CHAPTER FIVE

TECHNIQUE

A study of Tendulkar’s plays from dramaturgical point of view reveals that he is a master craftsman of the dramatic art. He has enriched the audience’s theatrical experience with his brilliant dramatic technique which is intricately bound with the themes of his plays. This chapter examines the technique employed by Tendulkar in his eight plays translated into English and attempts to bring out its distinctive features.

The study of Tendulkar’s plays in the previous chapters has shown that he is an out and out realist in the choice of his themes and the treatment of his characters. The same thing is observed about Tendulkar’s stage technique. He uses a realistic, objective, yet socially aware and detailed method of artistic presentation in his plays. His plays are essentially theatrical in the sense that they are written with an eye to the conditions of performance on the stage. He employs a suitable dramatic technique as per the content of his play as well as the necessities of stage representation. Being a hard-core realist, he tries to present contemporary reality in his plays. His plays cannot be classified into conventional tragedies or comedies. They do not aim at making the reader-audience laugh or weep. They aim at making the reader-audience conscious about life and its problems and think about it.

Tendulkar’s Style of Playwriting:

Tendulkar does not avowedly follow any particular trend of playwriting such as expressionism, absurdism, existentialism or naturalism. However, Tendulkar’s style of writing appears to be closer to the naturalistic vein. Shanta Gokhale observes that naturalism appears to be the characteristic manner of expression in Tendulkar’s
plays. She credits it to Tendulkar’s being an inveterate observer of humankind.¹ Naturalism is a style of writing that shows people, things and experiences as they are really without getting influenced by one’s emotions. It aims at presenting the slices of life. The situations and people in Tendulkar’s plays are very like those in real life.

According to M.H. Abrams, naturalism aims at presenting an accurate imitation of life as it is and prefers the average, the commonplace, and the everyday over the rarer aspects of the contemporary scene.² A naturalistic play is realistic both in subject and manner. The characters are chosen from the middle class or the working class and are usually people without exceptional endowments. The literary figures such as Emile Zola, George Moore, Theodore Dreiser and Eugene O’Neill are connected with naturalism.

The naturalistic form drives a writer into the minutiae of everyday life so that credible characters and situations are created. Tendulkar’s preoccupation with contemporary reality made naturalism a suitable form for the expression of his content. He chose his subjects from the world around him. His plays represent average humanity and its concerns. He stresses on visual concreteness of the settings in his plays. The use of everyday prose and elimination of soliloquies makes his plays life-like. Like other naturalistic writers, Tendulkar also believed that the everyday life of the middle and lower class people of his own time provided subjects worthy of serious literary treatment to be rendered without artificiality and with scrupulous care for accuracy of details. Aspects of the naturalistic selection and management of materials and a brutal frankness of manner are apparent in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar. A.J. Sebastian and N.D.R. Chandra write: “Naturalism in literature calls for an objective and empirical presentation of human beings…Naturalistic writers reject free will in man and believe that human behaviour is controlled by instinct,
emotion, or social and economic factors.” Tendulkar also believes that man is merely a higher-order animal whose character and fortunes are determined by his heredity and environment. Some of his characters exhibit strong animal drives such as greed, excessive lust and the tendency to be violent. They are subject to the social and economic forces of the milieu in which they are born. Tendulkar says in an interview given to Shailaja Wadikar, “Whatever is there in my life, or people’s lives is reflected in my plays. There is very little fictitious in my plays.” Thus Tendulkar has depicted his reactions to the contemporary situations in his plays.

**Tendulkar’s Views on Dramatic Technique:**

Playwriting is a highly technical medium. A playwright has to adjust to certain technical demands of the play’s presentation on the stage and function within its limitations. While delivering the prestigious Shri Ram Memorial Lectures for Performing Arts in 1997 in New Delhi, Tendulkar has expressed his views on the technique in playwriting. He has elaborated on the importance of a playwright possessing the basic and essential sense of structure or form of the play. According to Tendulkar, a play must have a strong structure or framework on which its plot rests. Just like architecture, a play’s structure should have a base and an outer form which rests on it. Without this elementary requirement which every structure has, a play will not be successful as the lack of support of the outer form to its inner content may result in the play’s structure collapsing. The performance of a play cannot involve the audience and affect it deeply if its structure is faulty. A strong and long lasting structure acts as the binding element of the play and allows it to endure through time. It allows the plot a fluent and steady movement. A play with a strong structure can grip and move us. Commenting upon the playwright’s development of his dramatic technique, Tendulkar says that the technique has to become a part of the playwright’s
subconscious mind and should function naturally like an extended entity just as his mind and body function together. According to Tendulkar, a playwright needs to get complete mastery over his medium by working sincerely and devotedly for a long time. He needs to internalize the skills required for his medium. Unless the playwright is careful, the technique and the content may fall apart. There is also the danger of technique overshadowing the content which a playwright should guard against. Tendulkar suggests that a playwright should internalize the theatre with its do’s and don’ts by working in the theatre.

Tendulkar had learnt the skill of structuring his plays by persistently watching and analysing performances of plays in the early part of his career. He used to watch the complete performances even if the plays were of an inferior quality. He says: “I must have seen more bad plays than good ones. But I think it helped me in internalizing the technique of playwriting – especially the structuring of play. Bad plays provoked me mentally to correct their structures in my own way which, I think, was an excellent exercise.” In addition to watching performances of various plays, Tendulkar also used to spend a lot of time watching the rehearsals of his own plays. He found the inner mechanism of his plays being laid bare and discussed in detail in their rehearsals. He learnt to correct the faults of his plays by observing their rehearsals. He kept experimenting and committing mistakes and learnt from them.

Though writing a play is an individual activity, its performance is a collective effort by a team of people related to theatre. The director, the actors and the technicians work on the written play and the concept of the playwright may be modified in the process of the interpretation of his work by these people. A play with a sound structure can stand its ground, whereas, a weak play may get modified into an entirely different play at this stage. According to Tendulkar, a play written for stage is
meant to be seen as well as heard. A playwright should be able to utilize the visual aspect of theatre properly. A skilful use of this aspect helps in presenting the content of the play clearly. Thus the use of the visual element is an important part of dramatic technique and the playwright should be conscious of it. If the playwright does not pay attention to the visual element in his text, a director may reinterpret the play visually and change its sense to give vent to his own creative talents. Gowri Ramnarayan writes that Tendulkar disliked tampering of the sense in his text of a play and tried to prevent directorial interference by making his script quite tight.\(^8\)

**Analysis of Technique in Tendulkar’s Plays:**

There are variations not only of themes but also of form in Tendulkar’s eight plays under the present study. These plays are fine examples of Tendulkar’s craftsmanship as a playwright. According to Arundhati Banerjee, it is the content of Tendulkar’s plays that determines their form.\(^9\) Five of these plays - *The Vultures*, *Sakharam Binder*, *A Friend’s Story*, *Kamala*, and *Kanyadaan*, follow the naturalistic model of playwriting. *Silence! The Court is in Session* and *Encounter in Umbagland* are allegorical in nature, whereas *Ghashiram Kotwal* is a blend of different folk forms. Tendulkar’s casting of various themes into appropriate structures bears testimony to his multifaceted creative genius. He has given a new direction to contemporary Indian theatre by his innovative experimentation with the form and technique of drama.

*Silence! The Court is in Session* is a three-act play. The action takes place in a hall near a village. As the setting remains the same throughout the play and there is not much lapse of time, there are no scene divisions of the acts in the play. Through the dialogue between Leela Benare, the protagonist of the play and Samant, a villager, Tendulkar provides the background information to the reader-audience. N.S.Dharan
comments that the style that Tendulkar uses in Silence! The Court is in Session is demotic and modeled on the language, rhythms, and associations of ordinary speech. Through Benare’s sarcastic and bitter remarks about the people she has to deal with in her professional and personal life, the playwright hints at the crisis in her life. Benare’s attempt to flirt with Samant is brought out through her efforts to get close to Samant on a few occasions on flimsy pretexts. While asserting her will to live her life as per her own wishes, Benare is described as placing her hand on her stomach unconsciously. Her action and words subtly hint at her unwed pregnancy. The playwright brings out Benare’s experiences and her deep inner feelings through the four short poems which she recites during the play. The first of these poems which appears in the first act deals with Benare’s adolescent love-affair with her own maternal uncle and her family’s opposition to it. Tendulkar highlights Benare’s unconventional behaviour through her words as well as actions. He also shows that her fellow actors who want to get even with her for her sarcastic remarks about them, unitedly decide to make her the accused in the mock-trial. Anju Bala Agarwal observes: “In this play (Silence! The Court is in Session), an actress (Benare) is turned upon by her fellow players turning a rehearsal into a mock trial where she is on the dock for infanticide and immorality. Her attackers are weaker than her and keep up the pretence of authority in order to condemn her.” Benare has disregarded the customs of society. Her fellow actors gang up to discipline her in the garb of representing the society. The clash between Benare and her fellow actors stands for the battle between the society who wants an individual to behave according to its customs and the individual who wants to follow his own wishes. The mock trial conducted against Benare symbolises society’s oppression of an individual who breaks its conventions. Thus the symbolical meaning of the mock trial makes the play allegorical in nature.
The first act ends with everyone looking grave and Benare in a stunned condition with her being accused of the crime of infanticide. The second act begins with everybody in the same pose. It signifies the continuity of time during the action of the play. The sombre atmosphere is lightened by Samant’s arrival with betel-leaves and cigarettes. Benare’s fellow actors engage themselves in small talk but she appears to be lost in a world of her own. She cannot come out of the shock of being accused of infanticide. She recovers after some time and pokes fun at Mrs.Kashikar. It suggests that she retains some of her earlier playfulness still. When the mock trial resumes and her personal life is gradually exposed to humiliate her, Benare goes into a complete silence. When Samant objects to the false accusations being made at Benare, Karnik reminds him that Benare’s crime itself is imaginary. Through Karnik’s remark, Tendulkar appears to be reminding the audience of this fact. Samant testifies of having heard a woman appealing to Prof.Damle to accept the responsibility of her pregnancy. From Benare’s tense reaction to Samant’s speech and the vehemence with which she refutes the happening of any such incident, Tendulkar makes her fellow-actors as well as the audience suspect that the imaginary incident narrated by Samant may be close to reality. Tendulkar mentions that Benare looks agitated and her agony seems to excite everyone except Samant. The playwright makes the reader-audience aware of the true nature of Benare’s fellow actors through their actions. When Benare goes to the inner room, they voice their suspicion about Benare’s condition. The pretence of the mock trial falls away as Benare appears on the scene while they are discussing the possibility of Benare’s having become pregnant as a result of her affair with Damle. Benare’s attempt to leave the rehearsal and go out is thwarted because of the door having become locked from outside due to a faulty door-bolt. According to Arundhati Banerjee, the incident of the faulty door bolt is an externalization of the ‘no
escape’ plight in which Benare finds herself in real life.\textsuperscript{12} Thus faulty door-bolt symbolises the helplessness of an individual in his confrontation with the society.

Like the second act, the third act also begins with everybody in the same position as they were at the end of the second act. With a perverse excitement, Sukhatme, the prosecutor, asks Benare to be summoned to the witness-box. Benare remains where she is. Mrs. Kashikar, the only other female member of the crew, starts pulling her forcibly. Tendulkar mentions that Benare’s face reveals the terror of a trapped animal which suggests her victimisation by her fellow actors who act like a pack of hunting animals. Tendulkar has used the device of telling about the incidents in Benare’s life through the narrations of characters. As Ponkshe, Karnik and Kashikar recall certain incidents, the reader-audience is told about the poignant events in Benare’s life. She sits like a block of stone, drained of colour and totally desolate while her private life is publicly dissected in a shameful manner. Though Benare knows that she cannot get out of the hall, she tries to go towards the door twice. The playwright points out her immense mental agony through this. Even Benare’s attempt to drink poison does not deter her fellow actors from continuing the trial against her. Tendulkar contrasts Samant’s sympathy for Benare’s plight with the sadistic attitude of the rest of the group. When Benare replies to the charges made against her, the whole court freezes in the positions they are in at the moment. According to Tendulkar, Benare’s self-justification in a long speech is her innermost outburst. He says: “She (Benare) hasn’t uttered even a single word. It’s all there in her mind. So, the entire scene is presented in blue light.”\textsuperscript{13} The light change at the end of her speech suggests that the court has not heard her. Benare’s pitiable condition suggests that she has accepted her defeat. Tendulkar mentions that Benare’s fellow actors pretend as if nothing major has happened though they realise the amount of pain she has gone
through due to their actions. They exhort her to get ready for their show. The toy-
parrot that Samant places near an almost lifeless Benare probably symbolises that she
will have to behave according to society’s wishes from hereon just as a parrot speaks
whatever it is taught.

The castigation of Ms. Benare under the garb of a ‘mock-trial’ shows the
society’s ruthlessness in cornering an individual and sacrificing him/her on the altar of
conventions and morals. But the irony is that the hangmen, here the critics of Ms.
Benare, are themselves equally guilty, but go scot-free under the protection of society
which they pretend to represent.

Tendulkar’s *Encounter in Umbugland*, a political satire, has the usual three
acts, multiple scenes structure. While dealing with Princess Vijaya’s development into
an astute politician from an inexperienced girl, Tendulkar highlights the changes that
the sense of power brings about in an individual in this play. There is no scene
division in the first act, whereas, the second and third acts are divided into five and
four scenes respectively. The first act depicts Vijaya as a complete novice in the field
of politics surrounded by her ministers who are experienced statesmen. The whole of
the first act seems like an introduction for the encounter that takes place between
Vijaya and her ministers afterwards. The second act depicts Vijaya as a crafty
politician and brings out her own awareness of the changes that have taken place into
her personality as a result of her contact with the treacherous world of politics. The
third act portrays Vijaya’s complete victory over the ministers. The situation at the
end of the first act is reversed here and Vijaya is shown as controlling her ministers
just like a ringmaster controls the wild animals in his charge. Thus the plot of the play
is well knitted.
The play begins with the death of King Vichitravirya, the ruler of Umbugland. As Vijaya, his daughter, is inexperienced in politics, Vichitravirya’s ministers begin to fight for the throne of Umbugland. This situation appears identical to the one that was created in Indian politics after the death of Pandit Nehru, the then Prime Minister, in the 1960s. M. Sarat Babu comments that Princess Vijaya stands for Indira Gandhi and Tendulkar draws parallels between the rule of Vijaya and that of Indira Gandhi in this play. Thus the play is allegorical in nature. According to Vijaya Mardhekar, the choice of Princess Vijaya as the compromise candidate by the ministers refers to the choice of Indira Gandhi, Nehru’s daughter, by the senior politicians of the Congress Party in those times. Like those politicians, the ministers in the play choose King Vichitravirya’s daughter so that they can rule by proxy. Vijaya’s victory over her ministers refers to Indira Gandhi’s coming out of the shadow of the senior Congress ministers and establishing a dominating position in the country’s politics.

While allegorising the political events in India in the 1960s, Tendulkar has used the devices such as the Sutradhar (narrator) and the chorus in this play. Prannarayan, the eunuch attendant of Princess Vijaya, acts as the Sutradhar of the play. He introduces the play and comments on the actions throughout the play. The chorus of the play consists of two masked men who bear very large pens in their hands and wield them like sceptres suggesting the great influence of press in politics. They report and comment on the various incidents taking place in the state. Arundhati Banerjee observes that the chorus of two masked pen-bearers is used by Tendulkar to satirise the misleading of the people by press. The pen-bearers indulge in double talk. On one hand, they are lavish in their elaborate praise of the government and thus act as its advertising agency, on the other hand, they propagate news in a sensational manner with a view to boost their paper’s circulation.
*Encounter in Umbugland* begins with Prannarayan, the narrator, welcoming the reader-audience on the occasion of the celebration of the sixtieth year of King Vichiravirya’s coronation. His remarks achieve the distancing effect by reminding the reader-audience about their becoming a witness to a performance. Then two masked pen-bearers appear on the stage. Their remarks about the recent happenings in Umbugland echo the headlines of newspapers. Thus they stand for the media. The banging of giant-sized pens also catches the attention of the audience. From the conversation between Vijaya and Prannarayan, the reader-audience comes to know about her lack of interest in politics and her adolescent desire to get away from the place. Tendulkar brings out the evil practices of selfish politicians through the conversation among the five ministers in which they expose each other’s follies. As the first act is not divided into scenes, the passing of time between different incidents is indicated through the changes in lighting.

In the second act, Queen Vijaya seems to have adjusted quite well with her duties and responsibilities as a ruler. The playwright mentions the visible changes that have occurred in her personality. She looks and acts very confidently. When Queen Vijaya tells Prannarayan about her plan for the upliftment of the tribal people in Umbugland, he tells her that the motive of improving her political stature is hidden behind that plan. The playwright points out the change that wielding power has brought about in Vijaya’s personality through Pranarayan’s remark. Anju Bala Agarwal aptly comments that Tendulkar’s *Encounter in Umbugland* is a concrete embodiment of the transformation that the sense of power brings about in an individual.¹⁷

The confrontation between Vijaya and her ministers as a result of their opposition to Vijaya’s plan is portrayed in the third act of the play. As Vijaya is
determined to implement her plan, she weeds out all the difficulties placed in her path by her ministers and comes out victorious in the political encounter. The crafty and calculative side of Vijaya’s nature is shown through her successfully turning Bhagadanta, one of the ministers, to her side. Queen Vijaya’s shooting darts at a demonic face on the wall while talking with Bhagadanta is suggestive of her scheming against the other ministers. On another occasion, she is seen knitting some threads while talking to the ministers. It suggests her weaving a web around them. The ministers incite their followers to attack the palace so that Vijaya can be killed by their hands. Vijaya dares to go out of the palace to pacify the angry mob. Vijaya’s encounter with the angry mob is reported through her own narration. Vijaya handles the mob’s sentiments tactfully and turns their fury against the ministers. To save their lives from the angry mob, the ministers accept their defeat to Queen Vijaya. On the whole, *Encounter in Umbugland* is a well-structured political allegory and a remarkable study of human nature.

The verbal play in the title *Encounter in Umbugland* suggests its satirical nature. The original Marathi version is titled ‘Dambdwipacha Mukabala’. The word ‘Dambdwip’ means an island of hypocrisy. It has been translated into English as ‘Umbugland’. Because of its closeness to the word ‘humbug’, the original meaning is preserved. After realising the sycophancy, selfishness and hypocrisy of her ministers, Vijaya observes that Prannarayan, in spite of being a eunuch, is more manly than those men. This is a telling comment on the wicked politicians.

Tendulkar has indicated the passing of time between various incidents through the changes in lighting in the first act. It has freed him from the necessity of dividing the act into different scenes. The playwright has used masked characters, a device from the masques of Elizabethan times, in this play. The masked pen-bearers
symbolise the opportunistic journalists. The masks suggest the journalists’ hiding their true character from the public.

Tendulkar’s *The Vultures* is a two-act play with a well-knitted plot. The first act consists of six scenes and the second act comprises of eight scenes. Tendulkar has used the technique of flashback while portraying the degeneration of Pitale family in *The Vultures*. The use of this technique enables the playwright to present the events which have occurred in the past twenty-two years in a cohesive manner. It also helps the audience to think about the causes of the human suffering which has been depicted in the play. The play begins with Ramakant and Rama running away from the house in order to escape from their creditors. This sight evokes the memories of the past twenty-two years in the mind of Rajaninath, the narrator of the play. His memories are presented in the play. Thus there are no elements of surprise and suspense in the play as the end has been disclosed at the beginning itself. Through the narrations of Rajaninath, the playwright achieves the distancing effect by reminding the audience that they are watching the events that have occurred in the past. Thus the playwright succeeds in avoiding the identification of the audience to the characters and events in the play.

Tendulkar depicts the dark side of human nature through the interactions of the members of Pitale family. Pappa (Mr.Pitale), his sons, Ramakant and Umakant, and his daughter, Manik, display the savagery of a vulture through their cruel words as well as deeds. Amidst these human vultures, there are two sensitive and kind-hearted individuals, Rajaninath, Pappa’s illegitimate son and Rama, Ramakant’s wife. The plight of sensitive and tender-hearted people surrounded by those of a vulturine nature comes out through the sad experiences of Rama and Rajaninath. The cruel actions of Pappa, Ramakant, Umakant and Manik stand in sharp contrast to those of
Rama and Rajaninath. N.S.Dharan aptly comments that Tendulkar’s *The Vultures* is a play built of contrasting situations in which there is a gruesome portrayal of man’s greed on one hand and a tender portrayal of man’s love and sympathy on the other hand.¹⁸

Tendulkar portrays the shocking consequences of greed through the words and deeds of the members of Pitale family such as Pappa, Ramakant, Umakant and Manik. The first act depicts the ruin of the elder generation of the family. From a conversation between Ramakant and Umakant, the reader-audience comes to know about Pappa’s act of driving away his brother, Sakharam, from the house. Though Sakharam was an equal partner in the family business, Pappa had grabbed his share of business treacherously. As Pappa has handed over his business to his elder son, Ramakant, he is shown as living a life of dependence on his children. No one except Rama, his daughter-in-law, has any regard for him. So Pappa is always cursing his children for their ill-treatment towards him. After snatching the last penny that Pappa has, Ramakant drives him away from the house.

The second act of *The Vultures* portrays the ruin of the second generation of Pitale family - Ramakant, Umakant and Manik. Ramakant and Umakant maim their sister, Manik, so that they can blackmail her lover, the Prince of Hondur. As their plan fails due to the sudden demise of the Prince of Hondur, Ramakant takes out his fury on the foetus in Manik’s womb. He aborts Manik by kicking her and then drives her out of the house. Umakant is also driven out of the house by Ramakant as he does not wish to give Umakant his share in their mother’s jewellery. Rama’s life has been full of torture and suffering since her arrival as a daughter-in-law in the family twenty-two years ago. After remaining silent for many years, Rama’s grief at her remaining childless is expressed through her long monologue in the second scene of the second
act. Through the two soliloquies of Ramakant in the fifth and seventh scene of the second act, Tendulkar brings out his frustration as a result of his inability to live a rich lifestyle.

Apart from the poems recited by Rajaninath in Act I, Scene I, Act I, Scene IV and Act II, Scene VIII, where the chronological movement of the action is suspended, the play appears to be naturalistic in nature. The events in the play are spread across a few months. However, Rajaninath’s poems include events that are spread across a span of twenty-two years. According to Arundhati Banerjee, Tendulkar’s deep empathy for the victims of human viciousness flows like an undercurrent throughout this play and finds its expression through the three poems recited by Rajaninath, its narrator. Rajaninath’s agony of being an illegitimate child comes out through his bitter and sarcastic remarks about his father and step-brothers.

Tendulkar has made an extensive use of the devices of contrast and imagery while bringing out the inhuman actions of the vulturish characters and offsetting them against the human actions of Rama and Rajaninath. Rama’s ability to give birth to children and Rajaninath’s ability to create poetry appears to suggest that these two characters stand for the creative instinct of human beings. On the other hand, Ramakant and Umakant are impotent and take out their frustration and anger on people around them. They seem to stand for the destructive instinct of mankind. The playwright has used lurid images such as mangy dogs, a rotting hole left after the decomposition of a person’s nose, skulls and skeletons, corpses, preying birds, repulsive insects, ghosts, evil spirits, goblins and rites of black magic in this play. Anju Bala Agarwal aptly comments that these images aggravate the abominating and awesome evil in the play.
Tendulkar has made use of certain dramatic symbols in the play. The house of the Pitale family is described as being worn-out and resembling a hole in a tree just like the den of vultures. According to A.P. Dani, the murky, dilapidated, den-like house in which the Pitale family lives, stands for their corrupt values. The title ‘The Vultures’ signifies the abundance of baser instincts in the devilish members of the Pitale family. The ringing telephone brings in complaints from Ramakant’s clients about his goods and suggests his disharmony with the outside world. The places associated with the good such as the garage where Rajaninath lives and the tulsi-vrindavan (an alter of sacred basil) where Rama prays daily, are surrounded by green, the colour of growth. The rooms of the house where the cruel characters live are grey-black, the colours suggesting decay and death.

The playwright creates a proper theatrical effect for the evil actions of the cruel characters through the recurrent screeching sound of the vultures. Tendulkar has used the wild screeching of vultures as a backdrop against various evil actions in the play such as Pappa’s children plotting to rob him of his remaining money, Pappa’s flight from the house as a result of the cruelty of his children towards him, and the physical assault on Manik by her brothers. Samik Bandyopadhyay observes that the screeching of vultures offers sound translations for the human acts which have lost their humanity altogether. Tendulkar has used an appropriate language for the cruel as well as tender characters. The decent language in which Rama and Rajaninath speak is in sharp contrast with the lewd, ribald and filthy language used by the vulturish members of their family.

Tendulkar’s Sakharam Binder is a three-act play with a concise plot and an extensive use of irony and detailed stage directions. There are twelve scenes in the first act of the play. Some of the scenes in the play are quite short. The third scene of
the first act has no dialogues and only stage instructions regarding the visual to be presented. Thus the cinematographic technique has been used by the playwright in this scene. The playwright has portrayed Sakharam’s relationships with Lakshmi and Champa, his mistresses, in this play. Sakharam does not believe in the institution of marriage. He prefers to have a contractual co-habitation with his partners. There is a wonderful symmetry in the play’s structure. The first act begins with the arrival of Lakshmi, Sakharam’s seventh mistress, in his house. Unable to adjust with Sakharam’s hot temper and excessive demands, Lakshmi leaves Sakharam’s house at the end of the first act. Though Lakshmi’s life is full of misery during her stay at Sakharam’s house, she manages to soften the rough edges of his personality and domesticates him to some extent. The second act which deals with Sakharam’s relationship with Champa, a sensuous and unconventional woman, depicts Sakharam’s transformation into a lewd drunkard as a result of his association with Champa. Circumstances compel Lakshmi to return to Sakharam at the end of the second act. In the third act, Tendulkar portrays the complex psychological effect on Sakharam due to the simultaneous presence of Lakshmi and Champa in his life. Arundhati Banerjee comments that the presence of Lakshmi and Champa at the same time appears to bring the two different strands in Sakharam’s character into direct confrontation which causes a psychological turmoil in him and results in his becoming impotent.  

Sakharam blames Lakshmi for his physical disability and orders her to get out of his house. Lakshmi discloses Champa’s affair with Dawood to Sakharam so that she can continue to live with him. Sakharam murders Champa in his rage. The end of the play is ironic as Sakharam who used to pride himself for the openness of his behaviour is forced to hide Champa’s corpse so that he can escape from punishment.
Tendulkar is highly realistic in the delineation of the characters as well as setting in this play. Sakharam’s simple house in the middle class locality of a small town is described in minute details. Tendulkar throws light on the unconventional lifestyle and thinking of Sakharam through his words as well as actions in the opening scene of the play. The playwright describes Sakharam’s personality as coarse which is in keeping with his inner nature. The way Lakshmi appears terrified when Sakharam scolds the children playing in his courtyard suggests the timidity of her nature. Her deeply religious nature is suggested through her enquiring to Sakharam about the photo frames of Gods. Lakshmi’s folding her hands on listening to the temple-bell also suggests this. From the conversation between Sakharam and Dawood, his bosom friend, the reader-audience comes to know that there had been six mistresses in Sakharam’s life before Lakshmi. Sakharam’s contemptuous attitude towards society and religion comes out through his words quite clearly.

In Act I, Scene IV, Sakharam comes back from work and hears Lakshmi talking to someone. His suspicion is aroused. His temper cools down when he finds out that Lakshmi was talking to an ant. Through Lakshmi’s habit of conversing with ants, Tendulkar brings out her compassionate nature. According to Shanta Gokhale, Tendulkar succeeds in portraying Lakshmi as a tender and caring human being who deserves the reader-audience’s affection and sympathy. Lakshmi’s kind nature is contrasted with Sakharam’s unsympathetic nature when he shows no concern for Lakshmi’s suffering as she spills burning coals on her feet. The room is kept in total darkness in Act I, scene V, in which Sakharam forces Lakshmi to satisfy his lust in spite of her burnt feet. The audience can hear only the voices of the characters. Thus Tendulkar guides the director in presenting the scenes which cannot be shown directly on the stage. The same technique has been used in Act I, scene VI, when Sakharam
beats Lakshmi with a belt for objecting to Dawood’s participation in the prayer of Lord Ganesha. The audience can only hear the agonised moans of Lakshmi.

There is parallelism as well as contrast in Act II, Scene I, in which Sakharam explains the rules of their co-habitation to his next mistress in the same manner as he had done to Lakshmi. Whereas Lakshmi had listened to all his instructions carefully, Champa does not pay any heed to them. Thus Champa’s behaviour is in total contrast to that of Lakshmi’s. Sakharam is unable to remain his usual dominating self in Champa’s company. Whenever he looks into her eyes, he loses himself in the lure of her bodily charms. Tendulkar brings out the effect of Champa’s beauty on men through the behaviour of Dawood who is unable to keep his eyes off her and is eager to do errands for her. Tendulkar mentions that Sakharam feels a twinge of jealousy when Champa appreciates Dawood’s pliant behaviour. Champa’s unconventional way of living is highlighted through her act of changing the clothes in the presence of Sakharam. She is unmindful of the fact that Dawood is glancing at her in stealth. Champa’s being unfaithful to Sakharam and getting physically involved with Dawood results in her tragic murder at the hands of Sakharam at the end of the play. The seeds of that incident are sown here.

Champa’s unconventionality is further highlighted through her beating Shinde, her husband. Tendulkar mentions that Sakharam and Dawood watch in a shocked silence while Champa rains kicks and blows on Shinde like a possessed being. Sakharam is described as staring at Champa in a scared manner. Thus the playwright brings out the effect of the spectacle of the aggression in Champa’s nature on Sakharam through his body language. The disruption of Sakharam’s routine life due to his infatuation with Champa is suggested through his lying in a drunken stupor on the day of the Dassera festival.
Through the conversation between Champa and Lakshmi in Act III, Scene I, Tendulkar sheds light on the difference in their attitude to life. Lakshmi expresses her belief in following the societal customs. She appears to be hurt by Champa’s disregard to God and religion. Sakharam is furious at Lakshmi’s return and starts beating her. Tendulkar mentions that Champa is not affected at all by Lakshmi’s misery. Thus the playwright makes it clear that Champa does not have genuine sympathy for Lakshmi and allows her to stay in the house as she is useful for doing the household chores. The fact of Champa’s affair with Dawood is reported to the reader-audience through Lakshmi’s narration. The effect of the knowledge of Champa’s affair on Lakshmi is described skilfully by Tendulkar through her frenzied actions and her address to God about Champa’s viciousness. After murdering Champa in a moment of rage, Sakharam appears to be terribly scared. Tendulkar describes Lakshmi’s actions and body-language to show how Lakshmi gathers her strength and courage from her faith in God. The prayer to God seems to clear her mind and she begins to dig a hole in a determined manner to hide Champa’s corpse. Thus Lakshmi appears to have taken control of Sakharam’s life at the end of the play.

Tendulkar’s Ghashiram Kotwal is a two-act play with a feast of songs, dances and music in which there is an aesthetic presentation of history. The playwright draws parallels between the contemporary society and the Maharashtrian society in the eighteenth century in this play. Tendulkar realised the tremendous potential for dramatic expression in Maharashtrian folk forms such as the Dashavtar Khel, Tamasha and Kirtan. Dashavtar khel is a folk dance drama from the Konkan region. It tells the stories of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Kirtan is a form of storytelling through songs, presented in temples. The stories taken from Indian mythology are illustrated in it. Tamasha is a dramatic form of entertainment comprising of a dancer, a
comedian, a main actor and a chorus. Tendulkar has used some of the elements of these folk forms in this play. Arundhati Banerjee observes that *Ghashiram Kotwal* can be considered as a landmark in Indian theatre due to its totally novel and experimental form. These Maharashtrian folk forms had been completely neglected by the modern Marathi playwrights who were turning to the works of the western playwrights such as Shaw, Ibsen and Moliere for inspiration. According to Veena N. Dass, Tendulkar showed how the indigenous folk forms could be pressed into the service of the modern Marathi theatre by recreating the form as well as the spirit of folk theatre in his play *Ghashiram Kotwal* without diluting its contemporary appeal.

*Ghashiram kotwal* deals with the rise of Ghashiram, a north Indian Brahmin, to the post of Kotwal (Chief Inspector) of Poona and his death at the hands of mob due to his cruel and unjust oppression of the people. By portraying Vijaya’s development into an astute and cunning politician in *Encounter in Umbugland*, Tendulkar had illustrated the positive influence of power. In *Ghashiram Kotwal*, the playwright shows the negative influence of power by depicting the deterioration in Ghashiram’s character after coming to power. The first act portrays the journey of Ghashiram from being a dancer in a prostitute’s hall to becoming the Kotwal of Poona. The second act depicts Ghashiram’s inhuman torture of innocent people under the intoxication of power and its resultant violent reaction by people in which he is stoned to death. The play begins with the convention of paying homage to Lord Ganpati through a song and dance sequence which is performed by twelve Poona Brahmins standing in a line. These twelve men form a sort of human curtain or human wall. The human wall is basically a singing and dancing chorus and comments on the actions that happen. The revealing and hiding possibilities of the human curtain freed Tendulkar from the need of plotting entries and exits of the characters. After the
prayer is over, the Sutradhar (narrator) appears on the scene. The Sutradhar accosts different Brahmins and skilfully questions them to make them disclose that they are going to Bavannakhani, the redlight area, to watch the dances of the prostitutes. Through these incidents, Tendulkar highlights the unbrahmanical ways of the Poona Brahmins. While the Sutradhar is commenting on the loose morals of these people, the human curtain turns its back to the audience which suggests that it has ceased to exist for the moment. After the Sutradhar’s narration is over, the human curtain is transformed into a group of people sitting in Gulabi’s hall in Bavannakhani and enjoying a dance performed by her. Thus Tendulkar has used the human curtain for presenting different situations in the play in a very skilful manner.

The moral degradation of Poona community is presented through the visual of a Brahmin lady embracing her lover while the men are enjoying the dances of the prostitutes in Bavannakhani. There is an ironic juxtaposition of the chanting of a devotional song ‘Radhakrishna Hari, Govinda Murali’ with the adulterous conduct of the Brahmin lady. While she is meeting her lover behind the human curtain, the devotional song is being sung in front of the curtain. The combination of the device of human curtain, music and actions of the characters produces a spectacular effect in this scene. It reminds us of the last scene of Tennessee Williams’s play ‘The Glass Menagerie’ in which Amanda is seen comforting Laura, her daughter, after Tom, her son, decides to leave the family. Like Tennessee Williams, Tendulkar has also used the technique of silent scene in a movie. While appreciating Tendulkar’s detailed instructions for movements, gestures, sounds and music in Ghashiram Kotwal, Shanta Gokhale aptly comments that the playwright must indeed have staged the entire play in his mind as he wrote it.27
The reader-audience gets its first glimpse of Ghashiram when he is shown as dancing with Gulabi as her foil. Nana Fadnavis, the Chief Minister of the Peshwa, enters Gulabi’s hall with a silver-handled walking stick. Nana’s sensual nature is highlighted by his having a garland of flowers tied on his wrist and his dancing with the girls. According to Shanta Gokhale, the cane in Nana’s hand indicates riches and power, the garland of flowers, sensuality, and the dancing, a surrender to the pursuit of pleasure. Nana sprains his ankle while dancing and begins to hobble on one foot. Ghashiram perceives a chance to flatter Nana and win his favour. He puts Nana’s injured foot on his own back and continues to hold it even after Nana offers him a pearl necklace as reward. The playwright brings out Ghashiram’s sycophancy through his actions here. Ghashiram’s background is made known to the reader-audience through Gulabi’s remarks about him to Nana. Nana leaves Gulabi’s hall in a palanquin which is formed of a few men from the human curtain.

Ghashiram’s joy at having received a costly gift is short-lived. Gulabi claims the necklace from him. Ghashiram’s humiliation by Gulabi and her servants is shown through the visual of Gulabi blocking Ghashiram’s way, demanding the necklace and getting him beaten by her servants on his refusal to part with it. There is even more humiliation in store for Ghashiram as he goes to the ceremony of the giving of royal gifts to the Brahmins at the Peshwa’s palace. He is arrested by the soldiers on suspicion of stealing, beaten severely and put behind the bars. While Ghashiram is lamenting his misfortune in the prison, the Sutradhar appears as a fellow-prisoner and tries to pacify him. Through the Sutradhar’s comments, the playwright points out the nexus between the police and the thieves. Then the soldiers come and carry Ghashiram away. They pick him up and throw him in the middle of the audience. Ghashiram is warned not to set his foot in the soil of Poona again. The pain and anger
of humiliation heaped upon humiliation is too much to bear for Ghashiram and his anger explodes like a volcano. Tendulkar writes that Ghashiram takes off his sash and throws it on the ground. It suggests that he is renouncing his religion. Ghashiram condemns the behaviour of the Poonaites and vows to take revenge on them. Ghashiram’s banging his fist in the dust and dancing violently to the beats of drum suggests the intensity of his anger.

The scene shifts to a programme being held at Nana’s mansion. The Sutradhar now becomes a Kirtankar, a teller of sacred stories. The human curtain becomes his audience. Some women are also seen listening to his narration. Nana comes and occupies a high seat. He ogles and leers at the women making his lecherous nature clear. His gaze rests on a pretty girl. Nana tries to get hold of her after everyone leaves. The girl runs away and Nana mistakenly grabs a servant instead of her. It is Ghashiram in a servant’s dress, hiding his face with the turban. He offers to bring the girl back to Nana. After delivering the girl to Nana on the next day, Ghashiram walks into the audience, looks at Nana dancing with the girl on the stage and exclaims loudly that he has captured Nana into his web by giving his daughter to him. Thus Ghashiram’s plan of taking revenge on the Poona community is made known to the reader-audience. In the next scene, Nana appears to be helpless before Ghashiram. He repeatedly requests Ghashiram to bring the girl back to him at least once. Ghashiram asks to be made the Kotwal in exchange for the girl. Nana accepts his proposal and the first act ends with Ghashiram becoming the Kotwal of Poona.

The second act begins with the Sutradhar’s narration of the events after Ghashiram’s becoming the Kotwal. Ghashiram has been trying to satisfy his thirst for revenge by inflicting inhuman torture on the guilty as well as the innocent people. Through Ghashiram’s words as well as gestures, the playwright makes it clear that
Ghashiram derives a sadistic pleasure from torturing people. Ghashiram’s torture of an innocent Brahmin who is unjustly charged of stealing is shown through his forcing the Brahmin to undergo an ordeal to prove his innocence. Ghashiram orders to place a red-hot steel ball on the man’s hand. The miming technique has been used for the representation of this scene. While the Brahmin is groaning with pain, the human curtain begins to chant the names of Gods and saints loudly. Samik Bandyopadhyay observes that the chant of the names of Gods and saints drowning the innocent man’s screams suggests the complacency or consolation cast over the yawning horror of corruption and tyranny.29

Ghashiram becomes even more tyrannical after the death of Gauri, his daughter, during child-birth. The playwright mentions in the stage instructions that Ghashiram looks at the blood on his hands after beating people and gets an immense joy out of it. Once a few poor Brahmins from the South visit Poona and eat some fruits from Ghashiram’s garden without permission. Ghashiram orders their imprisonment. The shortage of space in prison results in their death by suffocation. This leads to a revolt by Poona Brahmins against Ghashiram. The torture of Ghashiram by the furious mob is reported through the Sutradhar’s narration. Finally, Ghashiram is stoned to death and Nana declares festivities for three days to mark the occasion. The play ends with Nana, accompanied by his seven wives, dancing to the music of cymbals. Amar Nath Prasad comments that the music in Ghashiram Kotwal works like a structural device to provide the reader-audience a sense of relief but weakens the sting of the satire by lessening the gravity of its action.30 While replying to Samik Bandyopadhyay’s query regarding his use of the form of the musical for his play Ghashiram Kotwal, Tendulkar replied: “Ghashiram started with a theme, then came the specific ‘story’ or incident which was historical and then the search for the
form began. I knew that the usual naturalistic treatment was out of the question. By a series of accidents I discovered the present form which is a combination of a variety of ingredients from different folk forms of Maharashtra.”

Thus the playwright had used the form which he thought was best suited for the depiction of his subject.

Tendulkar’s *A Friend’s Story* is a three-act play. Instead of the usual division of the acts into scenes, this play consists of narrations and incidents. There are ten narrations and ten incidents in the first act, eleven narrations and ten incidents in the second act; and twelve narrations inter-spersed with twelve incidents in the final act of the play. In this play, Tendulkar has depicted the tragedy of Mitra (Sumitra Dev), a lesbian, through the eyes of Bapu, her friend and the narrator of the play. Bapu is also the confidant to whom Mitra tells her innermost thoughts and feelings. Like his earlier plays *The Vultures* and *Encounter in Umbagland*, Tendulkar has used the technique of one of the characters telling the story to the audience in this play. The form of the play is slightly unusual. There is a presentation of Bapu’s memories which are enacted on the stage, inter-spersed with Bapu’s narrations of his thoughts and feelings about the events that happen. Dealing with the theme of lesbianism on the stage was a rare thing in the early 1980s when Tendulkar wrote this play. According to Tendulkar, he knew that staging a play on a same-sex relationship was nearly impossible but the play got written by him out of some inner compulsion which had no logic. Tendulkar’s sensitive handling of this unconventional topic gives the reader-audience a unique dramatic experience by opening their eyes to the plight of a person suffering from a physical deformity. The tragedy of Mitra’s life makes the reader-audience introspective. Through the story of Mitra’s life, the playwright shows the reaction of the society towards an abnormal person.
The play begins with Bapu addressing the audience and telling them about his first meeting with Mitra. Bapu says that he had found a photograph of Mitra lying on the ground and mustered his courage to talk to Mitra so that he can return the photograph to her. At this moment, the narration merges into action in an effortless manner as if Bapu’s memories suddenly come alive and the reader-audience watches Mitra who halts while walking and turns around as Bapu has called her. Tendulkar brings out Bapu’s nervousness through his incoherent remarks. It is quite natural as Bapu is not used to conversing with girls. The differentess of Mitra’s nature is highlighted through her inviting Bapu to the restaurant for a cup of tea and telling him about her childhood memories and her mother’s perception of her boyishness. She breaks into an uproarious laughter after making a little fun of Bapu.

After some days, Mitra invites Bapu to meet her on the college ground. She does not tell Bapu the reason of her having invited him. She seems to have forgotten the existence of Bapu. Tendulkar brings out Mitra’s troubled state of mind through her actions as well as words. Her eyes keep wandering here and there. She presses Bapu’s hand with great force to see the reaction of her touch on him. She begins to talk about human nature but her words do not make any sense to Bapu as he is unaware of the context in which they are spoken. It is obvious that she is facing a problem. She abruptly ends the meeting and leaves without telling anything to Bapu about her problem. In the narration that follows, the playwright brings out Bapu’s bafflement at Mitra’s unusual behaviour. Then the reader-audience is introduced to Pande, Bapu’s room-partner. Pande advises Bapu to stay away from girls as Bapu, being a simple guy, won’t be able to handle it. He wants to know about Bapu’s relationship with Mitra. Bapu confides to the audience that he felt repulsed by Pande’s
comments as he did not want to share the knowledge of his friendship with Mitra to anybody.

The reader-audience comes to know about Mitra’s attempt of committing suicide through the conversation between Pande and Bapu. After some days Mitra returns to college and begins to meet Bapu as earlier. Bapu wants to know the reason of her wish to end her life. The playwright suggests that it is extremely difficult for Mitra to talk about her problem while Bapu is looking into her eyes. She makes Bapu turn his face in another direction while she narrates her experiences. Through Mitra’s long narration, the playwright brings out how she was biologically different from other girls and how she realised this fact in course of time. Mitra’s inhaling a cigarette deeply and clutching Bapu’s hand while telling him about her unsuccessful attempt of having an intercourse brings out her sense of shock and shame about her physical deformity. Tendulkar mentions that a turbulent storm racks her within. She makes fun of Bapu and tries to laugh in order to hide her inner pain.

In the next narration, Bapu gives vent to the feeling of repulsion in his mind about Mitra’s abnormality. After some days, Bapu hears that Mitra is playing the male lead in a play to be staged during the college gathering. The playwright gives us a glimpse of Mitra, dressed like a male and romancing Nama, the heroine of the play, during the college gathering. The first act ends with Mitra confessing to Bapu that she has fallen in love with Nama. She prevails upon Bapu to make his room available to her for a private meeting with Nama. A new side of Mitra’s personality is revealed to the reader-audience as she threatens Bapu to break their friendship if he doesn’t oblige her.

The second act depicts the struggle between Mitra and Dalvi, Nama’s boyfriend, for Nama’s affections. It also portrays the troubles of Bapu as he is caught
in the middle of the ‘Mitra-Nama-Dalvi’ triangular relationship. Bapu’s affection for Mitra makes him help her in her affair with Nama though he is conscious of its bizarreness. Mitra’s forging Bapu’s handwriting to write anonymous letters to Nama’s family results in Bapu getting beaten by Dalvi. Though Mitra is a lesbian, she appears desirable to men who don’t know about her real nature. This fact is brought out by Tendulkar through the effect of Mitra’s sight on Pande when she visits his room to meet Bapu. The playwright mentions that Pande is charged, spellbound and goes on watching Mitra without even blinking his eyes.

The scene of confrontation between Mitra and Dalvi is deftly presented by Tendulkar. Once Dalvi appears unexpectedly while Mitra and Nama are sitting in Bapu’s room. Dalvi abuses Mitra and orders Nama to leave the room at once. The playwright mentions that Mitra stands composed but alert in Dalvi’s presence. Her eyes look ferocious like that of a wild animal suggesting her great hatred and anger for Dalvi. She breaks down after Dalvi’s departure with Nama and bangs her head against the wall. Through Mitra’s actions and gestures, Tendulkar brings out her sense of humiliation because of Nama’s deserting her at Dalvi’s instruction. The second act ends with Mitra going out of Bapu’s life after his refusal to help her in carrying on her relationship with Nama.

The third act portrays the fluctuations in Bapu’s attitude towards Mitra. He tells the reader-audience that Mitra’s plan of keeping Nama under her thumb by blackmailing her arouses revulsion in his mind, whereas, Mitra’s oppression by the society after Dalvi’s public disclosure about her abnormality arouses sympathy for Mitra in his mind. Tendulkar brings out Bapu’s genuine concern for Mitra by showing his happiness at Nama’s departure for Calcutta. Bapu thinks that Nama’s absence will
allow Mitra to begin her life again. When Mitra goes to Calcutta in Nama’s pursuit, disregarding Bapu’s instructions, he ends his friendship with Mitra.

Through a scene that takes place at the army club, Tendulkar brings out the effect of Bapu’s breaking his ties with Mitra completely on her and his own realisation of his action having quickened the pace of Mitra’s downfall. Bapu becomes extremely restless to see that Mitra has taken to prostitution and drinking. The increasing pace of the symphony music being played in the background as Bapu watches Mitra’s shameless behaviour in the company of her escorts highlights his inner turbulence.

Toward the end of the play, Bapu comes to know about Mitra’s suicide from Dalvi. Dalvi’s total indifference to Mitra’s sad end is suggested through the casual way in which he reports this incident to Bapu and then lights a cigarette. Bapu is in a state of shock and doesn’t know what to do. Tendulkar mentions that Bapu keeps moving to and fro in the room and switches the radio on. The radio shrieks terrifyingly at top volume. It appears to suggest that life has become unbearable for Bapu due to his grief over Mitra’s death.

Tendulkar’s Kamala is a compact two-act play. There are no scene divisions of the acts in it. The setting of the play is the drawing room in Jaisingh Jadhav, a reputed journalist’s bungalow in the fashionable New Delhi neighbourhood of Neeti Bagh. The play begins with Kakasaheb, Jaisingh’s wife Sarita’s uncle, speaking on the telephone. The prominent position of Jaisingh in the field of journalism is suggested through the constantly ringing telephone in his house. Through the conversation between Kakasaheb and Sarita, the playwright provides the necessary background information to the reader-audience. The slavish status of Sarita in Jaisingh’s house is suggested through her docile behaviour like a personal secretary to
Jaisingh and making note of all the incoming phonecalls for his reference. It also suggests the thoughtful and submissive nature of Sarita who makes every effort to please her husband so that domestic discord is prevented. Sarita’s use of the word ‘Ma-Saheb’ (mother) points out her aristocratic lineage. The fact that Sarita has to deal with the complaints of the housemaid while managing all the other activities connected with running a household gives a naturalistic touch to the play.

The next phonecall received by Kakasaheb turns out to be an anonymous one. The caller expresses his anger with Jaisingh for having written something about him in a newspaper report and threatens him with dire consequences. Kakasaheb is surprised by Sarita’s indifference to the threatening call. She replies that Jaisingh gets such phonecalls all the time. The playwright points out the risk associated with investigative journalism through this incident. Sarita tells Kakasaheb that she is unable to change Jaisingh’s habits. Even her threat of leaving him and going back to her native place does not yield any results. Thus the playwright points out that Jaisingh is a selfish and cruel husband who is insensitive to the feelings of his wife.

Tendulkar highlights Jaisingh’s impatient nature in his first entry on the stage through his act of ringing the doorbell repeatedly even though Sarita rushes to open the door. His neglect of Sarita is brought out through his going through the phone messages in her notebook instead of enquiring about her well-being. Jaisingh tries to make a phone call. He bangs the phone down as he is unable to get his call through. The way he uses Punjabi words during conversations shows the effect of having lived in Delhi for a few years. While returning from his business trip, Jaisingh has brought Kamala, a tribal woman, with him. Kamala’s timidity and backwardness is indicated through her sitting on the haunches with her face veiled by the end of her dirty sari. She pulls her veil further down over her face when Jaisingh addresses her and answers
his questions with the movements of her head. Jaisingh does not tell Kakasaheb the real reason of his having brought Kamala with him. He shares the information with Sarita after a lot of reluctance. He expreses his distrust of Sarita by saying that he is not sure whether she will keep the information secret. According to Mrs. Pramila Devi, Jaisingh insults Sarita by expressing his lack of confidence in her. Though Jaisingh has bought Kamala in a rural flesh-market to expose the inhuman flesh-trade, he is not really concerned with the eradication of a social malady. He just wants to get name, fame and money through his exposure of the flesh-trade. The playwright brings out Jaisingh’s lack of concern for Kamala’s plight and his contemptuous attitude towards her through his asking Kamala whether she would like to live in his house for the rest of her life. Actually Jaisingh has already made up his mind to send Kamala to an orphanage after the press conference in which he is going to present Kamala in front of the world as a proof of his having unearthed a terrible scam.

Jain, a journalist friend of Jaisingh, comes to visit him. Jaisingh makes every effort to conceal Kamala’s presence from him. His desire to keep the matter secret before the press conference comes out through his actions. The stage is darkened and lightened again after a few seconds. It indicates the passage of time from morning to evening. Jaisingh’s anxiety about the press conference he has arranged is indicated through his pacing about the room in an excited manner. He does not allow Kamala to take a bath or change her torn clothes as a dirty and pitiable looking victim of flesh trade will suit his purpose better. Thus the playwright throws light on the callous nature of Jaising. At the end of the first act, Jaisingh leaves with Kamala for the press conference. After his departure, Sarita is seen to be engrossed in deep thought. Jaisingh’s callous attitude towards Kamala has made her introspective.
At the beginning of the second act, the scene shifts to the night. Jaisingh who was in a tense and excited state of mind since morning, now looks happy and relaxed. It suggests that his press conference has taken place as per his wish. The success of the press conference has already been celebrated as both Jaisingh and Jain seem to be heavily drunk. The reader-audience comes to know about the happenings of the press conference through the conversation between Jaisingh and Jain. The way Jain calls the press conference as a ‘Tamasha’ suggests the indifferent attitude of the journalists towards the work that they do. Kakasaheb and Sarita are shocked to know about the indecent questions put to Kamala by the journalists. Jaisingh and Jain appear to have enjoyed the plight of Kamala during the whole show. The playwright brings out the disturbing effect of her husband’s vile behaviour on Sarita as she refuses to share his bed that night. Tendulkar mentions in the stage instructions that Jaisingh’s touch causes a heartfelt aversion in Sarita’s mind and she throws him aside with a single shove. Once again the stage darkens and then lightens to indicate the passage of time. Sarita is sitting alone in the drawing room lost in deep thought. Kamala comes and there is a conversation between them. Kamala is under the impression that Sarita has also been bought by Jaisingh and innocently wants to know the price which Jaisingh has paid for her. Sarita who has become fully conscious of her husband’s exploitation of her as if she is a bonded labourer does not correct Kamala’s misconception. Thus Tendulkar brings out Sarita’s frustration with the state of things in her life through her utterances.

Sarita begins to assert herself and oppose Jaisingh’s wishes. When Jaisingh announces his decision to send Kamala to an orphanage, she insists on keeping Kamala in the house as a maid. Jaisingh does not listen to her. So Sarita refuses to accompany him to a party that evening. When Kakasaheb questions her about her
changed behaviour, she expresses her wish to hold a press conference and tell the world about Jaisingh’s slave-like treatment to his wife. Through Sarita’s long replies to Kakasaheb’s queries, Tendulkar brings out her realisation of her exploitation by her husband. Sarita’s uncontrollable sobs and the twisting of her body in pain points to her great mental agony.

Though Sarita feels wronged by Jaisingh, Tendulkar shows that she does not lose her sympathy for him completely. When Jain informs her about Jaisingh’s dismissal from his job, she becomes tense which shows her concern for him. When Jaisingh returns, she tries to calm his nerves by offering him food and drinks and being casual about his dismissal from the job. As Jaisingh is extremely agitated, he begins shouting at her and even shoves her away. But Sarita does not mind it as she realises his pitiable condition. Tendulkar suggests Jaisingh’s breakdown by his collapsing on the sofa in a listless condition. Tendulkar mentions that there is a quiet determination in Sarita’s voice as she confides to Kakasaheb that she is not going to allow Jaisingh to exploit her any more though she has given up the thought of rebellion at present due to Jaisingh’s sad condition. Arundhati Banerjee aptly comments that Tendulkar makes it clear through the stage directions at the end of the play that Sarita cannot unlearn what she has come to realise and there is a hope of her attaining independence sometime in the future.34 The play ends with Sarita looking ahead with a calm gaze that suggests her hopefulness about the freedom from slavery to her husband in the future.

Vijay Tendulkar’s Kanyadaan is a compact and gripping two-act play with the usual division of the acts into scenes. The first act consists of two scenes and the second act includes three scenes. The play revolves round the theme of marriage as indicated by the title. The word ‘Kanyadaan’ refers to the giving away of a bride to
the bridegroom by her parents. There are only seven characters in this play. The action takes place in the drawing room of Nath Devlalikar, the protagonist’s apartment in an old building in a middle class colony. Nath, a legislator, is an energetic old man. Seva, his wife, is a social activist. The other members of Devlalikar family are Jyoti and Jayaprakash, their young children. The play begins with a commonplace incident. Nath is trying to know the timing of a bus telephonically but fails to get a proper reply from the controller of the bus service. Jyoti tries to pacify her father by telling him that there is nothing unusual about such mismanagement of the bus service. But Nath refuses to take the reality into account and keeps harping on the duties of the controller and his negligence of them. Nath wants his children to understand his point of view. He complains that the dreams that his generation had seen about post-independence India have not materialised. His statement foreshadows the failure of his dream regarding his daughter’s inter-caste marriage. From the conversation between Nath and his children, the reader-audience comes to know that Nath and Seva have very little time to spare for their children. Both of them are seldom at home together. Jayaprakash’s repairing a household appliance in the spare time, Jyoti’s packing of her father’s luggage for his political trip, and Jayaprakash’s rushing out to bring his mother’s luggage in the house on her return from a women’s rally, bring out Tendulkar’s use of the naturalistic mode of playwriting.

The playwright points out the genial and tension-free atmosphere in the Devlalikar household through the cordial conversations and mutual leg-pulling by the members of the family. The democratic nature of working in the house is suggested through the freedom every member has to voice his opinions, Jayaprakash’s going to the kitchen to make tea as Jyoti declares that she has something important to tell to
her parents and Nath’s apologising to Jyoti after realising his mistake of chatting with Seva after asking Jyoti to tell them what she has in her mind. Jyoti declares that she has decided to marry Arun Athawale, a poet belonging to the backward community. The incident of Arun’s proposing to Jyoti and her accepting it is presented through a short narration by Jyoti. Seva does not like her idea at all. She starts giving one excuse after another to change her daughter’s mind. Nath, on the other hand, is happy about his daughter’s decision as it gives him a chance of setting an example of disregard of casteism in front of the society. Tendulkar makes the traits of his characters clear in the first scene of the play. Nath appears to be idealistic, over-enthusiastic and a sincere critic of his own actions. Jyoti seems to be an obedient daughter and a sympathetic person. She agrees to marry Arun though she realises that she is not in love with him. She has read Arun’s autobiography in which he has described the harsh experiences of his life. She agrees to marry him as she is eager to do something to make him happy. Seva and Jayaprakash appear to be reasonable and practical persons from the way they react to Jyoti’s decision to marry Arun. Both realise the hastiness and immaturity in Jyoti’s decision and tell her so. Seva, in particular, appears to be greatly concerned about Jyoti’s future as she thinks that the difference between the culture and lifestyles of Jyoti and Arun may prove to be harmful for their marriage.

In Act One, Scene Two, Jyoti brings Arun home to introduce him to her parents. The playwright brings out Arun’s consciousness of his low origins through his expression of discomfort on finding himself in an upper class and affluent atmosphere. It also suggests the kind of life Jyoti is venturing into by marrying Arun. Arun’s language is rough and even obscene at times. As Jyoti is not used to hearing such language, she covers her face with her hands to hide the tears that start gathering.
in her eyes. He asks Jyoti bluntly whether she is prepared to eat stinking bread with spoiled dal in his father's hut. Jyoti makes a little fun of Arun when he hints that he may prove to be a wife-beater. Arun grabs her arm and twists it in order to prove the truth of his words. Through Jyoti’s appearing hurt as well as confused, Tendulkar brings out the shock that Arun’s action gives her. This is the only instance of physical violence being shown on the stage in this play. After their marriage, Arun beats Jyoti several times and even kicks her in the stomach when she is in the sixth month of pregnancy. However, all these incidents of violence are made known to the reader-audience through the dialogues between the characters of the play.

Seva does not form a good opinion of Arun. She tells Arun that he will require his own place to live and a regular income after marriage. Arun shocks her by saying that he will start brewing illicit liquor to make money. Now Nath arrives and expresses his pleasure at meeting Arun. Nath behaves just like a person meeting his prospective son-in-law for the first time. However, the interaction that has taken place between Arun and Seva before his arrival and the resultant tense mood of everyone seems to make his speech ludicrous. Though Nath talks with Arun in a cordial manner, Arun does not respond to him properly and leaves the place abruptly. Nath expresses displeasure at the way his family members have behaved towards Arun. Jayaprakash tells him about the happening before his arrival. Nath is troubled to hear about Arun’s plan to run a liquor den in Jyoti’s company. But he asks Seva and Jayaprakash to excuse Arun as he has been brought up in the midst of poverty and hatred. They tell Nath that they are not in favour of Jyoti’s marriage to Arun as they have serious reservations about Arun’s suitability as a life-partner to Jyoti. Nath draws their attention to the democratic norms that they usually practise in the house and suggests that the decision has to be taken by Jyoti as it concerns her life more
than anyone else’s. Jyoti replies that she has made a commitment to Arun and does not wish to break it. Instead of taking Jyoti’s confused state of mind into account and guiding her properly, Nath, out of his idealistic fervour, stands by her and exhorts others to do so. The first act ends with a green signal being given to Jyoti’s marriage with Arun and the Devlalikar family as well as the reader-audience eagerly await the consequences of this marriage. Tendulkar mentions in the stage instructions that darkness descends on the stage at the end of Nath’s speech. According to Nutan Gosavi, the darkness betokens not only the confused state of the Devlalikar household but also adumbrates the future storm in which the family is going to be engulfed after this marriage.

The action in Act Two, Scene One takes place after a few months. Tendulkar mentions in the stage directions that Jyoti appears thinner and looks as if she has suddenly aged. It makes Jyoti’s sad condition after her marriage clear to us. From the dialogue between Seva and Jyoti, the reader-audience comes to know that the atmosphere in Devlalikar household has greatly changed after Jyoti’s marriage. Nath keeps brooding all the time because of his concern for Jyoti’s happiness. The long pause that Seva takes while criticising Arun for her daughter’s suffering suggests the intense anger and hatred in her mind for her son-in-law. As Arun has not been able to find a room, Jyoti is still living with her parents. Sometimes she goes out with Arun at night and does not return till the next day. Her parents are worried because of this. Nath notices a mark on Jyoti’s shoulder and asks her about it. Jyoti starts crying at this query. It suggests that she has been beaten by Arun. Nath suggests that Arun should also live with them and asks Jyoti’s opinion about it. She is forced to disclose that she has left Arun for good after their last quarrel. Everybody is stunned to hear this.
Arun comes to apologise to Jyoti. He seems to be repentant of his behaviour and blames himself in an abusive and obscene language. He even offers to cut off his hands for having beaten Jyoti. Nath and Seva become tense to see the knife in his hand but Jayaprakash remains unmoved. Thus the playwright suggests Jayaprakash’s realisation of Arun’s fake remorse. Jayaprakash’s perception is correct as Arun does not oppose him when he takes the knife away from his hand. The distress being caused to her family due to Arun’s behaviour makes Jyoti declare that she is going to leave with Arun. Nath realises his folly in allowing Jyoti to marry Arun completely in the second scene of the second act. The action of the play has shifted a few months in future here. Nath reads Arun’s autobiography which has been recently published. Reading about Arun’s sad experiences arouses his sympathy for him. Seva informs him that Jyoti has been hospitalized after having got an internal wound in the stomach due to Arun’s kicking her. Through the newspaper report about the persecution of the Palestinians by the Israeli forces, Jayaprakash suggests to Nath that Arun is taking revenge of the atrocities committed on the lower caste people by the higher class people by his inhuman treatment of Jyoti.

In the concluding scene of the play, Nath comes home after giving a hypocritical speech about Arun’s autobiography. After some time, Jyoti comes and wishes to have a talk with Nath in private. She speaks in an extremely hostile manner which suggests her anger. She blames Nath for giving an insincere speech. She disowns her father for having failed in his duties towards her and leaves his house never to return. Tendulkar uses a subtle device to suggest the total defeat of Nath’s idealism. With the spotlight on Nath’s face, the audience can hear sounds of huge buildings hurtling down and the sound gets louder and louder till Nath breaks down and falls on the sofa in a listless manner.
Features of Tendulkar’s Dramatic Technique:

Tendulkar manifests the actions and gestures of his characters in the stage directions in a way that accurately captures their purpose. Through his minute attention to the stage directions, he raises the level of audience sensitivity to the cardinal issues and aspects of his plays. His instructions for movement, gestures and sound cannot be ignored as they are a part of the story he wishes to tell. The instructions he inserts in brackets help to interpret his text properly. The meanings emerge not only through what is said but through what is shown on the stage. The description of the body-language of the characters helps us to visualise their minds.

Being a skilful playwright, Tendulkar ensures that his work is not misrepresented in its performance by visualising the various dramatic elements such as plot, character, dialogue and setting, and presenting them in his text. He uses a supplementary, conducive and helpful technique to make his themes and vision clear to the reader-audience. Tendulkar’s ample stage directions prevent ambiguity with regard to his intention. In order to avoid tampering with the sense of the play as he had intended, Tendulkar tries to compose a tight script and gives detailed stage directions in it. He endeavours to deliver a compact play into the hands of the director so that he does not use the text of his play as raw material and shape it according to his own vision. In addition to avoiding directorial interference with the sense of the play, Tendulkar’s lengthy stage directions allow the reader to grasp his play better. The valuable instructions in brackets in Tendulkar’s plays are immensely helpful to the actors to prepare for their roles. Thus Tendulkar is an actor’s writer. He also describes the gestures of the characters which help an actor in understanding the thoughts and feelings that reside in the minds of the character he is playing. V.B. Deshpande aptly comments that Tendulkar’s stage directions, like those in the plays
of Shaw, Ibsen and Pinter, are quite significant and are a part of the dramatic meaning. He also observes that Tendulkar’s intuitive awareness of the stage and his interest in an effective presentation of his plays becomes evident from his stage directions.

Tendulkar has used the long speeches given by his characters to convey to the reader-audience information about their motives, intentions and state of mind. He has employed the device of symbolism to enhance the beauty of the language in his plays. Commenting on Tendulkar’s keen consciousness of the possibilities of language in theatre, Shanta Gokhale writes that Tendulkar’s awareness of the sense and sound of words, the tone and rhythm of sentences and the juxtaposition of word with word, line with line, have immensely enriched the texture of the speech in his plays.

Tendulkar’s characters do not use accurate and exact words or the proper word order while speaking under the influence of intense emotions which is quite realistic. The spells of silence and the dramatic pauses during dialogue are the strong points of Tendulkar’s style. According to J.L. Styan, the dramatic pause is planned by the playwright solely for the sake of the audience. It is a means of schooling the audience to hear and see what the playwright wants. Thus a word or a sentence which is intended to convey a particular effect gets time to sink into the consciousness of the audience. Tendulkar has used the utterances as well as the silence of the characters in his plays effectively for the expression of their thoughts and feelings.

We find numerous examples of the dramatic pauses in the plays of Tendulkar. The dialogue between Benare and Samant at the beginning of the play *Silence! The Court is in Session* provides a very good instance of Tendulkar’s use of this device. While telling Samant about her love for teaching, Benare confides to Samant that the school management is conducting an enquiry against her on suspicion of indiscreet
behaviour. Benare insists that she is perfect in her job and the school management has no right to interfere in her personal life. While declaring that she will live her life according to her own wishes, Benare suddenly becomes silent with her hand unconsciously placed on her stomach. Tendulkar indicates the pause in her speech by three dots. This pause makes the reader-audience think about the crisis through which Benare is passing by subtly hinting at her unwed pregnancy. Thus Tendulkar uses words in his own way and goes beyond them by utilising the silence and the pauses between them. Arundhati Banerjee aptly comments that Tendulkar’s style of dialogue signifies more than what it says.³⁹

Tendulkar’s skillful use of dialogue is one of his strengths as a playwright. The language that he uses is most appropriately suited to the thought that is being expressed. He writes short, crisp and lively dialogues. They are natural and witty as well as terse. An economy of words characterises Tendulkar’s dialogues. He has an ability to express maximum meaning in minimum words. He turns everyday speech into a forceful dramatic tool. The silences and the unarticulated expressions are as important as dialogues in Tendulkar’s plays. According to Gowri Ramnarayan, Tendulkar revolutionised speech rhythms by employing half-sentences, part phrases, tentative expressions, pauses and silences in his plays and made the spoken word resonate with the unspoken.⁴⁰ Tendulkar himself says that he has an ear for the speech habits of people which get stored in his brain and aid him in writing his plays.⁴¹ Thus the novel use of language in Tendulkar’s plays helps the reader-audience to understand the thought processes in the minds of his characters.

There is a skillful use of the device of satire in Tendulkar’s plays. According to M.H. Abrams, in an indirect satire, the objects of the satire are characters who make themselves and their opinions ridiculous by what they think, say, and do.⁴² Such
indirect satire is found in all the plays of Tendulkar. In *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Tendulkar has satirised the hypocrisy of the urban middle class people through the characters such as Mr. Kashikar, Mrs. Kashikar, Sukhatme, Ponkshe, Karnik, and Rokde. All these characters are failures in their respective professions and as such, envious of Benare who is a successful career woman. During the mock-trial, they torture Benare in an inhuman manner. They pretend to conduct Benare’s trial on the basis of a fictitious charge even after realising that they are hurting her feelings greatly. In *Encounter in Umbagland*, Tendulkar satirises the corrupt politicians through his portrayal of the ministers, Vratyasom, Bhagadanta, Karkashirsha, Pishtakeshi and Aranyaketu. Through their words and actions, the playwright brings out that these ministers have no interest in public welfare and use their positions for personal benefits. In his play *The Vultures*, Tendulkar satirises the people who pose as cultured beings but stoop to the level of beasts to satisfy their greed. When Umakant suggests Ramakant to kill Sakharam, their uncle, Ramakant refuses citing their bond of blood. However, Ramakant maims Manik, his sister, when he needs to detain her in the house in order to blackmail her lover. The eponymous character of Tendulkar’s play *Sakharam Binder* criticises people for beating their wives. His own conduct resembles them when he beats Lakshmi and Champa, his mistresses. In *Ghashiram Kotwal*, the playwright satirises the intoxicating effect of power on human beings. Ghashiram seeks revenge on the people of Poona for persecuting him in spite of his innocence. After becoming the Kotwal, Ghashiram begins to get sadistic pleasure in torturing people and persecutes innocent people also. In *A Friend’s Story*, Tendulkar satirises people who punish others for doing things which they themselves do through the character of Dalvi. In addition to Dalvi’s having an affair with Nama, the playwright hints at his various other affairs. But Dalvi exposes Mitra’s abnormality in
front of the society for having an affair with Nama and thus ruins her life. In Kamala, Tendulkar has satirised the institution of marriage through Jaisingh’s total indifference to his wife Sarita’s feelings. In Kanyadaan, the playwright has satirised the human tendency to inflict pain upon others as a revenge of the injustice caused to oneself in the past through the character of Arun. Arun bears the scars of casteism and the atrocities committed against his forefathers by the higher caste people. After marrying Jyoti, a Brahmin girl, he tortures her as he is always conscious of her upper caste origin. N.S. Dharan aptly remarks that Tendulkar does not launch any frontal attack on the subjects he ridicules but resorts to the employment of the device of indirect satire. Tendulkar evokes scorn and contempt in the minds of the reader-audience for the evil actions of his characters.

Tendulkar does not wish that the audience should forget the existence of the theatre as soon as the curtain has risen. On the contrary, he seems to be anxious to make the audience aware that it is in a theatre. He wishes to instill a critical attitude towards the characters and situations in the minds of the reader-audience instead of identifying themselves with them. Tendulkar achieves this objective by bringing about the distancing effects in his plays. The term ‘distancing effect’ comes from the German ‘verfremdungseffekt’, an epic theory propounded by Bertold Brecht, the German Dramatist. According to Sebastian and Chandra, the audience is encouraged to keep a distance from the dramatic action by reminding them of the artificial nature of drama through the use of the device of distancing effect. Tendulkar uses various devices in order to establish the reader-audience’s detachment from the characters and situations in his plays so that they can experience the play in isolation from their personal concerns. In Silence! The Court is in Session, Benare’s fellow actors keep reminding her that the trial which is being conducted against her is fake. It serves as a
reminder for the reader-audience also. When Benare is accused of the crime of infanticide, she appears to be stunned. It makes the reader-audience think about the reason of such behaviour of Benare. In *Encounter in Umbugland, The Vultures* and *A Friend’s Story*, Tendulkar uses the remarks made by the narrators of these plays to remind the audience that they are watching a play. The human curtain in *Ghashiram Kotwal* also performs the same function. Thus Tendulkar allows the reader-audience to feel the distinction between the self and the work of art through the creation of distancing effects. R.N. Ray observes that Tendulkar, like Bertold Brecht, believes that the purpose of drama is not to produce catharsis in the minds of the reader-audience but to encourage, stimulate and provoke them to think over the issues affecting the normal and balanced growth of human society. By preventing the reader-audience’s identification with the situations in his plays, the playwright makes them think about the factors responsible for the emergence of various social problems.

In his plays such as *Encounter in Umbugland, The Vultures, Ghashiram Kotwal* and *A Friend’s Story*, Tendulkar has used the technique of making one of the characters the *Sutradhar* (narrator) to tell the story to the reader-audience. The narrator is usually a character outside the action of a play. But Tendulkar makes his narrators such as Prannarayan in *Encounter in Umbugland*, Rajaninath in *The Vultures*, Sutradhar in *Ghashiram Kotwal* and Bapu in *A Friend’s Story*, participate in the action of the plays. The playwright provides the necessary information to the reader-audience and creates the scene and atmosphere through the utterances of the narrators. Tendulkar’s narrators speak directly to the reader-audience and comment on the action of the play. Tendulkar has used this device to present large and complex materials in a short time-span in his plays.
Tendulkar keeps the whole theatrical experience in mind while manipulating all the component parts in his plays. He enhances the language of the theatre by employing the elements of movement, stillness, silence and sound properly in his plays. Shailaja Wadikar observes that the language, stage directions, setting, costumes, lighting and sound effects in Tendulkar’s plays are in harmony with their thematic background, and his plays breathe realism. While commenting upon his dramatic technique, Tendulkar himself had stated in an interview that he had used the genre of the realistic play in a different manner and had not followed a beaten track. Though most of his plays are written in the naturalistic mode, he did not get trapped in unnecessary details with regard to his stage technique. He displays a firm grip over the scenes in his plays which are well planned and executed. His hold over the structure of the plays gives them cohesion and stylistic uniformity. Tendulkar did not get stuck with a particular style of writing but continued to experiment with the form in his plays. He used the medium of theatre to its fullest by employing the visual elements skilfully. He used various types of sound, gestures, facial expressions, mime, songs and dances in an intelligent manner. He gave greater importance to the subject of a play and employed any form or style that produced the effect desired by him. He chose different forms of presentation in his plays on the basis of their ability to deliver his message to the reader-audience effectively.
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