sixteen, whereas Benare is involved with her uncle at the tender age of fifteen, both exhibiting licentious behavior. Blanche’s promiscuity stems from a neurotic need for emotional support and a sense of insecurity, whereas Benare tries to seek security in a lasting relationship but is heartlessly turned down by the male-chauvinists who are themselves puny at heart but put on sham bravado. They are trapped within peculiar circumstances seeking escape, but find their hopes thwarted. Blanche is unable to have stable relationship either with Allan or with Mitch and is either engrossed in her fantasies with Shep Huntleigh or is seen mocking, flirting with Stanley. Benare is more unfortunate, firstly by getting involved with her uncle and secondly with a married man where neither relationship can materialize. Both have compromised their sexuality in violating the social and cultural norms and meet social censure and wrath from the indifferent, callous people who surround them. It cannot be denied that Blanche makes amorous advances to Mitch, just as Benare walks into forbidden relationships, seeking gratification from a liaison with a married man that has no future. They are victims of circumstances but contribute to their sufferings by reaping the seeds of their own moral excesses. As Jackson claims, “Like Orestes, she (Blanche) has made a guilty choice, a choice which has involved her in the suffering of others” (Jackson 1965: 81). This is likewise true of Benare. Their moral bankruptcy makes them easy targets for social criticism and reproach; and becomes the greatest cause of their annihilation. Blanche is raped and is left forlorn, devastated to spend her days in an asylum whereas Benare has a more arduous struggle, with a child in her womb perhaps she may have to face the emotional rape forever and survive against the odds.

Tendulkar’s projection of woman as a provocateur and victim seems to be overcast by Williams’s portrayal of women. Williams’s desirous women are mostly framed by the libidinal forces of Lawrencian world. As Charu Mathur mentions about Williams’s female portrayal “the deification of desire is reminiscent of D.H.Lawrence’s total commitment to it. The ‘Animal Joy’ (Streetcar) speaks of the Lawrencian exaltation
of masculine appetite. At the same time, Williams never agreed with Lawrence’s insistence on the subservience of woman with respect to man. He, on the other hand, exposed the paradox that such a presupposition entails” (Mathur 2002: 20). Similarly Tendulkar too invests his women with unparalleled virile energy so that they radically assume the dual roles of giver and receptor and dynamically undermine the conventional mores, trying to negotiate the power equilibrium in man-women relationship horizontally rather than vertically. Power as Michel Foucault defines “is the relationship in which one wishes to direct the behavior of another” (Foucault in Bernaner and Rasmussen 1988). It is power that germinates violence and provides spatial dimensions to Tendulkar’s plays.

In Tendulkar’s Chiranjeev Soubhaqgyakankshini once again the ethical norms are challenged by the desires and wish fulfillment of Anjali Bhide, the central character. Besides Niyatichya Bailala, it is the next Marathi play to be discussed in this chapter which has not yet been translated into English and which was previously entitled Anji. It verges on the psychological problem of schizophrenia and Anji’s rape by the schizophrenic Shekhar Bhagwat, who baffles Anji and mesmerizes her with his quick temperamental changes. Anjali who has passed the marital age like most of the earlier women (Blanche and Benare who are always concerned about the loss of their youth) is searching for a suitable life partner. She finds her virginal fastidiousness desecrated by Shekhar who assumes the role of his own brother intermittently and speaks different languages and switches roles between a NRI and a Bengali babu. Anjali however does not protest over her rape or lose self control like Benare, neither is she totally disintegrated like Blanche but reckons it as a kind of self awakening. She finds herself a completely changed woman after the strange interlude.

Heroine: The first experience ever in the life of twenty nine years. Giving the pain of death and a sense of wonder something unwanted and yet something that should not end. (92)

Later when the narrator learns what disaster has befallen, he utters the word “Sorry”. She unexpectedly raises her voice and questions him,

What’s there to be sorry about? It was the only experience to be preserved, are you unhappy about it? Otherwise perhaps – that pleasure or happiness would never have come to me. I could never
earn it. I was denying it scared of my father. But for that single moment at least I lived. The real sorrow is that I could not live that fleeting moment properly. It ended as it came; but yet it came. At least once it had come! (92-93).

Unexpectedly, Anjali’s reaction to the pitiless and vicious deed is indeed shocking. Instead of being repelled by the ugliness of the experience, she is enthralled by the sheer physicality of the act which would have otherwise never come her way. In a way, Anjali unabashedly not only accepts the occurrence without complaint but cherishes the memory of the momentary pleasure she gained through the bitter-sweet experience. She, then shares a peculiar kinship with Blanche or Benare who are partially responsible for the moral outrage due to their sexual wantonness. John Gassner expresses a similar view about Blanche: Stella’s husband simply “performs the act of destruction that Blanche should have performed for herself, having had within her the seeds of her own destruction” (Gassner in Bloom 1988: 79). Gassner’s comment can be extended to Anjali also for she herself walks into the trap laid by Shekhar, possibly fully aware of the repercussions but in exhibiting completely unexpected reaction, shows her unconventionality as also challenges the orthodox norms of man-woman relationship.

It is significant to probe the demoralizing act as it could present the complexities of the issue at this juncture. Griffin in her study, “Rape: All American Crime”, points out “the male psyche persists in believing that, protestations and struggles to the contrary deep inside her mysterious feminine soul, the female victim has wished for her own fate. The theory that women like being raped extends itself by deduction into the proposition that most or much of rape is provoked by the victim. But this too is a myth” (Griffin in Freeman 1975: 27). Although the facts reveal that women like Blanche, Benare, in a way contribute to their tragic experiences, their lament or outcry cannot expiate their irrevocable acts, it must be admitted that their promiscuity is an appeal for emotional support and social security, a dependence on male support in a thoroughly patriarchal set up. The same holds true for characters like Rama in the explosive play *Vultures* by Tendulkar or Serafina in *The Rose Tattoo*. Serafina’s vow to abstinence is broken primarily because she is confronted by her husband’s infidelity and also enticed by the appearance of Alvaro who as she exclaims to herself, has her husband’s body, with the head of a clown.
Serafina too is quite flagrant about her sexual life. Her voluptuousness expresses itself in her words “My husband was a Sicilian. We had love together every night of the week, we never skipped one, from the night we was married till the night he was killed in his fruit truck on that road there!”(310). She denies being men-crazy but contrarily harbors unbridled sexuality as the words imply. Yet, Serafina’s unflinching faith in matrimony and her single-minded devotion to Rosario prevent her from responding to Alvaro’s sexual appeal. It is only when Rosario’s adulterous relations with Estelle Hohengarten are confirmed that she relents to her temptations. Her fascination for Alvaro betrays her feelings. Her sexuality itself lends an identity to her. In the absence of sexual fulfillment, her maternal disposition too undergoes vital change and she tries to exert power and control over her daughter’s sentiments which perhaps springs from covetousness. Flora is right when she comments- “Sour grapes – sour grapes is your trouble! You’re wild with envy!” (310). Only after her own carnal desires find a release, does she assume a sympathetic attitude towards Rosa and Jack and love at once transforms itself into a felicitous approval. This affirmation of sex is all pervasive in The Rose Tattoo and it evidently reflects the pivotal impact of D.H.Lawrence. Like Lawrence, Williams’s world presents sexuality as a dynamic life force that generates passions and feelings and confers meaning to an otherwise barren existence. This vigorous energy is present not only in the females but in the male protagonists too. Rosario, Alvaro manifest sexual prowess but it is completely different from Stanley’s gaudiness or vulgarity. John in Summer and Smoke is another charming, young man easily swept away by emotions and infatuated by eroticism. He invites Alma to go riding, he makes physical advances to Alma, next time he is seen chasing Rosa Gonzales, then engaged in wild play with Nellie and then a radically changed person who marries Rosa to fulfill his responsibility. John upbraids Alma as a “white-blooded spinster” when she holds back and points to the anatomy chart, insisting that along with the brain that yearns for truth and belly that craves for food, one has to feed “the sex which is hungry for love because it is sometimes lonesome” (221). If Rosa stands for passion, Alma stands for ‘soul’ and her ethereal, spiritual nature makes her reject the sexual advances of John. Alma’s mechanical resistance eventually leads to her psychic and moral collapse for her restrained behavior is not malleable to change, and finally when she switches over
the role, the transformation proves to be disastrous. Her moral frigidity melts down in a volcanic upsurge of promiscuity. This Freudian inevitability “sex comes too violently after too long a period of suppression” (Falk 1961: 102,97) is clearly discernible in Alma, who in the climactic scene tells John “The girl who said ‘no’, she doesn’t exist any more, she died last summer, - suffocated in smoke from something on fire inside her” (243). Alma’s subliminal, physical yearning for John is disenchanted and she tries to recompense it by embracing promiscuity quite intentionally. Alma like Blanche is a romantic idealist, sensitive but vulnerable, the sexual longing and fastidious superiority engenders a rift in their nature and leads to psychological trauma whereas Serafina is able to reconcile her sexual urge with the reality and outlives the turbulent forces.

There is, as Robert Lifton points out in his essay “Woman as Knower”, a “sudden emergence in often exaggerated form of psychological tendencies previously suppressed by social customs” (Lifton in Janeway 1971: 119). He conjectures that this “release phenomenon” produces a “proliferation of the deviant types” (Ibid: 119). Shannon and Maxine in *The Night of Iguana* are again the archetypes of libidinal energy. The alcoholic and neurasthenic J. Lawrence Shannon is a handsome thirty five year old priest who forsakes his faith in religion and is ill-famed for his lechery. Maxine, the Amazonian woman, unfettered by her widowhood can speak in unmasked, bawdy language. Her language, gestures and actions are charged with a kind of vivacity, crudity and lust. She can poke fun at Shannon’s act of raping a minor (a statutory rape) and she can directly speak to Shannon of her desires. Maxine (*chuckling*): “Ha, so you took the young chick and the old hens are squawking about it, Shannon?” (261) or later she asks him “why don’t you lay off the young ones and cultivate an interest in normal grown-up women?” (264). Body recognizes body’s need. Maxine has young hired men who swim and copulate with her nightly. Her sexual appetite is indeed triggered by Shannon whom she offers her dead husband’s shoes and his old bedroom, offering a space reserved for her husband literally and metaphorically. Shannon on the other hand indulges himself in immoral acts and jeopardizes his position as a priest. He justifies his lasciviousness by attributing his unconventionality to his mother’s rigorous training and her objection to his unacceptable behavior in childhood. Lack of parental understanding and support push him to the other extremes of morality. He is unrepentant and deceitful in his mannerisms
when Nonno questions him, whether he is a benedict or bachelor, being a man of God, Shannon indifferently answers “Bachelor, sir, No sane and civilized woman would have me…” (316)

This non-conformism and deviance is unequivocally portrayed in Tendulkar’s Rama in The Vultures and Champa in Sakharam Binder and is in congruence with the playwright’s contention of the unembarrassed rendering of sexuality. Tendulkar’s Sakharam Binder resembles Shannon in more ways than one. If Shannon has blasphemed his religion, Sakharam is quite outspoken about polluting his noble birth by his actions. Born in a noble family of Brahmins, Sakharam behaves like a scavenger as he himself professes. Both are ill-reputed for their ignoble lechery, they are addicted to liquor and drugs. Sakharam has transcended all the limits of decency by entering into contractual cohabitation with deserted women. These men seek the physical gratification without being tied down to the bonds of matrimony. Of course towards the end of the play, Williams in a master-stroke of ambivalence shows Shannon taking delight in a swim with Maxine and Tendulkar’s Sakharam is left with Laxmi in an equally ambiguous situation. Sakharam is incapacitated to act after murdering Champa and silently yields to Laxmi, who seems to have gained over him in her extraordinary display of fortitude and reasoning in the midst of mounting tension. Thus Shannon surrenders to Maxine’s wishes, probably becomes an instrument to satiate her ceaseless voyeuristic desires and Sakharam succumbs to his fate in being paired with Laxmi, but is ironically rendered “impotent” factually and figuratively.

Throughout the play Sakharam speaks about his “itch”, indeed Tendulkar’s idiom and the force of sheer physicality enacted on the stage incited strong reactions from the readers and the spectators alike. Sakharam regards his audacity as honesty and challenges the social norms:

I ask you what’s wrong with it? Damn it all, the body has its appetites, who made it? God. You think He doesn’t know? And He’s supposed to be our Father. We’re not saints. We’re men. I tell you, worship and prayer can’t satisfy the itch. If you want a thing, well, you’ve got to have it! What’s there to hide? And from whom? From our Father? (126-121).
Sakharam’s blasphemous sentiments and his blatant indulgence in physical pleasures certainly share a lot with Shannon who is equally blunt about his sexual misdemeanor. Both try to dodge the consequences of their demoralizing sexuality, Shannon by accepting Maxine’s proposal and Sakharam by yielding to Laxmi. Whilst Sakharam is quite aggressive, both are womanizers, reaping hedonistic pleasures, who at times man-handle the women they are involved with, as if to assert male superiority over female reticence. However their cynical attitude and skepticism is challenged by nonchalant and tough-spirited women. It is in the company of Hannah and Laxmi, physically weak yet iron-willed, spiritually powerful women that both men undergo remarkable transformation. Though not purged of his moral excesses, Shannon’s act of releasing the Iguana is a step towards retribution whereas Sakharam’s act of killing Champa plunges him further into the mire of misdeeds, conversely driving him close to Laxmi.

Again Champa, like Maxine or Alexandra Del lago is a replica of carnal desires. These women have the strength and inordinate sexual power like nymphomaniacs to draw the men to themselves. Their magnetic sexuality converts assertive men to tamed, submissive docile existence. The patriarchal power structure or male monarchy is inversed by the female dominance chiefly exercising the authority through their libidinal energy. In such women the erotic love becomes a symbol of virile energy, almost a masculine force that usurps the male-world and divests them of power, rendering them impotent. They articulate their desires; reap physical pleasures, completely indifferent to the conventional social norms which they intentionally trample upon. Champa not only challenges the patriarchal norms through her lasciviousness but she cajoles the victim who turns into a perpetrator and retaliates with double force. She mercilessly thrashes her own husband in the presence of Dawood and Sakharam who are stupefied with the violent outbursts of Champa and her offensiveness. The language she uses is equally abusive and obscene that pierces the heart and hurts the most. Champa “kicks her husband”, “hits him with her chappal”, “drags him to the door like a sackful of potatoes and throws him out”. Sakharam and Dawood try to restrain her when she slams her fist into his face and pounces on him.

Sakharam: What kind of a woman are you? Look, what you’ve done to him! He’s your husband. Haven’t you a heart?
Champa: No, I don’t have a heart. He chewed it up raw long ago. He brought me from my mother even before I’d become a woman. He married me when I didn’t even know what marriage meant. He’d torture me at night. He branded me, and stuck needles into me and made me do awful, filthy things. I ran away. He brought me back and stuffed chilly powder into that god-awful place, where it hurts most. That bloody pimp! What’s left of my heart now? He tore lumps out of it, he did. He drank my blood. Get up, you pig. I’ll stuff some chilly powder into you now! (167)

Champa is like one possessed. She drinks a lot, swears, and uses obnoxious language. When Sakharam calls her she resolutely answers “I won’t. I didn’t mind it as long as you were a man. I won’t take you now” (193). She boldly tells Sakharam that he has become impotent. Surprisingly Champa who resists Sakharam’s wishes by saying “I don’t like it—all that man-woman stuff” is later attracted to Dawood and goes to him every afternoon as Laxmi informs.

Such peculiar and complex characters as presented to the stage by Williams and Tendulkar are significant endowment to the discourse on gender, because they personify several principles largely unaddressed by the prevalent dramatists. These women are something other than what society has ordained for them and they are objects of desire as well as desiring subjects. The charisma of such a desire vandalizes the norms of feminine behavior and disrupts the customary notions of decorum. These women succeed in their quest at least to some extent by seeking sexual gratification through the interchangeability of male-partners. They are destined to occupy the superior position in a sexual power equilibrium and in the process they seize the masculine prerogative of a conventional social structure. Sex becomes an emblem of emancipation. Thus Serafina wins Alvaro, Maxine finally acquires Shannon, Lady Torrance seeks Val Xavier, and Alexandra though not bonded in marriage, derives her pleasures from Chance Wayne in Williams’s world. Tendulkar’s Rama seeks fulfillment through Rajaninath, Champa finds comfort in Dawood and Laxmi in Sakharam. Here the proscribed object of desire magically substitutes the husband and usually appears in the form of the husband. In a world occupied by such women if sex is brutalization, sex is salvation also.

Each character in Williams as well as Tendulkar is unique but all are endowed with certain common characteristics, a fixation with sex, coupled with strong sexual
drives. Their abnormality suggests that the dramatists find the norms of the society to be erroneous. Fertility and sterility become important sexual attributes in William’s and Tendulkar’s world alike. Not surprisingly then if sterility carries social stigma, the characters apprehensive of infertility radically challenge the established social moral taboos and justify such violation in seeking out sexual potency. Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is green with envy at Mae’s “producing no-neck monsters” and Mae is a “Monster of fertility” (22). She loathes Mae “Because she feels motherhood’s an experience that a woman ought to experience fully! - In order to fully appreciate the wonder and beauty of it! HAH! (22) Fertility here is seen as a key to success. Mae will be qualified to inherit Big Daddy’s fortune because of her fecundity. Like Serafina in *The Rose Tattoo* her productive state certifies her emancipation. Maggie is shrewd enough to realize the circumstances. She can emerge as a conqueror only if she is able to prove her fertility. She is quite persuasive in her efforts to convince Brick and avert the adverse conjuncture of being disinherited, her emphatic yearning is evident when she tells Brick “you and I have not produced any children, are totally childless and therefore totally useless!” (19). Being an outsider in the Pollitt family, like Mae, her identity is determined only in terms of producing an heir for the Estate. Maggie is a clever manipulator and seductress. Maggie’s overpowering femininity clashes with the male ego of Brick who either feigns indifference and withdraws into his own world or tries to be deliberately cruel in attacking her with his crutch or withholding sexual gratification that she pines for. Probably Brick’s deliberate denouncement of physicality ranges on the fears of impotency. As John J. Fritscher elaborates:

… to illustrate this “primordial fear” of the male that he will be held fast, absorbed, annihilated, or emasculated by the female, Williams has inverted what could have been the Earth-Mother-Lover into the wrathful bitch Goddesses who are often his women: the seeds were in Amanda and Blanche; they bloomed in Maggie Pollitt…(Fritscher 1970: 207).

Certainly Williams’s women betray an inclination for carnal satiety. Their uninhibited sexual craving emphatically defines their social conduct and determines their mannerisms.
Like Maggie, Lady in *Orpheus Descending* also consciously speaks of fertility and finds a release for her tormented soul through indulging in love. Maggie, however, can be segregated from other Williams’s heroines in her passionate love for Brick; although Brick grants complete freedom to Maggie to develop extra-marital relations if she desires, Maggie nevertheless remains undaunted. He asks her to “Take a lover!” and she replies “I can’t see a man but you! Even with my eyes closed, I just see you!” (40) Such single-minded faithfulness and passionate love is completely absent in Lady’s nuptial relationship. She consciously violates the social norms and her obsession for fulfillment turns out to be a consolation and comfort for her. She candidly opens up her private life with her husband to Val, telling him “My skin crawled when he touched me. But I endured it. I guess my heart knew that somebody must be coming to take me out of his hell! You did. You came. Now look at me! I’m alive once more!” (333). She reaches a state of completion and contentment when she finally conceives after being barren for a long time. She bursts out triumphantly, “I have life in my body, this dead tree, my body, had burst in flower.” “You’ve given me life, you can go” (337). However Lady is brutally shot down by Jabe for her moral transgression. Sexual consummation seeks fulfillment in conception and hence fertility becomes a seminal factor in the patriarchal world. Heavenly in *Sweet Bird for Youth* has to pay a similar price for her momentary pleasures with Chance Wayne. Bigsby rightly observes that “women in his plays are desperately sexual beings; the consummation which they seek is nevertheless spiritual. The body they embrace is physical enough but what they seek is seldom sexual satisfaction. They long for completion. They seek to close the wound opened up by their birth (Bigsby 1982: 130). Sexual fulfillment becomes an emblem of meaningful existence in Williams’s literary world.

Interestingly, a similar pattern of sexuality linked to fertility is delineated in Tendulkar’s dramatic world. Rama in *Vultures* voices her sentiments in tones quite similar to Lady and provides an outlet to her suppressed desires. She speaks in anguish about her hellish marital life “Everyday, a new death, every minute, a thousand, million deaths. A pain like a million needless stuck in your heart …” (240). Rama’s anguish evidently echoes Lady’s words in *Orpheus Descending*. Rama frantically explodes:
It’s not even my fault! This womb’s healthy and sound, I swear it! I was born to become a mother. This soil’s rich, it’s hungry. But the seed won’t take root. If the seed’s soaked in poison, if its weak, feeble, lifeless, devoid of virtue – then why blame the soil? And if still the soil should cherish that seed – should with god as its witness make efforts – beyond life itself – to guard that seed, to nourish it (241).

In *Orpheus Descending* Lady tells Val,

When a women’s been childless as long as I’ve being childless, it is hard to believe that you’re still able to bear! - We used to have a little fig tree between the house and the orchard. It never bore any fruit, they said it was barren. Time went by, spring after useless spring, and it almost started to die…. Then one day I discovered a small green fig on the tree they said wouldn’t bear! I ran through the wine garden shouting, “Oh, Father, its going to bear, the fig tree is going to bear!” – It seemed such a wonderful thing…. it called for a celebration – I ran to a closet, I opened a box that we kept Christmas ornaments in! ….
… “I’ve won, I’ve won, Mr. Death, I’m going to bear! (338).

The resemblance between Lady and Rama is peculiarly striking. Both are discontented in their marital life and both desire a consoling relationship outside marriage. Lady ventures to convince Val and Rama finds fulfillment in Rajaninath, her brother-in-law’s love. Remarkably both these women aspire for holistic identity as women and perfection that can be attained only in motherhood. They are trapped in a loveless, barren marriage. Lady, once her aim is realized, tells Val that he is free to go and Rama returns to her husband maintaining the guise that he is the father of her child. Regrettably both these women who take bold steps despite being weak at heart are condemned to inhuman treatment and are punished cruelly for their adultery. Lady loses her life and Rama’s hopes are disillusioned forever when her foetus is aborted by Manik.

Similar concern about fertility is voiced in Tendulkar’s *Kamala*. Kamala asks naïve questions to Sarita about how many children she has, when Kamala is told that Sarita was purchased for seven hundred rupees. Kamala humbly contemplates. “It was an expensive bargain, memsahib. If you pay 700, and there are no children …” (34). Ultimately sex is seen as a means to an end in all these complex relationships. It is used as an instrument to achieve perfection and not for sheer physical pleasure. Hence even
physicality expresses variegated shades in these characters. If characters like Alexandra Del lago or Maxine are portrayed as nymphomaniacs and voluptuous, others like Blanche and Serafina seek comfort and security; whereas Lady and Maggie see it as a means to reach the much desired motherhood. Tendulkar’s females also share the same nuances in their attitude to sex. If Anji and Champa are infatuated to the lingering passion, Baby and Laxmi accept their lot and turn to promiscuity as the only solace in their deserted lives, whereas Benare and Rama harbor maternal instincts and are willing to shield their motherhood against all the odds. In such peculiar circumstances ‘consummation’ is the only act of creation in the relentless process of destruction and disintegration. Sexuality comes as an emancipatory force and is depicted as a creative rather than destructive force.

The discussion of variegated shades of sexuality has yet another aspect of forbidden relationships – ‘incest’. Incestuous relations among siblings is the subdued thematic bottom-line of Outcry (1973), one of the neglected plays of Williams that forms a curious contrast to the filial love in Tendulkar’s Baby (1975). The ‘family’ as an institution is threatened to disruption and disintegration in the post-colonial world with the advent of rising influences of industrialization and urbanization. The collapse of the nuclear family in the modern metropolis establishes an intimate connection between economic decline, emotional upheaval and the space of home. The wreckage of marriage, family and relationships has become central to modern drama that is worked out under a substantial typology of home. The newly emerged cultural anarchy in the post-war world demands a redefinition, reinterpretation of relationships that in turn derive their complexities in the spatial, ideological referent called ‘home’. The plays that enact such predicament and plight of siblings in the modern hostile world are Outcry and Baby. Incidentally both these plays have been preceded by masterpieces and have been overshadowed by the successes of the earlier plays. These plays that have remained obscured and abandoned from critical acclaim, dramatize the ‘confinement’ of the siblings and the resultant disillusionment and desolation that marks their suffering.

Tennessee Williams was preoccupied with the Two Character Play during his ‘stoned age’, a period of acute depression triggered by death of his companion Frank Merlo in 1963 that culminated in his involuntary three months confinement at Barnes...
Hospital, St Louis, in autumn 1969. “Confinement has always been the greatest dread of my life,” Williams wrote in his Memoirs; “that can be seen in my play Outcry” (Williams 1975: 233). Confinement for Williams was not merely physical constraint but it was more a consciousness of being enslaved by his own nostalgic memories that had developed an everlasting attachment for the agrarian South. The earlier version of Outcry was The Two Character Play and Williams referred to the later version entitled Outcry as the most significant work and very personal play, and considered it as his own human outcry. He further added that “it was very close to the marrow of his being” and mentioned “I considered Outcry a major work and its misadventure on Broadway has not altered that personal estimate of it” (Ibid 233).

The Outcry can be read as the repeated but ultimately unanswered calls of two characters to each other and to a world that is unreachable and antagonistic to them. The play commences with Felice and Clare, a pair of sibling actors about to perform a play within a play entitled Two Character Play. They are forsaken by their company in a nameless theater of an unidentified foreign country. Within the theatrical performance, they recollect a violent heritage in a small town of the American South. Their gloomy past looms large at the background. Their astrologer father, threatened by their mother with detention to a state asylum, has shot her and then shot himself. The orphan siblings, deprived of insurance money, bereft of supplies, severed from communication, fear to venture outside their house. In an enlightening study, Thomas Postlewait states “Williams regularly portrays the interior thematically as a realm of entrapment and confinement” (Postlewait in Roudane 1997: 239). In the play enacted, however the interior seems to offer a refuge to the siblings. The metatheatrical embellishment that affords the oscillation of the action from one level to the other is not a superfluous technique to impress the readers but it offers a degree of complexity to the plot. The deliberate dissolution of the margins between the two dramatic worlds thematizes the breakdown between reality and representation and knits a fabric of schizophrenic insanity around the characters. The word ‘confinement’ is deliberately forbidden but there is a tacit understanding between Felice and Clare about their imprisonment. Felice is cognizant of the reality when he says “when a word can’t be used, when it’s prohibited, its silence increases its size. It gets larger and larger till it’s so enormous that no house can hold it”
These words justify the intersection of the spaces of home, asylum, prison or theater. The new Bethesda house is an incomplete stage setting on a larger stage “in a huge mausoleum of a theater somewhere that seems like nowhere” (16). On that darkened stage, in a cold, claustrophobic theater, Felice and Clare of the framing play manifest the vulnerabilities of the artist and his art in a cruel world. The artist’s turmoil and inspiration either genuine or externalization of the psychic energy springs forth from that darkness. In *Outcry*, the house is surrounded by “sacred flowers” (39); it has a door that sometimes stands open and is sometimes locked (48); it is a place of “unexpected collisions” (29). For Felice and Clare, as inhabitants of the house in the inner play, there are threats all around: “those vicious boys” (45), “voices from the street” taunting them as loonies (49), neighbors who “gave their son a slingshot to stone the house!” (57). Williams presents his characters with an overwhelming confusion that wrecks and annuls them both as people and as actors, as persons and as dramatis personae. In their attempt to respond to the blows of life, Felice and Clare reduce their art and act to themselves. The actor’s quintessential task that of embodying someone else’s passions and emotions is turned upon itself, as both performers are engrossed in mere self-dramatization. As Kalliopi Nikolopoulou analytically observes “endlessly rehearsing their professional failure in their “real” dialogue, they persistently enact their subjective trauma in the play-within” (Nikolopoulou in Gross 2002: 122). In other words, paralyzed by the ordeal of their family history, the two siblings incarcerate themselves voluntarily, inflicting law and penalty to themselves. Even the hope of acquiring aesthetic transcendence by acting out their affliction vanishes as they enact in an empty theater. Ironically, the empirical audience is forced to confront its own potential nullity in the weird situation.

This psychological and emotional intimacy between the siblings attests to Williams’s intense attachment to his sister, Rose, who undoubtedly remained the powerful inspiration for many of his female protagonists. The unsuccessful lobotomy of Rose and her confinement due to schizophrenia left an indelible mark on the dramatist’s mind. The mental impact was of such magnitude “that brother-sister incest becomes in Williams’s work a figuration of a profound psychic transaction through which two polar principles (gendered or otherwise) interpenetrate to form a totality” (Ibid 128). Such a sense of enclosed space is peculiarly presented in the *Outcry*. Every attempt of Felice and
Clare to transcend their family is defeated, they remain stranded within it. The only effort of Felice to step beyond the door is doomed to failure as he is summoned by the house back inside: “Yes, I’m already defeated. The house is so old, so faded, so warm that, yes, it seems to be breathing. It seems to say, don’t go away. Give up. Come and stay”. Such a gentle command! What do I do? Naturally, I obey (55). The only available alternative in this game is to trail the parental model: murder and suicide. Felice alludes to the likelihood of Clare’s suicide and relates his denial to leave the house to his concern for Clare who might attempt to kill herself if left unguarded. On the other hand Clare refutes any intentions of suicide and conversely accuses Felice of homicidal fantasies, her fears being aggravated by his custody of the pistol. After their last attempt to exit the house is foiled, Felice realizes that there is “nothing at all left to do” (58) other than (re)turning to the revolver as the remedy. Clare’s movements and actions tantamount to hysteria intermittently display moments of rationality, realism and perseverance.

Felice: We’re going to do The Two Character Play as we’ve never done it before.
Clare: Impossible.
Felice: Necessary.
Clare: Some necessary things are impossible.
Felice: And some impossible things are necessary (19).

The animosity implicit in the argument shows Clare as the realist who sees the engagement with the impossible as a worthless endeavor. The only escape for Clare and Felice seems to be death, the ultimate end of their ordeal.

Similar emotional and physical confinement is central to Vijay Tendulkar’s Baby. It is a play that remained away from critical approbation, which figures out the developing tensions in relationships when threatened by unfavorable circumstances. Baby is a touching play about the turmoil of a sister and her brother Raghav who desperately try to brave the calamities. If Felice and Clare’s subsequent efforts to leave the house are completely paralyzed, Baby and Raghav’s diagonally contrasting attempts to remain safe within the shelter are completely ruined. Baby is an innocent girl who has to succumb to a situation in which she finds herself mercilessly trapped. Raghav, her brother has to go the jail under false charges filed by Shivapa when he is manhandled by Raghav in his attempt to molest Baby. If Raghav truly bears the miseries of imprisonment, Baby
metaphorically finds herself trapped after being ravished by Shivapa and forced to be his mistress. Unfortunately, Raghav, who has completely broken down in his imprisonment, is left severely shocked and agonized to find Baby’s helpless acceptance of fate for survival.

Raghav: How did all this happen?
Baby: What?
Raghav: All this—No sooner I begin to think of it, I feel as if I am being smothered, suffocated (Tendulkar 2007: 186).

However, Tendulkar’s Baby does not give up hope and tries to seek happiness by seeking refuge in Phatarphekar’s novels and even entertaining guests like Karve, both sources of temporary relief in her otherwise darkened world. Surprisingly Baby never contemplates about death as being a means of escape even in the moment of despair, for she has developed her own philosophy: “Suicide is cowardly. No matter how difficult, we mustn’t give up hope; we must keep making the effort. Life is a battle, Raghav! And later in the play she voices her genuine feelings, “One who struggles can’t afford to despair” (187).

Baby is certainly an appealing character who tries to cling to life despite least hope for change and bears no grudges for her lot. She not only belittles herself to remain under the protective care of Shivapa, but also willingly consents to his strange demands, parading like a coquette, behaving like a pet dog and slavishly obeying him. Baby’s plight becomes all the more intense and pathetic when she gesticulates like a faithful dog and pleases Shivapa with gestures that he demands. Her cloistered world is temporarily disturbed with the return of Raghav. The tragedy of the siblings is truly striking as none can venture to escape the predestined fate. It is the distinct Indian ethos evoked by Tendulkar that demands a discomfited realization of the patriarchal set-up where greater power is vested at the hands of men though they are misfits in the world. Like Clare in the earlier play, Raghav has already given up the battle of life; he is completely shattered by the confrontation of reality but earlier he has tried to grapple with the conditions by challenging Shivapa who proves to be more powerful of the two. His dilemma is more acute for his actual imprisonment has ensnared him in fears. His suffocation is more intense as he helplessly witnesses the anguish of his sister, her brutal exploitation but is too feeble, impotent to alter her pitiable condition. His emotional and psychological
turbulence incapacitate him to act second time as Baby’s rescuer, instead he becomes a puppet in the hands of Shivapa. Shivapa, the goon not only despoils Baby, but also extracts physical pleasures ranging on inhuman perversity and demands financial assistance from her for his sick wife. Baby is drawn in more sympathetic colours particularly because she is purely commodified by Shivapa and even Raghav, who is weak to lift the cloud of suffering that shrouds her world. Incidentally Baby works incessantly to satisfy the demands of these men who are dependent on her- one who physically rapes her and the other who emotionally drains her. Neither of the men who pose as her saviors is able to offer solace to her or even alleviate her sufferings. Baby clings to Shivapa to save herself from public recrimination, with the awareness that becoming his mistress is the only means of escape from suicide or prostitution. She invites Karve with the hope of fulfilling her fantasies of passionate love. She agrees to keep Raghav with her despite her embarrassment as he would provide some help in her household chores. All these hopes and wishes are frustrated as these men lack the moral courage and strength that she desires and the situation demands.

Baby’s predicament is even more disquieting because she is fully conscious of her oppression, wishes to liberate herself from the bondage but finds no way out. Even her momentary romantic escapade with Karve is cursed by the arrival of Shivapa, who seems to be the wicked hand that ruthlessly rules her world. Tied to Baby’s destiny is the uncertain fate of Raghav, who has no other relation except his sister, and is incapable of supporting himself, let alone help her out of the quagmire of woes. Regrettably these siblings are caught in unusual circumstances, which they can neither overcome nor evade. In Baby, the roles of brother and sister seem to be subverted. The victimized sister unable to strike back, accepts her lot and continues her fight for survival whereas Raghav, who is completely deprived of physical or mental strength, seeks refuge from the hostile world. He is utterly paralyzed to act so that his manliness forsakes him and the feminine anxiety and timidity enveloped in fear transform him to a recluse. Baby emerges from her physical and psychological trauma and is willing to face the world but Raghav’s depression and fears drive him to the verge of insanity.

The peculiarity of events discussed in both plays establishes a strange affinity between the two works. These plays revolve around the fate of siblings who struggle to
escape the reality but fail in their endeavor. Even Baby who alone has some rational views about life depends on the quixotic fantasies that allow her fleeting instances of joy. Strangely, Clare and Felice never try to grab the opportunities they get to move out of their world whereas Baby wishes to venture but the responsibilities of Raghav and the threat of Shivapa are fetters that compel her to withdraw in her life. The autobiographical strain in *Outcry* adds a new dimension to the play. In Tendulkar’s play cultural upbringing, social consciousness and patriarchal ideology act as the restraints that render a complexity to the texture. No personal tinge of strained relationships is discerned in Tendulkar’s play as it forms an integral part of Williams’s drama, yet *Baby* too reaches the similar heights of intensity and emotional upheaval. These plays evidently evoke an atmosphere of suffocation and the helplessness of the human beings under the pressures of callous, dispassionate, modernized world that configures complete alienation of man. *Outcry* is the emotional appeal of the siblings who are utterly desolate and forsaken whereas *Baby* questions the patriarchal set-up of the Indian society that divests a single woman of the right to respectable living. If Williams effectively portrays the plea for public acceptance and sympathetic understanding of relationships, Tendulkar focuses on the unfortunate modern woman who has acquired the right to earn but not the right to live in honor. In the urbanized and industrialized modern world it is purely the utilitarianism that thrives and the women are again destined to be perpetually commodified and disgraced despite their capabilities and potentials. Felice and Clare’s interdependence carries subtle underpinnings of incest, contrarily Baby and Raghav display pure, affectionate love for each other. *Outcry* revolves around personal axis of delivering a passionate consideration of filial love conversely *Baby* raises social issues and hence it voices the writer’s concern at the universal level where Baby represents those women who are deliberately exploited and marginalized by the cold, unfeeling world. To conclude, it may be said that both Williams and Tendulkar have tried to forefront issues of social importance through an intricate pattern of filial relationships and boldly displayed the fabric of social life that denies individuality and significance to these kinships. Beyond these claustrophobic fears are masked the greater truths about the mute sufferings of the imprisoned souls and the deaf social institutions that define ‘home’ as the secure abode but virtually transform it into a prison-house that becomes a smothering,
enclosed space. These plays effectively highlight the psychological traumas of the siblings and their futile efforts to dismantle themselves from their endless turmoil. Williams’s play delves into the innermost recesses of human psychology but reveals the soul-shattering darkness within, nevertheless Tendulkar’s work fathoms the unavoidable circumstances but renders the indomitable spirit of Baby who rises like a phoenix in the midst of her affliction and continues her relentless struggle. Williams and Tendulkar have effectively depicted the emotional world of the siblings who deserve greater understanding from the outside world.

Another shade of sexuality is manifested in the portrayal of homosexuality by both the playwrights. It is especially more conspicuous in Williams’s play as Williams himself was a homosexual. Nevertheless Blanche’s husband Allan shoots himself when she discovers the truth and confronts him in *The Streetcar*, whereas in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Maggie tries to force Skipper to make love to her and demands to know the truth from him. Strangely enough, in both the plays, Williams shows how the homosexuals are marginalized and criticized so that the unbearable pain of confession ultimately drives them to despair and death. Allan commits suicide and Skipper drowns himself in drugs and liquor embracing death rather than life. Brick is enticed by Maggie, persuaded by Big Daddy to own the truth about his androgynous relationship with Skipper and later to accept heterosexual life. As the writer, the social pressure and demands from the director forced Williams to revise the last act and show Brick as a changed individual. Williams’s note in the text with two versions of the third act reveals that director Elia Kazan “had definite reservations” about the third act. He felt that Big Daddy was too “vivid and important” to disappear after the second act, that Brick “should undergo some apparent mutation as a result of the virtual vivisection that he undergoes in his interview with his father” and that Maggie should be “more clearly sympathetic to the audience.” (Williams in Day and Wood 1978: 97). After relenting about Maggie, Williams explains: “I didn’t want Big daddy to reappear in Act 3 and I felt that the moral paralysis of Brick was a root thing in his tragedy…. Because I don’t believe that a conversation, however revelatory, ever effects so immediate a change in the heart or even conduct of person in Brick’s state of spiritual disrepair. However, I wanted Kazan to direct the play, and … I was fearful that I would lose his interest if I didn’t reexamine the script from his point of
view” (Ibid: 97). Four years later Williams was to remark in an article in Playbill “A director of serious plays must learn to accept the fact that nobody knows a play better than the man who wrote it” (Ibid: 97). Years later Kazan admitted that “Williams…. knew what he’d written and how he would like it staged. I took liberties with his work to yield to my own taste and my overriding tendencies” (Kazan 1988: 329). Regrettably, it took years to appreciate how much better Williams’s original third act served the play in the production.

Tendulkar’s plays deal with variegated social issues. His play *Mitrachi Goshta* singularly devotes itself to the quintessence of homosexuality. In case of Williams’s his art served as a safe outlet for his repressed desires and so his handling the unfamiliar theme could be justified as a psychological urge. Tendulkar’s selection of the theme certainly shows his deliberate probe into the psycho-sexual realm and his attempt to bring to forefront issues that lay hidden under the dark underbelly of the civilized world.

The play was inspired by a real life incident. The infatuation which Mitra has for another girl ends in a major crises, finally unable to get the desired satisfaction. Mitra commits suicide. The tragic end in the real life was portrayed with equal fervor and strength by Tendulkar. Initially drafted as a short story, the play materialized but was neither well received from the critical circle nor from the audience. Mitra’s lesbianism was a crude shock to the morally conscious middle class Marathi audience. The fact needs to be acknowledged that Tendulkar was quite aware of the aftermath of such an outrageous and inflammable social issue but unlike Williams he did not compromise with the ending or try to offer any comfortable solution to the major moral problems he raised within the auspices of his drama. This uncompromising talent finds expression in his words:

> Theatre – which includes writing plays – is for the thick-skinned and the stubborn. There is nothing like humane consideration there. Every effort is looked at as a possible offense. Offense against someone’s good taste, against the good old norms of the theatre, against the society and the critics – at least some of them who imagine themselves to be guardians of all this….. You are, to quote Tennessee Williams, a cat on a hot tin roof. You must learn to relax as your behind gets scorched, if you want to be in this art” (Tendulkar 2003: xvii).
Tendulkar’s words certainly establish an unfailing bond between the two dramatists, for he also like Williams had dared to speak, to show the unpleasant, the unacceptable yet undeniable face of ugly realities. Williams too expressed his dissatisfaction at the response of the audience who failed to perceive the artistic concerns. In an attempt to modify the complacency of such spectators, he boldly stated:

A cage represents security as well as confinement to a bird that has grown used to being in it; and when a theatrical work kicks over the traces with such apparent insouciance, security seems challenged and, instead of participating in its sense of freedom, one out of a certain number of playgoers will rush back out to the more accustomed implausibility of the street he lives on (Williams 1971: 422).

Both believed that violence is intrinsic to human nature and readily faced the controversies that threatened to engulf their versatile output on stage. Prof. Madhukar Lohi criticized Tendulkar’s plays for being modeled on the Euro-American indulgence in obscenity and sex and so he outrightly denigrated them as belonging to the ‘Theatre of sex’ (Lohi 2006: 147). A P Dani mentions: “Tendulkar has been criticized for showing hideous, horrific and repulsive melodramatic actions on the stage as does Tennessee Williams” (Dani in Madge 2007: 115). In surprisingly contradictory response Raykar not only defends but finds Tendulkar’s portrayal of violence laudable.

Today as one feels happy about Harold Pinter, a very powerful British dramatist, poet and activist getting the 2005 Nobel Prize for literature for sending across a strong message of peace through presentation of violence and power dynamics in his plays, as much through silences as through dialogue, one feels sad that Vijay Tendulkar, another significant writer in the Indian and may be, global context writing consistently about power dynamics, decay and degeneration of values and the silencing and gagging of the weak and the oppressed has not been honoured with the Dnyanapeeth award (Raykar 2007: 44).

Such polemic responses and vehement reactions in fact have made Tendulkar more enigmatic and curiously captivating. If Dani emphasized the impact of Williams on Tendulkar, Arun Sadhu was outspoken about Tendulkar’s supremacy over his western
counterparts. “The last half decade was the era of Tendulkar; the statement does not require reaffirmation of Indian scholars or Western critics. His plays and films offered a new outlook to the intellectuals worldwide” (Sadhu in *Sakal*, 7).

His fixation with violence and aggression was not mere sensualism but an eye-opener that forced modern man to come to terms with reality. However, though Tendulkar’s art was influenced by Western dramatists like Ibsen, Artaud, or Williams the songs that he piped were invariably his own remarkable contribution to the Marathi stage and the international drama as a whole. There are some marked differences in these writers who have much in common. One of the major differences that set them apart is Williams’s recurring thematic pattern. His nostalgic concern for the vanishing idyll of the South and his overpowering indulgence in homosexuality visibly colored his creative art but also threatened it with monotonous restatement. Contrarily, Tendulkar’s plays harping a new tune in each play exhibited the nuances in thematic, stylistic patterns and substantiated his experimentalism with fresh perspectives. If it is comparatively easier to nail down the leitmotif in Williams’s plays it is equally complex and challenging to single out a common cord in Tendulkar’s plays that embrace diverse issues and again ascertain his multi-faceted talent.

This monotonous repetition that compelled Williams to retrace his steps to the haunting past led critics such as Hirsh to admit regretfully “Williams remained aloof from trends in American drama, continuing to create plays out of the same basic neurotic conflicts in his personality. Williams continued, that is, to borrow from and to be influenced by his own work; as critics of the later plays have all too frequently observed, Williams, heedless of external influences, plagiarizes himself” (Hirsch 1979: 17). Williams was singled out for self-plagiarism where Tendulkar was targeted for plagiarism, imitating others. It was a fallacious charge against Tendulkar that could not be proved but Williams undoubtedly spun his plays around himself thus limiting the scope of his themes.

The exotic South textured the plays of Williams and affixed the label of a regional writer on him.

I write out of love for the south… But I can’t expect Southerners to realize that my writing about them is an expression of love. It is
out of regret for a South that no longer exists that I write of the forces that have destroyed it… the south had a way of life that I am just old enough to remember – a culture that had grace, elegance… an inbred culture… not a society based on money, as in the North. I write out of regret for that… I write about the South because I think the war between romanticism and the hostility to it is very sharp there. (Williams in Bigsby 1992: 49)

The agrarian South held a lingering passion for Williams who could neither overcome its empowering spell nor found an appropriate substitute for his long lost haven. His plays awarded him the room to recreate it. However such provincialism did not confine the artistic world of Tendulkar and endowed his works with universality, extending them beyond temporal and spatial dimensions. Tendulkar portrayed the contemporary Indian society but never operated within the limits of any region or province. His dramatis personae moving beyond stereotypical temperaments are universalized figures that rendered atypical mannerisms and attitudes.

The aesthetic and sentimental pre-occupation with violence and sex in both Tendulkar’s and Williams’s works remained synonymous with controversies and turbulence. Yet Williams’s and Tendulkar’s dissection of sexual conflicts and aggression anticipated the greater bloodshed and sexual candidness in the plays and films of the later years. The spectacularly designed and intensely realized passions conspicuously nourished the later works and left an ever-lasting imprint on theatre. The elaborate discussion of the treatment of violence and sex determines the artistic intimacy with Williams that featured the works of Tendulkar. Sharing the same ideologies of presentation, battling similar forces of orthodoxy and conservatism, they paved way for new dynamism and demanded compassionate estimation of their art. Assuredly, Williams and Tendulkar offered a critique of the prevalent ideologies and challenged social dogmatism. The theatrical spectacle that they launched portrayed a world prone to intimidation and physical violence. The representation of uncouth physicality elicited strong reactions, being unpalatable to public tastes yet both declined to compromise their artistic liberties or alter their perception for catering to social demand. Though not flawless, their plays presented a faithful image of the debauchery and ugliness that was rampant in the society. Specifically they refrained from authorial comments or moralistic stance retaining the ambivalence and assigning free space for the responses of their
readers or viewers, rejoicing their authorial freedom. In ‘Authors and Writers’ Roland Barthes insists that, for the author, to write is an intransitive verb; hence it can never explain the world, or at least, when it claims to explain the world, it does so only the better to conceal its ambiguity: once the explanation is fixed in a work, it immediately becomes an ambiguous product of the real, to which it is linked by perspective (Barthes in Sontag 1983: 187). Hence it is inexplicable, irrational, ceaselessly intriguing that forms a part of Tendulkar’s and Williams’s artistic worlds.

As a dramatic innovator, Williams was apparently “a connoisseur of the visual and a celebrant of the magical textures of the human body live on stage” (Roudane, 1997: 2). Williams’s poetic language breathed life into words, created an alluring ambience and liberated the stage from the constraints of Ibsenesque realism by entering into a new theatrical world of “Plastic Theatre”. Williams’s works granted ethereal quality to words, weaved magical patterns through the paraphernalia of symbolism, scenic images, non-verbal expression augmented with dexterous use of lights, music and sets.

Similar experimentalism characterized Tendulkar’s theatrical output. Tendulkar’s Ghashiram Kotwal that proved to be milestone in Marathi theatre was fortified by a marvelous blend of folk forms, ritualistic celebration with a slice of historical representation. The innovative use of the human wall that served as an excellent symbol, juxtaposing secrecy in enacting the wall and revelation in serving as the singing chorus is indeed a remarkable contribution. The rich folk theatre traditions like the Khela, the Dashavatar, the Tamasha, the Gondhal, the Bharud, the Bahurupee and the Waghya Murali had a lingering impact. Such artistic finesse interwoven in the fabric of the play exclusively marked Tendulkar’s unsurmountable literary talent.

It was not only the technical innovativeness but enduring gallery of portraits that Williams and Tendulkar offered to the theatre. It is very difficult to justify the moral decrepitude of Sakharam or Shannon, or account for the perversities of Arun in Kanyadaan or Sebastian in Suddenly Last Summer, yet they are not unconvincing characters. The writers have indeed run the risk of representing irredeemable characters with the exception of Shannon, whose act of releasing the Iguana cures him of his blemishes. All these perplexing anti-heroes replicate the darker facets of mankind, unfathomable and problematic but part of our society, products of the unfeeling
consumerist world that cultivates unbridled lust and penchant for power and gives rise to the unhygienic power structure where weakness of one is the strength of another. So Sakharam is always on hunt for forsaken women, Shannon ready to exploit young girls, Arun exercising all his might on his weak, feeble wife and Sebastian who beguiles the impoverished paupers. They are the products of the mercenary, materialistic world that unacknowledgingly advocates “use and throw” culture that is in vogue. Each is guided by his own selfish interests that blinkers them from human consideration and conversely converts them into wretched villains. The fallacious vision of the world blinds them to their own vices and plunges them deeper into the world of evil and inhuman perversities.

Presumably, it is impossible to change these modern dacoits who rob the world of its values and shield themselves behind vulnerable, easily gullible women. Sakharam seeks Laxmi’s help. Shannon receives moral support from Hannah, Sebastian from his mother and Catherine and Arun’s bestiality remains unchecked because of his uncomplaining, submissive wife. It can be argued that this moral corruption is a product of loveless relationships. It is love alone that can nurture lasting relationships and check the emotional upheaval that disrupts inner and outer worlds. Incidentally both Williams and Tendulkar have effectively portrayed the electrifying impact of love through their plays. Shannon and Sakharam show remarkable changes in their demeanor and their bestiality seems to be monitored by Maxine and Laxmi repectively when they consent to stay together. Though their lives do not promise perfect marital bliss, it appeases their burning desires and reins their wavering loyalties.

Love can be the binding force despite all the hurdles. This is evidently, realised in Maggie’s attachment for Brick, and Baby’s or Anjali Bhide’s craving for love and abiding relationships. Had Blanche or Benare been fortunate to be awarded with this invigorating force of love, they would have been like Serafina or Rosa and no more Almas, Blanches or Benares would be yearning for love and understanding from strangers. Life then would not have been an arduous struggle but a sweet journey.

The thematic pattern, intricate relationships, unforgettable gallery of characters, subtleties and nuances of language undisputedly marked the analogies betwixt the legendary writers but in no way ascertained that Tendulkar’s writings were derivative. Resemblance of creative perspectives certainly is not a parameter to demean or gauge
Tendulkar’s plays as imitative or derivative; conversely it pre-supposes a greater understanding as well as sagacious outlook. Noticeably, as an Indian writer, Tendulkar’s exposure to other regional and western writers captured his interests. His radicalism and unconstrained delineation of moral corruption was fashioned on the works of western writers such as Brecht, Ibsen, D.H.Lawrence and Artaud but his art singularly displayed dominant impact of Tennessee Williams and though not a slavish replication it was apparently shaped by Williams’s dramatic oeuvre. Critics and scholars may not have discerned Williams’s influence on Tendulkar’s works in full measure; nonetheless his plays reflect optimum resonance of Williams’s artistic endeavor. Williams’s distinctive position as an experimental dramatist ascribed a canonical status and worldwide acclaim to him which on the contrary were not the avenues easily opened up for Tendulkar, the writer of similar stature. Ironically, valorization and canonical status commensurate to Tendulkar’s aesthetic achievements are still in the offing. These parallelisms moreover do not jeopardize Tendulkar’s unique contribution to the Indian theater; rather credit the dramatist’s liberal, unbiased viewpoint that established an affinity across the globe. This comparative enterprise is a humble attempt to appeal to the so-called champions of modesty and moral crusaders to recognize and respect the sovereignty of a writer and decipher the serious implications of his creative talent lest the war for recognition will be lost at ‘home’ before being fought ‘abroad’. His art claims appreciation and unprejudiced consideration, besides acknowledgement of the co-existence of the baser realities and alluring splendor in the artistic odyssey.

Arthur Miller’s scintillating comment on the universality of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* can be extended to the entire artistic corpus of both the dramatists: “In an atmosphere… of poetic conflict, in a world that is eternal and not merely this world – it provided more evidence that Williams’s preoccupation extends beyond the surface realities of the relationships and beyond the psychiatric connotations of homosexuality and impotence. In every conceivable fashion there was established a goal beyond sheer behavior. We were made to see, I believe, an ulterior pantheon of forces and a play of symbols as well as of characters” (Miller 1978: 190-91). Both these playwrights were feted with multi-faceted retrospective of their works in their life-time, an honour denied to most writers and artistes whose “genius” is often discovered posthumously.