A perusal of Tendulkar's plays reveals his affinity with the Theatre of Cruelty propounded by Antonin Artaud. Even without any reference to Artaud's, theory of cruelty, Tendulkar has been the butt of criticism for depicting cruelty raw in his plays. He delves deep into the cruelty inherent in the heart of egoistical man. The Vultures presents the shocking cruelty of man. Man like a vulture that dives low to devour its prey, can stoop to any unpredictable baseness, like killing his father for material prosperity or using his sister as a fulcrum to soar himself to riches. The two brothers in the play - Ramakant and Umakant - are embodiments of evil innate to man. They are hostile to each other and go on poking fun at each other's defects. Umakant humiliates his brother, Ramakant, by taunting him for his barrenness whereas Ramakant ridicules the former for his impotency. However, for common advantage they join together and with the cooperation of their sister, Manik, harass their father. When they get an inkling of their father's hidden money, unhesitatingly they frighten him out of his wits. Overwhelming him with a pretence of love and affection they also threaten to kill him and demand money from him and
succeed in their efforts. They remain callous when he flees out for life. Their rapacity is unflinching. Later instead of rectifying their sister's immoral conduct they ruminate on the possibility of blackmailing her lover for the sake of money. As they fail to do so because of the sudden demise of her lover, the Raja of Hondur, they plan to arrange a bird's eye-view of the Sati of their sister. Violating all the norms of humanity they abort her. Manik is no less malignnant. She tries to take revenge on her brothers by attempting to abort her sister-in-law through black magic. Synchronizing themselves with the tone of the play, the other two unblemished characters of the play - Rama and Rajanath - commit adultery and perfect the picture of the play - a family of vultures who devour one another for monetary benefit. Tendulkar raises their house itself to the status of a devouring vulture through the consciousness of Rama. And the screeching of the vultures at the end of each scene makes the cruelty of the characters to one another predominant in the play.

Silence! focuses on the sadism incipient in man that inflicts savage agony on the others and reveals how man is prone to a satanic joy at the expense of the others on the
pretext of safeguarding social norms. The cruelty dormant in the heart of man darts to the surface in the behaviour of a group of men-actors. They ruthlessly attack the personal life of a sagacious woman-actor, Benare, and expose her, for she, a spinster, has become pregnant without the sanction of wedlock. The men actors - Mr. Kashikar, Sukhatme, Karnik, Ponske and Rokde - make Benare their target. They take revenge on her for their failure and frustration in real life through the technique of the play within the play. They play a mock-trial and charge Benare of infanticide. Then they gratify their grudge against her by overpowering her with evidence on evidence against her. Mr. Kashikar, the mock-judge, announces mulet for violating the moral standards of the middle class society and for her horror-striking crime of infanticide. She would be no longer worthy of continuing in her profession as a teacher and she would lose her job the only hope of her life. When Benare finally collapses under the shock of their indictment, all the men and Mrs. Kashikar the only other woman character in the play phoo-phoo it as a joke. The scene is a stark evidence of the culmination of man's cruelty and his callousness to the calamities of the others. However, Prof. Damle, the man responsible for the shameful situation of Benare, remains unscathed by the vultures who extol themselves as the protectors of middle
class morality. Their unrelenting attack on Benare is an instance of man's cruelty to women in educated and elite middle class society. The outpouring grief of Benare reveals the fathom of suffering that woman has been bearing for ages in the male-dominated society.

Sakharam Binder has outraged the moral sensibility of the orthodox middle class society in its crude presentation of cruelty in sex. Sakharam Binder, a social castaway treats a woman as a dispensable commodity that can be discarded as soon as it ceases to be any consequence to him. He takes castaway women each at one time on co-habital basis and exploits their helplessness. He frightens them out of their wits with his exhortions and establishes his crude authority over his victims with his sheer animal energy. He terrifies Laxmi, a castaway woman, with his set speech, and drives her to seek the company of insects and birds. His relationship with a woman is all conditional. It is of necessity, without any higher communion with the woman. However, he thrives hard to overpower the woman in his aggressive domain. He meets his implacable match in the terrible woman, Champa, who has walked away on her husband, unlike Laxmi. He becomes infatuated with her physical charms and he is easily cowed down, by her all-demanding temperament and
reveals how much meekness of Laxmi he has in himself. There is thus a reversal of roles between the oppressor and his victim, confirming the eternal truth that there is an incipient cruelty at the heart of either man or woman and he or she outwits his or her opponent as the opportunity springs up. After Sakharam turns impotent she boldly takes recourse to Dawood and asserts her supremacy over Sakharam. And even the god-fearing Laxmi plays a strategic game of deceit and infuriates Sakharam against Champa by thrusting the news of the latter's affair with Dawood, on Sakharam.

The minor characters also exploit the woman in their clutches. Laxmi's husband throws her out of his house to drift with the vile society. Champa's impotent husband tortures her horribly beyond the utmost bound of human imagination and plunges her into the unsafe world to be exploited by the social castaways like Sakharam Binder. Thus the play unfurls the cruelty in sex and family.

Ghashiram Kotwal unravels the spectacle of cruelty that remains embedded in politics, sex and religion. Nana Phadnavis of Poona exploits Ghashiram Kotwal's ambition for power over his offenders. Humiliated by the Brahmans of
Poona Ghashiram becomes a slave to his passion and pledges revenge on them. He can gratify his thirst for revenge through only power and he struggles hard for the whip of Kotwal. When a congenial situation comes handy to him, he holds on to it. He stoops low to conquer power. He presents his daughter, Lalita Gauri, as a bait for the salacious Nana Phadnavis and emerges as the Kotwal of Poona. His rude and revengeful exercise of power straightens all the curves of the Brahmans of Poona. He cleanses Poona of corruption and licentiousness. But he goes too far in his passion for revenge to be tolerated by the Brahmans for long.

Nana Phadnavis uses Ghashiram as a talisman against his political opponents. Later after the disposal of Lalita Gauri, he realizes the invalidity of Ghashiram and orders happily the beheading of the latter on the demand of the furious mob. Ghashiram raises no resistance against the mob as his dreams about his daughter are dashed to the ground by the tidings of her death. But her pre-mature death dispels all his dreams and he becomes easily subdued by the artful viles of Nana. With the promptings of Nana Phadnavis he becomes more revengeful and more blood-thirsty and invites his doom. When the wrathful mob surrounds him and stones him...
to death, he welcomes that sort of breath-taking death for having sacrificed his beloved daughter at the altar of Nana Phadnavis's lechery.

By making Nana Phadnavis court Lalita Gauri in a temple of Lord Ganapati, Tendulkar has superbly manipulated the commingling of politics, sex and religion exposing the hypocrisy and Machaivelian selfishness of man.

Kamala exposes the chauvinism intrinsic in the modern Indian male who believes himself to be liberal-minded. Jaishingh Jadhav pretends to be a social reformer and launches criticism on the human sale that goes on in India with the awareness and support of the eminent politicians. To prove the inhumanity of the human sale he buys a slave, Kamala, at a flesh market. That is, he acts against law. Till then he captivates us with his sublime notions. But his treatment of Kamala later belies his noble ideals. He shows himself to be more interested in his profession than in the eradication of the hardships of the victims. He is enthusiastic to create sensationalism by pouncing Kamala at the Press Conference. It will enhance the popularity of his paper and fetch him recognition and reward. Once he fulfils his wish,
Jaisingh treats his wife, Sarita, no better than Kamala. He makes her receive a number of irrelevant phone calls and maintain a record of the names of all those people who call upon him in his absence. He expects her to work like a slave for him. He insults her by expressing his lack of confidence in the strength of her mind. That is, he tells her about Kamala only after warning her to keep the secret in tact till the conference is over. Indeed, he has never thought of her as a person with a mind of her own. He is
pacified when she repulses him and refuses to accompany him to a party. He overtly snubs her by remarking that she has no right to take any decision in his house and he reminds her that he is the master of the house. He sticks on to this view and takes Kamala to the orphanage, contrary to her request. Sarita sees through his hypocrisy and selfishness. She realizes that for Jaisingh she is also a slave like Kamala and resolves to assert her independence.

If Jaisingh exploits Sarita and Kamala - Vijay Tendulkar opens a new frontier here - Jaisingh is exploited by his employer. He himself is a slave to his authorities. He struggles hard to establish an inhuman activity going on in India. He commits a crime by buying Kamala and he loses the good opinion of his wife. Till then he is encouraged by his proprietor so much so that he believes he will be saved by the latter. Unexpectedly when he is at the apex of joy he is sacked down to his dismay. The proprietor himself is to impelled to do so.

In the play Tendulkar probes deep into the cruelty that is inherent not only in the heart of man but in the nature of human life itself. None - either man or woman - is
free from oppression. Man is cruel to woman and man himself is cruelly ill-treated by society.

Tendulkar in the play *Kanyadan*, the most controversial of his plays, reveals the revengeful nature incipient in the heart of the oppressed and shows how it bursts out when an opportunity is rendered. In such a case idealism itself is ignited. Nath Devlalikar, a Brahmin and a socialist, promotes the marriage of his daughter with a dalit poet. Nath Devlalikar's high ambition is indeed commendable. But after the marriage, the dalit son-in-law turns to be a cruel tormentor of his Brahmin wife and her parents. He sees his wife, Jyoti, as a symbol of all those horrors that his caste has suffered for ages at the hands of the so-called high caste. So she becomes a target of his revenge. Instead of elevating himself to the high expectations of his wife and her father, he pushes them into a mire of agony by resorting to physical violence towards her. He vulgarly taunts her by scandalizing her parents and finds a beastly joy in torturing her. He fails to tolerate even the support and solace given to her by her parents and brother because he remembers the helplessness of his mother when his father has beaten her. Instead of reforming himself by resolving not to
treat his wife so barbarously as his father has done, he repeats the same cruelty towards his wife, affirming Tedulkar's conviction that cruelty in man, however educated and efficient, is a recurring fact of human life. The talented dalit poet, Arun Athavale, inspite of his powerful and heart-breaking autobiography and inspiring poetry, remains a primitive man to the core in his wife-beating for the gratification of his thirst for revenge - he representing all the repressed dalits and she symbolising all the oppressing rich classes.

Jayaprakash keenly analyses the trend of human nature. Man never endeavours not to turn inhuman towards his oppressors but finds a sadistic joy in victimizing his oppressors. This explains the rude behaviour of Arun. Thus Nath Devlalikar's efforts to make his daughter's marriage a success become futile in the context of the eternal existence of evil in man. And as a result his daughter succumbs to the evils of life and recognizes man's cruelty as a veritable feature of life whereas the ideals of her father are mere illusions of life.
Encounter in Umbugland is a purely political play. It unfolds the cruelty of political game where each politician conspires to suppress and supercede others. King Vichitravirya desires to rule Umbugland for thousand years though he is already old and on the verge of death. However, he reprimands his cabinet for a similar aspiration. After the death of the king, the Cabinet ministers outwit each other in their struggle for power. As they fail to arrive at an agreement among themselves, they install their late king's daughter, Vijaya, as their ruler. Vijaya's adolescence and inexperience attracts them. They resolve to make her their pawn. But the moment she is enthroned, she turns to be more than a match for them, she rejects their restrictions and asserts freedom in the administration with her independence of mind. As a consequence the Cabinet becomes disheartened and deny cooperation to her. This strife for power launches them on an encounter.

As it happens usually in a political game, one of the Cabinet ministers belonging to Kadambas supports the Queen and both the parties use the public to establish supremacy over each other. The race for power thus goes on. The Cabinet's plans are to burn the palace and to dethrone
the Queen with the succour of the mob. However, the Queen proves to be the stronger and more powerful in diplomacy and defeats their plans with the guidance of her servant, Prannarayan, and the Cabinet minister, Bhagadanta. She manoeuvres to turn the tables against them by inciting the mob against them and easily subdues them to her authority. She starts governing them autocratically like her late father. In their race for power they forget all their affection and turn cruel to one another. That is, man resorts to treachery to grab power. He emphasizes this idea through the momentous comments of the Cabinet ministers and Prannarayan, a man of third sex.

Thus Tendulkar's plays fall into the orbit of Artaud's doctrines of the Theatre of Cruelty. They emerge as documents on the cruelty inherent in man. They confirm Tendulkar's gospel of cruelty that at the least provocation this bestial spark in man springs up to his surface and spoils the sweetness of his life. He flings his plays as bomb shells on the complacent society and let it shrug its shoulders with shamefacedness at its own horror-striking atrocities.