PREFACE

Govind Purushottam Deshpande was born at Poona in a small town near Satara. He is a retired Professor of Chinese studies at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He is a leading Marxist intellectual and a successful Marathi playwright. Every one of his plays has been put on stage by major directors. His plays have a reputation for being dense in ideas, discussion and debate. The trilogy, Political Plays (“A Man in Dark Times”, “Past One O’ Clock” and “A Passage to Darkness”) deals with the impact of times and events on human beings, and their relationships.

Vijay Tendulkar, a prolific writer in Marathi, has authored full-length plays, one-act plays, children’s plays, and a novel. Most of his plays have been translated into major Indian languages, and some into English. He symbolises the new awareness and attempts of Indian dramatists of the last quarter-century to depict the agonies and suffocations of man, focussing particularly on those of the middle-class.

Girish Karnad, born near Bombay, is today one of the foremost playwrights in India and writes in Kannada. Karnad deals with the Indian myths and legends and makes them a vehicle of a new vision. By using these myths, he tries to show the absurdity of life with all its elemental passions and conflicts, and man’s eternal struggle to achieve perfection.
This thesis discusses three plays of G.P. Deshpande, two plays of Vijay Tendulkar and two plays of Girish Karnad and examines their thematic aspects.

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. First chapter traces the origin and development of drama. Second, third and fourth chapters deal with the of the collapse of the communist ideal, and the vacuum left by the loss of belief with the impact of human-beings, and their relationships, in *A Man in Dark Times*, *Past One O’ Clock* and *A Passage to Darkness*. Fifth and sixth chapters deal with the power politics and the cruelty with which power is obtained in *Ghasiram Kotwal* and *Encounter in Umbugland*. Seventh and eighth chapters deal with the theme of incompleteness, and the problems faced by the protagonists in attaining completeness in *Hayavadana* and *Naga - Mandala*. The final chapter presents the essence of all the chapters.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to all the critics whose studies have helped me comprehend and assess G.P. Deshpande’s plays, Vijay Tendulkar’s plays and Girish Karnad’s plays.

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...V. Madhavi