Chapter - VI

KANYADAAN
THE THEME OF CONFLICT
BETWEEN
UPPER CASTE AND DALITS
*Kamyadam* is perhaps the most controversial of all the plays written by Tendulkar. It dwells on an extremely sensitive social and political issue, namely, the conflict between upper castes and Dalits, a phenomenon still rampant in several parts of India. Despite fifty years of independence Dalits continue to suffer abject misery and ill-treatment at the hands of the upper castes. Politicians, instead of trying to uproot this evil, seem to capitalize on it. Tendulkar delves deep into this social evil and presents it as it is. He raises disturbing questions, but never bothers to answer them. This method of his is truly characteristic of a genuine playwright whose foremost concern is to open his reader-audience's eyes to a social problem which continues to evade easy solutions. And as a creative writer, he does not take sides.

As the title suggests, the play centres around 'marriage'. It is an unusual marriage in the sense that it brings in its wake complex problems: problems at once self-created and unforeseen. Jyoti, a young Brahmin woman, comes from a politically and socially active family. Nath Devlalikar, her father, is an M.L.A. Seva, her mother is a busy social worker. Her brother Jayaprakash is an M.Sc. student. Jyoti is an educated working woman. Theirs is an urban middle class family. Brought up in such a progressive-minded family, Jyoti decides to marry Arun Athavale, a Dalit youth from a village, whom she has known only for two months. Arun is poor, but talented. He is a B.A. student. He writes poetry a factor which seems to have influenced Jyoti in her decision to marry him. Jyoti informs her parents and brother that she has decided to marry Arun. Nath Devlalikar, the idealist who dreams of a casteless society, gives her his consent immediately. Nevertheless, as they are used to Nath's ways, they finally agree. Jyoti and Arun get married. What follows is a sequence of violence, misery and disillusionment.

The play is divided into two Acts each of which is further divided into scenes. Act I has two scenes, and Act II three scenes. Comparatively speaking, it is a shorter play by Tendulkar. Yet, it is the most gripping of all his plays. The evolution of Jyoti from a soft spoken, highly cultured Brahmin girl into a hardened Dalit girl is really incredible and distressing. One cannot but wonder if such a sacrifice, as Jyoti's, is possible among modern women. The imperceptible transformation occurring in Nath's attitude to the world is also vividly portrayed.
by the master playwright, Nath the idealist, in the end, turns into a disillusioned realist. The play, therefore, is at once a domestic, social and political one.

In the opening scene we witness a happy family gathering. At the same time, we feel a little disturbed at the fact that both Nath and Seva do not spend much time with their children, Jayaprakash and Jyoti. Nath is a busy man who is out almost always on tour delivering public speeches. Seva is also busy organizing women's rallies and camps. Nath himself is aware of this, and both Jayaprakash and Jyoti are accustomed to their long periods of absence as the following conversation reveals:

Nath : When she (seva) goes to Bombay for a women's camp, I stay here to lecture in Pune. If she comes to Pune, I go to Aurangabad to take part in a rally for people's rights.

Jayaprakash : Don't worry, Dad. The two of us are always here. We keep conveying your messages to each other.

Nath : That's just it. Sending messages to one another cannot be called marriage. Isn't there a thing called co-existence? Eh? This is all too much of a rush, baba: This matter will have to be reviewed seriously sometime.

Jyoti : First the rush and scramble must stop. For both of you (p.3).

Jyoti hesitantly tells her father that she wants to tell them something concerning herself. On Seva's arrival, Jyoti discloses to her parents her decision to marry Arun, a Dalit youth, whom she has met in the socialists' study group. Seva is shocked to hear her daughter. But Nath is excited and dismisses his wife's questions concerning the boy's background and occupation as irrelevant. Jyoti tells her mother:

I feel he can be trusted. His poems and autobiography have inspired me with complete faith in him (p.10).
Seva warns Jyoti of the consequences of her hasty decision saying:

My anxiety is not over his being a dalit. You know very well that Nath and I have been fighting untouchability tooth and nail, god knows since when. So that’s not the issue .... You have been brought up in a specific culture. To erase or change all this overnight is just not possible. He is different in every way. You may not be able to handle it(p.13).

Jyoti tries to allay her mother’s fears by telling her that she will manage. She tells both her mother and father of her intention of bringing Arun when they are both at home.

In scene 2, Act I, we see Jyoti bringing Arun to her house to introduce him to her parents and brother. Arun is dark-complexioned and has a harsh face. Yet he is good-looking. On entering the comfortable middle-class house, Arun feels quite nervous and ill at ease. He does not want Jyoti to leave him alone, saying, “I feel uncomfortable in big houses...” (p.16). Jyoti is surprised. Arun continues:

If you see my father’s but you’ll understand. Ten of us, big and small, lived in that eight by ten feet. The heat of our bodies to warm us in winter. No clothes on our back, no food in our stomach, but we feel very safe. Here, these damn houses of the city people, they’re like the bellies of sharks and crocodiles, each one alone in them(p.16).

As the conversation progresses, Arun grows more and more eloquent on the subject of untouchability. His words spit venom. They express his hatred for Brahmins. He asks Jyoti:

Will you marry me and eat stinking bread with spoilt dal in my father’s hut? Without counting? Tell me, Jyoti, can you shit everyday in our slum’s village toilet like my mother? Can you beg, quaking at every door, for a little grace for our buffaloes? Come on, tell me.(p.17)
Jyoti finds such talk revolting and she covers her face with her hands. She begins to weep uncontrollably on hearing Arun say:

And you thought of marrying me: Our life is not the Socialists’ service camp. It is hell, and I mean hell. A hell named life. (p.18)

On seeing her crying Arun asks Jyoti to forgive him for being rude in his speech. Jyoti laughs when Arun sings, “It’s a jolly game, caught a Brahmin dame”. When Jyoti tells him that she is not a touch-me-not girl, Arun suddenly seizes her arm and twists it violently. Jyoti is painfully hurt, more so because of this sudden change in Arun’s behaviour.

Seva enters witnessing this scene. She hides her displeasure and asks Arun about his education, future prospects etc. The moment she hints at a ‘stable career’ Arun burst out saying, “No problem. We shall be brewing illicit liquor”(p.21). Both Seva and Jayapraakash are shocked. Unmindful of their shocked reactions, Arun goes on talking in a rather obscene language about the advantages of brewing illicit liquor.

Nath’s entry at this juncture eases the situation a little. He is pleased with Arun’s appearance. He tells his wife:

Seva, until today, ‘Break the caste system’ was a mere slogan for us. I’ve attended many intercaste marriages and made speeches. But today I have broken the caste barrier in the real sense. My home has become Indian in the real sense of the term. I am happy today, very happy. (p.23)

After sometime Arun leaves not caring even to touch the tea that Jyoti brings him. On his departure, Seva tells her husband that Arun is someone who can fit among them. On being informed of Arun’s rude behaviour, Nath says:

Not only is he not a middle class man, he is a dali. He has been brought up in the midst of poverty and hatred. These people’s Psychological make-up is altogether different. We must understand him and that is extremely difficult (p27)
Though Nath speaks in defense of Arun's vile behaviour, he advises Jyoti to think the matter over. But Jyoti says that she does not want to change her mind and that her decision is 'final'. Nath decides to stand by her, come what may. Therefore he says:

I am on Jyoti's side... He (Arun) may not be a gentleman, but neither is he a scoundrel. As a human being he has potential. He has intelligence, drive and creativity... He is like unrefined gold, he needs to be melted and moulded. This is the need of the hour. Who can perform this if not like girls like Jyoti? ...I stand by you. Go ahead my child, let us see what happens. (p.31)

The darkness that sets in now, as the stage direction indicates, seems to be suggestive of the darkness is that going to descend on them.

Jyoti gets married to Arun. Scene I of Act II opens to show us Jyoti who has become tired and crushed after a few months of married life with Arun. She comes home with the determination not to return to him. To her father's proposal that both of them could stay in her house, she replies in sheer agony:

... He... will not enter this house. Because... I have left him... I am not going back to him again... never. (p.39)

All are stunned to hear Jyoti speaking so agitatedly. Nath, however, is firm on his resolution not to break the relationship. To quote him addressing his wife:

Seva, let not his wonderful experiment fail: This dream which is struggling to turn real, let it not crumble into dust before our eyes. We must save this marriage... this experiment is a very precious experiment (p.41)

Arun enters fully drunk asking for Jyoti's pardon. He says to Nath:

I will see Jyoti and fall at her feet. I will beg her pardon. Don't want anything else. (p.42)
He takes out a knife saying that he is going to cut off his arm with which he beat Jyoti. Sensitive to his histrionic act, Jayaprakash snatches away the knife and Arun offers no resistance. Nath also perceives his artifice. To Seva's question why he beat Jyoti he responds in the following manner:

What am I but the son of scavenger. We don't know the non-violent ways of Brahmans like you. We drink and beat our wives... We make love to them... but the beating is what gets publicized. (p.44)

Jyoti, who has been watching all this, leaves the house with Arun, perhaps to prevent further embarrassment to her parents and brother. On seeing this Nath feels proud and expresses himself in the following words:

Jyoti, I fell so proud of you. The training I gave you has not been in vain. (Suddenly dejected). If only I believed in God, then Jyoti, this is the moment I'd go down on my knees and pray for you... (p.45)

This utterance is indicative of the pride and anguish that swell up in his heart. He wishes, against all odds, that her daughter would be able to lead a happy domestic life with Arun. At the same time, it also shows that he is besieged by unknown fears.

In scene 2, Act II we see Nath immersed in Arun's autobiography which has just published. Seva reports to him that Jyoti is pregnant and advised rest by the doctor. But she has failed in her attempts at persuading her to come home. Nath is all praise for his son-in-law who has shown the world that he is a powerful, creative writer through his autobiography. Pat comes Seva's response:

...The truth is that your daht son-in-law, who can write such a wonderful autobiography and many lovely poems, wants to remain an idler. He wants his wife to work... On top of that, for entertainment, he wants to kick his wife in the belly, why not? Doesn't his wife belong to the high caste? In this way he is returning all the kicks aimed at generations of his ancestry by
men of high caste. It appears that this is monumental mission he
has set out to fulfill. (p. 47-48)

At this juncture, Nath receives a phone call urging him to chair a
discussion on his son-in-law's book. But he bluntly refuses to do so, for by now,
he has discovered that Arun is a hypocrite and an avenger. At this juncture Seva
tells Nath:

Shall I tell you what I'll say if they ask me to speak? I will say that
in this excellent book, whatever the author, has said about injustice
and exploitation is hypocrisy of the first order. Because this man
himself exploits my daughter. Like a shameless parasite, he lives
on my daughter's blood, and on top to that he gets drunk and
bashes her up. Constantly he taunts her about her caste and about
her parents, heaping foul abuse on them for being hightborn. (p. 49)

Nath is now convinced that his son-in-law is not a saviour of society, but a
canker eating into its very soul.

Arun comes in with two others who wish to have Nath preside over a
discussion on his autobiography. He is proud that he is 'a celebrated writer' now.
Nath, however, refuses to oblige them. After they have left, Nath gives vent to his
uncontrollable rage in the following outburst:

Scoundrel! he wants to blackmail me. . . As though I'd overlook
my daughter's misery and shower him with superlatives. . . . Seva,
he. . . . his visit has polluted this drawing room, this house, and this
day. It stinks. . . . Why did I have to come into contact with a man
like this? (p. 57)

But Nath does go to the function and deliver a hypocritical speech, under
pressure from his wife who thinks that such a gesture would save their pregnant
daughter from any further misery.

In the last scene we find that Nath's hypocritical action receives a
boomeranging reaction from his own daughter, Jyoti, who comes to hear him
speak on Arun's autobiography. She confronts him with uneasy questions which he, of course, has half-expected. But, what she has decided to do, once and for all shocks him. While Jayaprakash praises him saying, "People were saying that Bhai's speech was the most balanced, measured and to the point" (p.59), Jyoti confronts him with question, "why did you come to the meeting today?" (p.65).

Nath tries his best to convince her affirming that Arun's autobiography is a very good book. But Jyoti continues to batter him saying that it is all a lie, for she knows:

You attended that meeting and made a speech only because you were afraid that if you didn't, Arun would torture me more (p.66)

She goes on:

It was the sole consideration. There was no other consideration.
Your speech today was not only lousy, it was hireling's speech.
You attended the meeting against your wishes; you praised that book against your wishes. (p.66)

Jyoti's words sting Nath. He feels helpless and defenseless. He is pained to see his ideals crumbling before him. This daughter of his has been a severe critic of his speeches right from the time when she was eleven years old. When Nath asks her who will take care of her during delivery, Jyoti harshly replies:

I have my husband. I am not a widow. Even if I become one I won't knock at your door. I am not Jyoti Yadunath Devlalikar now, I am Jyoti Arun Athavale, a scavenger. I don't say harijan. I despise the term. I am an untouchable, a scavenger. I am one of them. Don't touch me. Fly from my shadows, otherwise my fire will scorch your comfortable values (p.70)

Saying these words, she leaves the house, obviously, never to return. Nath breaks down and lies on the sofa, a totally defeated idealist-father. The play ends here. The reader-audience is left wondering what could be the future of Jyoti, and, of course, her father.
Kanyadham won the playwright the Saraswathi Samman Award. In the
"Afterword" are given a few excerpts from the speech that Vijay Tendulkar made
on the occasion. He tells us that the play "gives expression to a deep-rooted
malaise and its pains". He says further:

... It is an old habit with me to do what I am told not to do. My
plays... contain my perception of society and its values and I
cannot write, what I do not perceive. 

Kanyadham, a two-act five-scene play, is tightly written-with only seven
characters. Jyoti, the daughter of Nath Devalkar, and MLC who insists on
democracy at home, has promised to marry Arun Athavali, a Dalit youth. When
she informs her parents, her father is ecstatic, but her mother Seva and brother
Jayaprakash are unhappy, after they meet Arun and are shocked by his language
and behaviour. Arun's excuse for his attitude is the mistreatment meted out to his
family and forefathers at the hands of society. Jyoti's decision to marry Arun leads
to a crisis which worsens after marriage, as Arun proves to be a violent husband.
Around them, the country too, is marching towards Emergency.

At the end, Jyoti is forced to come to terms with her fate as Arun's wife, as
she realizes that is not possible to improve people and change society. Tendulkar
has focused on a problem that there is no bridge between the various sections of
society, and that the attempt to overcome a taboo often leads to greater pitfalls
than one can handle, In Tendulkar's Words:

The work which has been selected for the Saraswati Samman is not
the story of a victory; it is the admission of defeat and intellectual
confusion. It gives expression to a deep-rooted malaise and its
pains.

Victory and fame are normally honoured. The ambition of those
who jump into the fray with the aim of winning is honoured. That
is why this award leaves me disturbed and confused. I am
wondering what I have really done to deserve it.
I have written about my own experiences and about what I have seen in others around me. I have been true to all this and have not cheated my generation. I did not attempt to simplify matters and issues for the audience when presenting my plays, though that would have been the easier option. Sometimes my plays jolted society out of its stupor and I was punished. I faced this without regrets. It is an old habit with me to do what I am told not to do. My plays could not have been about anything else. They contain my perception of society and its values and I cannot write what I do not perceive.

You are honouring me with the Saraswati Samman today for a play for which I once had a slipper hurled at me. Perhaps it is the fate of the play to have earned both this honour and that insult. As its creator, I respect both verdicts.

*Kanyadaan* explores the texture of modernity and society change in India through a marriage between two people of different castes and backgrounds. As an extremely sensitive social and political problem play, *Kanyadaan* is the most controversial of all the plays written by Vijay Tendulkar, for which he once, in the most notorious display of public anger, had a slipper hurled at him. The play was acknowledged as a powerful work that explores the dynamics of caste and social change in Modern India and reinforced Tendulkar’s reputation as a serious thinker and gifted craftsman in the theatre. By witnessing the degree of social consciousness, the play is a land mark in its dramatist’s career where the anti-brahman, anti-caste and land reform movement in Maharashtra have been among the strongest in twentieth century India, creating a powerful awareness within the state about the problems of untouchability and dispossession, but also mobilizing a form of reverse discrimination against the upper caste.

The play’s literary reputation reached its apex in March 1994 when it received the K.K. Birla foundation’s third Saraswathi Samman, one of India’s highest literary honours, for its “reflective representation of the complexity of human relationships... (and) the emotional connections and conflicts between the downtrodden and elite segments of society.” The foundations official felicitation
commended Tendulkar for creating a vibrant work that compelled intelligent readers to think, challenged their materialistic pursuits, and expressed an enduring belief in human strength and loyalty.

The play dwells on an extremely sensitive issue namely, the conflict between upper castes and Dalits, a phenomenon still rampanty prevalent in several parts of India. Despite sixty years of independence Dalits continue to suffer object misery and ill-treatment at the hands of the upper castes. Politicians, instead of trying to uproot this evil, seem to capitalize on it. The original vision of constitutions casteless society remains very distant: perhaps further than what it was at the time when India became independent. Obviously, there are reasons for this but most unfortunately the reasons themselves are not very obvious. There is yet another complication that has made the understanding of caste even more difficult and that is the nature and course of Indian history. Though the issue has escaped the notice of all modern writers on the early history of marriage, Tendulkar, as an intellect, is neither too dishonest nor too indifferent to educate audience in the right direction.

As a central ritual within the Hindu marriage ceremony, the very title Kanyadham- the father’s gift of the daughter in marriage to a suitable groom, codifies and imposes so many cardinal problems on the very existence of Hindu high caste woman. The Manusmriti, a socio-religious compendium composed around the beginning of the era, repeatedly states that women must never be independent4 Manusmriti not only encourages child marriages, but also promises to entitle rich rewards in heaven. Earlier the act of giving the daughter in marriage, the greater is the merit! The girl is not only treated as her husband’s property but also presumed as his nearest relatives:

For they (the ancient sages) declare that a bride is given to the family of her husband, and not to the husband alone. (Apastamba II. 10. 27.3).

The girl now belongs to the husband’s clan! She is known by his family name Once a woman is given in marriage, she must obey her husband while he is dead. A woman joined in the right way with a man also assumes his qualities.
"like a river united with the ocean". [Manu IX: 22]. Therefore a woman is a kind of impersonal being. She can have no merit or quality of her own. A father who demands a bride-price for his daughter unacceptably turns her into a commodity sold to the highest bidder. The best kind of marriage, instead, follows "the law of Brahma when a man dresses his daughter and adorns her and he himself gives her as a gift to a man he has summoned, one who knows the revealed canon and is of good character." 4

Good fortune also comes only to families in which men value women, for "the deities delight in places where women are revered, but where women are not revered all rites are fruitless". 5 Another crucial consideration in marriage is a parity of ritual and social status. A twice born man (who belongs to one of the three higher-caste groups) should match with a woman of his own caste, or class, if he does not wish to reduce his offspring to the status of servants, and the opposite event the marriage of a twice-born woman to a low caste man is so unimaginable as not to be mentioned in the Manusmriti at all. In the play Kanyakubha all these familial and social symbolisms of the ancient rituals collide against contemporary social process whose very purpose has been to subject patriarchal authority, prescribed gender roles, and caste division to radical scrutiny.

The unique feature of Hinduism lies in its composition of varna based society. It cannot be an exaggeration to say as colour is to America, race is to Germany and so is caste to India. As the system of castes is the most vigorous of the causes of social disintegration, it had stood in the way of developing among the Indian's any principle of cohesion or any motive or unity. The peculiar peril of a society organized on the basis of caste is anarchy. The spirit of intransigent division which is characteristic of caste has not only rendered impossible all superior organizations, but it has also sunk the Indians into a state of intellectual mobility. In the name of karma, as a Machiavellian act of manipulation, the institution of property rights has achieved extreme crookedness. As a result, society became frighteningly divided due to inequality.
If the caste system is the mainstay of the Hindu religion, endogamy is the driving force to sustain it. By forgetting the fact that no democracy can grow in a social environment in which the distinction of inferiors and superiors form an essential and permanent idea, the so-called nationalists of a nationless India boast that the social system of India was perfected thousands of years ago and console themselves by attributing all their miseries to the foreign invasions. “Varnasrams” says Mahatma Gandhi is inherent in human nature, and Hinduism has reduced it to a science. It does attack by birth. A man cannot change his varna by choice”. So he asserts:

- Prohibition against inter-marriage and inter dining is essential for a rapid evolution of the soul.

By forbidding intermarriage between the different castes the system of caste has rendered social fusion impossible, every caste lives for itself with no feelings of commiseration and pity for the sufferings of other castes. This parceling of the Indian population has produced baleful results. The peculiar peril of a society organized on the basis of endogamy is anarchy. The dread of anarchy has led to absolute monarchy as the strongest defense against it. Tendulkar’s entire process of posing the problem through Kanyadaan raises interesting questions. Exogamy has been offered as a solution to the caste problem. Tendulkar claims to have written the play from an actual case he had seen of such a marriage. However, the present discussion focuses how on the resolution of the problem leads to institution of marriage in India.

The play is divided into two acts each of which is further divided into scenes. Act I has two scenes, and Act II three scenes. Comparatively speaking, it is a shorter play by Tendulkar. Yet, it is the most gripping of all his plays. As the little suggests, the play centers on marriage - an institution which is a foundation for the super structures of family, society and nation. The marriage in the play is an unusual one in the sense that it brings in its wake complex problems at once self-created and unforeseen. Jyoti, a young Brahmin woman, comes from a politically and socially active family. Nath Devalikar, her father, is an MLC. Seva, her mother is a busy social worker. Her brother Jayaprakash is an M.Sc. student.
Though we witness a happy family gathering in the opening scene, we feel at the same time, a little disturbed at the fact that both Nath and Seva do not spend much time with their children. Jayaparakash and Jyoti. Nath is a busy man who is out almost always on tour delivering public speeches. Seva is also busy organizing women’s rallies and camps. Though ‘hide-and-seek’ game and its further consequences in their future familial relations alarm Nath, his intention of reviewing it does not materialize. Both Jayaparakash and Jyoti are accustomed to their long period of absences.

Thus, in its own way the play is a comment on the quality of the family life. These two social reformers have been able to give to their children, despite their observance of democratic norms. Though, to all appearance, the atmosphere in the house is liberal and democratic, the cruel fact that the parents have really no time for their children, engrossed as they are in their own self-centric activities, cannot remain hidden for long. In fact, the children are seen not as individuals with their own aspirations, but as more extensions of their parents’ social experimentations. The observation “we control a man’s environment in business and we loose it entirely when he crosses the threshold of his home” is true in modern homes. The roles of father and mother in socializing their children have been utterly imbalanced and this fact has become most pivotal one as the whole play turns upon it.

Jyoti’s declaration of her intention to marry a Dalit boy creates a heated debate in the house. The parents, are rattled but they are too seasoned as politicians to show their inner case. Seva is shocked to hear her daughter but Nath is excited and dismissed his wife’s questions concerning the boy’s background and occupation. They realize that now their integrity as public advocates of inter-caste marriages and casteless society is on trial. Seva’s reaction to the news displays a gap between her theory and practice. She searches one excuse after another to stop the marriage although she is self righteous enough to say that she is not against inter caste marriages parse.

As parent’s reaction is naturally cagey and guarded at first. Seva says that Jyoti is acting in haste and then she talks of the incompatibility of their life style;
Seva: Jyoti, in my opinion you are acting in haste. Not even two whole month have passed since you two got acquainted. You don’t have a clear and complete understanding of the man.

[p.506-507]

Seva’s questions concerning the boy’s ‘parents occupation’, ‘intelligence’, ‘trustworthiness’, and ‘life style’ are considered to be a mother’s natural and genuine anxiety, but her blindness to the fact that the same arguments can be and are made by the critics of inter-caste marriages is ironic. In fact, incompatibility of culture and life style is precisely the general argument against exogamy:

My anxiety is not over his being a Dalit. You know very well that Nath and I have been fighting untouchability tooth and nail... But your life has been patterned in a certain manner. You have been brought up in a specific culture... He is different in every way. You may not be able to handle it. [p.509]

Keeping Seva’s oscillating role between a mother and a social worker aside her role is the play represents one of the crucial features of Indian caste system and institution of marriage and upholds a truth- “endogamy is the essence of caste system.”

All rules of endogamy, that is, rule which prohibit marriage outside the group, exist in an attempt to maintain the integrity of that group. The rules of endogamy are supposed to preserve the purity of the characteristics that set one group from another. In present Indian society, the latent function of preserving the power and privilege of the dominant race is more honored than the manifest function of preserving caste purity. That’s why the issue of inter-caste marriage is loaded with polluted implications and emotional fervor. What follows in an attempt to describe the history and functions of law prohibiting inter-caste marriage in as dispassionate and a political a manner as possible. As an immediate solution the caste could be removed from our society if exogamy is encouraged by custom as well as law. Thus Dr. B.R.Ambedkar in his historic speech made on 25 December, 1927, a watershed in the history of Dalit Movement, talks about the remedial role of exogamy in annihilating caste system in India.
Remember that if the prohibition on social intercourse and interdrinking go, the roots of untouchability are not removed. Releases from these two restrictions will, at the most, remove untouchability as it appears outside the home; but it will leave untouchability in the home untouched. If we want to remove untouchability in the home as well as outside, we must break down the prohibition against intermarriage. Nothing else will serve. From another point of view, we see that breaking down the bar against intermarriage is the way to establish real equality.

Anyone must confer that when the root division is dissolved incidental points of separateness will be disappear by themselves. The interdictions on interdining, interdrinking and social intercourse have all sprung from the one interdiction against intermarriage. Remove the last and no special efforts are needed to remove the rest. They will disappear of their own accord. In my view, the removal of untouchability consists in breaking down the ban on intermarriage and doing so will establish real equality. If we wish to root out untouchability, we must recognize that the root out untouchability is in the ban on intermarriage. Even if our attack today is on the ban against interdrinking. We must press it home against the ban on intermarriage; other wise untouchability can’t be removed by the roots.142

Tendulkar is a herald of human predicament. His predilection explore man-woman relationships, especially marital, is a grand theme of his works from the beginning. As marriage plays a pivotal role in social discours; Tendulkar, as a writer, by counterpoising the existing familial relationships Kanyadaan with that of other plays like Sakhawat Binder and The Vultures, tries to establish the moulding nature of a family in the society. Our society, the intimate and stable network of community has been dissolved in the mass society. For most urban and suburban Indians, the relations with neighbours has become guarded and transitory, and does not contribute much to self knowledge or self acceptance. While other institutions have bet loosing their personal and local quality, the family is the one institution in our society that has become smaller and more decentralized; the only institution to retain human scale. As primary function of marriage is to provide the continuity and intimacy that neither man nor women are likely to find in any other relationship. Tendulkar is not only portraying the imbalance relationships of Nath and Seva, but also prophesizing their effects on
the children's future. The practice of exogamy is a grand experiment in the sense that the intellectuals like Nath and Seva should not only propose and preach the theories but also plan and practice deliberately. The celebration of ideal marriage should not be a coincident but a conviction.

Nath's reaction is less ruffled and more in keeping with their professed ideology. But, the trouble here is that the more it accords with their public pronouncements, the more na"ive it appears. Nath is quite enthused over his daughters courageous decision but in supporting Jyoti to the hilt is quits blindness extends to the fact that even Jyoti is not quite sure as to way she wants to marry Arun. Her sympathetic love that 'she could do any thing make him happy' [p.506] misses the mark in real marriage. He brushes aside Seva and Jayaprakash's objections to the marriage for the haste in decisions as 'nonsense':

Jayaprakash : What is nonsensical about it, Bhai? Marriage, after all, is a knot tied for a lifetime.
Nath : JayaPrakash, do you know what it is to love at first sight?... this is a matter of plucking the heartstrings.

In spite of this candid confession about her state of mind which clearly stands in need of guidance, Nath, as continued later almost pushes her into the marriage, less out of parental affection than out of his perception that it is a great opportunity for an ideological experiment of his to work itself out. He reassures her, "doesn't matter, Jyoti don't worry. We are all with you" [p.509], and leaves for his bus.

In Scene 2, Act I, we see Jyoti bringing Arun to her house to introduce to her parents and brother. Arun in dark complexioned and has a harsh face. Yet he is good looking. On entering the comfortable middle class house, Arun feels quite nervous and ill at ease. He does not want Jyoti to leave him alone, saying feel uncomfortable in big house.... [p 512] Jyoti is surprised. As the conversation progresses, Arun grows more and more eloquent on the subject of untouchability. His words spit venom. They express his hatred for Brahmins. Our grandfather and great grandfather used to roam, barefoot, miles and miles, in the heat, in the rain, day and night till the rags on their but fell apart ... used to wander shouting,
"Johaar, Maayi-baap! Sir-madam, Sweeper! and their calls polluted the Brahmins, ears”.

Generations after generation, their stomachs used to the stale, tinkling bread they have begged! Our tongues always tasting the flesh of dead animals.... How can there be any give and take between our ways and your fragrant, ghee spread, what bread culture?” [p.513].

Jyotl perhaps for the first time feels the roughness of this language. She covers her face with her hands, so as to hide her tears. But he goes on relentlessly, “... and you thought of marrying me. Our life is not the socialist’s service camp. It is hell, and I mean hell. A hell named life.” [514].

Seva enters witnessing this scene. She hides her displeasure and asks Arun about his education, future prospects etc. As she puts her finger of his raw nerve, Arun feels cribbed by this buttonholing of his. He retorts by giving her an answer which shocks her sensibilities to no end:

Seva : It is no longer an easy thing to run a household... If there is no money, there should be a stable career at least. Otherwise one suffers, and the wife has to suffer for no reason.
Arun : (Patience running out) we don’t worry about such problems.
Seva : You have to worry. How can any one escape them?
Arun : No Problem. We shall be brewing illicit liquor. [p.516-17].

The answer completely floors Seva by its outrageousness. Not all her indoctrination and all her training, at the Congress Seva Dal comes to her rescue now. The answer makes her all the more hardened in her opposition to the marriage of Jyoti to Arun. Seva is more likely to given the couple her blessing if the young man has a ‘suitable station’, but the marriage is supposed to be an ideal match. Though the marriage creates the assumption of equality and alliance between the family of the bride and the family of the groom, the financial status
creates obstacles to their marriage. But the thing is ignored. As education remains a significant but not important element of class status creates obstacle to their marriage. But the thing is ignored. As education remains a significant but not important element of class status, in match selection in India, violations of educational endogamous, like violations of caste endogamy are more socially acceptable if a woman marries financially 'up' than 'down'. The notable thing is that the possibility of experimenting exogamy on financial status is a myth because the lower castes are denied property right from centuries together. Babu Rao Bagal observes:

It was indeed a Machiavellian act of manipulating the institution of property rights - achieved with great skill and extreme crookedness. As a result, society became frighteningly divided due to inequality. The fundamental division was: people who were endowed with wealth, comfort, power, on one hand and on the other, those who were supposed found damnable by God and religion, eternally condemned to life of sorrow, misery, servitude and untouchability.

The atmosphere is tense to the breaking point when Nath walks in completely unmindful of the brewing storm in the house he quite gushes over the son-in-law. His mental elation sounds quite comic and ingratiating too. He gives a mini-speech on intercaste marriage.

Nath: Seva, until today, 'Break the caste system' was a mere slogan for us. I’ve attended many intercaste marriages and made speeches. But today I have broken the caste barrier in the real sense. My home has become Indian in the real sense of term. I am happy today, very happy I have no need to change my clothes today. Today I have changed. I have become new... [p.519].

From his speech it is clear that he is overjoyed by the prospective marriage not because his daughter has found a good husband but because it will fulfill his long cherished dream of breaking the caste barriers. In other words, he completely misses the human aspect involved in the matter and is carried away by its
ideological import. It is important to notice this point here for, as it turns out later on in the play, Jyoti’s marriage for Nath is only a means of promoting his ideological agenda.

When Arun gets up and leaves the house without even touching the tea and snacks brought by Jyoti, the family can freely discuss Arun and Jyoti’s decision to marry him. It is, of course, natural that Jayaprakash and Seva are against the match, having seen and heard of Arun what they have. But Nath goes on to the extent of even justifying the rough edges of Arun’s intensity as practical view and Nath’s equally intensely idealistic view becomes increasingly clear:

Nath: Look, Seva, Society cannot be transformed through words alone. We have to act as catalysts in this transformation. The old social reformers did not stop with making speeches and writing articles on widow remarriage. Many of them actually married widows. Why did they do it…? That was also an experiment, a difficult experiment. But they dared to risk it. [p.524].

With the parents being so irreconcilably divided over the marriage, the decision is left to Jyoti, who is also not very clear about her own feelings. When pointedly asked about her opinion of Arun, she can only reply:

Bhai, I told you at the outset… I don’t know much about him… He asked me, I said yes, quite spontaneously… and sometimes he shows such a different side, that it strikes me, I don’t know him at all. At times I feel I can trust him, but the very next I am left miles behind him. I ask myself - this thing that I want to do, is it the right thing? [p.524-525]

In the state of her mental confusion and dithering, Nath asks Jyoti the usual questions about her being aware of the consequences of her decision and so on. When she answers more out of a sense of duty rather than out of conviction, the matter is closed for him and as per the democratic traditions of the house, one must forget one’s difference of opinion and stand by Jyoti. Seva’s pointing out that a house cannot be run like the office of a political party cuts no ice with Nath.
But Seva firmly announces her “Party rebellion” and sticks to her guns. Now Nath, having Jyoti’s consent no matter of what worth, rides roughshod. Fully in his element, Nath gives the family a lecture on social justice and for him jyoti’s marriage is not so much a matter of the coming together of two persons in flesh and blood as of the meeting of two cultures. It is not a marriage of two minds but of two ideological abstractions! It is on this high moral, idealistic note that the first act ends. The stage direction says that darkness descends at the end of Nath’s speech. Which is symbolic in more than one way. It betokens not only the confused state of the household but also the future storm in which the family is going to be engulfed after this marriage of two ideologies.

Scene I of Act II opens to show us Jyoti who has become tired and crushed after a few months of married life with Arun. She comes home with the determination not a return to him. To her father’s proposal that both of them could stay in her house, she replies in sheer agony. She is a ‘beaten’ figure in every sense of the term. Seva’s fears have come true. Arun has no room of his own and hence he has to spend their nights in some friend’s house or another’s they find it difficult to get a house for them; every night he comes home dead drunk and beats Jyoti. Unable to bear this physical and mental torture any longer, Jyoti decides to spend her nights alone in her maternal home. Now her marriage is on the rocks. When Nath comes in and learns of Jyoti’s tales of woe, he shocks the family by his suggestion that Jyoti and Arun should come to stay with them rather than wander from one friend’s house to another’s. He condones Arun’s ill-treatment of Jyoti as the result of the harsh environment in which he has been brought up; if he gets a better so surrounding, such as Jyoti’s maternal home, he will definitely improve. Jyoti rejects the offer outright, saying that she has come for good. He in all earnestness appeals to Seva to see to it that the marriage does not fail. Still, the marriage for him is an ideological experiment:

Seva let not this wonderful experiment fail! This dream which is struggling to become real let it not crumble before our eyes!... This is not just a question of our eyes!... This is not just a question of our daughter’s life. Seva, this has a wider significance..... This experiment is a very precious experiment (p.537)
If Seva brings an ambivalent cultural feminity to Jyoti’s decision to marry Arun, Nath’s idealism concedes intellectual approval to Jyoti’s decision but participate at the emotional level, in the consequences of her choice. His interest in celebrating the marriage does not find in accommodating the couple. In this sense, he has a precious little cultural and practical critical awareness as insider to understand the gross roots hurdles of an inter caste marriage. In short, the failure of exogamy. Tendulkar reminds, is due confusion on the part of the Brahmin intelligentsia to deal with it.

Arun, as if to prove him wrong, not only rings up but come home to say sorry to Jyoti. Exhibitionistically, he declares his love for her. When Seva asks him why he beats her, he tells her to take at his love and not at his beatings! Soon an argument develops between the about who is in the right and who in the wrong. Arun’s continual declaration of being against ‘white collar culture’ annotates many meanings:

What am I but the son of scavengers? We don’t know the non-violent ways of Brahmins like you. We drink and beat our wives........We make love to them but the beating is what gets publicized I am a barbarian, abarbarian by birth When have I claimed any white collar culture? [p.540]

Talking about wife and husband relationship between Hindu and Dalit families, Kancha Ilaiah, a dalit critic and an anthropologist observes:

In other words, man-woman relations among Dalitbahujans do not go beyond natural relationships. For those who not come in touch with letter, for these whose spiritual wisdom is primitive but natural because it has not acquired the character of manipulation and exploitation, the human touch is still retained in these societies, begemonic relations in the forms that are visible among the Hindus are absent. Here even sexual intercourse is an organic need of the body but not a pleasure of the heart. This undefined love retains its naturalness among the Dalit-bahujans. Among the Hindus the man-woman relationship is conditioned by manipulation and receptivity. Dalitbahujan relationships on the other hand are based on openness11.
Jyoti, in order to stop the whole show, declares her intention of going back to Arun this time forever. Seva is against this continual folly and obstinacy of Jyoti, “this is the moment I’d go down on my knees and pray for you”. [p.541].

Tendulkar has taken much pain to delineate the pseudo-democratic qualities of existing politicians through Nath’s character. Tendulkar opines that the evil effects of the caste system could be overcome if the leaders of high caste Hindus could implement them in their letter and spirit. Although Nath knows the difficulties of implementing exogamy such a remedy to improve the Indian society, is a challenge against existing Dalit conviction, it seems that he is interested more in organizing a public show of movement against the caste system rather than having real intention of abolishing it. Nath’s intention of submitting the success of the marriage to the divine grace is not only a hopeless agony of a father but also a grand failure to understand the psychologically digested nature of the caste system. As against Ambedkar’s famous words, “Anything that you will build on the foundations of caste will crack and will never be a whole”11. Nath’s intention of building the institution of marriage on the presumed physical structure of caste has the institution of marriage on their presumed physical structure of caste has forgotten a vital aspect of the caste system. Caste is not a physical object like wall bricks or a line of barbed wire which prevents the Hindu foul commingling and which has, therefore, to be pulled down. Caste is a notion. It is state of mind. The destruction of caste does not therefore mean the destruction of a physical barrier. It seeks a national change.

As the Scene2, Act II opens. Audience find Nath going through hand adorning his Dalit son-in-law’s recently published autobiography. Seva returns from where the pregnant Jyoti has been admitted after her being brutally beaten and kicked by Arun in the belly. When Nath learns this, he fails to understand Arun’s behaviors. For one thing, it goes against his cherished principles and his ideological dream seems to be crumbling. For the first time he confronts the ineluctable human element involved in his social experimentation. As he sits completely baffled and wonders as to how a person who himself has gone through so much suffering can inflict pain on others. Seva diagises the situation with clinical precision:
You can't stop me .... The truth is that your dalit-in-law, who can write such a wonderful autobiography, and many lovely poems, wants to remain an idler... He wants his wife to work. And with her money he wants to drown himself in drink, and has a hell of a time with this friends. On top of that for entertainment, he wants to kick his wife in the belly. Why not?

Does not his wife belong to the high caste? In this way he is returning all the kicks aimed at generations of his ancestors by men of higher caste. It appears that it is the monumental mission he has set out to fulfill. [p.543-544].

The presence of Arun in the play connects the play to history of dalit movement. Just as the presence of Nath, the Brahmin socialist, Through Kanyadham, as a Marathi play from 1983 that uses caste and marriage as theme and a young Dalit writer as antihero, Tendulkar inevitably evokes the twentieth century history of the struggle over the practice of untouchability, as well the more immediate of the Dalit movement in Maharashtra and in the nation as a whole. By making the emancipation of the untouchable classes a viral part of his political programs, B.R.Ambedkar, as a fountain head of Dalit movement, had ensured constitutional abolition of untouchability in the written document that was adopted in January, 1950. By steering his own Mahar caste in Maharashtra in the direction of sustained political action, Ambedkar also instilled a new consciousness that developed rapidly after independence into a mass movement in that state and in other regions where similar communities were concentrated. In 1956 Ambedkar led a mass conversion of Mahars and several other untouchable casts to Buddhism in city of Nagpur as a stepping outside the hierarchical Hinduism altogether. In 1958 a national level conference formally adopted the term 'Dalit' as an 'internationally positive' alternative to such official terms as 'untouchable' and 'scheduled caste'. In 1972, a group of radical Dalit writers launched the Dalit panthers expressing a new level of pride, militancy and sophisticated creativity.11 Dalit literature in Marathi, especially in the genres of poetry, fiction and autobiography, now constitutes not only a distinct strain within contemporary Marathi writing but also a model for the literature of oppressed
groups in general throughout India over five decades; therefore, the Dalit community Maharashtra has used a sustained social creature of caste, politically effective self-expression, systems of 'protective discrimination' in education and employment, and increased political representation to effect a significant, though by no means adequate, change in their circumstances.

Nath, Perhaps for the first time, realize his folly in promoting the match of Jyoti and Arun when explained in such ideological terms the gap between the man who suffers and the mind that creates. From now on his liberal view of Arun changes to a realistic one. He declines an invitation for speaking at a seminar organized on Arun's book. His opinion of the son-in-law receives a further jolt when Seva informs him about statements Arun is reported to have made about his in-laws. Nath finds all this behaviors of Arun's hard to understand, but then in comes Jayaprakash with the newspaper report about the harassment in Palestinians is the victimizers helps to put Arun's behavior in a perspective that Nath can understand.

The discussion poses two important questions in relation with oppressed class thought: Was an oppressed class ever thought of taking revenge against through an individual life? If at all it happens, who pays the more price? Throughout history we can hardly find any such king of illustration that an individual life is made a scapegoat for taking revenge against an entire suppressing class either in block literature or in Dalit literature. But Tendulkar's attempt to portray Arun as representative of all Dalit poets has created much heat and dust in Marathi literature. The interviewers wonder why the Dalit poet characters if he is not to be seen as representing Dalits as a group. Why Tendulkar should make him such as negative character. Regarding the origin of Kanyadaan, Tendulkar asserts:

All my creative writing begins, not from an idea but from an experience, mine or somebody else's which then becomes mine. It was such an experience, another's to begin with, that provided the starting point for Kanyadaan.
It seems that one can conclude that Tendulkar’s depiction of Athavale was too close to the actual person to have representative quality of a liberal humanist written to bring to the portrayal of a Dalit. Such a conclusion is supported by another statement made by playwright:

I have drawn upon my personal experience to write about a problem that belongs to my world. It so happens that a Dalit youth has unavoidably entered this problem. I believed there can be. I’m sure there is, another side to the theme I have dealt with. But it would not be right if I ban-owed this familiar yet unknown world not be right if I barrowed this familiar yet unknown world and wrote about it. I do not think I have fully understood the Dalits. 16

As a response to this comment, Shanta Gokhale, a senior theatre critic, historian, playwright and director, objects—"Was Tendulkar too conscious of the first-hand experience to transform the particular case of a Dalit that he had heard about into his own character with the same degree of confidence with which he had transformed a certain book - binder he had heard about into the Sakharam Binder of his play?

Once again, the role of Jyoti among these Unexplainable and inevitable labyrinth like conditions calls for Tendulkar’s favourite theme of “hellish-condition of Indian woman. Throughout Tendulkar’s writings, as in history too, women pay the more price when extreme ideologies take over. Gulabi looses her chastity and life in the power of Ghashiram Kotwal. Kamala an innocent woman becomes a scapegoat for politics of journalism in Kamala. In Kanyadaan Jyoti becomes a site, a battle ground on which the clash between the upper caste and Dalit caste takes shape. She becomes the vessel in which the conflicting caste ideologies pour their aspirations for power. The complete submission of the girl’s gendered self to the violence perpetrated on her by the caste politics leaves no scope to become the model. ideal. Hindu Brahmin housewife to him that she will call her husband’s people and home her own. sacrifice her career for him and mutely suffers all the physical, sexual and psychological violence and humiliation inflicted upon her.
Arun visits Nath with two of his friends Hameer Rao and Vamanseth, as if to put Nath’s ideology to further test. He has come to invite Nath that presuming his acceptance, they have arranged a discussion on his autobiography with Nath as the chairperson. The invitation is really a trap for Nath, if he denies it, Arun can denounce him as a castiest and thus damage his public image; he gives consent for it, he has no option but to praise the book. Criticize the book he dare not as he will be termed as reactionary and by helplessly praising the book, he will be legitimizing Arun and his actions, the invitation is a kind of black mail. Now, he is at risk. Talking about the play one of the critics says:

Jyoti thus becomes mindless and surrenders to the situation. She like her father plays the Rescuer while Arun plays the victim. Her rescuing, at first, makes him behave more helplessly and then triggers his feelings of inferiority. Consequently, he shifts to the role of persecutor in order to feel powerful..... Jyoti goes down to the role of victim. Thus the Rescuer-victim transaction. This Drama Triangle make not only Jyoti but also Arun mindless to feel powerful. The unreal idealism of Nath and Jyoti reflects their favorite role of rescuing which impairs their perception of the reality.17

Though Nath has bravely taken the first option, Seva tells him that much course of a faction will give one more stick to Arun to beat Jyoti with. This time Nath decides to go by Seva’s programmatic advice, as it accords well this his public pronouncement. The marriage does not only upset the societal divide between Brahmin and Dalit communities, as Tendulkar shows, the marriage unleashes the dormant political currents waiting to capitalize on the new nexus between caste and power. The marginalized too only seize the opportunity to mobilize their claim to status and power but practice convert forms of revenge.

The final scene starts with Nath’s returning home after chairing the discussion on Arun’s autobiography. He has acclaimed a glowing speech though inwardly he was cursing the public and also to ensure that it spares his daughter from getting beaten. For the first time perhaps he has said what he did not feel at heart. He breaks down completely by the painful awareness of his utter helpless in
the matter which forces him to carry this hypothetical growth experiment of exogamy. His mind is illuminated and comes to know the severity of caste politics in his ideal utopian India. Nath's painful reassessment of Arun similarly resists a 'political' interpretation and appears instead as a political father's desperate attempt to regain control over his private domain. After he agrees to praise Arun in public while his daughter lies in hospital, he is overcome by a repugnance that, ironically, can be expressed only in the casteist language of purity and pollution:

I felt as though just his being here had polluted this living room, this house, this whole day. Seva. I feel like taking a bath wash everything.... This furniture, this whole place! It has all become polluted, it's filthy. What a man I have got mixed up with, what a man! [p.533]

It is possible to see Nath's outburst simplistically as an "anti-Dalit" statement as a reactionary suggestion that the twice-born man abhors the 'untouchable' because of the insurmountable 'lowness' of the latter's character. But in Tendulkar's representation Nath is even more culpable in this moment of disillusionment than Arun.

Returning home, Nath can freely denounce the book as an artistic hase. If it is a form of literature, the autobiography stands to fail by its factuality, unlike fiction. And Run's book is a pack of lies. Incidentally, what Nath says publicly about the book and what he says at home is a symbolic way of similar Dalit autobiographies in Maharashtra being treated by scholars and leaders of Nath's pervasion. It is doubtful whether Tendulkar tries to prove the factuality of latter as against and on the basis of sole illustration of Arun, a Dalit autobiographies or vice versa! However it can be understood as a personal experience in Tendulkar's life. Talking about the biographical element in Kavyakamb, Tendulkar says:

Nath Devalkar, the protagonist of Kavyakamb, is many other liberals of my generation whom I understood completely. The pain of these today, the defeat they have suffered, the fundamental confusion and naivete that has lead to their pain and defeat, these tain the theme of Kavyakamb, and I wrote about it because it came so close to me.
With the same fervor some critics have responded to what extent it is justifiable to portray a Dalit writer as a device to reveal his protagonist's naivety. Shanta Gokhale says: "Is Tendulkar saying that he there used Arun Athavale merely as a device to reveal his protagonists naivety?"

Nath now realizes, after going through suffering at the hands of Arun himself, as to what a sea of misery he has pushed his daughter into. And, to his credit, it must be said that in a moment of extreme self-candour he castigates himself to no end.

The kind of great love and ideal marriage by a democratic like Nath will certainly alarm likeminded people and completely demolishes the hope for the possibility of great experimentation. Here Tendulkar places the so-called champions of a caste free society and egalitarianism on the pinhead of a powerful deconstructive moment, where the limits are exposed. Nath's lamentations over the post-independence decline of India, pointing the finger everywhere but at himself, turns upside down and shatters his centre captured in the stage directions which describe his breaking down and collapsing on the sofa, as much as in the sound effects as of "huge buildings hurling down."

Jyoti has been a severe critic of Nath's speeches right from the beginning and now she has come to get an answer to a basics question. She doesn't have any doubt about the factually of the speech, but she wants to know why Nath chaired the discussion. She learns that, as she had suspected, it was ostensibly to spare her suffering more rather than out of any genuine admiration for the book. And the discovery is a shattering one for Jyoti, for it destroys her image of her father as an unflinching idealist. Nath tries his best to convince her affirmation that Arun's autobiography is a very good book. But Jyoti continues to batter him saying that it is all a lie, for she knows:

You attended that meeting and made a speech only because you were afraid that if you didn't Arun would torture me more. [p 562].
She goes on:

It was the sole consideration. There was no other consideration.
Your speech to day was not only lousy, it was hireling's speech.
You attended the meeting against your wishes; you praised that
book against your wishes. [p.562]

Jyoti knows that, by his hypocritical and insincere participation in the
discussion, Nath has compromised on his ideology for the sake of which he had
turned his back to Arun and which she, full trust in him, had accepted despite her
suffering. In short, Jyoti now realizes that his ideology and his public image were
far more important to her rather than his own daughter that she has become a mere
pawn on his ideological chess board. Jyoti's position between deep sea and the
devil i.e. between two worlds of conflict, one is to establish an utopian by
marriage and another taking revenge reminds the audience of the famous
argument made by Ivan Karamazov in Kostoevsky's master piece The Brothers
Karamazov:

Tell me yourself-I challenge you: let's assume that you were called
upon to build the edifice of human destiny so that men would
finally be happy and would find peace and tranquility. If you knew
that, in order, to attain this, you would have to torture just one
single creature, let's say the little girl who beat her chest so
desperately in the outhouse, and on her ravaged tears you could
build that edifice, would you, agree to do it? Tell me and don't
lie.30

Through the classical encounter between Jyoti and Nath, Tendulkar
completely demolishes the school of thought that regards, man as innately good
and violence as merely a matter of environment modifiable with change in
circumstances. He particularly wants to show that damage idealistic parents like
Nath do to their children by adhering to this philosophy. To her question why he
praised the book when he did not like it and hated its author, Nath flatly denies
that he hates Arun by taking recourse to the Gandhian doctrine 'hate sin, not the
sinner'. Referring to her own specific case, Jyoti poses the question as to how to
separate the evil Arun from the good Arun for both are inextricably twined up with each other. Arun is both the passionate lover and her evil tormentor. If she accepts him at all, it has to be in toto. Jyoti cries out in pain to her father:

Tell me, where is that beast I should drag out and destroy, where is that God I should rouse from his sleep? Tell me..... Arun is made of all these things bound together and I have to accept him as he is, because I cannot reject him. [p.564].

Jyoti’s agonical cry is a genuine probe into the mystery of human personality. In spite of her being betrayed, she does not become a skeptic, but she cries for a reason in suffering. She is not against the noble cause for humble existence, but her mind and heart wrestle sincerely with the problem. Separating evil from man is a universal story of philosophy for centuries together. She doesn’t want to deny or surrender her reasoning for the problem of innate evil in man. Jyoti, here resemblances her creator Tendulkar who also simply agrees to his hopelessness in given solutions to the problems of mankind. In fact this kind of attitude can only serve one to be a conscious agent of a social change. Instead of philosophizing the problem, one needs to learn to live. As Jyoti tells her father, “I have to stop thinking and learn to Jyoti makes a progressive choice, by destroying an imbibed caste consciousness while ironically Nath constitutes his own requirements of ideal masculinity. The message she leaves one with is a clear one, it is not communities that are superior or inferior, but individuals who are so. If at all change is expected, it should start with an individual.

Nath, out of belated parental solicitude, reassures her of his support if she chooses to come back to him. But she brilliantly checkmates him by throwing one of his favourite ideas in his face:

It will not happen. Bhai, because you yourself have taught us that one must not turn one’s back upon the battlefield. This drug. Bhai, has entered and mingled with our blood. The poison has numbered our entire consciousness. We cannot run away ... We shall continue to lose our lives as guinea pigs in the experiment, and you, Bhai... you will go on safely resuing the God sleeping in man [p.564-565].
Illustrating the concept of 'gender, crossing' of masculinities and femininities, in the context of caste and family structures, pivotal to the deconstructive dramatic axis of Tendulkar, Sudha Rai observes:

The deconstructive moment is shaped by Tendulkar as one wherein individuals transcend the strategies of systemic manipulation, choosing to stand by their womanhood. Masculinity is therefore constructed as a weak and regressive force, prone to violence and corruption. The charge of the deconstructive moment of theatre lies of women’s consciousness is a realization that is not only personal, but pierces through the system as a whole.

Jyoti’s rejection of the parental home as a symbol of failed idealism is a kind of crystallization of her understanding of the complexities of Dalit consciousness. Her consciousness must be accepted at any cost as the play’s transcendence of the divide between the self and the ‘other’ constructed in two central oppositions - the first between Brahmin and Dalit identity, the second, between masculinity and femininity.

After this philosophical demotion, Jyoti goes on to reject Nath as father by telling him of the permanent psychological damage he has done to his children. After such realization what forgiveness? Jyoti firmly dissociates herself from the family and forbids them to meddle in her life even of charity. As married daughter she reminds her father:

I have my husband. I am not a widow. Even if I become one I shan’t knock at your door. I am not Jyoti Yadunath Devalikar now; I am Jyoti Arun Athavale, a scavenger. I don’t say harijan. I despite the term, I am untouchable, a scavenger. I am one of them. Don’t touch me. Fly from my shadow, otherwise my fire will scorch your comfortable values. [p.566]

The last words of the play are the indictment over the failure of exogamy in caste based society. Jyoti’s frustrated expression “We shall continue to house our lives as guinea pigs in the experiment” [566] is an indirect verdict declaring
the tragic end of inter-caste marriages.

It is often said that in a marriage a father loses his daughter, but Nath loses not only his paternal authority but the right to love and project his daughter. Kanyadaan—giving away of the daughter has been doubly painful to Nath. The ritual meaning of *Kanyadaan* undergoes a double reversal here the father condemns his daughter to fate worse than death by giving her away thoughtlessly "to a man who has no good qualities", but it is the daughter who reminds him of the irreversible nature of the gift. This reversal of roles - in which Jyoti lays down the conditions of her future life- rewrites the text of Manu while marking a radical moment in the contemporary treatment of gender. But if Jyoti makes a “heroic” departure, the real place of victimization is the home she is going to, not the home she has left. Among the few protagonists in contemporary Indian theatre, male or female, who asserts their will in order to alter their condition, Jyoti stands apart because she chooses a worse life, not to continue it but to change it. Veena Noble Dass observes that the image of women in contemporary Indian literature has changed drastically she observes:

No more is women considered or portrayed as a weak person, or falling at the feet of her husband or trying to pleasure him always... Modern writers have tried to transform this image of women as seen in the myths by portraying them in a more realistic manner. One such writer is Vijay Tendulkar.21

Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session* does not kill herself or feel shy but makes her fight till the end. Rama, in *The Vultures*, does not believe in her fate but would do anything to change her life. Champa and Laxmi in *Sukharam Binder* are two life forces to question the male chauvinism. In *Kamala*, Kamala opens the eyes of Sarita thus she resolves to live the life of a human than marital slave. Here in *Kanyadaan*, Tendulkar has succeeded in portraying, Jyoti differently and raised the status of Indian women from a weak person to a powerful one. Thus, the end of the play, though evokes so many questions about the future of Jyoti, can be understood as writer’s call for Indian youth to take a stand for the successful experimentation of exogamy, which is the only hope to find a meaningful democratic India. Jyoti neither thinks of giving divorce nor resolves to go back.
but boldly peruses the sacred meaning of marriage in the terms of Indian culture. In one sense, Jyoti starts the experiment where Nath fails and ends.

The selection of characters and content in Kanyadaan has a great significance in Tendulkar's domain of social awareness and relevance. The two strategies that are suggested by social reformers and scholars to abolish the caste system are violent and non-violent in nature. The destruction of the authority of Shastras and Vedas can be a great cause for violence. But as latter one, intercaste marriage can be a powerful attack on the existence of caste system where the fusion of blood alone can create a feeling being kith and kin become paramount and the separatist feeling created by caste will vanish. Though Tendulkar has been called an 'advocate of violence', in Kanyadaan he selects the method of non violence to a great problem of India. This method of his is truly characteristic of a genuine playwright whose foremost concern is to open his reader - audience's eye to a social problem which continues to evade solutions.

The belief that romantic love is the only acceptable basis for marriage in Indian value system will certainly see its end one day. To build a marriage on romantic foundation is to build on quicksilver. Marriage is not arrange for reasons of social, economic and even political convenience, love is a thing apart. In a castiest society like India going beyond the norms of culture and tradition in marriage will only be a tragedy. Tendulkar put forth a question - is marriage supposed to be for love? or love for marriage? And eventually he proves that there is no happy-ending for romantic love. Tendulkar is a realist in the sense that one can never see anywhere in his plays the happy ending of romantic love unlike most of the imagination and commercial literature.

To choose a mate for love accorded well with the individual freedom prized by the rising middle class. Jyoti's role reminds one that such a mutually fulfilling relationship requires an awareness of who we are and a roughly accurate perception of our partner. A marriage based on romantic love is unlikely to be such a relationship. The ideal image that Jyoti cherishes so dearly about Arun, "He writes poems, I like them. Now he is writing autobiography. I have read some parts of it. I felt that I could not do anything to make him happy" [p.506] is fabricated from alienated facts of the self.
REFERENCES


