CHAPTER VI

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The basic tenet of drama as a literary form is its performance. The thematic value of performance is considered as the most important literary value in the study of the plays of two playwrights, Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar. The study is the comparison of dramatic works of these playwrights. The English plays of Girish Karnad and the Marathi plays of Vijay Tendulkar are compared here. Girish Karnad was born in Maharashtra but his literary career is flourished in Karnataka. He writes his plays both in Kannada and in English. His plays in English are his own translations from Kannada into English except the play *Wedding Album* which he wrote in English. Vijay Tendulkar wrote plays in Marathi. His only English play is *His Fifth Woman*. These playwrights are the symbols of the new resurgence in their own areas and have made bold innovations, fruitful experiments and given a new direction, which goes in the history of Indian drama as a significant mark of achievement.

The plays of these writers are not entertaining but they are thought provoking. They share contemporary social and national life. There are some similarities and differences in them. Vijay Tendulkar shows the lust, greed and violence in the lives of people using the contemporary setting and language. Girish Karnad uses anecdotes, parables and ideas from the forgotten conventions, scrapes and fragments of Indian history and mythology and welds them with the contemporary reality.

Vijay Tendulkar was a prolific writer because he wrote film-scripts, novels, short stories, literature for the children, journalistic writing, translations, adaptations and essays along with plays. There are many identical themes in the plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar. They have Indian stage-theatre and screen world to their heart. Karnad has acted in the
films which are based on the scripts of Tendulkar like ‘Manthan’, ‘Ardhasatya’ and ‘Umbaratha’. Tendulkar has translated Girish Karnad’s *Tughlaq* into Marathi. Both the dramatists have made noteworthy contribution to the stage and have made some changes in the art of writing. They have made significant contribution to the Indian National Theatre Movement. Their plays are not based on the value of entertainment but they provoke the audience to think. They are contemporary writers and both of them share the contemporary social and national concerns of the country. When Girish Karnad received the Jnanpith award, he opined that it was Vijay Tendulkar who deserved it more.

After peeping deep into the plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar it is found that in the plays of these playwrights sex, struggle and zest for power, violence and instinct for selfishness are the major themes of these plays.

Vijay Tendulkar uses historical figures like Nana Phadnavis and Ghashiram Kotwal in order to show how the political persons like Nanas use Ghashirams like pawns and throw them away when their purpose is over. Like Nana, Aazam is in Girish Karnad’s *Tughlaq*. Tughlaq uses Sheikh Imam-ud-din also in the same manner. In order to gain power, Ghashiram surrenders his daughter to Nana Phadnavis. Tughlaq kills his father, brother and step-mother in order to gain the power. These persons do not hesitate to use the blood relations for their greed to wield power. In both the plays power is acquired through violence. Sex, violence and greed are the main themes in the plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar.

Girish Karnad is a playwright who gives stress on existentialism, particularly in his plays *Yayati* and *Tughlaq*. Karnad adopts the mythical story of *Yayati* as the plot of his play. In *Yayati* the central figure Yayati is greedy in such an extent that he surrenders his son’s youth for his own. Karnad adds new characters to deepen the commodative richness of his drama and gives it
a contemporary appeal. The addition of the character of Chitralekha makes the play more interesting.

Vijay Tendulkar was always haunted by the feeling of loneliness. Writing gave a sort of mental and psychological relief to Tendulkar. He got the relief from all the feelings like tension, happiness, sorrow, excitement, thrill, anger and pleasure by incorporating them in his writing.

The exposure to sex and carnal instincts is one of the major characteristics of the plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar. In fact Vijay Tendulkar became a controversial playwright because of the explicit portrayal of sex in his plays. The sexual relationship of the modern man is very complex. The main cause of suffering of the women is their exploitation in the hands of men because men, in general, look at sexual pleasure as the means of revenge against their own exploitation in the hands of their employers or benefactors. According to anthropologists, man is polygamous by nature. Polygamy and polyandry are reflected in Girish Karnad’s *Yayati*, *Hayavadana*, *Naga- Mandala* and *The Fire and the Rain*. *Yayati* is married to Devayani, yet he is interested in sexual relationship with Sharmishtha, a rakshasa woman. *Hayavadana* is interested in both, Devadatta and Kapila. In *Naga-Mandala*, Appanna is married to Rani but for sexual pleasures he visits his concubine. In *The Fire and the Rain*, Vishakha is married to Paravasu but she is seduced by Yavakri, her former lover.
In Vijay Tendulkar’s *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe*, the protagonist of the play Leela Benare, is first of all molested by her maternal uncle and later by Prof. Damale who is already married. In *Gidhade* Manik has sexual relations with many persons though she is not married with any one of them. Rama is pregnant due to her sexual relationship with her brother-in-law Rajaninath. The hero of *Sakharam Binder* is in the habit of bartering women who have been left by their husbands. In the same play Champa is having sexual relationship with Dawood when she is staying with Sakharam Binder. In *Ghashiram Kotwal* Nana Phadnavis is interested in having sexual relations with many women. Lalita Gauri, the daughter of Ghashiram Kotwal is molested by him. In *Kamala* the protagonist Jaisingh Jadhav buys Kamala from flesh market to prove that a woman can be bought and sold.

All these things prove that sex is dealt by both the playwrights in their plays as the basic theme.

The struggle and zest for political power is also one of the basic themes of these playwrights. In Girish Karnad’s *Yayati*, Sharmishtha and Devayani struggle with each other to overpower Yayati. Even the zest for power and youth makes Yayati blind and he exchanges his oldage with his son’s youth. Tughlaq kills his own father and brother for the sake of power. Devadatta of *Hayavadan* tries to overpower Kapila. In *Naga-Mandala*, Appanna wants to be powerful than Rani. In *Tale-Danda* Sovideva beats his father and puts him in the jail to be the supreme power. Damodara Bhatt, Manchanna Kramita and Sovideva crush the movement of the Sharans. In the play *The Fire and the Rain* Yavakri tries to overpower all by achieving the knowledge. The play portrays the struggle in between two brothers for the power. Yavakri wants to take revenge of the insult of his father as he has been denied his rights. Even Paravasu kills his father when he disturbs him in the Fire ceremony by killing Yavakri.

In the plays of Vijay Tendulkar the power politics and political power
are at the centre. *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe* and *Sakharam Binder* reflect the supremacy of the male over female. In *Ghashiram Kotwal* Nana Phadnavis is holding the power at the beginning but this power is transferred to Ghashiram by declaring him as the Kotwal of Poona. Ghashiram takes revenge of the insult, but he has to lose his daughter. In *Kamala* Jaisingh Jadhav is dismissed from his job as his masters are involved in the skin market. *Kanyakadan* explores the revenge motif of a dalit against the age-old injustice done to them by the upper class.

One of the major basic instincts of the human beings is violence. In the plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar violence is found at the base. In Girish Karnad’s *Yayati* Sharmishtha pushes Devayani in a well and at the end of the play Chitralekha commits suicide. A lot of violence and bloodshed take place in *Tughlaq*. Many people are killed and many die during the shifting of the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. In *Hayavadana* the heads of the characters are transposed. The violence in the play is based on sacrifice. At the end of the play both the characters, Devadatta and Kapila kill each other. The play *Naga-Mandala* ends with the death of the Naga. In the play *Tale-Danda* Sovideva beats his father and puts him in the jail and at the same time he crushes down the movement started by the Sharans. He punishes severely the persons who participate in the movement. Haralayya and Madhuvarasa are punished by plucking their eyes out with iron rods and their hands and feet are bound and they are tied to the elephant’s legs. *The Fire and the Rain* is a play full of violence. Raibhya kills Yavakri for molesting his daughter in law. Raibhya is killed by his son Paravasu. Nittilai is killed by her husband and her brother.

In the plays of Vijay Tendulkar violence is a dominating factor. In his *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe* the protagonist of the play Leela Benare suffers a lot in the hands of other characters of the play. At the end of the play she is sentenced to undergo an abortion. The play *Gidhade* depicts the violence at
various levels. The father is beaten by his sons. The sister Manik is beaten by the brothers Ramakant and Umakant to such an extent that she suffers a miscarriage. Ramakant and Umakant beat their uncle and they make him to run away to save his life. In *Sakharam Binder* Sakaram beats Laxmi with belt. Champa beats her husband Fauzdar Shinde with her chappal. Champa is strangled by Sakharam as she is having illicit relationship with Dawood. In *Ghashiram Kotwal* Ghashiram suffers due to the punishment given to him for theft he has not committed. Injustice is done to him by the Brahmins of Poona. Later, after becoming the Kotwal of Poona he takes revenge on the Brahmins of Poona by committing cruel atrocities against them. Lalita Gauri, the daughter of Ghashiram dies while undergoing an abortion due to the midwife’s crude attempt. At the end of the play Ghashiram is killed by the mob. In *Kamala* the inhuman flesh market of Luhardaga exposes the violence present in the society where the human being is sold as animals and their value is based on the physical appearance. In the play *Kanyadan* also violence plays significant part. There is physical violence as well as psychological violence in the play. Arun twists a hand of Jyoti in her house and that too without having any reason indicates violence. The behaviour as well as the thoughts of Arun is violent. Arun’s violent thoughts are his reactions against the Brahmins who have treated dalits in bad manners for years together. He is angry with their high class society. When he gets a chance becomes a devil and he beats Jyoti like a beast. He is not worried about what will happen to Jyoti who is pregnant. Even he does not hesitate to kick Jyoti in her belly. Wadikar states, “Arun Athawale may be seen as the spokesman of the angry young generation among the dalits of the post – 1970 India.” (Wadikar 113) The play *Kanyadan* deals with anger and commitment of the educated, lower class young generation with whom violence becomes a day to day routine affair.

In Tendulkar’s plays the violence becomes the integral part as his plays
are based on reality. Indian society is divided into many castes and religions and the upper class people always rule over the lower classes. The relationship is like the ruler and ruled. If the ruler is going to oppress the ruled and the ruled wants to take revenge, violence is inevitable. The upper class people have exploited the dalits not only physically but also economically. The poor people are always exploited.

Greed and selfishness of the modern man is one of the significant aspects of the selected plays. In Girish Karnad’s *Yayati* Sharmishtha and Devayani are selfish and they try to overpower each other. Yayati is greedy for his youth and he sacrifices his son’s youth for his own. *Tughlaq* portrays the protagonist’s greed for power and he kills his father, brother and his step mother for it. In *Hayavadana* Padmini is interested in the head of Devadatta and the body of Kapila and when she gets a chance she transposes the heads of these characters so that she would get a complete man. Appanna of *Nagamandala* and Sovideva of *Tale-Danda* are but the selfish characters. In the play *The Fire and the Rain* Yavakri, Paravasu and Raibhya are self-centred and they are ready to kill anyone to be the supreme power in the society.

Selfishness of the modern man and his greed for power and money are presented in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar. In his *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe* the characters except Leela Benare are selfish and they disturb Benare purposely. *Gidhade* is the best example of the greed of the modern man. Except Rama and Rajaninath all the characters of the play behave as if they are beasts. Ramakant, Umakant, Manik and Pappa Hari Pitale are the vultures and they beat one another for money. The hero of *Sakharam Binder* is worried about his lust but he is not ready to take the responsibility of a husband and without marring any woman he stays with them and uses them sexually and when he is bored with them he asks them to quit his house. In *Ghashiram Kotwal* Nana Phadnavis is lusty and greedy and he uses Ghashiram as his pawn and when his purpose is over he throws him away. Ghashiram barters his daughter for
Kotwalship. In Kamala Jaisingh Jadhav uses Kamala for his fame and throws her away after his purpose is over. He even maltreats his wife Sarita. In the play Kanyadan Nath Devalalikar surrenders her own daughter for his philosophy. Arun Athawale marries Jyoti only for his zest for revenge on the upper class.

Both the playwrights are great humanists because they want an ideal society beyond the caste, creed, religion and the gender of the person. They are of the opinion that everyone should be treated equally on the human ground. The protagonist in the play Tughlaq, Basavanna and King Bijjala in Tale-Danda and Nath Devalalikar in Kanyadan are the representatives of this ideal society.

The function of Tendulkar’s plays is neither to just entertain nor to just reveal ironies and contradictions but to help man to know himself in relation to his environment. Tendulkar aims at bringing to light some of the most complex and vital issues of our inner and outer existence. Tendulkar is treated as an Avant-Garde playwright for he deliberately undertakes in Ezra Pound’s phrase to make it new. He had shocked the conventional sensibility and by revolting against the accepted norms and values, he shocked the traditional readers and introduced the neglected and forbidden subject matter. He did not sugar coat the realities but put the things as those are. The difference between the western stage and the stage of Tendulkar is most spectacularly evident in the use of a curtain as a theatrical device. Tendulkar’s human curtain is a radical innovation for the modern urban stage.

The plots of both the writers are neatly built. In no way both the writers follow the rules of Aristotle in case of their plots. In Karnad’s plays, though the plots are based on Indian mythology, in many ways, they comment on contemporary situations. Even in case of language, Karnad’s plays are contemporary. The plots of the plays of Tendulkar are based on the real life incidents.
Both the playwrights use action in proper way while writing the plays. In the play *Yayati*, Girish Karnad puts the titular hero at the centre and all the actions in the play move around him. In *Tughlaq*, the actions of the play are based on the political theology of the Sultan. Through the actions it is proved how the decisions taken by the Sultan are wrong and are almost mad. In the play, *Hayavadana*, there are two centres of actions, one is Hayavadana and the other is Padmini. At the end of the play, Hayavadana turns into a total horse whereas Padmini, Devadatta and Kapila have to die. The play *Naga-Mandala* moves around the love in between Naga and Rani. The actions of the characters like Appanna, Kurudavva and Kappanna are also significant and they assist to lead the action ahead. Rani’s behaviour is controlled by Kurudavva who gives the root which Rani uses to make Appanna fall in love with her. But she has to put it in the ant hill. At the end of the play Naga is to survive through the hair of Rani. The play *Tale-Danda* is based on the Sharana movement of Basavanna and all the actions of the play are concerned with the movement. The marriage of the Brahmin girl with a cobbler boy is the result of Basavanna’s movement and the cause of operations which the people face later on. In the play *The Fire and the Rain*, the actions of play move around Yavakri, Arvasu and Paravasu. Even the love relationship in between Arvasu and Nittilai help the action of the play.

The actions in Girish Karnad’s *Yayati, Hayavadana, Naga-Mandala* and *The Fire and the Rain* are inspired by or adapted from either folk-theatre or folk-tales of Karnataka. The actions in these plays fulfil the need of the plays. In Karnad’s plays though the unity of action is not followed, his plots are not over-crowded with the actions.

Girish Karnad uses mythical characters and mythology in his plays whereas Vijay Tendulkar takes characters and situations from the real life. Girish Karnad in his *Yayati, Hayavadana* and *The Fire and the Rain* takes the characters from Indian mythology. Whereas in *Naga-Mandala* he uses the
folk-tale which he has heard from his friend A. K. Ramanujan. While writing *Tughlaq* and *Tale-Danda* he uses historical characters. Though the plots and characters are derived from Indian mythology and history, they are directly concerned with the present situations. Vijay Tendulkar in his *Ghashiram Kotwal* takes the plot and characters from history but he also comments on the contemporary situations through it. The plays *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe* and *Kamala* are based on the real life incidents. As the sources of plots and characters of both the writers are different yet there are many similarities. Both the writers hate casteism and class distinction in Indian society and comment bitterly on the existing situation.

In Vijay Tendulkar’s *Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe*, the mock trial leads the action to present and past of Leela Benare. The technique of play within the play helps the writer to show the actions which have taken place in the past life of Leela Benare. The play *Gidhade* is full of violent actions which take the characters to the vulture’s level. But in all these actions there is uniformity which makes the play effective. In the play, *Sakharam Binder* the actions begin with Laxmi’s arrival at Sakharam’s home and the play ends with Champa’s death. In between these two actions many actions are intermingled, such as Sakharam’s beating of Laxmi, Laxmi’s going away to Amalner to stay with her nephew, Champa’s entry into Sakharam’s home and life, Champa’s beating to her husband; are all the actions related to the central character Sakharam Binder. The play *Ghashiram Kotwal* is also full of actions. The play observes the folk-theatre form and it is turned almost into a musical. It is the combination of Tamasha, Khele and Dashavatar. The actions in the play are form oriented. The insult of Ghashiram and his going to jail for the theft which he has not committed turns Ghashiram into a monster. And as avenge, he treats the Brahmans of Poona in a violent manner. The atrocities done to Ghashiram are the cause of his treatment to the Poona subjects after gaining the kotwalship. In Vijay Tendulkar’s *Kamala*, the actions are oriented
towards the representation of oppression of women in male dominated society. Jaisingh’s buying of Kamala and his presentation of Kamala in press-conference, his dismissal from his job, indicate how power matters and the powerless are harassed. Vijay Tendulkar’s Kanyadan is a play based on caste system in India. Nath Devalalikar, a reformist, wants to eradicate untouchability and class-distinction from the society but he fails. Arun as revenge oppresses his wife Jyoti and at last Jyoti wants her father not to interfere in her relationship with her husband, and as she has accepted him as her husband it is her responsibility to be loyal with him. The actions reflected in the plays of Tendulkar are based on the real life incidents so they appeal more directly to the heads and hearts of the readers.

Both the playwrights use different dialects of languages in order to show the difference in social classes from which these characters come. As Karnad writes in English which is not his mother tongue yet his command over the language is outstanding. And he uses the simple and straight-forward language in his plays. But Tendulkar wrote his plays in his own mother tongue, in some plays his language is difficult to understand for the common man e.g. the language used by Rajaninath in Gidhade. Tendulkar in his Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe and Ghashiram Kotwal has used poetic language whereas in Gidhade, Sakharam Binder, Kamala and Kanyadan his language is prosaic. Both the playwrights use the language in an unambiguous way. The language used by Leela Benare is quite different from that of the other characters of Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe. Dawood of Sakharam Binder and Ghashiram of Ghashiram Kotwal use the mixture of Hindi and Marathi. Jaisingh Jadhav of Kamala, as he is a journalist uses Hindi, Marathi, English and Punjabi with a great fluency.

Girish Karnad as well as Vijay Tendulkar use songs in their plays. Karnad used the folk-theatre Yakshagana for his plays. Yakshagana is full of songs, music and dance and in his plays Hayavadana, Naga-Mandala he has used the
technique. Vijay Tendulkar has used songs in his plays Shantata! Court Chalu Ahe, Gidhade and Ghashiram Kotwal. In the play Gidhade when Pappa Hari Pitale is drunken a lot to celebrate the departure of his brother he sings a song in a lusty mood ‘चंदू को ग ठम्मरा…’ The effective use of songs is the prominent feature of the plays of both the playwrights. In Naga-Mandala and The Fire and the Rain, Karnad has used the technique of dance whereas Vijay Tendulkar used it in Gidhade and Ghashiram Kotwal.

Music is an inseparable part of folk-theatre and in the plays of Girish Karnad and in the same way the plays of Vijay Tendulkar, music plays important role. Girish Karnad uses Yakshagana form whereas Tendulkar uses Tamasha and Dashavatar. The beating of the drum is used effectively in Yayati. In Hayavadan, Naga-Mandala and The Fire and the Rain as he uses folk-theatre, music plays important role. Vijay Tendulkar has used music in his plays Gidhade and Ghashiram Kotwal particularly.

The purpose and function of Chapter No. 1 is to discuss briefly the hypothesis, significance and the scope and limitations of the present study, to define clearly the objectives of the study, to have a brief survey of the development of the form of drama and to have a brief introduction to the lives and works of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar. The purpose and function of the second chapter is to discuss briefly the method to be used in the present study. This chapter as far as possible defines clearly the specific method to be used to carryout the proposed study. Thus the first two chapters provide the necessary critical background and theoretical framework to the present study. The main objective and the purpose of the present study is to analyze and interprete the themes and techniques of the selected plays of the two selected writers: Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar. A sincere attempt is made to achieve these objectives in Chapter No. 3 and 4 in which the six selected plays of Girish Karnad in English and six selected plays of Vijay
Tendulkar in Marathi are discussed respectively.

Another significant objective of the present study is to have a comparative perspective of the twelve selected plays by the two selected playwrights with reference to themes and techniques of the plays. A sincere attempt is made to achieve these objectives in Chapter No. 5.

Chapter No. 6, the present one, is an attempt to have a sort of conclusion of the present study, though broadly speaking it is an epilogue rather than conclusion because in literature there is always scope for further studies. Great literary works are like Gold mines, the more you dig, the more you get and hence Chapter No. 6 maybe regarded as the epilogue of the present study.

In this context following observations are made.

First there are certain common techniques used by Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar, especially the use of music, history, legends and myths. However, they are used basically to interprete the modern realities of human life. A detailed comparative view of their techniques is already discussed in Chapter No. 5.

In the context of the themes of the selected plays of Karnad and Tendulkar, as discussed above in the present chapter we find sex, violence, zest for power and selfishness are the dominant themes handled by the playwrights.

In the first chapter Introduction, three possibilities were mentioned while discussing the hypothesis of the study.

4. The two dramatists have entirely different views of human life or human predicament.
5. The two dramatists have something common and they share to a limited extent a partial view of human predicament.
6. The vision of life or the concept of human predicament of both the playwrights is mostly identical and they have almost the same view of the
human life.

Obviously, enough the present study reveals that the first hypothesis is entirely wrong and the second hypothesis is also partial. The study reveals that the third hypothesis is very significant and relevant. In this context Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar have penetrated deeply into the human life past and present. Their perception of human life reveals in their selected plays, that the instincts like sex, violence, zest for power and selfishness are inherent in human life as they are in the animal life, since the other animals and human beings belongs to the same Nature. These instincts make the some total of evils in human life inspite of man’s efforts to fight against them to become nobler and nobler. In this struggle man has used religion and education for his own betterment and yet as Darwin, Sigmund Freud and Karl Marks have shown the realities of human life, the human struggle for betterment of human life has been unsuccessful and incomplete and even his future is matter of speculation only. It is this perception of human life that forms the literary and moral vision of the two writers Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar alike.