

## CONCLUSION

*But the social order is the sacred right which serves as foundation for all others. This, right, however does not come from nature. It is therefore based on convention—the question is to know what these conventions are...*

Rousseau

*The Social Contract* introduces Rousseau's understanding of society and politics where his notion of politics of representation becomes meaningful. The present study was designed and conducted with a purpose to understand the politics of representation that often projects women as the lower strata in social hierarchy. In contemporary societies, it is really imperative to recognize the politics of the power structures—the dominating voices, making women silent. The politicized representation of women in one form or the other through literature counteracts the possibilities of equality and an egalitarian society.

All through the literary canon, women's voices have been restrained under the forced representations—the mis-representations. Eve and Pandora are considered to be the archetypal women held responsible for the evils in society. The impact of such myths, a patriarchal encoding, drives women to inferiority, resulting in unusual disablement. Various waves of feminism confronted the masculine hegemony to create a discourse and a substantial position for women. Kate Millet corroborates that in women, awareness had already been there much prior to the formal inauguration of women's movement. Limited advantages granted to the elite women—the western women, further forbade the unanimity of women worldwide. The female section of humanity continues to challenge this masculine politics of representation.

Since a limited research has been conducted on the topic under consideration, this study would definitely open significant vistas for the people interested in the issues stated herein. To mention the rationale for limited work in this regard, one can establish the impact of male authority, the politics of representation. Many intellectuals have responded selectively and with varying degrees of intensity to the question of representation, but how Tendulkar brought forward the same inquiry was the objective of this work.

In postmodern times, writers like Vijay Tendulkar have a well defined territory and place. Tendulkar finds valuable position among the emerging 'new voices' protesting against the power structures. He, therefore, is referred as the father of modern Indian experimental and serious theatre. Challenging the patriarchal and institutionalized social and cultural frameworks, he asserts a distinct identity for women. He is valued for espousing the social and political ideology as he offers a theory of how the politics of representation works in literature and society. He also provides a profound insight into the transformative potential of a new society, its literature and aesthetics.

It is the re-visiting and the re-reading of the past that both confirms and subverts the power of representation of literary texts. Alongside historical records, the literary text itself operates as primary marker of the new dimensions in representation. Literature plays a vital role in providing symbolic forms through which new modes of subjectivity can be negotiated. It arbitrates between the intimate, private and public spheres. Eagleton rightly suggests that literature is meant to re-organize the area of intimacy into subjective forms, appropriate to the social and political goals of early capitalism.

Tendulkar, through his writing, is able to see the influence of deep rooted traditions on the common man. He has the ability to see the undercurrents of reality. While understanding their intellectual needs and supporting their dignity and recognition he empathizes with women. He strategically deals with the issue of 'gender' that acts as a 'psychological and cultural marker'. He defies the acceptability of this cultural construction that becomes 'natural' within Indian society. This present thesis has dealt with the issue of politicized representations of women through his selected plays. The social system awarding women lesser choices, creating an inequality for them—an interior colonization, finds sanction and approval from the patriarchal society. The research sought to interrogate how this social structuring renders woman a slave, psychologically invalid and utterly dependent on her male counterpart or rather her master.

The existing social position of a woman is the unavoidable consequence of what has been imposed on her in the past. In fact, woman's deplorable condition reflects man's approach to her, haunting her subconscious mind since times immemorial. There is a subsistence of multiple beliefs and fallacious impressions for the sustenance of the

patriarchal system. This study has explained these factors in terms of politics of silence, culture and identity—the three chapter heads.

The politics of silence is essentially an expression of patriarchy that disempowers women in the social processes. Women experience an indirect and explicit conditioning through the process of silencing. A silent woman is consciously given importance to further strengthen the conditioning, beyond her imagination. This inauthentic state of women, their acceptance of roles, amply demonstrates the internalization of such objectification. The mythological representations of women, as becomes conspicuous from the characters of Leela Benare, Sarita, Laxmi, Champa or Rama in this study, carry a sense of women's voicelessness in an andro-centric context. Religious practices—agency of silencing— further create worries for the status of women as they are directed to follow definite conventions. Besides Hinduism, the other religions such as Christianity and Islam also do not allow women equal space. Saint Paul exhorts women to remain silent in the churches, whereas Muslim women are forbidden to enter the mosques. Their freedom of speech is thus curtailed.

In his plays *Silence! The Court is in Session* and *Kamala*; Vijay Tendulkar adopts a feminist stance and recommends a revaluation of women's position. He unveils a post-colonial bias in exhibiting the fact that women are still slaves to their male masters, just the way they had been in the myths or other scriptures. The compliant language of the characters expresses that they are looking for something in vain. The abandonment of responsibility by Jaisingh or Prof. Damle gives insight into how masculine politics works in silencing women. *Silence! The Court is in Session* significantly conveys the silence and consequent objectification of Leela in her otherwise apathetic and hostile surroundings. The restraints and inhibitions are imposed on a woman, whereas a man is free to lead his life. A revelation of an extramarital affair ostracizes a woman as happens with Leela Benare, while, the same boosts the image of a man, winning him secret admiration of others, as is the case with Damle.

Culture, the pivotal concern in chapter titled "Politics of Culture", is a means of domination and consequent resistance. Various representational codes define the perceptions of readers and spectators that vary significantly beyond the intended meaning of their producers. The signifying practices derive their common base of

understanding from larger cultural ideas regarding women. There is an inherent politics in cultural practices. The representation of women in contemporary advertisements—a propagator of the popular culture, in relation to a particular product is a cultural condition in which their bodies become the objects of display, controlled by aggressive masculine authority. This culture overwhelmingly dominates women imposing models of physical beauty and their lack of freedom of expression further hardens the chains of cultural oppression.

In his dramaturgy, Vijay Tendulkar critically examines the repercussions of these cultural notions of class, race, and gender prevalent in society. Being realistic in his approach, he analyzes the institutions of family, and role of power and hegemony in directing the society. Tendulkar, like Corneille and Racine, the writers and dramatic theorists, is bourgeois in origin, but he is concerned about the larger sections of society, especially the exploited ones. The exclusion of the issue of representation from cultural level has implications for the understanding of the concept of hegemony that forms the basis of the analysis of *Sakharam Binder* and *The Vultures*. The hegemonic dimension of global politics is inextricably linked to representational practices. The exercise of consent and coercion does not occur in a given society; rather hegemony involves the very production of categories of identity and the society. Such hegemonic practices seek to create fixedness of meaning, thereby increasing the dimensions of politics. Focusing on the micro-centres of politics like family, the politics of culture sees the issue of understanding of power and its implication in the construction of meaning and identities. Tendulkar has exposed the family of vultures and position of protagonist Rama in *The Vultures*.

Power is the derivative of ideology, inherent in all the material and spiritual processes enmeshed with culture. The notion of cultural power results from a situation where the ordinary people, for reasons of dominance, control, consent or intimidation, allow themselves to be ruled by the lifestyle of the dominant class. In *Sakharam Binder*, the male shows the underside of the brute physical, macho power that often works against women, not without social or cultural legitimacy. This play shows the power of the male discourse and impact of culture for shaping such discourse of physical arrogance. Violence, a product of this arrogance, is the natural instrument that power brings. Questions are raised by the critics regarding the role and instigation of Lakshmi resulting in murder of Champa by Sakharam, an act of violence.

Tendulkar however finds faults again with the males. Men are held responsible by him for women's conditioning. During one of his visits to women prisoners Tendulkar observes that most convicts either are compelled to do what they did by some man or their man played foul and arranged to implicate the woman to keep himself out of jail. In his *Criminals and Killers* he avers: "At times he (accomplice or the culprit) is a frequent visitor promising the woman that he is trying to get her out. It never happens. The man goes scot-free after indulging in the crime and the woman spends years, at time her prime, in the jail for something which she didn't do but owned to please her man" (16).

Tendulkar occasionally finds his women characters becoming victims of this power and violence. This lust to rule starts in our very personal relationships and percolates first into the family and then the society. It is the result of social conditioning that takes place within the structures of family that Rama experiences helplessness and victimization within the family. Rama is offended in her patriarchal surroundings, legitimizing Rousseau's idea that women are made for the purpose of yielding to men and that they must put up with injustice. Throughout the literary tradition, woman is represented as a sign and positioned by gender, race and class. The postmodern strategies allow positions of spectatorship to be viewed ideologically. They provoke our conditioned responses and subvert those responses, making us aware of how these are induced in us.

The last chapter, "Politics of Identity", plays an important role in modern political thought, thus making politics of representation a subject of analysis. It subverts an authorized social consent and changes the constitutive nature of the body politic. Thus politics of identity can be a way for the excluded ones to question the hegemonic social frameworks on the grounds of justice and also a way of changing the constitutive rules of polity of inclusion. Tendulkar challenges this notion, proposing women to be a part of inclusive structures and by implication, questions the existing structures. The feminist literary theory corresponds to the insurgence of feminine consciousness against the masculine images of identity and experience of women. The very notion of a woman's identity transforms the experience of women into their consciousness—their response to the male paradigms. Feminist theory, therefore, becomes an ideology combating the economic, political, and cultural degradation of women. For feminists, power means a capacity for transformation of

individual and the environment without the use of force. In agreement with most of these feminists, Tendulkar believes in power that strengthens and fortifies like Foucault's power, which, in turn, leads to the production of truth.

Tendulkar favours women empowerment/women articulation as his female protagonists often struggle against odds in their pursuit for social and cultural space, or fulfill an irresistible need for carving out a distinct identity for them. The protagonists—Benare, Rama, Sarita and Jyoti represent intellectually sound but crippled women, who are conscious of the injustice imposed on them. The rigid social obligations do not allow them their due, seizing all the prerogatives. Tendulkar, through their consciousness of self, raises their position. In a developmental construction, there not only appears a protest but women like Vijaya take lead to overturn the patriarchal hierarchy. Vijaya, who is different from all other women characters of Tendulkar, like Shaw's *Candida* is courageous, emotionally restrained, ethically strong, intelligent, straightforward and determined. Tendulkar assigns her the responsibility of initiating new conventions as she triumphantly carries out her well-devised plans of vanquishing her enemies.

Tendulkar exhibits a psychological mastery in representing the world of reality of his women characters. With a keen observation of his surroundings, Tendulkar introduces the readers to the stark realities prevalent in the society. While presenting reality in all its vulgar and naked forms, he becomes a realist and a humanist and shows the predicament of women. His projection of social reality is not a photographic representation of social forces, but a complex communication in which the whole environment comes alive to expose the inner self of the characters. He urges women to deal with their male counterparts audaciously. Almost all the women protagonists of his plays, one way or the other, refuse to succumb to the mastery of men. In a protesting voice, his women characters tend to break the shackles through their soliloquies. Tendulkar advocates Beauvoir ideas that if women have gained only what men have been willing to grant; then they have taken nothing, they have only received.

Leela Benare is unconventional woman, as she attacks the hypocritical facade of her surroundings and also watches it crumble. Through the projection of the protagonist, Tendulkar challenges men to prove themselves to be superior. Benare is not idealized by him, but he is able to force his readers to become compassionate and

sympathetic towards her. Sarita is issueless and sacrifices her own career for the sake of her husband. Ultimately, she recoils from her slave like position but doesn't stop being a compassionate human being. The devotion demonstrated by Lakshmi to her patron Sakharam is an outcome of the cultural obligations—the hegemonic social structures. Tendulkar makes her refute the biased social conditioning as she prompts an otherwise insensitive Sakharam into committing a murder. Rama is surrounded by the males, the drunkard vultures, who stand together in demanding situations and leave the women in abject helplessness. She is victimized in this inescapable role, thus completing her motherhood. Jyoti concludes with the revelation of her father's hypocritical principles, while facing the bitterness of actual life. Her final decision of dealing with odds finds sufficient basis for Tendulkar's own inclination to raise the status of women through protest. Vijaya, above all, turns down the patriarchal order when she takes the initiative and pushes her kingdom towards an egalitarian dawn.

Social, legal, religious and cultural practices accord men more rights, including their freedom of mobility, access to resources and other pre-requisites of life. The majority of male characters of Tendulkar enjoy these rights and expressions of freedom. Such a representation by Tendulkar fails to evade the propagandistic strain as he receives adverse criticism from his critics. Kamala Bhasin, however, finds males at a disadvantage, since they are pushed into role-stereotypes, whether they want it or not. They, too, are obliged to fulfill social and other obligations that require them to function in a specific way. Women are absolutely excluded from power in patriarchy, as the problematic framework is determined by men. Tendulkar articulates against this kind of politics and projects women either as equal partners in a relationship or as assuming leading positions in his plays.

With his critical acumen, Tendulkar becomes subjective and objective, personal and impersonal, particular and general, individual and social and finally local and cosmopolitan. In his subtle and complex writings on human relationships, he focuses on representing life of the world at large. Dramatizing his belief that human beings are basically animals, he shows that the instinct to control and dominate, determines all human pursuits and relationships. Tendulkar is a man of radical and progressive views. It is evident from his personal essays and other works that he had an inherent need to understand people of multiple descents, and has a capacity to be equally empathetic to all of them. In his plays, Tendulkar makes efforts to coordinate

different elements of theatrical strategy to create plays, unencumbered by the burden of canon. The description of violence and power in his plays highlights his concern for the surroundings. Keeping pace with the fast changing dynamics of society, he realizes and responds to the various social weaknesses and makes theatre a pulpit so as to tear the veil of illusion off the idealism of morality, religion, conventions, personal relationships and the corrupt institutions.

His theatre bridges the gulf between the traditional and modern Indian theatre. In fact, his aim is to help human beings to introspect themselves in their own environment and transform drama from a means of entertainment into an object of enlightenment, a medium of higher communication. A theatre is a site for subverting universal narrations. Drama and theatre do, however, work within symbolic orders and regimes—which are, in turn, determined by state power and its hegemony. Tendulkar exploits the corporeal structures of theatre to interrogate his [her] story and also connect with discursive structures that pose questions about the representation of unequal relations of domination and subordination. Postmodern theatre, to which Tendulkar belongs, raises questions rather than attempting to supply answers or definitive truth. Tendulkar like Hutcheon, believes that some of the dominant features of our way of life experienced as ‘natural’ are actually ‘cultural’ made by us, and not given to us. Being a postmodernist, Tendulkar challenges the patriarchal and capitalist forces through his theatrical representations.

Unlike problem plays of western dramatists Ibsen, Shaw or Galsworthy, Tendulkar dramaturgy raises basic questions, rather than provide us with explicit or clear-cut solutions. The peculiar temperament of his protagonists pulls the audience out of their slumber and complacency and pushes them into introspective and insightful struggles of life. His art liberates the readers from cribbed, cabined and confined existence, turning them into ‘human’ in the true sense. Defending his portrayal of women as exploited and losers at various junctures, Tendulkar has written that when he shows the struggle of a woman then it is not the struggle of that woman only. In an interview with Satya Saran and Vimal Patil, he gives the plea:

When I show the struggle of a woman, it's not one woman's fight. The individual must have name and identity and caste and background to be credible, but she is not just a woman on stage, in a particular play. I am, in writing of her situation, showing that the possibility of a

struggle against it exists... By not giving a solution, I leave possibilities open, for whatever course the change may take. When the members of my audience go home and chew on the situation, they might be able to see their daughter or sister in the woman's position and come up with a way of changing the situation for her advantage. (qtd. in Wadikar 72)

Vijay Tendulkar admits that his perception of reality, drawn from personal experiences of life, forms the basis of his writings. Tendulkar truly deserves the appreciation for the work he has created in his contemporary settings. While supporting the feminine gender, Tendulkar declares that a man can superficially enter into any relationship and step out of it, but so is not the case with a woman. Even if she is a downright feminist, progressive, conscious, having put up with the relationship for some time, she cannot come out of it the way we change clothes. The relationship is life-long and goes deep into her very skin. A woman is always entangled in that relationship, and often defines herself through it. The construction of an ideal Indian woman had both political and religious aspects—political aspect being the outcome of colonial-rule, which made Indians defensive thus constantly reaffirming Indian cultural superiority, a part of political agenda. In inclusionary politics, the purpose precedes the power, whereas in identity politics power remains an end in itself.

Tendulkar believes that women themselves ought to be determined to liberate themselves; otherwise, there would always remain a vacuum which is very painful for women. For him, men and women are only two elements psychologically, with a superfluous distinction. The availability of these elements varies from one individual to other. Women are deliberately made the political subjects under the ambit of representation, the normative functions of language. The pervasive cultural conditions reveal the misrepresentations of women's lives. Representational politics sets the criterion for the 'subject' formation. The subjects are, thereafter, shaped, reproduced and regulated by the political structures. Being objectified, women are silenced; and are forbidden to speak for their rights. Their lack of speech becomes lack of identity. This objectification by means of imposed cultural roles and symbolic gestures further pushes them towards a crippling conditioning that makes it hard for them to come out of that vicious circle. Their acceptance of fixed representation is to condone social

system of power validating images—a cultural production leading to politics of culture.

The socio-cultural contexts lead to psycho-social processes, forming an identity. The notion of a universal patriarchy has been widely criticized in the recent years for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists. Tendulkar raises critical questions about the contexts structured and restructured by changing ideologies of caste, class and gender, questioning the politics, resistances, subversions and the strategic appropriations. The women in his scheme of things work for their individual ‘self’, their personal identity.

Through this study, it is revealed that though in some cases, women go unheard; their articulation does help in raising the consciousness of other fellow women. Tendulkar provides a voice to women for questioning the very foundational notions of patriarchy and its politics operating within and without the family and home, and the discovery of courage to re-present their ‘self.’ He thus prepared ground for overturning the entire social structures based upon this defunct polity. The study did not deal with the queer theory; however. Tendulkar touched the delicate issue of lesbianism in one of his plays named *Mitrachi Goshta (A Friend's Story 1982)*. Though the concept of personality formation given by Chodorow is introduced and discussed at length in the present work, the mother-daughter relationship has been rarely mentioned. Beyond the Freud’s concept of sexuality, the feminists point out the importance of the earliest bond between the mother and a girl child.

Theatrical performances incorporating pyrotechnics of music on the stage have also not found place in the present work. *Ghasiram Kotwal (1972)* deals with the issue of power politics and prevalent corruption in a form of musical theatre. Politics of theatre can be another aspect that may be dealt with, circumspectly, as one can observe a parallel representation of folk and reality in his plays. Similarly, the study lacked references to Tendulkar’s scriptwriting in Hindi and Marathi cinema, stories like “Who Would Love Someone Like Me” and “The Story of a Man”, fiction pieces like *Kadambari*, personal essays including “Them” and “And Me” and “Tribals and I” carrying morality messages for humanity.

The legitimization and subversion of Vijay Tendulkar’s women characters from social, economic, sexual and even psychological angles could be termed as his individual ‘politics’. In the end, the thesis is headed towards the politics of identity,

dealing with strong and powerful women like Jyoti and Vijaya. Idea of an egalitarian society seems to be a utopian one in the times of capitalism, as it deals with systemic corruption and an inevitable hierarchy. People do talk of inclusive growth for humanity, but the exclusive uplift of the underprivileged might invert the social equations. They might be doubtful of matriarchal societies, where the lead would be taken by the women alone. Thereafter, the issues of 'politics of gender' do come into play.

To conclude, it can be stated that Vijay Tendulkar's observations on the social discontent through his representations have broken the 'silence' of his women protagonists against their hostile surroundings. Questioning their state in a cultural arrangement, he develops a distinct identity for them. They may be passive and indifferent at times, but they cannot be non-living entities. In his treatment of women, his vision appears to be very different from the one that the defenders of feminist ideology could be said to possess. Tendulkar has successfully exposed the evils of male hypnotism existing within human consciousness, and also within the social structures that primarily feed on hierarchical notions, thus subordinating women in the male world.