

Gender Manifestation in Tendulkar's *Silence The court Is In Session*

Shruthi.T, Assistant professor of English, Government first grade college. Peenya-58

ABSTRACT:

All of Vijay Tendulkar's plays concentrate on different aspect of the human character and complexity of human relationship. His greatest quality is to simultaneously involve and distance himself from his works. All his works are clearly distinct from each other. He considers himself a writer of plays and film scripts on a wide variety of subjects, not a closet philosopher or a sociologist who has missed his vocation. Over the last few decades, he has scanned the life – world of contemporary Indian in order to identify the sources and nature of the violence that has come to pattern it. Even when violence is not ostensibly his theme, it casts its shadow on his characters. It is unjust to read his entire work as a commentary on human violence.

Vijay Tendulkar in all his plays has been voicing the evils in the society of all types, marginalization of gender, caste, the needy, the racially different, the Dalit and others. His plays are gyno-centric. The males in his plays are embodiment of hypocrisy, selfishness and treachery.

Keywords: Marginalization, plight, revolt, Gender manifestation

In *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Tendulkar mocks at the law courts, at the human existence and the double standards of society, Violence, cruelty and the different sets of norms prevailing. The play is an attempt to deny the different systems of norms and codes existing for men and women. It also hits at the inability of the courts in sanctioning punishment. The voice of male dominated society is condemned in the play. The last scene of the *Silence! The Court is in Session* clearly shows the condemnation that Tendulkar has for the legal system prevailing. However, the

elaborate monologue after a long Silence by Miss Benare is an attempt by the Dramatist to do justice that was denied to Ms. Benare. That Tendulkar gives an opportunity to Miss Benare is an attempt by Tendulkar to show case the atrocities meted out to the marginalized gender by men. He raises many questions about love, sex, marriage and moral values present in the society.

It is an attack on society's hypocrisy. The play also attempts to say that there is no voice that can express the woes of the marginalized gender. Ms. Benare becomes a metaphor of futility of the existence of women in male dominated society. The play is a caustic satire on the social as well legal justice

Silence! The Court is in Session, was produced in 1967 and is the first authentic play of Vijay Tendulkar that has become a part of new Indian English drama. This was the first play in which Tendulkar has focused on the social oppression of women. The play as one can understand is an expression of the humiliation confronted by women and their struggle against the society dominated by patriarchal dictates.

The play portrays the social evils like caste, untouchability and the conflict confronted by protagonist is of the highest level. The protagonist Miss Benare appears before the court for having accused of infanticide and around this the play situates itself. Throughout the trial Miss Benare suffers in silence but towards the end of the trial, unable to bear the subjugation she has been subjected to, she opens up with all rage and expresses her anger and fury. Throughout the monologue, her outburst is an expression of the conflicts she confronts at that time and is a result of the inbuilt anger against the domineering men in her society whose will had prevailed for a long time. She represents the suppressed women folk in the society and argues for providing a space and place for expression by the marginalized gender.

Speaking on the need to make Benare raise her voice, Tendulkar observes: "Shubha Deshpande suggested that the central character of the play Miss Benare must open up somewhere, especially at the end of the last act. She could express her pent up feelings by way of a monologue. Without Benare's articulation, the play would remain less communicative... I was compelled to write. So I made Benare fly into fantasy and made her recite a prolonged monologue."

This outburst also is a representative female voice that could be heard in the open, the voice that expresses not the self but also the whole women kind.

Yet another social issue that the play portrays is the working of the judicial system; the mock trial. Tendulkar creates in the play is the mockery of the law courts, mockery of human existence and the mockery of the double standards of society. Violence, cruelty to women in particular and human beings in general and power politics dominate the structure of the play.

The play is of the social consciousness essentially shares the psychological stresses and inhibitions. Melaine Klein, one of the most important of Freud's successor admits: "There is no impulse, no instinctual urge or repose which is not experienced as unconscious fantasy... Fantasy represents the particular content of urges or feelings (for example wishes, fears, anxieties, triumphs, love or sorrow) dominating the mind at the moment. Unconscious fantasies are... an activity of mind that occurs on deep unconscious level and accompanies every impulse..." (Klein: 1960, 6).

Leela Benare possesses her own guilt and in her advance proclamation of her exceptional reservoir of talent and strength, is her unconscious effort to rationalize her conduct that is not to be supported by social codes. To share her loneliness and guilt, she inevitably needs the support for Samant. Her confession, "I feel scared when I am alone" is an unconscious projection of her own guilt that is to be exposed in the play. In contrast, of her nervousness, through her sudden access of energy, clapping of hands and singing of songs, she intends to project and reveal the mystery that has been suppressed by her. Tendulkar following the tradition of naturalism accepts that the fantasies associated with forgotten past now and then shoot up in the present and they subsequently control and guide human energy and mechanism of behavior. The primitive instinctual urges that provide all the psychic energy of the individual are kept out of consciousness by the mechanism of repression, 'not because they lack significance but because they may be so significant as to constitute what is felt as a threat to the ego.' (Brown: 11)

The horror of the cruelty existing at the face of society has been projected with exceptional poignancy. It is said: "In view of the fact that Benare is snared by the highbrows of cultured society, she is surprisingly ignorant towards the way of the world, which is disguised in good faces. She encounters to hold the swirling darkness. Her entire life is translated into an ever increasing entanglement," says Kanade Ponkshe, in spite of the best resistance of Miss Benare, reveals the whole truth of her effort to get married. She was pregnant and she wanted to give birth to the child. It was only out of social cowardice that was not able to reveal the identity of the father of the child. Moreover, she was also conscious about the plight of the illegitimate child. Hence, in wider perspective of social consideration, she conceived the plan to give name and dignity to unborn baby. It is an irony that Ponkshe realizes the gravity of the situation but he was not ready to accept the proposal because it would have been a violation of male dominated social values in which there had been no compromise of woman

between her pure virginity and marital life. Miss Benare had no intension of the betrayal of Ponkshe and therefore she confessed that the child in her womb was of Professor Damle.

At the end Miss Benare makes a confession of her relationship with her uncle. But it was not meant for guilt. It was motivated by her zest of life and she got love and contentment out of it. It is true that the relationship was governed and guided by innocent fascination, a state of life when she was ignorant about the crude ways of the world. Like other protagonists of Tendulkar, Benare is tormented and humiliated but instead of adopting the strategy of withdrawal, she seeks confirmation and assimilation. She owns the identity of her child with the exceptional strength of spirit and intends to preserve the sublimity of motherhood.

The play reveals the perplexing contradictions within human nature. The play shows how individual is disempowered, made subject, reduced to the role of a spectator by the logic of certain events and social grouping. The play is a portraiture of the indomitably and grit of the human spirit. Miss Benare is in a state of nature as solitary, poor hasty, brutish and short. Tendulkar's dramatizes the shift in paradigm as a post partition society where the women are forced to step out into the public sphere and the contradictions and pit falls that awaited them. Benare as the early representative of that positions is more defensive and more pleading. She seeks break out the stereotype, but ultimately accepts social norms.

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