



Kailash M. Ingole
New Shahunagar
Behind Pranav Plaza Complex,
Nanded - 431 605

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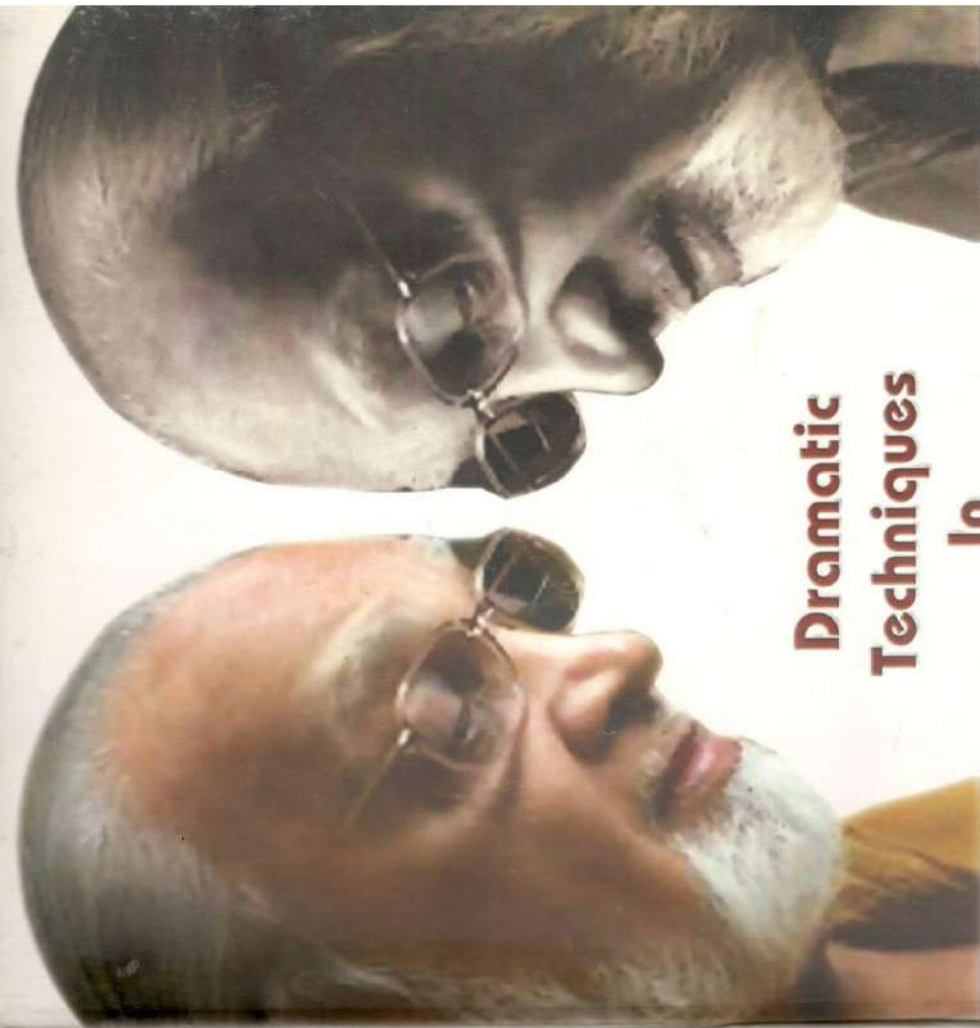
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Dramatic Techniques In Vijay Tendulkar's Plays

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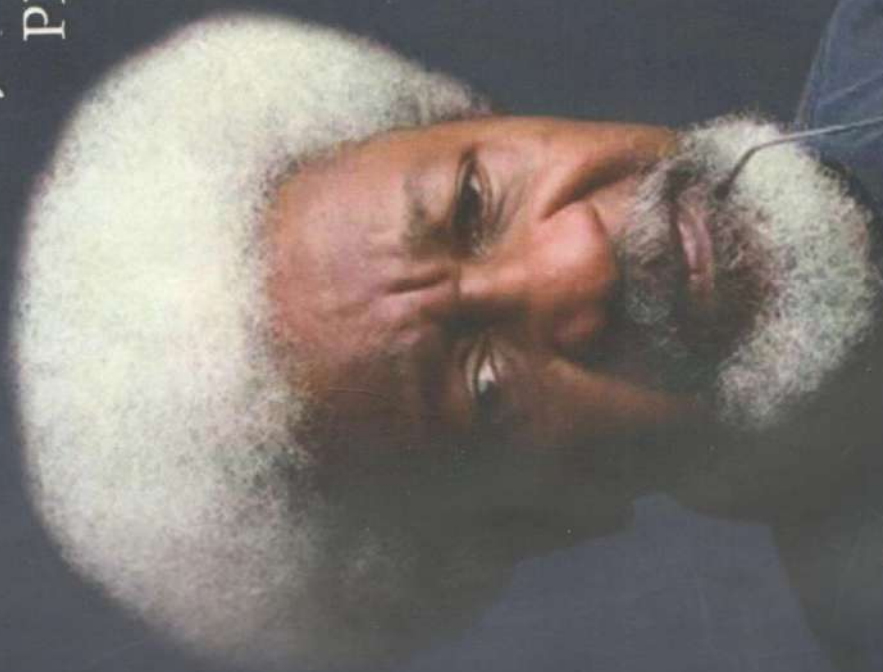
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Shobabharti Prakashan, Ahmedpur.

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अनुक्रमणिका

1. Sexual Politics In Tendulkar's SILENCE! THE COURT IS IN SESSION	Dr. Ingole Kailash M.	01
2. Cultural Study Of Sharankumar Limbale's Akkarmashi : The Outcaste	Landage Ramesh A.	06
3. The Indian English Fiction And Arun Joshi	Maknikar U. S.	13
4. Observations On Growth And Production Of Indian Major Carps Through Composite Fish Culture Under Different Management Practices	Totawar D. V. Dr. H. L. Tamlurkar Bhise K. K.	16
5. Characterization Of Volatiles In Rambutan Fruit (Nephelium lappaceum L.)	Totawar Kapil V.	22
6. Soci-Political Contributions of Shahu Maharaja	Dr. Shivkeri Chandrakant D.	32
7. China's Changing Strategy In South Asia And Its Impact On India Foreign Policy	Prof. Dr. Munde S. E.	40
8. A Study Of Some Personality Factors Of Rural And Urban Female-Male College Students	Sayyed Salar Sayyed Gaffar Dr. (Smt.) Bansod V. P.	49
9. नवजागरण के परिप्रेक्ष्य में नागार्जुन का उपन्यास साहित्य	डॉ. बदने रामकृष्ण	60
10. दुष्यंत के गजल में राजनीतिक अभिव्यक्ति	प्रा. कुलकर्णी विजयकुमार म.	62
11. मानवीय संवेदना का कहानीकार : मंटो सआदत हसन	रमाकांत शंकरराव वाठारे	66
12. दलित कहानी में चित्रित दलित स्त्री का जीवन (‘अपना गाँव’ कहानी के संदर्भ में)	उपाडे लक्ष्मण ब.	69
13. हिंदी कहानियों में चित्रित कृषि जीवन : एक मूल्यांकन	संतोष प्रकाश पांडे	73
14. अनुवाद के क्षेत्र में हिंदी द्वारा रोजगार	प्रा. गायकवाड बाबासाहेब आर.	78
15. “चन्द्रकिरण सौनरेक्सा के कहानियों चित्रित नारी रूप : एक अध्ययन”	प्रा. कुलकर्णी संतोष सु.	81
16. कबीर एक विचार	पाटील धरणे प्रभा	86
17. सामाजिक यथार्थवादी कवि निराला	पांडे विक्रम अशोक	91
18. फणीश्वरनाथ रेणु कृत ‘मैला आँचल’ की आंचलिकता	सूर्यवंशी प्रताप आ.	96
19. वाचन संस्कृति के आज के स्वरूप	प्रा. डॉ. सांगोले सुनीता	101
20. साहित्य रसिक यशवंतराव चव्हाण	प्रा. आलगुले केशव	104
21. समाज आणि साहित्य यांच्यातील परस्पर संबंधातील एक अभ्यास	प्रा. गुल्हाणे अर्चना	110

Sexual Politics In Tendulkar's SILENCE! THE COURT IS IN SESSION.

Dr. Ingole Kailash Madhavrao
N.C. Law College, Nanded

"In the beginning this universe was nothing but the self in the form of man. He was as large as a man and woman embracing. This self divided itself into parts and with that there were masters and mistresses." [Campbell, Joseph vol. 9-10] Sex and gender are two different entities. Gender has nothing to do with biology. It is a social and cultural construct. Biologically men and women are different.

The sex differences cannot mean sexual inequality and male dominance. But the patriarchal social setup or masculinity is meant as superiority, whereas femininity is associated with inferiority. Masculinity implies strength, action and domination, while femininity denotes weakness, passivity, obedience and self-negation.

God has created sex for procreation. But the gender is man-made. It is created by man for the domination over woman. Gender differences assert the superiority of man over women. Though the woman have played equal role in the formation of society, yet they are not treated as human beings.

The sub-ordination of women to men is perhaps older than civilization itself. It is he who created the image of women. He did not want her to be equal or co-sharer. We are born as equal entities, but gender-based division of labor separated us in male and female. "As woman and men we are socialized to develop certain parts of our personality while suppressing the other parts. This programming promotes a predetermined, stilted, and repetitive way of acting life." [Steiner, Claud M. 96]

These gender deformities are thus caused and canonized by socio-cultural programming of sex roles. This has become the part of living and generations and generations are trained to gain it through socialization.

Gender consciousness and male mechanism are more explicitly stated in *Silence. The court is in Session* than any other works in Indian context. Tendulkar's plays unlike Shakespeare's are mostly female dominated. The roles of female protagonists eclipse male figures. A keen observation of Tendulkar's plays reveal that his female characters command prominence in a world that is chiefly dominated by male chauvinists. It is Miss Benare in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Sarita in *Kamala*, Rama in *Vultures*, Vijaya in *Encounter in Umbugland*, Laxmi and Champa in *Sakharam Binder* that attain greater importance than their male counterparts. They are at the center of all action. Tendulkar shows these women fighting against the patriarchal social set-up in India. Tendulkar is perhaps not a conscious feminist but he has depicted the women characters with all compassion.

Leela Benare the protagonist of the play is sprightly rebellious and assertive women. She is bold and strongly opposes male ideology. She is very attentive in her work and receives love and respect of all people around. She is also a member of the amateur theatre group called "The Sonar Moti Tenement [Bombay] Progressive Association. The other members of this amateur theater are Mr. Kashikar the chair person of the association, while Mrs. Kashikar is a housewife, Balu Rokade is a college student, adopted by Kashikars, Sukhatme is lawyer, and Ponshe is a clerk, Karnik is an actor in the experimental theatre, Prof. Damle is a lecturer and important character in the play."

When the play opens there are Miss Benare and Samant on the stage. They are the first to come to the village hall where the artists from Bombay are to hold a 'Mock Law Court.' It is an important scene for Benare who shows interest in rustic Samant. A lady who always criticized men, except one, expresses herself in the following way. "Let's leave everyone behind, I thought and go somewhere far, far away with you." (Tendulkar Five Plays 55)

Samant, the poor soul, does not understand anything, he stands awe-struck at the behaviour of Leela Benare. She does not lose a single opportunity to get close to Samant. But Samant has no reason to suspect her. Her efforts continue till the other members of the group enter in.

All is set for the mock trial. Benare goes into the inner room to wash her face. Karnik takes Ponshe aside and indicating the inner room, tells him if he knows anything about Benare. The talk between them has a great significance, as we are to learn it soon. At Sukhatme's suggestion, they all plan to make Benare the accused of the mock trial.

Benare comes out singing, unaware of anything that is going to happen to her. Ponshe obstructs her way saying : "Miss Benare, you have been arrested on the suspicion of a crime of an extremely grave nature, and brought before the bar of this court." Before Benare understands anything a wooden dock is arranged around her. Mr. Kashikar the judge of mock court asks Benare : "Prisoner Benare. Under section No. 302 of the Indian Penal Code you are accused of the crime of infanticide. Are you guilty or not." (Tendulkar Five Plays)

On hearing of this sudden charge Benare is stunned, and the entire atmosphere becomes extraordinarily somber and tense. Ironically enough this so-called illusive 'Mock Trial' slowly but steadily grows into serious affair.

Act II starts in this tense and serious atmosphere. Mr. Kashikar repeats his question if or not Benare is guilty of crime of infanticide. Benare stands numb holding on to a chair for support when Sukhatme enquired Benare; "Why are you so grave all of a sudden? After all it's a game it's a game that's all. Why are you so serious?

After a break again situation grows intense and Benare realizes that she is being baited by these all male aggressors. She has already incurred their displeasure by taunting each one of them, by exposing their pretensions.

In this way the Mock-trial begins. To begin with, Sukhtme asks Ponkshe a new question about the accused Benare's private life and her general behaviour in public. Sukhatme asks Ponkshe if Benare is married or not. Thus Ponkshe starts providing information of Benare that she is a woman who runs after men. Next Karnik is brought into the witness box, and Karnik states the fact that Rokade has seen Benare in a compromising situation.

Then Rokde is called in as witness. Rokde with all hesitation discloses the fact that he has seen Benare in the hostel room of Prof. Damle. Benare has already stiffened considerably and Karnik signals Ponkshe to observe this dramatic change. Thus Benare finds herself in trouble to the excitement of her tormentors.

Then, Samant is called as a fourth witness. He does not want to unsettle Benare who has already become an unwitting target in the cruel game being played on her by Sukhtme, Ponkshe, Karnik and Rokde. Samant answers Sukhtme's questions, looking at a novel and amusing enough all that occurs there in co-incidents with the 'Mock court trial', as he fails to realize the real motive behind Sukhatme's questions. Ironically, what he reads from the book, the cheap novel he carries with him fits in with what Benare has recently undergone in professor Damle's room on that fateful night, when the learned professor refused to accept her in his life for fear of losing his own reputation. A tense and stunned Benare, who has remained mute upto that movement, suddenly asks Samant to stop saying, 'That's enough She says, "It's all a lie! A complete lie!"'. But Mr. Kashikar orders Samant to go on Benare gets angry over this and utters :

"You've all deliberately ganged upon me! You've plotted against me!"

Benare cannot bear all this any longer. Her eyes are suddenly full of tears. Still in a voice of tearful defiance, she addresses them all. "What can you do to me? just try!" Benare cries bitterly. And suddenly the atmosphere of the hall changes, all are silent except Samant. Samant shows pity for Miss Benare. Benare stands and starts to go, but to her horror, she finds the door locked from outside. She finds herself trapped into the power game of these men. Kashikar says then that the trial should go on, till the villagers come to see the play. Benare does not respond to Kashikar's call and remains stuck up where she is. He orders Mrs. Kashikar to pull her in. And Karnik asks Sukhatme to fire away his questions at Benare who does not answer any of his question.

Mrs. Kashikar tells Sukhatme that Benare remained unmarried to fairly advanced age of thirty four for, "That's what happens these days when you get everything without

marrying." (Five Plays 99) Mrs. Kashikar accuses Benare of immoral character. Rokd begins his views of Miss Benare. He tells the court that Benare once tried to lure him into marrying him, and also that she always carries a bottle of the poison called TIK 20 with her. He describes his meeting with Benare where she told him that Professor Damle refused to marry her after having made her pregnant.

When it comes to Karnik, he tells the court that it was not Balu who slapped Benare, but it is Benare who slapped him. He discloses a grave fact of Benare that she had fallen in love with her own maternal uncle. At this point Kashikar the mock judge himself, warns to be openly examined as a witness, something very unprecedented in the very history of court proceedings. He tells Sukhatme that the chairman of Benare's school, Nanasaheb Shinde has already decided to dismiss her from service. This shocks Benare who realizes suddenly that she is going to lose her job the very next day. In disappointment, she tries to swallow the TIK-20 that she keeps in her bag. Karnik rushes forward and dashes it away beyond her.

Kashikar as a 'mock-judge' now asks Sukhatme to put his side as a defence counsel in the case. Sukhatme has nothing to say, he thinks it's all Benare's fault. As a prosecution lawyer he requests mock-judge not to show any sympathy for Benare and mete out the severest sentence against her, for her guilt is unpardonable. Kashikar then asks her if she has something to say. He gives her ten seconds.

It is Benare now who is at the center of action. The whole court is silent as all eyes are on Benare. Motionless Benare suddenly stands up and says I've lot to say. She expresses her love of life.

At last Benare accepts the fact of falling in love with her maternal uncle, a teen-aged girl, though, she had enough sense even at that stage to ask him to marry her. Benare also accepts the pervert nature of her uncle who had his eyes on her newly blossomed beauty. She accepts as a grown-up woman, she fell in love again. This time it was an intelligent love, she thought. However Professor Damle exploits her hero-worship, and when she offered to him her own body on the altar of his worship. She says "My intellectual god took the offering and went his way."

To conclude, all her bitter experiences have taught Benare that it is her body that has brought about her current sad plight. Never the less, she may hate her body, but would not totally reject it. Her agony finds expression in the depiction of the conflict within :

"This body is a traitor ! I despise this body -and I love it! I hate it but I love all you have, in the end, isn't it ? And where will you go if you reject it ? It was your body that once burnt and gave you moment so beautiful, so blissful near to heaven! It took you high, high above yourself into a place like paradise. And now it carries within it the witness of that time a tender little but-of-will

will be lisping, laughing, dancing little life-my son-my whole existence ! I want my body now for him for him a love." (Tendulkar Five Plays 18)

She asserts in pain and anxiety that hers is a selfless mother's quest, founded on her would-be son's most essential needs. The boy must have a mother, a father, a house and a good reputation in society.

Kashikar the judge of the Mock Court trial now announces his verdict. He says that Benare has tried to 'dynamite' social customs and sacredness of marriage and motherhood and hence deserves no mercy. Moreover, as a teacher, she has set a very bad example, by daring to conceive a child not of wedlock. Therefore the sentence meted out to her is that she must destroy the foetus in her womb. Benare cries intolerably. "No!No!No!- I won't let you do it- I won't let it happen!" She approaches the stool meant for defence counsels, sits on it and collapses with her head on the table."

At this time, someone from outside opens the door. The door opens little by little, and two or three faces peep in. The first face asks if the show has already begun. Samant answers saying that the show is yet to begin and asks them to wait for five minutes. Meanwhile, Karnik, Ponkhse, the Kashikars get ready for their performances of the night. But the frozen figure of Benare asserts to them and they try to make her understand by saying that the mock court trial was only a game. Thus the play ends with a focus on Leela Benare. L.S. Desphande rightly points out the predicament of Miss Benare: "The punishment meted out to Miss Benare speaks volumes of the ways of our so-called cultured society. The Story of Benare's innocence is a long drawn out tale of woman's suffering at the hands of man as usual the man is left scot-free and woman is made a scapegoat by all around her. The height of irony lies in the final utterance of the play, "The play must go on".

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Office Address :

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Nanded.

Cont. no. 9960561672,

9527406121, 9970379604.

lokasthamagazine@gmail.com

arvinda_khedkar@rediffmail.com

- ◆ संपादकीय २
- ◆ 'रानभैरी' तील संघर्ष
प्रा संजय हापगुंडे ३
- ◆ मराठवाड्यातील शहिद सैनिक आणि त्यांच्या
अवलंबितांचे प्रश्न प्रा.गावडे आर.पी..... ५
- ◆ आदिवासी महादेव कोळी समुदाय : एक समाजशास्त्रीय
अभ्यास - प्रा.डॉ.कांबळे बी.एम..... ८
- ◆ आदिवासी जमातीतील दारिद्र्य: एक समाजशास्त्रीय
अध्ययन - प्रा.एस.पी.ढोले... १२
- ◆ भारतातील भाववाढीची चिकित्सा
मयुरी राजेश्वर फुके. १९
- ◆ परभणी जिल्ह्यातील उच्चमाध्यमिक स्तरावर
इतिहास विषयाच्या अध्ययन अध्यापनामध्ये
येणाऱ्या अडचणींचा अभ्यास
-चव्हाण मधुबला नारायणराव२६
- ◆ ग्रामस्वच्छता, ग्रामविकासाच्या संदर्भात समाजसुधारकांची
भूमिका -बालासाहेब लक्ष्मणराव लोहकर२९
- ◆ संत जनाबाईंचे अभंग : स्त्री जाणिवेचा आविष्कार
सूर्यवंशी शिवाजी आनंदराव ३१
- ◆ Social work Intervention for Adolescence
Development- Prof. Smita Nair..... ३५
- ◆ Woman Portraits in Tendulkar's Dramatic
World - Dr. Ingole Kailash M. ३८
- ◆ जकात कराची अर्थशास्त्रीय चिकित्सा : विशेष संदर्भ
नविड वाघाळा शहर महानगरपालिका
- विभूते उमाकांत पंढरी. ४१
- ◆ उच्च शिक्षण आणि स्वायत्तता
- प्रा. बी. आर. भोसले. ४४
- ◆ ग्रामीण पत्रकारिता आणि त्यासमोरिल आव्हाने
- खंदारे सुनिता गणपतराव..... ४७

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Woman Po traits in Tendulkar's Dramatic World

Dr. Ingole Kailash M.

Tendulkar is a naturalistic writer who believes in writing what he sees and not what he thinks or imagines. His plays are notable for their uncompromising realism, merciless probing for human nature, candid scrutiny of individual and group psychology, and experimental technique (An Online Entry). He is the representative writer of his age and time he does not believe like dictum art for art's sake but uses his pen as a means of propaganda. He is not sheer propagandist, but explores crude realities of human lives with a view of their reformation. He himself accepts this: "I was never able to begin writing my play with idea or theme in a my mind I had to have my characters with meliving person leading me into the thick of their lives while they would give it theme (Tendulkar, *The Play is a Thing 2*) Being a realist writer his treatment of man-woman relationship is not idealized or factious, but apt and real.

Tendulkar's women are the most comprehensive characters of his plays. Tendulkar as picked some of the supreme examples of women from this observation of Indian society they look so real that the other women find themselves portrayed on the stage. Tendulkar has some tips of characters like cleaver, gullible, malleable, stubborn, conservative, rebellious, self sacrificing and grasping too. They are not idealized, romanticized, but they are the supreme creation that can be seen in Indian society.

Tendulkar shows pairs of women characters in almost all his plays. These women are very much different in class, behavior and character. But underneath their superfluity, their lives are the same, for each and every woman is dominated suppressed and oppressed by men. Leela Bendre and Mrs. Kashikar are the most famous and appreciated characters of Vijay Tendulkar. To take the example of

Leela Bendre, she is young and bold. She never hesitates to attack men, for she does not accept men as superior being. She always criticizes hypocritical nature of men. She believes in the potentialities of women folk that they are not inferior to men by any means. But unfortunately, she is betrayed by a man to whom she most respected. The person she loved did not have courage to stand by her side and accept her child. This is what weakens Benares to plead one or another man to marry her, so that she could give the coming child its father's name. Because in Indian society the child that is born before marriage is not well-treated. It is in this state of body and mind that she is trapped by her colleagues into being the accused in a mock trial.

Mrs. Kashikar, on the other hand meddled aged and conventional character. She is acutely against the free women like Benares. She is imposed very much by male dominant philosophy. In the exploitation of Benares, she is all ahead. She could not tolerate Benares freedom Benares very existence makes aware of her emptiness. This is perhaps the reason why she offers her help in physically forcing Benares into the dock. Mr Kashikar could not have admitted her to break the marriage institution. She has become so because of the constant insults and snubs of Mr. Kashikar. She was a short-tempered woman. She did not bear suppression of body and mind. We really wonder if she had economic power like Benares, she could have fought bravely than any other. But she has no choice rather than to be a participant in the patriarchal social system. She is more enthusiastic because she wanted to retain her self-esteem. Hence her testimony is such a bitter that when she was asked why Benares remained single till then, her response is, "This is what happens these days when you get everything without having to get married. It's all pleasure without responsibility. Let me tell you, in our times, even when a girl who was flat nosed, black skinned or hunch-backed, she was married. Everything goes wrong Sukhatme, when all this nonsense about earning money begins. It's under that immortality has become rampant in society". That is the character of Mrs. Kashikar who destroys her own kind to establish herself on the right side of man-made social conduct.

While Benares is not a strong rebel gets our sympathy since she falls a prey to her fellow colleagues. Her sin or her premarital relations sometimes irritates us, but all the while ornamentation that she undergoes moves us. Had she been a true rebel, she would not have suffered. But she could not escape herself from male dominant society. She pleads to give her baby a name for she knew very well without father's name her child would suffer a lot of humiliation from the society. The character of Mrs. Kashikar was made ridiculous and hideous, still it's the Tendulkar's art of characterization that makes us feel sympathy for Mrs. Kashikar. and though Benares is a center of our sympathy, still she also becomes a part of our hatred. Thus Tendulkar systematically presents two different nature women, prevailed in the society. Generally

we see old women emphasizing on patriarchal mode of life while young women are attracted towards liberated and independent life.

In *Vultures* the same contrasted pair can be found in Manik and Rama. Manik is unlike Benares liberated women, likes to enjoy every bit of life without caring moral scruples, while Rama is good natures, divine and submissive women. But this time there is no innocent women like Benares, but a women who is selfish and luxurious. It is Manik who is pregnant. Her premarital sexual relation is not out of mistake but out of her passion to enjoy the life. On the other hand, Rama is childless despite her divine goodness. Her infertility is the cause of evil that is seen in her husband, brother-in-law, sister-in-law and father-in-law. It is their sins, what she is suffering with. That is why she likes to find an outlet in the form of Rajaninath. Manik is a very bold character she is the woman who likes parties, dance, smoking, drinking and hopping from one bed to another. Presently she is carrying a child of so called Rajah. The character of Rama is completely contrasted with Manik. Rama is a all good woman except her illicit relationship with and obedient women in Hari Pitale's family. Rama is a all good woman except her illicit relationship with her half brother-in-law Rajninath. Though Manik's behavior is crude, she receives our sympathy. Her brothers beat her, mock her and throw the vilest abuses at her. They fracture her leg in the plot to blackmail her lover the so-called Rajah. When Rajah dies and when they realize that they could not get anything from Rajah, they kick her unborn child out of womb. She cries the hardest, but none of her brother is little moved. It is the most heinous scene that we witness on the stage. She runs down the stair, her one leg plastered and sari full of blood. She at last meets with very bad fate. She even hallucinates her father laughing at her fate. Rama's fate is not different than Manik. Tendulkar Obviously lacks poetic justice in the play for Rama also meets with equal destiny with Manik, even after her all goodness. Finally, she is pregnant. But her husband suspects the child to be his half-brother's. He accuses her and speaks to kick the child out. At last we see Rama emotionless and devoid of life.

In *'Sakharam Binder'*, the same pair of woman is presented by Tendulkar. There are two women Laxmi and Champa, one is a moral force, and another is a sexual challenge. But both the characters meet with same fate. Both are the deserted and homeless women. Laxmi has been left by her husband, while Champa abandoned her husband. The characters of both the woman are quite contrasted. Laxmi is a very obedient, subservient, hard working and ready to fulfill all cruel demands of her husband. While Champa is a socially despised woman, a whore. She is lazy and irrespective of men and even by Sakharam. She is seductive and a sexual woman. But she receives our sympathy on account of her past with her husband. Her husband is a drunkard and impotent man. So far as his economic condition was good, she tolerated him. But later on, it became very hard for her to punt up all the affairs. After all she is a human being and has all the passions a woman could have. There are the demands of body too. So she abandons her husband and goes to Sakharam. It is because of her voluptuous body that she suffers mostly in the play.

There is a strong contrast in the characters of Laxmi and Champa. Laxmi is obedient, always ready to tolerate Sakharam's torture. Sakharam never gets her consent in the matter of sex. Whether she feels to have sex with him or not she has to co-operate with Sakharam in sexual matter. She is contracted for that. On the other hand Champa is moody woman. She plays no heed to Sakharam, unless she is drunk. She probably, tries to forget that she is involved in an immoral act. Laxmi is a pious woman, she inwardly considers Sakharam her husband. She puts on Manglasutra in the name of Sakharam. When she is driven out by her nephew, she falls on the legs of Sakharam and put up with his cruel beating. While Champa has no respect for Sakharam, she doesn't respond to Sakharam, unless she is not drunk. Sakharam is afraid of Champa. She is even heartless to beat her husband ruthlessly. But Champa's character can only bring forth how gravely a woman is exploited in man-made society. Because she is not a traditional woman. Without a single minute's consideration, she abandons her husband. Unlike Laxmi, she is obedient and dependent, but she is independent and self-respecting woman, she does not allow a man to use her body simply because he is her husband or patron. She is also womanly for she cooks and serves the home of Sakharam. She is not even that impious woman. Because her first reaction to Sakharam's sexual demand is,

"I'm not that kind of woman.
You'd better behave yourself.
Don't upset me. I don't like that sort
Of thing.....all that man-woman stuff."
(Tendulkar, *Five Plays* 162)

But soon she submits him though she is fully drunk.

It is really interesting to see how she could fall in love with Dawood. Some discuss that Sakharan becomes impotent after Laxmi's return. But There is no ground to believe this. For this reason she could have gone to Dawood and not put up with Sakharan. Moreover she is never conscious whenever there is sexual intercourse. Therefore, it would be wrong to suspect her affair with Dawood. We can only think that it is a plot devised to take the play in correct direction.

The same is the case with Kamla and Sarita in play, *Kamala*. The Oppression and suppression of the women is brought to the front in the play with the simple questions of illiterate village women Kamala. Sarita is an Educated and self assured woman, while Kamala is an illiterate and innocent woman. It is Kamala who realizes Sarita's position in family and society. Kamala's simple question "how much did the owner pay, for you?" shakes the very existence of Sarita. And this is the question that makes her realize her position equal to Kamala. Kamala is bought for Rs.250 She Considers that even Sarita is bought by her owner. Sarita is a housewife unlike Rama, and is childless. Her husband Jaishngh Jadhav bought her from the market of Madhya Pradesh. He Bring her to his home. In fact he wants to present her press conference to show that such things still occur in modern India. But the play is concerned more with her stay in Jaishngh Jadhav's house. Because the play is based on the real incident, it shows the intensity of woman's exploitation in India. Ashwin Sarin, the Indian Express reporter, actually bought a woman to expose the brutal humiliation of women folk. The act of Sarin in just a take off point for Tendulkar. Through this Tendulkar Served the dual purposes, one to expose brutal flesh market still existing in Indian and other the conditions of housewives are different than the sold out women. Tendulkar finds it as Chance to explore the issues. The play is structured around three long conversation that take place between Kamala and Sarita, Jadhav and Sarita's uncle, the newspaper owner-editor and third between Sarita and her uncle The conversation between Kamala and Sarita creates realization in the Sarita. It is the point of change. She shows this realization to her uncle. And the peak of her realization can be found in the discussion of Sarita and Jaishngh.

Sarita unfamiliar with her potions is made familiar by illiterate, rural girl Kamala. One can understand from the conversation of Kamala that she is one step ahead in the understanding of man-woman relations. Her Innocent speeches make sarita feel badly of her own condition in the house.

"Memsahib, Can I say something if won't
Upset you? The owner has bought you
and me. He's shelled out big money for
two women, no ?..... We must stay
together here, like two sisters.
(Tendulkar Five Plays 35)

Simone De Beauvoir, an avowedly feminist critic, observes the position of woman and dual nature of man in the following manner: "Women have gained only what men have been willing to grant, They have taken nothing, they have only received." (Simon De Beauvoir 19)

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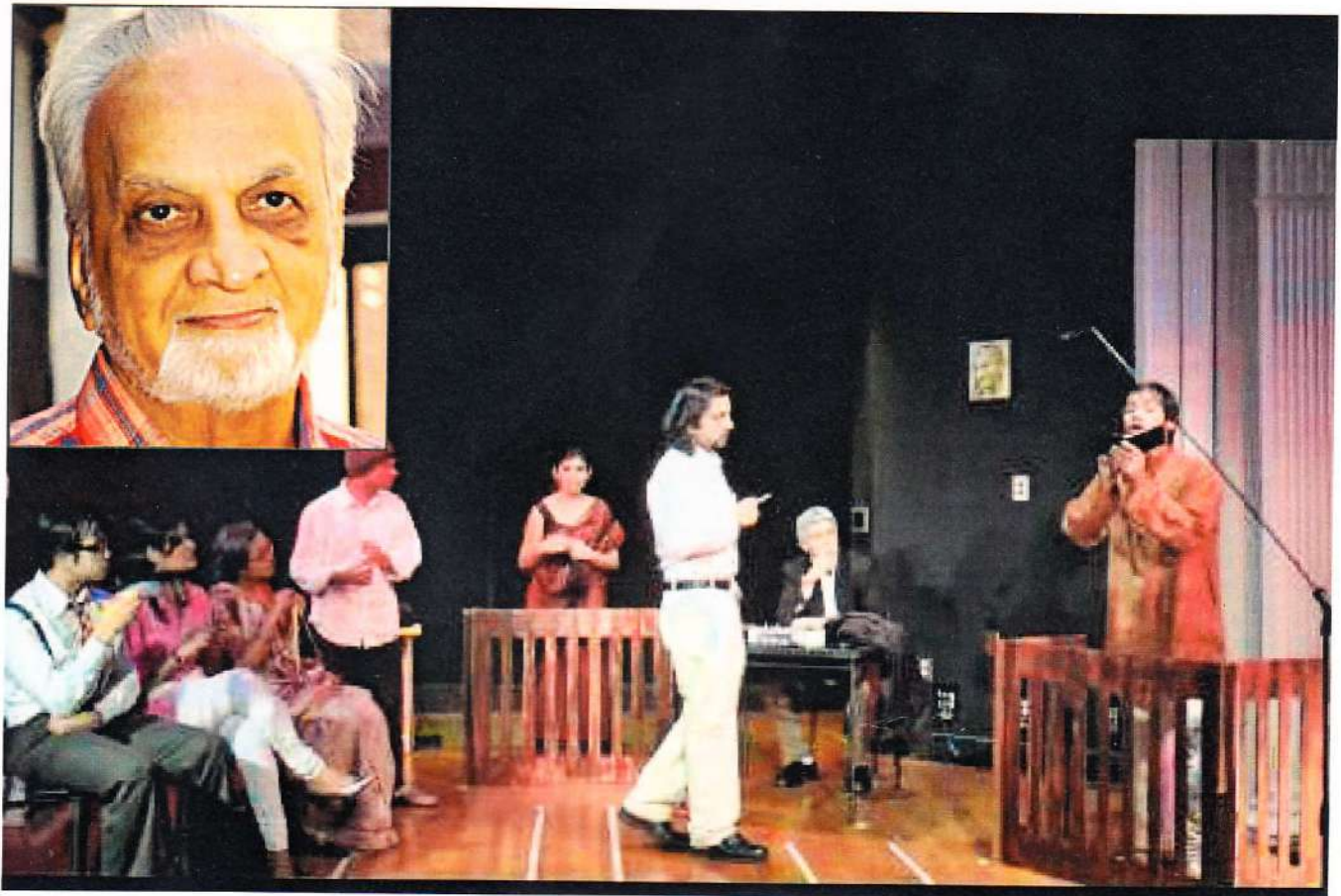
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CONTENTS

Sr. No	Titles And Authors	Page No
1	Financial Inclusion In Dhemaji District Of Assam: An Analytical Approach <i>Arup Das</i>	1
2	“लोकशाही प्रक्रिया व पंचायतराज : नांदेड जिल्ह्यातील ग्रामपंचायतीचा चिकित्सक अभ्यास २०००-२०१०” गड्डमवाड संजय विश्वनाथ	7
3	Dramatic Elements In Tendulkar's Silence! The Court Is In Session <i>Ingole Kailash M</i>	10
4	Effects Of Store Brand On Customer Loyaltycase Study: Refah Chain Store <i>Mehrdad Asghari And S.Harish Babu</i>	15
5	Cng Based Mobility System And Socio-Technical Challenges In India <i>Mukesh Lakum</i>	24

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS IN TENDULKAR'S SILENCE! THE COURT IS IN SESSION



INGOLE KAILASH M.
N. C. Law College, Nanded.

Abstract:

An attempt is made to unfold the dramatic elements employed by Vijay Tendulkar's in his drama Silence! The Court is in Session so as to evaluate to what extent these elements have helped the playwright to present his plot effectively.

KEY WORDS:

Dramatic Elements, plot effectively, society, demonstrate.

INTRODUCTION

THEMES

The main theme of the play is the exploitation of helpless woman at the hands of modern, civilized but orthodox society. The play dramatizes the conflict between individual and the society, in which individual is ruthlessly crushed by the society. The rules and norms are more important for the society than the individual. It also exposes the sexual politics in patriarchal norms of family and gender relations. Maya Pandit succinctly remarks in this connection: "Benare's defiance of the male domination and her subsequent trial explode the myth of motherhood as a sacred phenomenon and demonstrate how the biological phenomenon is deliberately glorified in order to obtain control over women's sexuality" (67). The play narrates the story of a carefree and self-asserted modern woman, who breaches the conventional bond of morality by keeping physical relations before marriage. Consequently she has to beg for the legitimacy of her child. It is noteworthy to quote here Asha.S.Kanwar, who says: "Silence! The Court is in Session is a social satire on male dominated society in which a woman can neither get sympathetic response nor win a man to give legitimacy to her child" (13). Freedom of any sort is not allowed and tolerated for women in male dominated societies. Leela Benare is one of the examples, there are thousand others, who have and are meeting such dreadful situations every day. In a patriarchal society, there is nothing like emotions and sentiments. But as in the words of Benare, "Body is everything" (Five Plays 118).

This shows that the conventional, patriarchal society can never offer sexual freedom to women. At the same time the play throws light on the malignant characters like Ponshe, Karnik, Sukhatme and Mrs. Kashikar, that are prevalent in the society. Benare's personal life is dragged into open and condemned her love affair with professor Damle. Mrs. Kashikar is the living example of those women who take pride in derogating her own sex.

Apart from this, the play raises several questions of love, sex, and moral values that are prevalent in the society. Moreover the present play is one of those great plays that bring out new dimensions to each reading.

PLOT:

The play has expertly structured plot. It is single and unified one. The action follows a logical sequence from the beginning to the end, except some of the interruptions like pan spitting contest, and Mr. Kashikar's usual toilet programmes. Because it is a modern play, so there are no scenes but only acts. And these three acts are well organized and expertly related to each other. It is presented like a detective play, as it causally unfolds the events in the life of Miss. Benare. Every new detail either from Rokde, Ponshe or Mr. Kashikar, concerning to Benare is shocking. The play is so well structured that the denouement unravels itself as reversal.

SETTING

The setting of the play is village. It opens and ends in a hall, where the trial was to be performed. The hall is a perfect place for mock law court. It is an empty hall with two doors, one to enter by, and one to go to an adjoining room. Within the hall are a built-in platform, one or two old wooden chairs, an old box, a stool. A clock, out of order, on the wall. Some worn-out portraits of national leaders. And a picture of Lord Ganesha. An ideal surrounding for a mock-trial.

The atmosphere of the play is the mixture of levity and seriousness, with occasional patches of comic relief. Till Rokde's evidence, the atmosphere is full of jokes, fun and hilarity. But with Rokde's evidence levity gives place to seriousness. And this serious and tense atmosphere is carried to the end. Though there are some innocent comments by Mr. Samant that gives comic relief to the characters as well as to the audience.

DICTION|LANGUAGE

The language that is used in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, is the vernacular used by the common people in the society. "The style that Tendulkar uses in this play are demotic modeled on the language, rhythms and associations of ordinary speech" (Abrams 166). At times he uses Sanskrit slogans to heighten the importance of the situation. For example lines like: "Janani Janambhumishcha Svargadapi gariyasi", and "Na jeevan jeevanamarhati" (Five Plays 79, 116). The former means Mother and Mother land both are even higher than heaven. While latter means life is not worthy of life. "The dialogues in the

play are characterized by a certain idiosyncratic use of syntax. Most of the utterances are short and there are abundant pauses, marked by numerous dots and dashes. However, whenever serious topics are discussed, the dialogues pick up a faster rhythm and the sentences certain depth and fullness" (Dharan 63). About Tendulkar's dialogue writing, there are no two opinions. His characters are the output of his minute observation of the society. Every detail matters lot to him. It is because of this that his characters are not types but the living and moving persons in the society.

Silence and pauses form an important element in Tendulkar's plays. It means and speaks a lot in a play. "For the first time Tendulkar attempted to show that an unspoken meaning lay beyond the spoken word. People loved teasing us in those days, saying your Tendulkar writes only half sentences. But these half sentences had the power to create something quite tremendous. That is why i feel that the acting idiom i was exploring found its perfect math in Tendulkar's writing" (Ten Ani Amhi 14). However he has written this play in a naturalistic manner. The language is bold and explicit.

PLAY-WITHIN-THE PLAY/MOCK-TRIAL

The mock-trial in this play is a systematized plan or game to trap Ms. Benare. The mock-trial forms the basis of the play. As all important activities like accusation and judgment occur in this mock-trial which almost functions like a play-within-the play. The real performance was supposed to have been Mock Law Court. But before the real performance starts, the mock-trial has been intentionally organized to ridicule Ms. Benare. It is the mock-trial that causes the terminal 'reversal' in the play. "Benare, who has all been baiting her male counterparts, ends up being the game ruthlessly hunted and baited by them all. This element of reversal gives the play its unique dramatic significance" (Dharan 61). The mock-trial exposes the sadist attitude of the characters like Rokde, Ponkshe, Karnik and Mr., Mrs. Kashikar. The jealousy and wrath that heaped up all these years, against the libertine character of Ms. Benare is thus relieved through this play-within-the play. All the characters seemed to have ganged up against Benare. As the charge is leveled against her, the mock-trial does not remain mock, but becomes real, and discusses a real life event.

Characterization

As it is earlier discussed that Tendulkar writes in a naturalistic manner. His characters never seem to be unreal and romanticized. "They are the first and foremost human beings of flesh and blood who draw their features from the widest range of observed examples" (Gokhale 32). His characters live out the roles as a living and real persons and not as a card board character or the mouthpiece of the playwright.

Leela Benare, the most original of Tendulkar's character, is drawn with greatest care and complete attention. She is a woman, full of life, who always likes to enjoy every bit of life. Her feeling for life is reflected in the sentence, "We should laugh, we should play, we should sing, if we can and if they let us, we should dance too" (Five Plays 61). Such an innocent character is made to humiliate and suffer, by the other vicious characters in the play. The reason behind her humiliation and exploitation is her rebellious nature. She openly opposes and rejects the conventional values of the orthodox society. Beyond doubt she has committed mistakes or one may call them sins, but still the question remains, "was she all alone in that crime? If not, then why she alone to be suffered and punished? The play raises such many questions, which probably cannot be answered. One such heart-rending question Benare raises in her soliloquy, "I was in love with my mother's brother. But in our strict house, in the prime of my unfolding youth, he was the one who came close to me. How was I to know that if you felt like breaking yourself into bits and melting into one with someone, If you felt that just being with him gave a whole meaning to life – and if he was your uncle, was it a sin?" However, one may observe and praise Tendulkar's art in combining rebellious and feminine qualities in Benare. Her feminine nature can be seen in an event where she objects Ponkshe not to call Prof. Damle, a scoundrel. This type of attitude can be expected from woman only.

In the light of the protagonist Leela Benare, all other characters seem vague and unimportant. Because they only assist in the final tragedy of Benare. They are mere witnesses who speak about Benare. Even the playwright gives very little attention in delineating theses portraits. Their characters can be summed up in a single line that they all are malicious, spiteful, facade and sadist. Their spiteful nature is seen not only attacking Benare, but among themselves also they are not united. They look down upon to one another. It would be unjust here to ignore Mrs. Kashikar's character. Mrs. Kashikar is the truest picture of middle-aged, married Indian housewives. She is one of the conventional, orthodox and surrendered Indian housewives. She is the example of 'thy is your enemy'. Mrs. Kashikar upholds the moral values prevalent in the society. She strongly believes that women must follow some limitations in life. She reflects her ideology through sentence, "should there be no limit to how freely a woman can behave with a man. An unmarried woman? No matter how well she knows him?" (Five Plays 100). Instead of being sympathetic to the person of her own sex, she is rude and cruel with Ms. Benare. "Her collusion in the attack of Benare demonstrates how women internalize the dominance of men over themselves as a natural phenomenon and turn against other transgressing women as the 'other'" (Pandit 68). Another important character is Prof. Damle who is

physically absent in the play.

MONOLOGUE:

The monologue at the end of the play, has become very famous in the contemporary Marathi theatre. Tendulkar was all against such monologue, because he believed that silence is more influential than the words. But due to his director's constant pursuance, he had to insert the final statement from Benare. The monologue allows Ms. Benare to break the silence that was imposed on her. It is an outlet to her suppressed feelings. She is accused of the crime of infanticide under section no.302 of Indian penal code. All her attempts to protest are callously drowned in Kashikar the mock judge's imposition of "Silence!" However she breaks this 'silence' at the end of the play, when she burst forth into a long and brilliant monologue, "which brings out in most eloquent terms, her love of life, focusing with astonishing brilliance on her betrayal at the hands of Prof.Damle, and the consequent torture at the hands of her fellow characters" (Dharan 61).

From the feminist point of view, the monologue is of greatest importance for it unfolds the inner psychic response of the accused to the tormentation and humiliation meted out at the hands of her fellow colleagues. Through soliloquy, Benare relates her heart-rending suffering in so called modern and sophisticated society. In a male-dominated middle class urban societies woman is not considered as a human being with emotions and feelings, but she is taken as a 'body', a thing for the pleasure of men, used and thrown as if a use-and-throw object. Her agonizing feelings can be seen through sentence: "I offered my body on the altar of my worship. And my intellectual God took the offering and went his way. He was a man for whom everything was of the body! That's all! Again, the body! This body is a traitor! I despise this body—and love it" (Five Plays 118).

COMIC RELIEF

In the admixture of tense and comic atmosphere of the play, Tendulkar brilliantly adds comic patches at the appropriate places. The most famous comic relief is provided in the pan spitting contest. This occurs instantly after the serious and grave charge that is labelled against Benare, of infanticide. When Benare is dumbfounded after the accusation of infanticide, the pan spitting contest helps her to regain her composure for a little while. Apart from this there are numerous comments from Samant, Mrs. Kashikar to laugh at. The tug-of-war between Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar is also quite amusing. One such example from the text is:

"Mrs: Kashikar: shall I be the accused? Mr. Kashikar: No, the minute there's half a chance to butt in, you're right there, pushing yourself forward. Mrs. Kashikar: Enough. So I won't be the accused. I hope that pleases you" (Five Plays 72).

SONG

Song is the most representative art of one's culture, tradition, and life.

Therefore its representation in literature is mandatory. However Tendulkar's writing is the outcome of his observation of the society, hence the songs and poems that are prevalent in the society, are ought to be the part of his writing. There are four small songs in this play. All are sung by Ms. Leela Benare. All these four songs are meaningful, symbolic, and of great dramatic significance. For example the first song that Benare sings in the opening scene:

"Oh, I've got a sweet heart. Who carries all my books, He plays in my doll house, and says he likes my looks. I'll tell you a secret. He wants to marry me. But mummy says, I'm too little to have such thoughts as these" (Five Plays 58-59)

The song is too meaningful as it tells us about Benare first love affair with her maternal uncle. She was deeply in love with her uncle, but she could not marry him. Because he turn away from his responsibilities. Moreover, her own mother opposed to this marriage.

The second song that makes her realizes that there is nothing in the world that she can own, or call her own.

The grass is green,
The rose is red,
This book is mine
Till I am dead!
The third song is a poem by Shirish Pai:
Our feet tread upon unknown
And dangerous pathways evermore,

And the wound that's born to bleed

Bleeds on for ever, faithfully.
There is a battle sometimes, where
Defeat is destined as the end
-----spend----- (Five Plays 62-63)

The poem by Pai is more significant as it presents the absurdist view of life. Life is meaningless, it is destined to be defeated. The last song is even more symbolical, in it Benare narrates her whole story in just four lines:

The parrot to the sparrow said.
'why, oh why are your eyes so red?
Oh, my dear friend, what shall i say?
Someone has stolen my nest away. (Five Plays 74)

In this song 'parrot' is symbolic to Samant, and 'nest' to the chastity of Benare.

Apart from the techniques and devices discussed earlier there are other devices which may not deserve such detail study, but without whose mention this chapter cannot be concluded. The first such important device is symbolism, which is abundant throughout the play. The playwright makes ample use of sarcastic and paradoxical words that contribute to the symbolism in the play. Besides this, the use of irony, satire, pathos and mock elements, are praiseworthy. In short, Tendulkar's genius as a playwright lies in the subtleties of his writing skill. He uses these aforementioned devices with a view to criticize the society. He excels in his both roles as a playwright and as a social reformer.

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8



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INDEX

S. No.	Subject	Author	Page No.
1.	Vision For Empowerment Of Women	Dr. L. J. Waghela	1-6
2.	Soyinka as a Dramatist	Dr. Kailash Ingole	7-8
3.	Marketing	Dr. Pankaj S. Vishwakarma	9-13
4.	इक्वीसवी सदी के उपन्यासों में सामाजिक चेतना	प्रो. डॉ. शंकर बुंदेले	14-19
5.	मराठी से हिंदी अनुवाद की समस्याएँ	डॉ. संजय धोटे	20-27
6.	सूर का दर्शन	शैलेंद्र दुबे	28-30
7.	तुलनात्मक अनुसंधान कार्य	प्रा. चंदन विश्वकर्मा	31-32
8.	हिंदी कविता में गांधीजी का अहिंसा धर्म	प्रा. डॉ. रवीन्द्रकुमार शिरसाट	33-37
9.	आवारा मसीहा और विष्णु प्रभाकर	प्रा. डॉ. संतोषकुमार गाजले	38-41
10.	शास्त्रीय संगीत शिक्षण पद्धती कैसी चाहिए ?	प्रा. डॉ. राजेंद्र देशमुख	42-45
11.	स्त्री दायमता की मनोभाषिकी	किशोर गिरडकर	46-51
12.	डॉ. राजकुमार वर्मा के काव्य में सौंदर्य चेतना	डॉ. ज्योति मंत्री	52-55
13.	स्त्री भ्रूणहत्या एक राष्ट्रीय समस्या	डॉ. रजनी मामीडवार (कंचलवार)	56-58
14.	आर्थिक विकासाच्या वाटचालीत ई-कॉमर्सचे योगदान	प्रा. राजेंद्र एम. तातेड	59-62
15.	यवतमाळ ग्रामीण भागातील माध्यमिक विद्यालयातील विद्यार्थ्यांच्या गळतीच्या कारणांचा शोध व उपाययोजना - एक अभ्यास	डॉ. स्मिता गवई	63-67
16.	पुरोगामी विचारसरणीचा ग्रंथ म्हणून आज्ञापत्राचे स्थान	प्रा. मोरेश्वर वाकडे	68-69
17.	ग्रामीण भागातील महाविद्यालयीन विद्यार्थ्यांचे आरोग्य शिक्षण	प्रा. एस. बी. चोरडीया	70-72
18.	सोयाबीन पिकाच्या उत्पादकतेचे भौगोलिक विश्लेषण : विशेष संदर्भ नांदेड जिल्हा	डॉ. एस. एन. कळसकर	73-76
19.	सार्क संघटनेचे स्वरूप व रचना एक राजकीय अध्ययन	स्वामी विरभद्र गुरप्पा	77-82
20.	पालि साहित्यात जातीवादाचे खंडण	सहा. प्रा. बी. एस. मानवटकर	83-85

Soyinka as a Dramatist

Dr. Ingole kailash

Asst. prof. Rajiv Gandhi mahavidyalaya

Mudkhed Tq. Nanded, Dist. Nanded

Anglican upbringing, direct experience of the theatre, influence of Western writers, Yoruba God of iron (ogun), communal rites, rituals and individual disposition to life, have shape a Soyinka's concept of play writing. It is because of this varied and first-hand experience that we notice novelty and innovations in his plays. He has used variety of dramatic style's for his plots. Tradition is his one of the con-current themes along with this he covers large variety of themes like: the clash between modernity and traditionalism, power-politics, sensuality, corruption, hypocrisy and sadism inherent in human psyche. He always returned to the Yoruba roots for the themes of his plays. His every new play deals with new and different tradition of the Nigerian society. Soyinka employs Western theatrical devices to narrate this tradition. It was a lyrical blend of Western experimentalism and African folk tradition.

Except 'The Lion and The Jewel' all other plays that have been analyzed in this study are tragedies 'The Lion and the Jewel' presents the clash between modernity and tradition. And tradition finally wins over the modernity. Modernity is represented by Lakunle while Baroka represent tradition. This playful comedy touches upon various other themes like love, sex, power-politics and cunningness. The playwright divides this simple plot into three sections: morning, noon and night. The manipulation of mimes are done to comment on the past actions in a musical way.

Msiska thinks that, "Tragedy is Soyinka's primary love, for it offers him a language in which he is able to fuse imperceptibly his interest in the metaphysical and mythological with his boarder political concerns. Yet, even here one notices that his approach ranges from the purity of Aristotelians paradigm to that of traditional African modes of tragic (153). His tragedies closely follow the Aristotelian concept of tragedy. However there is a controversy regarding the tragic and comic modes of his two plays: *The Strong Breed and Madmen* and *The Specialist* Soyinka shows tremendous alertness in the maintenance of the three unities of time, place and action. Almost in all the tragedies, Soyinka's choice of the hero is very careful as his suffering leads the audience to the cathartic effects.

Soyinka's characters are types rather than the individuals, they change with course of the action. The duality of the characters is the characteristic feature of his characterization. The complexity of the characters might be the cause of realistic nature and life-like presentation of the situation in the plays. The close and detail study of his characters bring to our notice that he

was the greatest observers of men and manners in the society. Some of the characters like Lakunle, Baroka, Eman, Blind Begger and Igweze enjoy international reputation.

Soyinka uses easy and accessible English language for his plays. The probable reason behind this was that English was spoken and understood by most of the Nigerians in the contemporary period. Though the plays are written in English, the indigenusness is retained with the frequent use of Yoruba proverbs and songs in them. The musicality is the another features of Soyinka that brings him close to Yoruba culture and tradition. The drumming, dancing and singing are unavoidable parts of Yoruba life and culture. A Yoruba society cannot be imagined without the presence of dance and song. This inevitable element of Yoruba life is introduced by Soyinka time and again or wherever it is required in his plays. His plays are replete with song, dance, mime and pantomime.

Soyinka's concern for his society and the welfare of his people is exhibited in almost all of his plays. He lashes out the weaknesses of African past and the present society. He compels his audience to think of the fossilized and rotten traditions and attempts to make a better society. He can be seen as anti-religion, anti-government and anti-establishment in his pursuit of a civilized and ideal society. The other elements like the play-within-the play, reversal, peripeteia, comic relief, Deu-ex. Machina are noticeable in the plays of Wole Soyinka.

Thus, Soyinka mixes African traditional elements with Western form and style. By exploiting the themes from Yoruba cosmology, the playwright intends to touch the sense and sentiments of his audience.

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लोकास्था

4

**INTERNATIONAL
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EDUCATION**



वर्ष ३ रे

अंक ११

फेब्रुवारी-२०१८

लोकास्था

वर्ष ३ रे

अंक ९९

फेब्रुवारी-२०१४

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arvinda_khedkar@rediffmail.com

Hypotheses : An Essential Component in Research

Shri. Bhosle P. E. ०३

Exhibition of Power in Tendulkar's Kanyadan

Dr. Ingole Kailash M. १२

Gandhian Contribution to Economic Thought

Mahendrakumar M. Bembalge १६

नांदेड शहरातील बालकामगारांच्या समस्यांचा अभ्यास

प्रा. जाधव एस.व्ही. २१

कुपोषणग्रस्त बालकांच्या समस्या : समाजशास्त्रीय अध्ययन

मनिषा रामचंद्र वानखेडे २४

नांदेड शहरातील कायम विनाअनुदानित शिक्षणशास्त्र महाविद्यालयातील

ग्रंथपालांना ग्रंथपालन व्यवसायात येणाऱ्या समस्या

देवकरे संजीवकुमार रामराव २७

डिजिटल ग्रंथालय संकल्पना व आवश्यकता

जोशी अनुराधा अशोकराव ३१

भारताचा विदेशी व्यापार : एक दृष्टिक्षेप प्रा. मारोती कदम

३३

दशावतार , भारुड ,डोंबारी व कोल्हाट्याचा नाच या लोककला प्रकाराचा

तमाशा लोकरंगभूमीवर पडलेला प्रभाव

प्रा.डॉ.संजीवकुमार पांचाळ ३९

नांदेड शहरातील माध्यमिक शाळेतील इयत्ता ९ वी च्या वर्गातील विद्यार्थ्यांच्या

हिंदी भाषा लेखनातील चुकांचा अभ्यास करणे व त्यावर उपाय सुचविणे

प्रा. स्वामी प्रेमा म्हादया ४२

गांधीवादी तत्वज्ञान आणि भारतीय लोकशाहीची वर्तमानस्थिती

प्रा. बी. आर. भोसले ४६

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Exhibition of Power in Tendulkar's Kanyadan

Dr. Ingole Kailash M.

Tendulkar's major plays deal with the theme of power and violence. Samik Bandyopadhyay in his introduction observes, "Tendulkar studies power and violence in the spaces institutionally defined the specificities more often than not serving to camouflage the violence in the exercise of power. The institutions that are exposed with their power mechanism include media (*Kamala*), performance (*Silence! is in Session*), The family (*The Vultures*), the state (*Ghshiram Kotwal* and *Encounter in Umbugland*), society and morality (*Kanyadan*) and sexual mores (*Sakaharam Binder* and *A Friend's Story*)." (XIII) As institutions come to embody power, power assumes an institutional body, its practice defined and determined within the parameters of particular institution. Samik Bandyopadhyay observes further Tendulkar's concern with the power.

**"Over the years he has become more
And more concerned with the machination
of power in its several interfaces."(1)**

Ever since, man became, fearful of nature, he tried to overpower her, by this or that way. In this effort of domination man is dehumanized to a great extent. The alienation proliferated within the society and brought about various divisions in it. The strong urge to be powerful made some few dominating over many less powerful. The less powerful people give away their power by accepting the hierarchy and ideologies, religious and secular. Therefore, there is always a struggle of lower rungs of people to take back the power and right from the upper rungs of peoples. Steiner points out that "people of higher rungs get much more recognition than those of lower rungs in the hierarchies of the society. In this rat race, some go up and some go down," {125-140}. It is a psychological fact that a human child, like its ancestors, feels powerless, as it becomes conscious of its identity. Family forms the basic training ground where children are trained from the beginning in these roles. In a typical family, father plays the persecutor, mother plays

the rescuer and children play the victim. In *Kanyadan*, Nath, an ideal socialist Brahmin, play the role of persecutor, and Jyoti, his daughter the rescuer, while Arun plays the victim in the beginning, and finally Arun becomes persecutor and Nath and Jyoti the victims. *Kanyadan*, unlike *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Vultures*, *Sakharam Binder* and *Kamala*, demonstrates male dominant politics. It is the recently translated and published play. The play shows how the ideal people fail to achieve their cherished aims and create new problems. As it is discussed earlier, in an idealized family, the figure of father is persecutor and children are the victims. The children of these ideal people often become victims of their experiments and ideals. The play also portrays how these ideals cripple their minds, and their thinking and their perception of reality. Jyoti the central figure of the play is very much impressed by her father's casteless societies philosophy. She likes to implement her father's ideals. Under this impact she unconsciously falls in love with a dalit boy Arun Athavale. Thus, she risks her marital life. In the beginning she is dominated by her father and later by her husband. Power comes into being with the recognition of male idealist values that force a woman to follow a particular path. In the beginning, under the influence of Nath, she shows the openness of her mind; and later with Arun, she accepts the cruel, narrow ways of life.

At the very outset of the play, Nath Devlikar reveals his socialistic character. Because of his moralizing tone his daughter Jyoti says, "Bhai the way you talk, it's as if you have been appointed for the task of reminding people of their duties. His son Jayaprakash calls him "a social repairer" Nath considers the call of the nation far greater than the call of his wife. In such an atmosphere the play is set. Nath being a social preacher had impressed all his family by his ideology. His wife Seva was also socialist, fighting for the rights of dalit people. Jyoti, their daughter, directly or indirectly, influenced by her parents worked the broad ideologies. She falls in love with a dalit poet called Arun Athavale, to whom she met at socialist study group. Nath is very happy with her decision to marry Arun. But Seva and Jayaprakash are a little worried, because of the non sensical behavior of Arun. Seva even forewarns Jyoti about it.

**"Your life is patterned in a certain manner.
You have brought up in a specific culture
To erase or to change all this overnight is
Not just possible. He is different in every way.
You may not be able to handle it. (Kanyadan 13)**

Jyoti neglects her mother's warning and stands firm with her decision to marry Arun. When she takes Arun her home, Arun because of imposed inferiority feels uncomfortable in a Brahmin house. So he requests Jyoti to be with him all the time. When Jyoti asks him to accompany her to kitchen, the male chauvinist arouses in him. He says, "Men who sit and chat in kitchen are pansies." Jyoti is shocked, but she ignores it. When Jyoti cuts joke at his view point he says that he will beat his wife, he feels challenged, and immediately twists her hand. Arun himself had given a chance to Jyoti to see a male in him. But out of awash to do something different she ignores it. Arun, again, reveals his character and upbringing, when he is introduced to Seva and Jayaprakash. He repeatedly makes Seva and Jayaprakash feel awkward by his talk. He tells Seva that he can earn good money by brewing illicit liquor. He further says that it is a good business for a man and his wife. Even children can be employed to fetch pan and cigar. This was an example for Jyoti to understand the nature of Arun. But because of her father's socialist idealism, she becomes blind to all this. When Nath is reported about the rude behavior of Arun, he finds it as an outcome of cruel treatment that he and his family received from the upper classes. He is not ready to call Arun inhuman. But he expresses his great joy over realizing his ideal of breaking the caste barriers through the marriage of Jyoti and Arun. In this way, Jyoti gets her father's moral support in marrying Arun.

Jyoti works and earns, while Arun spends it. He drinks and beats her mercilessly. When it becomes unbearable to her, she leaves Arun and returns to parents' house. Nath takes this cruel behavior of Arun as his despair due to the lack of residence. So, he offers a room to him in his house. When Jyoti is not ready to tolerate Arun any longer, he comes to apologize to Jyoti and her family members. At this time he accepts his barbarism and does not hide anything from them. Nath intervenes and asks Jyoti to go with Arun.

He feels proud of his daughter to accept his decision and feels proud of his idealism.

Then, Arun exploits Nath by asking him to talk over his autobiography. Nath is unable to bear now, because it was against his ideals. But he had no option, because he fears that if he would not appreciate Arun's book in his speech, Arun would beat Jyoti mercilessly.

At last, Jyoti is forced to accept Arun's culture. She tells Nath how he is wrong and Arun is correct in the end. In this way, she plays the rescuer while Arun the victim. His role prevents her from perceiving the reality. Her rescuing at, first, makes Arun behave more helplessly and then encourages his feelings of inferiority. Consequently, he shifts to the role of persecutor in order to feel powerful and beats Jyoti mercilessly. Jyoti gets back to the role of victim. Nath is as good as Ghasiram in making his daughter a scape-goat in his experiment. In the earlier period, it is Nath who dominated Jyoti with his powerful socialist idealism, and in the later period, it is Arun who exploited her with male dominant philosophy.

The play '*Kanyadan*' is controversial in nature. It arouses the eyebrows of many conservative people of the time. It was severely criticized as an anti-Dalit play. But it is the play that got Tendulkar 'Sarswati Samman' Tendulkar, in his speech of this occasion, says:

"You are honoring me with Sarswati 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 this honor and insult. As a creator I respect both the verdicts." (Sarswati Samman Acceptance Speech)

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NEW INTERNATIONAL
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CONTENTS

Vol-I, Issue- XII March 2014

Sr. No.	Title & Name of the Author(s)	Page No.
1	अमेरीकेचा वाढता राजकिय - लष्करी दहशतवाद डॉ. सुरेन्द्र भिमराव कांबळे	1
2	संत सखाराम महाराज संस्थान, लोणी जिल्हा वाशिम यांचे शैक्षणिक व सामाजिक योगदान - एक दृष्टिक्षेप श्री. धनंजय वसंतराव ठाकरे	6
3	यशवंतरावांची प्रशासकीय कार्यपद्धती प्रा. डॉ. श्याम सिरसाठ / प्रा. कालिदास फड	9
4	Major Themes in Tendulkar's Plays Dr. Ingole kailash m	13
5	A study of choking agents as a chemical weapons. Dr. S. P. Dhake	24
6	राष्ट्रीय चळवळीत शेतकऱ्यांचा सहभाग आणि काँग्रेसचे धोरण १९२१-३९ प्रा. श्रीमती वैशाली बागूल	28
7	Mental Health and Job Satisfaction among Executives Dr. Ravindranath K. Murthy	33
8	इ. ५ वीच्या शिक्षकांना मातृभाषा मराठी बालभारती पाठ्यपुस्तकातील पर्यावरण रक्षण गाभाषटक विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये रुजवितांना येणाऱ्या अडचणींचा अभ्यास प्रा. डॉ. सौ. पु. पा. जी. पाटील	39
9	Caste and Communitites in Andhra Pradesh : The study of the Goudas P. Muthyam	45
10	History of Physical Education in India: From Ancient to Post-Independence Period Dr. Venkateshwar Rao Telluri / Nemmadi Ravi Kumar	52
11	Telangana : A story of Oppressed Region Mr. Vijay Kumar Kothi	60



Major Themes in Tendulkar's Plays

Dr. Ingole kailash m

Asst. prof.

Rajiv Gandhi mahavidyalaya

Mudkhed Dist. Nanded

The common themes in Tendulkar's plays are violence, sex, power, exploitation of women and the weaker section of the society. Dealing with these themes he does not fail to portray hypocrisy greed sadism, masochism and selfishness inherent in man. His dramas highlight the complexity of human relationship and contain a latent critique of modern Indian society. To quote N.S. Dharan. "Tendulkar's creative genius sharpened by his keen observation and seasoned by his journalistic experience has found explosive expression in his powerful plays which sensitize the reader – audience to the domestic socio – political tensions in Indian urban milieu" (93). The realism with which Tendulkar writes, leads him to show follies and lackonas of his characters. His characters mostly belong to urban middle class Indian society. Therefore, in his dramas we get a lively and realistic picture, of the problems, predicament, moralities and values of this section of the society. Even the haphazard study of Tendulkar's plays bring to our notice the degenerated and morally corrupted state of contemporary period. The easy-go-lucky life, short-cut ways to success, rat-race of prosperity, negligence of duty and morality characterize modern life. Due to this kind of living style of middle class Indian society, they generally meet with frustration and defeat in their lives. And defeat and frustration lead them to be selfish, emotionless, sadist and at times brutal.

'*Silence! The Court is in Session*' upheld the evils of modern and so called civilized society. The implicit and explicit male ideology, and the sadist behaviour towards women exploitation is brought out in the play. The patriarchal social setup cannot endure any sort of liberties for women. She is expected to emote the role assigned to her by the society. In other case the society may start in expedition against her. Leela Benare's freedom is not tolerated by her male and female colleagues. Therefore she is made an object of ridicule and insult. Her love-affairs are disclosed publically. While portraying the predicament of Benare, Tendulkar satirizes hypocrisy, sadism and selfishness of the character. '*Ghashiram Kotwal*' narrates a contemporary situation in Indian politics. With the help of historical episode, Tendulkar attacks corrupt and mean strategies of power – politics. The play brings forth that all evil activities like violence, sex, greed, treachery and brutality are at the behest of corrupt power – politics. Tendulkar, through this play has shown that politics is a very dirty game in which one can use one's daughter and wives for seeking power. So also the powerful person can be senseless and emotionless to exploit poor, and helpless. The end of such power politics is sure destruction.

'Kamala' comes up with the issue of gender discrimination. Sarita's consciousness of being oppressed and exploited is arisen by Kamala. For the first time she is made aware that she is not equal and co-sharer of a family, but a slave to her master husband in the house. She considers herself not better than Kamala, sold and bought for the pleasure of men. She plans to revolt against her husband, but with womanly sensibility defers her plan. The play ends with an optimistic note that the day will come when Sarita will be master of herself. 'Sakharam Binder' is about a misbegotten and crooked character. The characters like Sakharam and Champa establish a fact that the early experiences are responsible for shaping good or bad character of a man. The play is full of violence and sexual scenes. The playwright criticizes the dirty living style of the lower – middle class society. 'The Vultures' deal with the same themes like violence, sex and sensationalism which are the indomitable part of Tendulkar's early plays. It is a story of urban middle class degenerated family wherein the members are ever ready to use and kill one another for their selfish ends. Through 'The Vultures' the playwright talks about the emergence of relationless and emotionless society. The innocent and weak people will be mercilessly and brutally crushed in this society.

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■ Volume - II ■ Issue - IX ■ March 2014



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अनुक्रमणिका

1.	Position of English in India	Asst. Prof. Ayodhya Jadhav	01
2.	Effect of yogic exercises on menstrual discomfort of teenagers	Shubhangi Damale	04
3.	Chhavi Rajawat, an MBA graduate, is India's youngest Sarpanch.	Uday M. Kharat	08
4.	Major Themes in Soyinka's Plays	Dr. Ingole kailash	11
5.	FDI : Us and india	Prof. Ramdas T. Tuplondhe	12
6.	संत मीराबाई : नारी मुक्तिस्वर	प्रा. डॉ. कुलकर्णी वनिता वा.	16
7.	"स्त्रीदुःखाला वाचा फोडणारी - 'आर्त' कादंबरी"	प्रा. डॉ. शिवप्रसाद पं. बायाळ	19
8.	सत्यशील संपादक : सगर गुरूजी	प्रा. डॉ. राजकुमार मस्के	22
9.	"सत्यशोधक दिनकरराव जवळकरांचा पत्र प्रपंच"	प्रा. डॉ. गोविंद काळे	26
10.	बहुआयामी व्यक्तिमत्व : आण्णाभाऊ साठे	प्रा. आर. एल. बोवडे	31
11.	गोंड स्त्रीयांचे आदर्श प्रारूप : स्त्री भ्रूणहत्या	प्रा. एच. एल. सोनकांवळे	33
12.	ग्रामीण साहित्याचे बदलते स्वरूप	भोसले अंगद ज्ञानोबा	36
13.	वहिणाबाई चौधरी यांची कविता	प्रा. नवीन के. गिलविले	41
14.	भाषांतर स्वरूप व भाषांतर करताना येणाऱ्या अडचणी	डॉ. हणमंत रामचंद्र पोळ	45
15.	पंचायतराज संकल्पना : एक विश्लेषण	प्रा. संतोष शंकरराव इंगोले	48
16.	पर्यावरण संवर्धनात युवकांची भूमिका	प्राचार्य डॉ. एम. के. गावंडे	53
17.	स्वातंत्र्य सैनिक रघुनाथ रामचंद्र माने गुरुजी : व्यक्ति आणि कार्य	प्रा. हमीद उमरअली काझी	55
18.	नाशिक जिल्ह्यातील आदिवासींच्या देव देवता व सण उत्सव	प्रा. डॉ. साळुंके य. मुरलीधर	68
19.	भारतीय लोकप्रशासन आणि माहिती तंत्रज्ञान : एक अभ्यास	काजळे विजयकुमार सारंगधर	74
20.	भाववाढ आणि RBI च्या मौद्रिक धोरणाचा आढावा	प्रा. कदम के. के.	78
21.	वाशिम जिल्ह्याची सोयाबिन अर्थव्यवस्था	प्रा. संतोष उद्धवराव धामने	84
22.	'अन्न भेसळ ही एक समस्या'	सौ. प्रा. मेघा एस. देशमुख	88
23.	डिजीटल ग्रंथालये : आधुनिक काळाची गरज	एकनाथ रमेशजी वाठोरे	91
24.	इंटरनेटचा ग्रंथालयात वापर	प्रा. विजय प्रकाश जाधव	95
25.	ग्रंथपालांसाठी कृतिसंशोधन : एक अवलोकनात्मक अभ्यास	प्रा. देवकरे संजीवकुमार रा.	99
26.	भारतातील सार्वजनिक उद्योगातील निर्गुतवणुक	मठपती नागनाथ	102
27.	खो खो व वास्केटवॉल महिला खेळाडूंच्या कार्डिओ व्हॅस्कुलर एन्ड्युरन्सचे तुलनात्मक अध्ययन	प्रा. मंजुषा देशमुख	105

Major Themes in Soyinka's Plays

Dr. Ingole kailash m.

Asst. prof. Rajiv Gandhi mahavidyalaya
Mudkhed Tq. Nanded, Dist. Nanded

Soyinka's main concern through his plays is the celebration of Yoruba tradition. The plays that have been selected for the present study are based on same or other Yoruba tradition. Apart from the question of efficaciousness of these traditions, the plays offer various themes like violence, sex, power, exploitation of women and the clash between modernism and traditionalism. Dr. Rajkumar points out, "Soyinka has exposed snobbery, corruption, immorality, hypocrisy and other vices prevalent among the power seekers and engages himself intellectual war with them." (156) Another important theme that re-currently figures in Soyinka's plays is the existence of fate element. His plays strongly suggest that one cannot cut himself off from his roots, so also one cannot avoid his destiny. Unlike Tendulkar he remains a detached observer of the actions and predicaments of his character without offering a moralizing and philosophizing comment.

The apparent theme of *'The Lion and the Jewel'* is the clash of modernism and traditionalism. It is a comic play that covers wide range of themes like power, sex, celebration of tradition and exploitation of women. Lakunle's superfluous ways of Westernization have been severely satirized by the playwright. At the same time Soyinka gives a fine picture of rural politics by depicting the corrupt and mean power politics by Baroka the village bale. But in the end villainous Baroka is shown to be victorious over Lakunle, for he represents traditionalism. *'The Death and the King's Horseman'* celebrates one of the Yoruba rituals. The play depicts the psychological struggle of its protagonist wherein he is shown to be torn between the individual will and social demand. Soyinka's manipulation of tradition is to ask the question of its validity. *'The Strong Breed'* also bases its plot on the celebration of Yoruba tradition. In it the playwright highlights the Yoruba concept of destiny. The play brings us to a conclusion that the destiny is an inevitable part of man's life. It pursues a man wherever he goes. Eman, the protagonist of the play, runs away in the early part of the play from his duty of a carrier, but destiny soon catches hold of him. With the end of the play, the playwright successfully evokes the audience to think of the efficaciousness of such rituals. When the villagers fail to curse Eman, there itself ends the validity of this tradition. *'The Swamp Dwellers'* narrates the realistic tragedy of a poor family residing in Delta region of Nigeria. The suffering of the poor farmer family and the reliability of rural people on the supernatural and divine agencies has an universal application. The rural youth's fly to the city and getting lost into it also is the concern of the playwright. The playwright attempts to prove through this play that evil exists in cities, villages are still pure and innocent. The belief in supernatural and divinely once again is matter of discussion for Soyinka. *'Madmen and the specialists'* is probably a different play in the literary cannon of Wole Soyinka. The play is the aftermath of civil war that broke out in Nigeria. The playwright, through this play shows his anger and dislike for war. The play forwards the philosophy of pessimism and nihilism. The exploration of the contact an clash between modernity and tradition forms the nucleus of his major plays. He exploits myths, folklore, and legends for the delineation of his themes. The other traditional contents like dance, music, mime, pantomime, and drumming are also used to present the theme. Ogunba comments in this regards. "The strength of Soyinka lies in using tradition or pseudo tradition to comment on the contemporary Nigerian society" (Ogunba 5).

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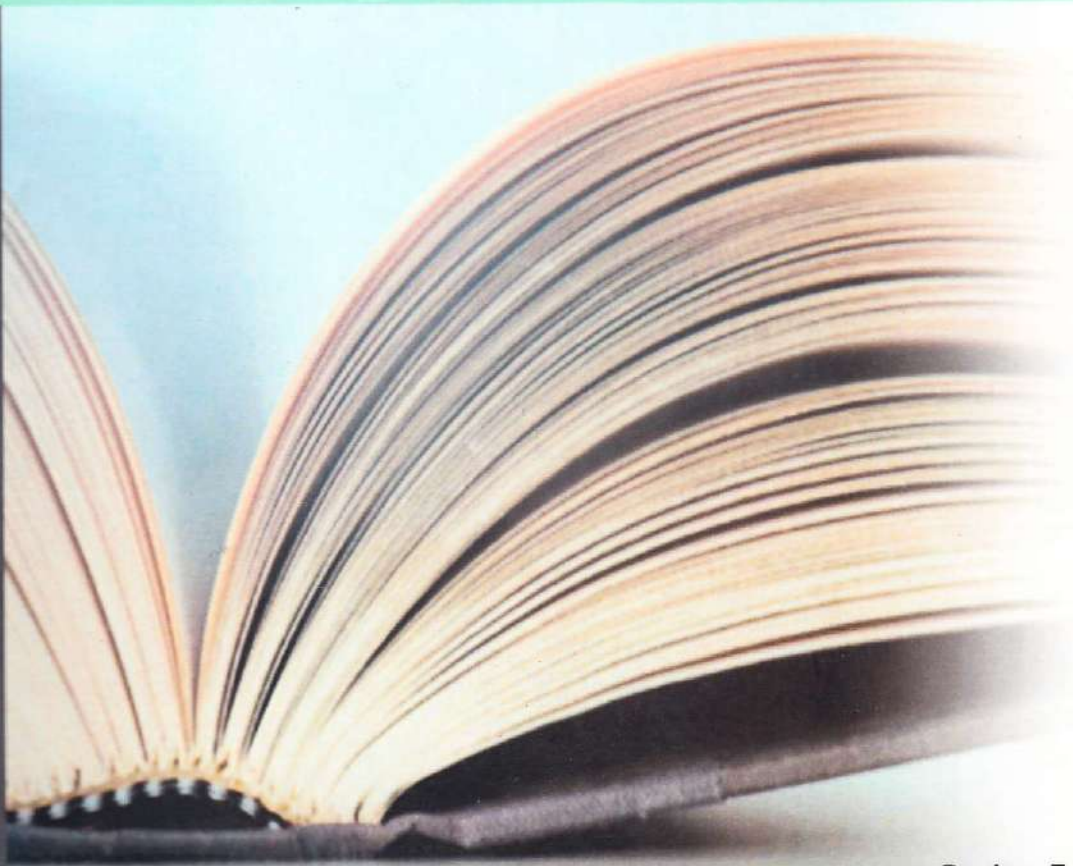
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10

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Content

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Sr. No.	Title and Name of The Author (S)	Page No
1	Dramatic Construction In Soyinka's The Swamps Dwellers Ingole Kailash M	1
2	नासिरा शर्मा की कहानी में नारी अस्मिता ज्योती विठ्ठलराव लोखंडे	8
3	Experiments Of ICT Established Education In India Manjunath. B	10
4	Significance Of Values In Modern Era Rakha Yadav	16
5	भारतीय नारी शीला य. भंडारि	22

DRAMATIC CONSTRUCTION IN SOYINKA'S *THE SWAMPS DWELLERS*

Ingole Kailash M

N.C. Law College, Nanded.

Abstract:

Dramatic techniques are very vital in the art of playwriting as they assist in developing and presenting effective plot structure. Different techniques are used for different plot. Soyinka has been considered as a master-craftsman in the art of drama. Let's have a look at one of his important plays from structural point of view.

Key words: Dramatic techniques, playwriting, master-craftsman.

INTRODUCTION:

Synopsis

The play is comparatively short of all of Soyinka's plays. It relates a story of a poor family residing in Niger Delta region. When the play opens we find Makuri and Alu awaiting for their beloved younger son Igwezu. They fear that their younger son Igwezu should not go missing like their elder son Awuchick, who had gone to the city some ten years ago. Both the brothers had left the village to seek their fortune in the city.

The conversation of the old couple has been interrupted with an arrival of a blind Begger. This blind begger is a tall and thin Moslem from north Nigeria. The begger tells his pathetic story how he has become blind and how drought in northern part has destroyed the lives of people dwelling in that area. However, the begger's appearance and strong positive attitude towards life impresses Makuri and Alu. He tells them that he does not accept charity from irreligious people, and is dying to farm the land. Meanwhile the village priest Kadiye enters to know if Igwezu has returned from the city. His visit is not out of sympathy or knowing the well-being of the family. But he wanted to check if Igwezu has made fortune in the city, so that he could extract something in the name of God and religion. When he comes to know that Igwezu hasn't yet returned, he leaves the hut promising to return after Igwezu's arrival.

Igwezu returns from the field greatly disappointed by the destruction of his farm due to flood. The begger consoles him promising that his farm will once again stand, and he will give himself as his bondsman. The Kadiye re-enters again, and inquires if Igwezu has made money in the city. Igwezu admits that he actually gone into the debts. And he has pledged his farm as a security for his debt. What is worse, his own brother has exacted this pledge from him. It is more saddening to know from him that his wife Desala has left him and become his brother's mistress. The Kadiya gets ready to shave by seating in the swivel chair.

While shaving the Kadiye, Igwezu asks a series of questions to the Kadiye. He asks if he have not offered all valuable gifts to him in order to save his farm and family. Then, why his farm and family has been destroyed. Wasn't it a responsibility of a Kadiye to protect? In a moment of anger, he was to slice into the rolls of fat beneath the priestly chin. But some how controls himself and allows the Kadiye to fly. Acknowledging the insult of the Kadiye, Makuri warns Igwezu that Kadiye may stir up the village against him. Igwezu flees to the city sensing the danger from the Kadiye. But while going he advises the blind begger to stay in the village and cultivate the land. To the begger's question, 'If he will return, he gives no answers. The play ends with the Begger's assurance of staying in the village and giving account to Igwezu.

Plot / structure:

We have a finely devised plot for the play '*The Swamp Dwellers*'. This time Soyinka employs a new technique to relate the story. This technique is gathering information from every new character in the play. The plot is a simple story of a poor family and their struggle for survival. The story could have taken more pages and time, had it written in an action format. But with the narrative technique of sharing information it is made short. Every new character narrates his experiences with the other characters of the play. While doing this the playwright never allows himself to detrack from the original story. He successfully manages to bring these experiences into a full-fledged story with a good beginning a middle and an end. The discussion of the elderly couple about the where about of their twins constitute the beginning. The episode of the blind begger provides the middle. And the clash of Igwezu and the Kadiye forms the end.

Unlike the strong Breed, the playwright avoids to divide the plot in acts and scenes. By doing this he avoids any sort of interruption in the smooth going story. There isn't a single irrelevant scene or episode in the play. The episode of the Blind Begger is motivating in the completely destroyed situation of Igwezu and his family.

Setting:

The play is set in the hut of Makuri and Alu in a village of the Delta region of south – east Nigeria. This region is periodically flooded with waters of river Niger. The description of the hut with its minute peculiarities adds greater dramatic effect. The inside detailing of the hut – rush – baskets, 'a dire cloths and barber's equipments, reminds one of the ideal pictures of huts in India. The play opens and ends in this hut.

The swamp Dwellers is a realistic tragedy of the people living in Delta region. Therefore it is shadowed with grave atmosphere. The play opens with the elderly couple's worry and scared feelings about the safty and whereabouts of their twin sons. This serious tone pertains till the end of the play. Because no joyful or happy things happen in the lives of the characters of the play. This might be the reason why we don't find any comic relief in the play. In the end Igwezu leaves the town defeated and surrendered.

Themes:

It is an inescapable tragedy of a poor family residing in Delta region. To me it is the main theme of the play. The play demonstrates a critical plight of a farmer family, which is same everywhere regardless of region and country. These farmer families follow some or other sorts of traditions and customs which becomes the major cause of their suffering. In the swamp Dwellers,

villagers offer valuable gifts to the priest like the Kadiye, in order to appease the divine serpent of the swamp. Similar is the condition of the farmers in India, there are thousands of suicide on the part of the farmers following several customs like dowry marriage animal sacrifice (bali) and so on.

At the same time the play throws light on the attitude of the village youths. Through the character of Awuchike Soyinka criticizes the village youth for getting lost in to the glittering world of the city, breaking all familial and human ties with the village. In the rat-race of prosperity the present youth is turning his back to the responsibilities and moralities of the society. We find in this play the degeneration of human relationship in the form of Awuchike and Desala.

The play also questions the efficaciousness of the religious offerings in order to appease God or divinely powers. The series of questions that Igwezu asks to the Kadiye really makes one to think of such religious practices. The question "should man continue to grope through an absurd existence with blind hope for divine salvation or should he seek other ways of saving himself" (An Internet Entry).

In comparison with Soyinka's other plays the present play covers limited range of themes. But it does not fail to make universal appeal. From this we can say that "Soyinka uses the theatre to make statements of human need and values" (Jole Adedji 127).

Characterization:

There are only two important characters in the play, which need illustration. All the other characters play but a minor role. Therefore the researcher is going to analyse only two characters Igwezu and the Blind Begger.

Igwezu:

He is the protagonist of the play and the real son of the land. He has great reverence for the tradition of the swamps. Moreover, he is kind and loving man. In the words of Makuri "he is a man to keep word" (SCP1 95). He has performed all religious rites that were required by the deity, in order to save his farm and family from the divinely calamities. But to his utter disappointment he could neither save his farm nor his family from the destruction. Flood runs down his crop and his own brother Awuchike seduces his wife.

Unlike his brother he tries his luck at making some money in the city. But could not get success rather goes into the debt of his own brother Awuchike. Awuchike takes the profit of Igwezu's worse conditions, he seduces his wife. Igwezu pledges his to harvest as a security to the loan to his brother. After financial and emotive collapse in the city, he returns his village with a hope of recovering from his harvest. But something more severe was waiting for him. He finds his harvest completely ruined by the flood and "the beans and the corns had made an everlasting pottage with the mud" (SCP1 101).

His belief in the God and the religious rites break into the pieces. He realizes the authenticity of God and religion. "I know that we can appease the serpent of the swamps and kiss the Kadiye's feet, but vapours will still rise and corrupt the tassels of the corn" (SCP1 101).

His mind is now open to the ignorance that he continued in the name of religion. At the end he has emancipated himself from the manacles of deceit, realizing in a consolatory stand. His departure to the city in the end is the sign of his realization of invalid and inauthentic

practices of religion. Katrak says in this regard: "The internal progress in Igwezu's mind from ignorance to knowledge is figured in the external journey from the city to the village and return to the city" (Qtd. In M. Pushpa 83).

However, the character of Igwezu is imbued with all good qualities. He is bonded with his family and village. He performs all religious practices that are demanded by tradition for the security of his farm and family. Moreover he does not lose touch with his parents when he goes to the city. His first job as soon as he earns little money was to send the barber's chair to his father, which he had promised his father. But being a modern tragedy wherein good scarcely wins, Igwezu loses all the time. Through his character the playwright certainly not shaking the belief in God, but raising a question about efficaciousness of religious practices.

The Blind Begger:

"Angel from the God," would probably correct words for this character. For he comes in as a saviour in the inescapable condition of Igwezu. "He introduces a completely new force, a new way of thinking into the hide bound society of the village" (Jones 18). His is a character that eclipses the importance of the protagonist Igwezu. For his suffering is much more than Igwezu. Not just that his positive stance and self belief in the adverse conditions make him altogether a different character. He belongs to the dry north part of Nigeria. And has undergone long periods of draught and later on the crop-flourish has been divested by the locusts. Fly – sickness in the early childhood renders him blind. In his initial stages of blindness he believed that he will be recused by his faith in Muhammad: "My faith promises me and I knew that I was living but blind" (SCP1 90-91). But nothing comes to his help and he has to lead a pitiful life where humiliation and suffering have no alternative.

Some critics like Nkengason have taken the begger's journey from north to south as the rejection of his faith in Muhammad. But I see this act of the begger in different perspective. If he had rejected his faith in God and religion, he would not have been a righteous person. He could have accepted mercy even from irreligious people. His action of turning his bowl up side-down ensures his faith in religion and God. His journey to the south is probably a destined part of his life. Otherwise he could not have been a glorified character. He had an important role to play, and that role is to re-build the completely devastated lives of flood ridden people. Jones appropriates his role in the words: "he is Christ-like in that he enters a hide-bound traditional society and makes men begin to think again" (19).

His entry in the play is at the very crucial time. Igwezu had gone into the debt, his wife and brother had betrayed him, moreover his crop has been devastated by the flood. At such a time the begger enters with faith and determinism to support morally collapsed Igwezu. His words not only pacify Igwezu but enliven his hopes in life. He becomes a mentor for Igwezu and the villagers. He provides a brilliant suggestions about land reclamation that guide the people to solve the problem of flood without relying on external forces. He questions the validity of swamp serpent, and in that way brings an enlightenment in the lives of flood afflicted people.

His character is strongly contrasted with the character of the Kadiye the village priest. The begger gives himself selflessly and unasked for the good of others. On the other hand "the pot-bellied" Kadiye is an opportunist, who tries to extract whatever he can even in the adverse conditions of the people. The begger offers himself as a bonds man to Igwezu to work in the farm even though he is blind. And the selfish Kadiye fails to protect people with his divine and

individual powers in the face of difficult conditions. Thus the character of the begger re-establishes faith among the people and not destroys it.

Entrance and Exit:

The technique that Soyinka has used to build up the plot largely depends on the entries and exits of various characters. As has been mentioned earlier in the discussion of the plot, the playwright has used a new technique of story building in the form of gathering of information from every new character that appears on the stage. The characters tend to enter and leave the stage in succession. The Kadiye enters and exits, and again re-enters. In between the two visits of the Kadiye, Igwezu and the blind begger enters. The dramatist very skillfully brings all the characters on the stage in the end of the play. The Kadiye's entry accompanied by the drummer and the servant is striking and spectacular on each time. The meeting of Igwezu and the Begger is at very appropriate time. In this way entrances and exits are superbly organized in order to add thematic significance to play.

Maintenance of Unities:

The swamp Dwellers is probably the only play where in three unities of time, place, and action are closely followed by the dramatist. The play opens when the daylight has gone but it is not completely dark, and comes to an end when it is night. It does not take more than two hours, the time that is justly required for its enactment on the stage. The whole action takes place in Makuri's hut into which the characters visit in succession one after another. All the important actions like Igwezu's failure in the city and at the home in the face of crop destruction, the story of blind begger; Awuchike's betrayal of his parents and brothers and befooling of the villagers on the part of the Kadiye, are brought together into an organic whole. The interlinking of the various episodes are successfully brought together making a good story. No episode or action is unnecessarily imposed, and the different episode of the blind begger made an integral part of the play. The play is greatly appreciated for its brevity, simplification and organization.

Contrast:

The element of contrast exists at every point in the play. It is by this element that the viewers judge the actions of the characters. The contrast is at the level of persons and places. The first obvious contrast is between the twin brothers. Awuchike and Igwezu. Awuchike is the representative of new class of Nigeria, who has discarded all ties with the family and the village. The people like Awuchike leave the village to lost permanently in the city. They hold no familial or cultural responsibilities of any sort. Awuchike has been living in the city for last ten years. And has prospered as a wealthy timber merchant. But has forgotten his familial duties towards parents. Even severe than this he is morally degenerated in the pride of wealth. He feels no hesitation at seducing his own brother's wife. Nor does he feel shame in taking pledge from his own brother for the loan.

On the other hand we have a pure innocent character of Igwezu, for whom family and village matters a lot. In adverse situation, he too leaves village to try his hand at making his fortune. But he never for a moment forget his village and parents. As soon as he earn little money in the city, he sends a barler's chair for his father, which he had promised while leaving

the village. Moreover, like a responsible family member he performs all religious rites that were required by the religion and tradition. He would never have left his village, had his wife not insisted for.

Similar is the contrast between the female characters. Igwezu's mother and wife. Igwezu's mother remained loyal to his father despite various temptations from the visiting traders. She is the ideal family woman, with a feeling of care for all family members. Contrasting to this character is the character of Igwezu's wife. She deserts her husband and involves in the act of infidelity with her brother-in-law. The glittering world of city tempts Igwezu's wife to break the familial bond of marriage and become a mistress of someone else.

The most important contrast that figures out in the play is between the blind Begger and the Kadiye. The devout muslim beggre denies the religious value of begging insisting as he does on a scheme of self – help that leads him to search for land where he can farm. The Kadiye is an opportunist, who is always on a quest to extract from the people even in their adverse situations. The pot – bellied Kadiye rich and prosperous figure who has liking for wearing rings in the finger. He befools the poor and innocent villagers in the name of religion.

The final contrast is between the bitter hopelessness of Igwezu and calm confidence of the begger. Both have experienced the similar conditions of failure in the life. Igwezu surrenders to it, while the begger takes it as a challenge. The positive stance of the begger motivates Igwezu to come out of his riddle and try again for good. The draught and flood also form contrast in the play.

CONCLUSION:

Soyinka's concern through most of his plays, seem to be the age-old customs and rituals. As a avowed reformer he discusses the issues with a view to bring about social change. Unlike Vijay Tendulkar society is at the centre for Soyinka in his plays. The swamp Dwellers is not an exception to it. The basic idea for the play was a news that oil had been found in marketable quantities in the Niger Delta This provided the playwright with a theme how easy money can bring social changes whatever may be its source. The fleet of the rural youth to the cities severing all human ties also forms the concern of the play.

Although the source of the play is a news in the newspaper about the discovery of oil and its impact on the people, still the playwright cannot think of the Nigerian society devoid of customs and rituals. Here he talks of the farmer's divine ritual of offering valuable gifts to the swamp serpent as a security of farm and family.

Through this the playwright throws light on the ineffectiveness of such rituals and the selfishness of the religious priests like the Kadiye, who exploit innocent people in the name of religion.

The play is the tragedy of poor farmer family, who are destined to suffer. The picture that has been presented in the play is universal, appealing to the plight of Monsoon all farmers in the world. In India we have a no different situation, for Indian farm is largely dependent on monsoon rain. We have a contrast of two different conditions of nature in the play – draught and flood. Igwezu and his family suffer due to flood, whereas the blind begger faces the consequences of draught.

There is a controversy among the critics about the end of the play. Most of the critics assess this play as not ending on a positive note. Some successfully assert that the play does not offer solution to the problems raised. The Ibadan Magazine records: "The play does not end on a

positive note by showing the villagers casting off their superstitions and marching off to construct dykes and increase the amount of land available for farming.”(1959: 27-30) But this view of these scholars is contradictory for certain reasons. The play obviously ends on a positive note. The blind begger’s ending speech is a kind of inspiration for the completely broken characters like Igwezu. The Begger:

“The swallows find their nest again
When the cold is over,
Even the bats desert dark holes in the trees and flap wet leaves with wings of leather.
There were wings everywhere as I wiped my feet against your threshold. I heard the cricket
scratch himself beneath the armpit as the old man said to me.....
I shall be here to give account”(SCP2 112)

The begger in the play is the mouthpiece of the playwright who not only inspires the villagers to face adverse situations but also guides on how to solve the problem of flood with the help of land reclamation. He offers his valuable suggestions on the self-help not relying on the external forces. By not offering solution the playwright might intended to retain the seriousness of the play. The playwright probably left it to the readers and viewers of the play to understand what and how they like the end of the play, “What Soyinka wished to convey by his ending of the swamp Dwellers is not absolutely clear: it is an ambiguous code” (Gibbs 44). But the play certainly struck the positive note offering. “The ideal of individual love-act-of-courage in the effort of saving humanity whenever such an individual possesses the will and the resources” (An Internet Entry).

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⑨



Editor

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अनुक्रमणिका

1.	The art of characterization in soyinkya's swamps dwellers	Dr. Ingole Kailash	01
2.	The struggle for self identity of indian women in the fiction of Manju Kapur's custody	Penurkar A. K.	03
3.	Geographical perspectives on Environmental pollution	Dr. Thaware B. B.	07
4.	Nephelometry study on metal chlorides	Mr. Panchal Rajendra Dr. Kedar N. A.	09
5.	Parliamentary privileges of indian parliament	Raut Prafull	13
6.	Area, Production and yield of green gram / moong crop in nanded district	Dr. Choudhari Govind	16
7.	Consumption of water by various sectors in India and Maharashtra	Dr. Rajendra Gaikwad Dhere M. P.	18
8.	स्वकथनातून आलेला शैक्षणिक संघर्ष	प्रा. भानुसे विठ्ठल	22
9.	१९८० नंतरच्या मराठी ग्रामीण कादंबरीतील शिक्षित तरुणाचे भावविश्व	भोसले अंगद ज्ञानोबा	26
10.	समर्थ आणि शिवाजी महाराज	सौ. संध्या सं. पावटे	31
11.	'ताम्रपट' कादंबरीतून चित्रित होणारा सामाजिक आणि राजकीय जीवनाचा विशाल पट	प्रा. लहाने गंपू	35
12.	पंचायतराजमधील अनुसूचित जातीतील महिला सरपंचाची भूमिका : एक अभ्यास (मराठवाड्यातील ग्रामपंचायतीच्या विशेष संदर्भात)	डॉ. धावे किशन काळे रामेश्वर	38
13.	कौटिल्याचे स्थानिक प्रशासन विषयक विचार	डॉ. शिरसाट एस. टी.	41
14.	अन्नसुरक्षा धोरण एक अभ्यास	प्रा. डॉ. मुंदे पांडुरंग	44
15.	ग्रंथालयात संगणकाचा उपयोग	डॉ. राठोड दिनेश	47
16.	भारतामध्ये अन्नधान्य समस्या व उत्पादनात आंतरराष्ट्रीय विषमता	प्रा. जाधव दत्ता	50
17.	जॉन ड्युईच्या कार्यवादाचा आधुनिक शिक्षणावरील प्रभाव	प्रा. डॉ. खुरपे गोरोबा	53

The Art of Characterization in Soyinka's *Swamps Dwellers*

Dr. Ingle Kailash M.

Asst. prof. Rajiv Gandhi mahavidyalaya
Mudkhed Tq. Nanded, Dist. Nanded

There are only two important characters in the play, which need illustration. All the other characters play but a minor role. Therefore the focus is here laid precisely on the analysis of only two characters Igwezu and the Blind Begger.

1. Igwezu : He is the protagonist of the play and the real son of the land. He has great reverence for the tradition of the swamps. Moreover, he is kind and loving man. In the words of Makuri "he is a man to keep word" (SCP1 95). He has performed all religious rites that were required by the deity, in order to save his farm and family from the divinely calamities. But to his utter disappointment he could neither save his farm nor his family from the destruction. Flood runs down his crop and his own brother Awuchike seduces his wife.

Unlike his brother he tries his luck at making some money in the city. But could not get success rather goes into the debt of his own brother Awuchike. Awuchike takes the profit of Igwezu's worse conditions, he seduces his wife. Igwezu pledges his to harvest as a security to the loan to his brother. After financial and emotive collapse in the city, he returns his village with a hope of recovering from his harvest. But something more severe was waiting for him. He finds his harvest completely ruined by the flood and "the beans and the corns had made an everlasting pottage with the mud" (SCP1 101).

His belief in the God and the religious rites break into the pieces. He realizes the authenticity of God and religion. "I know that we can appease the serpent of the swamps and kiss the Kadiye's feet, but vapours will still rise and corrupt the tassels of the corn" (SCP1 101).

His mind is now open to the ignorance that he continued in the name of religion. At the end he has emancipated himself from the manacles of deceit, realizing in a consolatory stand. His departure to the city in the end is the sign of his realization of invalid and inauthentic practices of religion. Katrak says in this regard: "The internal progress in Igwezu's mind from ignorance to knowledge is figured in the external journey from the city to the village and return to the city" (Qtd. In M. Pushpa 83).

However, the character of Igwezu is imbued with all good qualities. He is bonded with his family and village. He performs all religious practices that are demanded by tradition for the security of his farm and family. Moreover he does not lose touch with his parents when he goes to the city. His first job as soon as he earns little money was to send the barber's chair to his father, which he had promised his father. But being a modern tragedy wherein good scarcely wins, Igwezu loses all the time. Through his character the playwright certainly not shaking the belief in God, but raising a question about efficaciousness of religious practices.

2. The Blind Begger : "Angel from the God," would probably correct words for this character. For he comes in as a saviour in the inescapable condition of Igwezu. "He introduces a completely new force, a new way of thinking into the hide bound society of the village" (Jones 18). His is a character that eclipses the importance of the protagonist Igwezu. For his suffering is much more than Igwezu. Not just that his positive stance and self belief in the adverse conditions make him altogether a different character. He belongs to the dry north part of Nigeria. And has undergone long periods of draught and later on the crop-flourish has been divested by the locusts. Fly – sickness in the early childhood renders him blind. In

his initial stages of blindness he believed that he will be recused by his faith in Muhammad : "My faith promises me and I knew that I was living but blind" (SCP1 90-91). But nothing comes to his help and he has to lead a pitiful life where humiliation and suffering have no alternative.

Some critics like Nkengason have taken the begger's journey from north to south as the rejection of his faith in Muhammad. But I see this act of the begger in different perspective. If he had rejected his faith in God and religion, he would not have been a righteous person. He could have accepted mercy even from irreligious people. His action of turning his bowl up side-down ensures his faith in religion and God. His journey to the south is probably a destined part of his life. Otherwise he could not have been a glorified character. He had an important role to play, and that role is to re-build the completely devastated lives of flood ridden people. Jones appropriates his role in the words: "he is Christ-like in that he enters a hide-bound traditional society and makes men begin to think again" (19).

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**NEW INTERNATIONAL
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CONTENTS**

Vol-I, Issue- IVX May 2014

Sr. No.	Title & Name of the Author(s)	Page No.
1	The Study of Dramatic Devices in Soyinka's Madmen and the Specialists Dr.Ingole kailash M	1
2	निवडणूकीच्या राजकारणातील दलितांच्या राजकीय पक्षांचे स्थान रविनंद नामदेव होवाळ,	8
3	Evaluation Techniques Mrs. Hashmi Saleha	15
4	रविंद्रनाथ टागोरांच्या दृष्टीकोणातून व्यक्तिमत्त्व डॉ. सुनिता या. पाटील,	19
5	Higher Education: Challenges for India in 20th Century Mr. B.Devendar	22
6	A study to measure attitude of parents of Secondary students towards evaluation system Dr.Dharma Teja	29
7	Education as an Instrument of Social Change R.Karunakar	34
8	नाटक आधुनिक प्रयोगशील वाङ्मय : स्वरूप व घटक प्राचार्य डॉ. बालाजी रंगनाथराव लाहोरकर	38
9	Presentation of Child Psyche in Tagore's <i>The Post Office</i> Dr. S.S.Awasthi, / Prof. V.J.Chavan,	40
10	वसंत बापट यांच्या कवितेतील निसर्गदर्शन : एक अभ्यास श्री कमलाकर कोंडिबा राऊत	54
11	Revitalizing the Dynamics of Indian Higher Education through Integrating E-Learning Strategies in Higher Education System of India: Emerging Challenges and Perspectives Dr. Shazli Hasan Khan	52



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Study of Dramatic Devices in Soyinka's *Madmen and the Specialists*

Dr. Ingole kailash M

Asst. prof. Rajiv Gandhi mahavidyalaya
Mudkhed Tq. Nanded, Dist. Nanded

Synopsis:

Bero is a doctor and his return is the major event of the play, which is awaited by his sister Si Bero. In his absence she learns many medical and herbal secrets from the two old women – Iya Agba and Iya male. The old man father of Bero and Si Bero is also drawn to the battle field out of humanitarian concern. Meanwhile Bero enlists himself for the army intelligence services, in the course of which he changes from a caring doctor into a cruel power seeker. On the other hand his father works for rehabilitation of wounded and diseased soldiers but unconventionally. The effects of the war lead the old man to encourage the practice of cannibalism. In particular the old man developed the doctrine of As. In pursuit of it the old man serves a meal of human flesh to his son and others. He saves his father from being killed by imprisoning him in his hut. He employs the mendicants to keep watch on him. The another reason for hiring spy for this father was to know the secret of the doctrine of As.

In the later part of the play the curiosity regarding the As doctrine increases in Bero and the state. But the old man never agrees to disclose it. In a fit of anger Bero shoots his father dead. And thus there is a symbolic end of every thing with only Si Bero given the opportunity to escape.

Plot / Structure:

Soyinka's innovativative writing skills once again come forth with this play, as he dispenses away with the traditional construction of plot. Nor is there any portrayal of fixed characters. Unlike *The Swamp Dwellers* he has brought past and present together with the help of the flashback technique. The fading of back into the present is more smooth and graceful in this play. The flashback technique allowed the playwright to present the unified story, without losing or disentangling the episodes. The continual fading of back and forth in time and place gives an abstract quality to the play. There are few reference to time but even these serve only to blur. The technique that Soyinka used for this play transcends the regional boundaries and its scope is enlarged to include universal human situation.

The play is divided in two parts: part one, and part two. These, two parts are farther divided in episodes. This can be simplified in a following way:

Part – I

- 1) The grotesque dance of the Mendicants.
- 2) Si Bero and Old Women.
- 3) Bero and Mendicants

Part – II

- 1) Old Man and Mendicants
- 2) Bero and Old Man
- 3) Action leading to the final destruction.

Due to the complex plot it is very difficult to read it. And unless one's complete concentration it is not possible to make the things clear. However, the chorus helps us to know about the movements of the play.

There is hardly any action going on in this play except for the dance of the mendicants. There is more of a verbal duel of ideas rather than action. The play is laden with words full of suggestive meanings. Most of the time it is verbal interaction that is going on, on the stage. A more or less similar technique of conversation seem to run throughout the play.

Setting:

We are not provided with the particular details of the place, besides the home surgery of Dr. Bero. There is the mention of a hut of Old women – Iya Agba and Iya Mate, that suggests that it might be one of the Nigerian villages. The characters verbally move to the war front with the help of flashback technique. As far as the unity of place is concerned it is fully observed in this play.

The atmosphere in the play is grim and at certain level frightening. The play opens with a saddening worry of Si Bero for the return of her father and brother, who have gone to the war front. And ends with the killing of the Old Man. There are several cruel and inhuman scenes like the punishment meted out to the mendicants by Bero and the serving of the human flesh on the part of the old man. The playwright only effort to provide comic relief is in the form of the mendicants poking fun at themselves. But this comic scene can provide a little comic relief to the mendicants from the incessant brutality of war, no of course, to the audience. As the scene reveals of an extreme situation in which the mendicants find themselves. The scene goes thus:

AAFAA: Three and two, born loser. What did you stake?

GOYI: The stump of the last arm.

CRIPPLE: Your last?

GOYI: No, I have got one left.

BLINDMAN: Your last you lost the right stump to me yesterday.

GOYI: Do you want it now or later?

BLINDMAN: Keep it now. (SCP2 217)

Thus, an atmosphere of grim and seriousness continues throughout the play. The end is the loss of everything to feel sorry for Si Bero.

Themes:

"Soyinka had written this play after his detention for alleged sympathy to the Biafran cause in Nigerian civil war" (White 143). Therefore the play was an outcome of his personal despair and disillusionment towards society. This could be the reason why he could not employ various dramatic devices to make the play more effective. The play is an aftermath of an unspecified war. The bitter consequences of war like political instability, corruption and absolute power have given rise to the cynicism and despair in the society.

The play brings to focus that the characters like Dr. Bero exploit the situation to their selfish end regardless of human values. And the sufferers are the people like Cripple and Blindman. They are the victims of war event. On the other side the character like the old man teaches nihilism in his utter disappointment towards war. He introduces the philosophy of 'As' to the war victims. The frustration of the old man converts him into a subhuman. He strongly believes 'As does not change' meaning people will not change in their cruelties toward one another. His philosophy of 'As' leads him to serve human flesh to the fellow soldiers. M. Pushpa remarks in this connection: "The play epitomizes the tragic history of mankind, and the recurrent phenomenon of war. It explores the spiritual, psychic and physical range of mankind during and after war" (57).

Characterization:

Except Si Bero and the old women, all other are complex type of characters. They are very fluid. They change back and forth with the situation. Most importantly there is no indication of regional or ethical background to these characters. Most of the characters have given only representative labels rather than names e.g. Old man, Blind, cripple etc. This trait gives the play a universal applicability and it can fit into any place and any society. We have only two important characters in this play Dr. Bero and the Old Man, around whom all major actions take place. Hence we will analyse these two characters here.

Dr. Bero:

As has been mentioned earlier Dr. Bero is a complex type of character. Before the war, he was a humanitarian, a true doctor, and a preserver of life. But after war there is a sea change in his character. Now he is an 'Intelligence specialist' a power-seeker.

brutal and exploiting officer. Bero's quest for power takes him on the path of destruction. His violence against Aafaa is a sign of his transformation from the doctor to the politician. He understands only one law, and that is the law of gain. He is an advocator of an absolute power. Bat forgets the dictum 'absolute power corrupts absolutely. When he fails to extract the knowledge of the As philosophy from his father he shoots him dead. The severe than that he advocates and like the eating of human flesh. He ascertains this fact in saying, "I give you the personal word of a scientist. Human flesh is delicious. Of course, not all parts of the body. I prefer the balls myself" (SCP2 240).

The play strikes a note that excess of anything is bad. Bero's destruction in the end shows it clearly that there is a limit to everything. And when the boundary is crossed, the destruction is sure. The earth mothers set the house of Bero ablaze, when he is still in.

The Old Man:

He is a father to Dr. Bero and Si Bero. He is the last proof of humanity for Bero in the play. He appears only in second part but accounts of him are given in the first part by Bero. Unable to bear the consequences of war, he joins the front line with a view to nurse the wounded soldiers. Despite his efforts, he fails to stop war. He invents the philosophy of 'As' According to his philosophy 'As does not change: As is the evil for the old man. And As does not change means evil doesnot change. He means to say that people do not change in their cruelties towards fellow beings. Besides this he teaches the incapacitated to think. He cannot tolerate killing of men by men. Therefore in an utter frustration he serves human flesh to the soldiers including his own son.

His son tries a lot to know from him the secret of As. But he doesnot reveal it to him. His angry son one day shoots him dead. However, the old man is a moraling police in the play. His act of cannibalism is the outcome of the playwright's anger towards society and the its structure. He wanted soldiers to be conscious of the killing one another. By his act of serving human flesh he was trying to establish the importance of human life.

Absurdity:

Some critics of the play have successfully pointed out the absurdity in the play. And it is a fact that the play attains absurdity to some extent. It differs from the absurd play only in a way that it deals with day-today reality. The pessimistic tone is carried through out the play giving a constant indication of the futility of human action. The play opens with the macabre dance of the mendicants who are disabled and deformed by unidentified blast. The mendicants are playing a game of dice and stakes for which are their already disabled bodies. Their action and dance do not seem to be absurd but their conversation strikes us as very absurd. Their speech is like recitation of nursery rhymes in a child like manner, repeating lines from the previously learnt lesson give the hint of

absurdity. The example of their conversation make it more clear:

Si Bero:
 You know how I like them sorted out.
 Aafaa: Yes, we know.
 Goyi: First roots.
 Cripple: Then peel the barks.
 Aafaa: Slice the stalks.
 Cripple: Squeeze out the pulp.
 Goyi: Pick the seeds.
 Aafaa: Break the pods. Crack the plaster.
 Cripple: Probe the wound or it will never heal.
 Blindman: Cut of one root to save the other.
 Aafaa: Cauterize.
 Cripple: Quick quick-quick, amputate!

(Blindman lets out a loud groan) (SCP2 221)

The futile talk and action of the mendicants make this play absurd.

Flashback:

With the use of flashback technique in this play, Soyinka has established himself once again as a master of dramatic art. The complex and entangled plot of the present play is made accessible and enjoyable, with the help of flashback.

The technique of flashback helps the playwright to retain the action of the play at one place. And also to supply the information of the actions that took place at the back stage.

Musicality:

Though the play seems to be absurd in form and content, still the playwright has made ample use of musicality in it. There are five songs in the play two in English and three in Nigerian language and the macabre dance of the mendicants. The play opens with an invocation to the spirits of wind, in which Si Bero and the old women request the God of the wind to bring back Bero and the Old Man. The invocation is accompanied by the joint action of Si Bero and the Earth mothers.

Ofe gbe wa de'le o.....Ofe.....

Ofe gbe wa de'le o.....Ofe

Oko epo epai runa

Gbe wa de'le o

Ofe gbe wa de'le (SCP2 226).

The song is in Nigerian language in which the characters pray God for the safety of Bero and his father. In the opening of the play we have a macabre dance of "Traveling Exhi-

absurdity. The example of their conversation make it more clear:

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Ofe gbe wa de'le o.....Ofe

Oko epo epai runa

Gbe wa de'le o

Ofe gbe wa de'le (SCP2 226).

The song is in Nigerian language in which the characters pray God for the safety of Bero and his father. In the opening of the play we have a macabre dance of "Traveling Exhi-

bition of the As Grotesque" (SCP2 268). The men who are disabled and deformed by some unidentified blast take part in the dance. They exaggerate their disabilities to extract money from the passer-by. Thus the play is full of songs and dance movements.

Aafaa, Goyi, cripple and the Blind man – four war victims turned – beggars – have double roles as characters and chorus in the play. Like the ancient Greek plays, the chorus serves the purpose of commenting upon the movements of the play.

Language:

When we examine the characters and their language we find that Soyinka has made these characters very fluid. There is no instance in the play where Soyinka wants to Africanize the English language. Characters speak English as though it is their mother tongue. The vocabulary and speech pattern seem to interchange. The songs that are sung in African language have an internal rhythm pattern of repetition. They add musicality to the play.

Conclusion:

Soyinka had written this play when he was arrested for alleged sympathy to the Biafran cause in Nigerian civil war. He had to spend two years in solitary confinement. It explains the grotesque energy that has weakened his potential as a playwright, and consequently his characters. It is this reason why we hear Soyinka most of the time advocating through his characters. It is the despair and the disappointment towards war and social structure that forced him to write such an absurd play. Because of the moralizing purpose and the realistic situation the playwright could not deploy his dramatic skills in the play. However he successfully brought out violence and barbarism inherent in human civilization. The play is an instance of the dictum 'absolute power corrupts absolutely' As in Tendulkar's *Ghashiram Kotwal*. Ghashiram does not hesitate to offer his daughter to Nana, so also Dr. Bero in this play does not hesitate to eat human flesh. Moreover he talks of the benefits of human flesh.

"The central enveloping theme is the erosion of humanity in a well organized tightly controlled authoritarian society" (Jones, 107). The names of the characters like Cripple and the Blind man are suggestive of wicked mentality of the human beings. The play strikingly brings forth that it is highly impossible to preserve humanity in the state of war. The social evils like corruption, violence and brutality take the possession of the society. The moral survivors are either brutally killed or put into the prisons.

Considering the theme of the play, the form and the structure that has been used for the play is appreciable. The flashback technique helps the playwright to present the theme effectively. Other elements like characterization, chorus, language and musicality contribute in making the play successful one.

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6

शोध संपदा

SHODH SAMPADA

वर्ष ४ थे
मे ते जुलै २०१४
अंक १६ वा

संपादक
डॉ. राजशेखर सोलापुरे



19. Subalternity in Richard Wright's Native Son

Madhukar R. Wankhede ९१

20. Characterization in soyinka's The Strong Breed

Dr. Kailash Ingole ९५

21. Quest for Freedom: A Study of Anita Desai's Protagonist Sita

Gulab Shaikh ९७

❖ उपेक्षितांचा विचार ❖

२२. भटक्या-विमुक्त जाती-जमातीच्या व्यवसायावर औद्योगिकीकरणाचा पडलेला प्रभाव

प्रा. दत्ताजी मेहत्रे १००

❖ वेध चळवळीचा ❖

२३. लोकपाल, जनलोकपाल व अण्णांचे आंदोलन

माधव शिंदे १०५

❖ कृषीव्यवस्था ❖

२४. भारतातील शेतमाल विक्री व्यवस्था एक अभ्यास

कुलदीप कदम १०९

❖ व्यक्तीवेध ❖

२५. यशवंतराव चव्हाण व महाराष्ट्राची जडण-घडण

प्रा.विजयसिंग भाबरदोडे ११३

२६. डॉ. शंकररावजी चव्हाण : एक प्रगल्भ व्यक्तिमत्व

श्रीकांत देशमुख ११७

❖ ग्रंथालयीन ❖

२७. महाविद्यालयीन ग्रंथालय संगणकीकरण काळाची गरज

शिवराज देशमुख १२०

28. Total Quality Management and Libraries

Gadekar P.C. १२२

20. Characterization in soyinka's The Strong Breed

Dr. Kailash Ingole, Mudkhed

There are two major characters in this play. They are Eman and Sunma. Eman is the protagonist of the play, while Sunma is his well-wisher. The other characters like Jaguna and Oroggi also have an important role in the play, but because they represent a group therefore cannot be individualized. Hence focus is laid here on Eman and Sunma only.

Eman

He is the tragic hero of the play 'The Strong Breed'. Ogunba Summarizes his life in a sentence. "a man destined to suffer" (104). He is a strait forward man who belongs to the family of the strong Breed. Being an educated person he discard his village. The village in which he takes the shelter also follow a custom of a carrier. In Eman's village the carrier is from the strong breed family, where as in the village now he stays a carrier is a stranger in the village. He works as a teacher and a healer in the village. He is responsive to all those who are helpless and needy. Sunma who is the assistant of Eman is very much impressed by his nature and good deeds. She wants to save Eman from the cruel villagers, as she knows it very well that Eman is a stranger to the village, he will be marked as a carrier one or other day. Despite her tremendous efforts she cannot persuade Eman to leave the village. Eman's stubbornness in staying in the village is his acceptance of his destiny.

He readily accepts the role of a carrier because he strongly believes that a carrier cannot be unwilling and insensible. Eman's life and sacrifice is reminiscent to Christ life and sacrifice. He is also a teacher and a healer like Christ. And sacrifices his life for the well-being of the society. "Towards the climax of the physical sacrifice, his body flinches, and he needs water. Eman's pathetic appeal to the girl who betrays him parallels christ's agonized cry, 'I thirst.' Eman's death, like Christ, stuns the people in whose name it had been demanded, and leaves a remarkable impression on some unlikely minds" (Jones 49).

He sacrifices his life for the betterment of the humanity. He saves the life of Ifda who is an idiot and insensible. At the same time he fulfills the purpose of his own life that is belonging to the strong breed.

Sunma

She is the eldest daughter of the village priest Jaguna and Eman's helper in his job. She is the only humane character except Eman in the

play. She is aware of the evil of the villagers and therefore has a desire to fly from the village. She despises herself being a member of that village: "I wonder if I really sprang from here I know they are evil and I am not. From the oldest to smallest child, they are nourished in evil and unwholesomeness in which I have no part" (SCP1 121).

At the outset of the play she tries desperately to get Eman to leave her village. But Eman appears to be adamant to her pleadings. She is completely unknown to Eman's past that he belongs to the strong breed and that he has certain destiny to fulfill. Some critics have stressed on the relationship of Sunma and Eman. They succinctly made the point that she was in love with Eman. They may be saying this because she wanted to go away from village with Eman. But the dramatist has nowhere shown that she was in love with Eman. The critics might be interpreting it from the psychological point of view. She is simply an advocator of good and abuser of evil in the play. Her compassionate feelings for Eman makes her a good humane character.

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Dr. Ingole Kailash M.

Asst. prof. Rajiv Gandhi mahavidyalaya
Mudkhed Tq. Nanded, Dist. Nanded

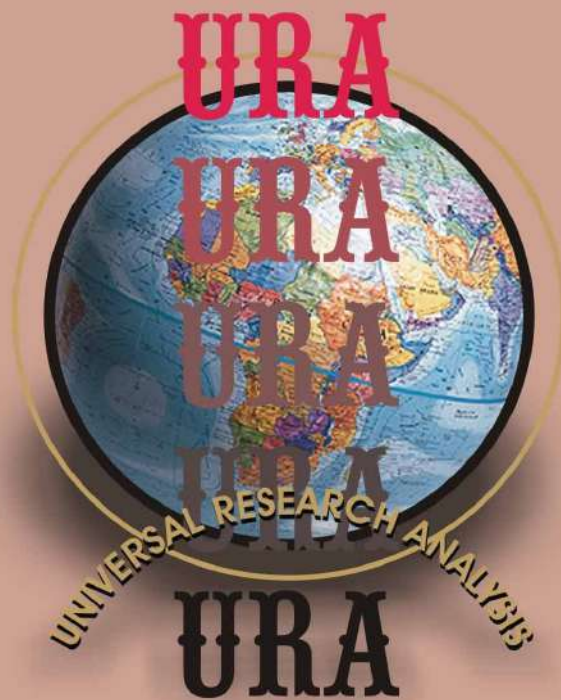


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INDEX

Sr. No	Title for Research Paper	Page No
1	Facile Method of 1,2-bis(Substituted phenyl)-1H-benzimidazole synthesis using silicagel as an efficient catalyst V. B. Rathod, P. R. Totawar	1
2	Conflicting Images of Indian Women in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Low Land Dr. Kailash Madhavrao Ingole	7
3	The Role of News Papers in Student's Life - Special Reference to Nanded City Dr. Somnath Kishanrao Pachling	15
4	Performance in Sports Dr. B. N. Gapat	20
5	राष्ट्रीयकृत बँकाच्या विलिनीकरणाचा चिकित्सक अभ्यास बी. आर. कुंडगीर	24
6	भारतातील आर्थिक सुधारणा - एक अभ्यास डॉ. एस. आर. पाटील	32
7	भारतीय परराष्ट्र धोरणातील आर्थिक विकासाचा पैलू डॉ. बालाजी वसंतराव चिलर्गे	39
8	स्त्रीवादी इतिहास लेखन प्रवाह डॉ. डी. ए. पाईकराव	46
9	रा. रं. बोराडे यांच्या कथेतील स्त्री व्यक्तिरेखा : एक आकलन डॉ. सुनीता सांगोले	50
10	जागतिकीकरण : ऐतिहासिक पार्श्वभूमी आणि वाटचाल डॉ. एस. व्ही. शेते	54
11	महात्मा फुले यांचे सामाजिक विचार डॉ. एस.एन. सातव	60



2

Conflicting Images of Indian Women in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Low Land

Dr. Kailash Madhavrao Ingole
N. C. Law College, Nanded

Research Paper - English

ABSTRACT

Jhumpa Lahiri's outstanding novel The Low Land reveals the anti-prototype feminine character and overwhelming feministic concern in the figure of Gauri who rejects the traditional roles customarily undertaken by Indian women. Gauri moves forward courageously to subdue the traditional role of Indian women, abandon her home and familial duties to pursue a different career and stand as emblematic of the distinguished role of women in changing society. The Low Land provides a beautiful portrayal of female individuals lost in the new world of material progression. It takes the readers to be struck with surprise as her characters act exactly against the patriarchal expectations. It offers a breathtaking account of emotional interplay that ends up in loneliness, alienation and withdrawal from familial life and marital cords.

The present research would reveal an internal conflict of the Indian women placed in unusual circumstances against the conventional patriarchy that is ready to rebel and find an expression of her free will at large. Indeed, this paper intends to critique the myths surrounding motherhood using a critical approach to the feminine characters. The same would analyze and critique the feminist archetype in the novel and simultaneously would explore the traditional roles which women, especially, Indian women are expected to follow and the course that the main protagonist chooses in her attempt.



I have realized that fighting for women's rights has too often become synonymous with man-hating. If there is one thing I know for certain, it is that this has to stop. (Emma, Web)

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Low Land* projects the distinctive images of Indian men and women acting upon the abnormal circumstances offered by their destinies as illustrated in the quote of Emma Watson. The images of women and their appropriation in literary representation can be studied in the light of Elaine Showalter's perspective of Gynocriticism which signifies the authentic portrayal of the feminine viewpoint. This perspective believes that merely biological discrimination could not be a discriminative logical construct for the welfare of society. Rather, the school considers sex as a biological cultural construct and gender as a product of the social and cultural milieu. The school undertakes the analysis of the constant struggle of women writers under the dominance of male discourse. Also, they have viewed the suppression of feminine voices via dominant forms of social, cultural, economic and political suppression. However, they collectively demand a complete break from the traditional role of the feminine gender redefining feminine traits to be successful in the so-called man's world. This newer outlook and feminine concern offer a less militant view than Betty Friedman and Germaine Greer's perspective of the well-being of the feminine gender. However, modern Gynocritics encourages women to nurture their feminine beauty and exclusive aspect dealing with the traditional roles thrust on them. Simultaneously, the theoretical perspective redefines the gender roles turning on their heads that becomes, in the way, all more exciting for feminine welfare.

The role of patriarchy in concern with feminine authority, status and oppression has often been in question in the writings of Indian women writers. Many author-novelists such as Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur have imparted their authoritative voice while exposing the follies of a male-dominated society. They have also projected the dilemmatic conditions of traditional Indian women crushed under the heavy burden of familial duties and at the same time fascinated by the modernity of life. Jhumpa Lahiri succinctly displays both the interior aspirations of Indian women aspiring to be free and at the same time afraid of breaking the conventional norms of the patriarchy. This dilemmatic condition of their psyche does not allow them to lead forward in their lives. Many of the female protagonists who tried to break the retrograde customs and institutions were being put at the center of criticism for their distinctiveness in approach



and actions. Jhumpa Lahiri achieves this amazing depth while bringing clarity to the feminine psyche in her struggle to assert her inherent feminine aspirations.

The Low Land: The Storyline

The Low Land reveals the story of three main characters such as Subhash Mitra, Udayan Mitra and female protagonist Gauri Mitra. Subhash Mitra is revealed as the protagonist who deserves high prestige in academics, growing up in Calcutta, but later moving to Rhode Island for the rest of his life. He is a sensible, caring guy who is involved in a romantic relationship with a single mother Holly. But after having a long relationship with Subhasah, Holly prefers to set back with another guy. Subhash's marriage thus remains only a romantic settlement having left with no choice in life. Udayan Mitra is shown as the brother of Subhash Mitra, who appears to be a radical member of the Naxalite Movement. His struggle and conflict with the system gain much importance in his life. He appears to be quite different from his brother Subhash. He deliberately neglects his academic pursuit for his cause of Naxalite Movement. In the due progressive course of action, he marries Gauri and dreams to live a happy life with her. But his tragic destiny brings nothing best to him. Udayan Mitra gets shot and killed by paramilitary police early in the narrative leaving behind Gauri and their unborn child Bela as fatherless children. Destiny leaves no choice for Subhash and Gauri but to marry each other as they wish to continue their lives in a progressive line. Gaury, as Udayan's widow, marries Subhash after which they move to Rhode Island. Gauri appears to be the antagonist in the story as she is portrayed as an intelligent yet self-centered individual in the story. Yet, she is incompatible to resolve the heartache of her first husband as she leads her life in the memories of him. This nostalgia affects her relationship with Subhash and her daughter, Bella as well. Eventually, she ignores her familial duties and leads a life of isolation. On the contrary, Subhash marries Gauri, and remains a caring husband to his niece come daughter who owns her after the mother abandons them. His marriage with Gauri remains only as a compromise to find consolation and a solution to the complexity brought to them by destiny. However, their fate denies them any sort of happiness or bliss either. Bela, the daughter of Gauri and Udayan, having risen by her step-father-uncle leads a life of ignorance as she is not revealed the identity of her real father. But in due course of time, she learns about her biological father as a teenager. This leads her to develop mental issues and psychic disorder, but soon recovers and pursues her education in arts. However, she

resents her mother for abandoning her and Subhash on their unfortunate destinies. She denies Gauri, the right to be a grandmother to her child. The Low Land deals with broken familial relationships where none is blessed with happiness and peace in life. Rather, their familial relationships are tested against adversities in life brought by their aspirations and dreams of life.

The Low Land: Thematic Concern

Jhumpa Lahiri places her outstanding feminine characters on the verge of cruel destiny where they are tested against the fire of death of their loved ones. The killing of Udayan Mitra in a Naxalite conflict with the police proves to be an earth-shattering event that brings a permanent scar on women, especially on the mother whose beloved son is taken away from her and the other, his young pregnant wife as well. Further, Gauri having a fatherless child in her womb leads to police investigations, and cruel judiciary procedures are harassed by unfavorable questions concerning her husband's death. To provide a kind of relief to her Subhash decides to marry her and give an identity to her child too against his parents' wishes

To take his brother's place, to raise his child, to come to love Gauri as Udayan had. To follow him in a way that felt perverse, that felt ordained. That felt both right and wrong. (Land, 115)

Jhumpa Lahiri presents a kind of conflicting situation in Gauri's life where she wishes to settle her life in order to safeguard her child, whereas she is unwilling to accept the physical relationship with her previous husband's elder brother. This brings her nothing best but a mental crisis and she is taken to traumatic conditions in life. She feels suffocated in both the marriage as well as in her role as a mother. She persistently gets haunted by the olden memories of her first husband, the real father of her daughter which shows her dutiful infatuation with her truthful love. Lahiri expresses her conflict in the following words

Even now, part of Gauri continued to expect some news from Udayan. For him to acknowledge Bela, and the family they might have been. At the very least to acknowledge that their lives, aware of him, unaware of him, had gone on. (Land, 154)

After the death of Udayan, Gauri shows no hope in her life. But, it is the promise of Subhash that brings her a ray of hope in life. It is his promising human concern that Subhash displays in his behavior. But soon their marriage and relocation to America lead

to suffocation and unbearable trauma in Gauri's life. Soon Gauri demands to leave her house to visit attend a university lecture and pursue her course of education ahead. Their marital relationship soon turns to be sour as Gauri fails to recover from the crisis of her first husband's death. This leads to miserable marital life as expressed in the lines.

Though he had encouraged her to visit the library in her spare time, to attend lectures now and again, she realized that he didn't consider this her work. Though he'd told her, when he asked her to marry him that she could go with her studies in America, now he told her that her priority should be Bela. She's not your child; she wanted to say to remind him of the truth. (Land, 162)

Their marital relationship gets filled with resentment, hatred and no love to grow and gets on the verge of a break. Eventually, Subhash decides to allow Gauri the freedom to attend the university lectures and she begins to cherish the time spent away from her familial duties. However, inside her psyche, she feels depleted showing the same kind of resentment and withdrawal of emotions in her relationship with her daughter. Gauri feels having caught up in an unreeling surge of emotions, she also begins to grudge Subhash's absence when he is away at work. She feels no pleasure in his absence or presence as she is dried from within. Having broken all her dreams of blissful life, Gauri develops a kind of psyche where she feels no emotions, sentiments and relationships for her loved ones. Her dried emotionalism brings her on the verge of complete withdrawal from all kinds of hope and happiness in life. She is left with nothing in life. She develops exactly the opposite of what Indian women are traditionally expected to follow in the path of culture. This is revealed in the words of Jean Baker Miller who recognizes

Indian women are stereotypically expected to be nurturers and caregivers and their selves were almost totally determined by what the dominant culture believed it needed for women. [...] The Low Land cherishes women like Gauri, if they want to break free; they are branded as failed mothers and wives. (Psychology, 17)

On the contrary, Gauri is not ignorant of her familial duties as she learns her inability to lead a role of a dutiful mother and a wife. Having torn between the conflicting situations, she locks herself in her room, gets busy with the course work and continues on this path. She acts exactly opposite to what she is expected to follow the path of a traditional woman. Gauri feels inadequate when she is unable to feel like a mother ought

to. Yet, she feels grateful towards Subhash for bringing her from Tollygunge, and at the same time, she feels resented towards him for not being in the place of Udayan, her first love-cum-husband. Her failure to believe in the institution of marriage and motherhood makes her life miserable. Exploring the affiliation of Lahiri's characters Victor Ramraj writes,

Yet, though Diasporas may not want actually to return home, wherever the dispersal has left them they retain a conscious or subconscious attachment to the traditions, customs, values, religions and language of their ancestral home. (Multiculturalism, 214)

The final chasm in their marriage takes place when unexpectedly coming home early one day, Subhash finds Bela abandoned by her mother in the house. This breaks their relationship developing silence in their relationship for weeks or two. Yet, Subhash having left with no choice one day, has to break his silence saying, "My mother was right... You don't deserve to be a parent. The privilege was wasted on you." (Land, 175) These words break their marital relationship forever, yet they customarily lead a life under one roof for weeks or two. Gauri continues to pursue her future studies, traveling to Boston for her Doctoral program. Further, Gauri finds a teaching job at university making herself free from the clutches of the marital bond. She leaves Bela to Subhash and the father and daughter had to leave a life of psychological crisis. Bela suffers from lower grades as she loses her psychological integrity and identity. Her school counselor advises Subhash to take Bela to a psychologist on Gauri's sudden departure from their lives.

The Low Land: Feminist Perspective

Gauri's expression of freedom and free will in many respects is termed as her rebellion against the patriarchic expectations of Indian women. Jhumpa Lahiri majestically puts forth the patriarchy in its right order expecting Gauri to sacrifice her free will and bow down to the destiny, fate and circumstances offered to her. But Gauri is made of a different metal. Jhumpa Lahiri does not put her male characters in the wrong place or actions, and yet they are viewed with jaundiced eyes from Gauri's perspective. Jhumpa Lahiri makes her character Gauri refuse and rebel against the claustrophobic norms, and heavy expectations and follow the path of millions of Indian women. Although, Gauri finds it difficult to be a loyal, dutiful mother similar to other Indian women. Lahiri makes Gauri suffer through her destiny, but at the same time, no reader feels any sympathy for

her. This finds its best expression in

The Lowland traces the fortune of gentle fraternal bonds frayed asunder by cruel political affairs. Lahiri's description of the story events purports to show how the nonappearance of loved ones becomes secretly a presage unforgettable presence within the subliminal mind of the exaggerated characters directing their obvious actions to their significant ways of life through which they are aggravated on. When their respective paths interweave, Lahiri proves herself to be skillful at depicting the sadness at the central part of the complicated interpersonal relationships that materialize. (Ramya, 01)

This is a different kind of feminist perspective embodied through distinctive layers of feminine expressions of free will. Gauri abandons her child and her husband, especially when the husband is the very person who offers her a means of escape from the life of a widow and an unwanted daughter-in-law. Gauri is seen as an iconoclast, who shatters the preconceived notions of what she should and must do to meet the Indian traditions. Her rebellion is seen as small and domestic heroism where she cuts her hair and her sari. Jhumpa Lahiri brings in many layers of feministic perspective by showing Gauri's refusal to accommodate within the given circumstances. This finds its best expression as in

In one corner of the floor, all of her saris, and her petticoats and blouses, were lying in ribbons and scraps of various shapes and sizes, as if an animal had shredded the fabric with its teeth and claws. She opened her drawers and saw they were empty. She had destroyed everything. (Low, 141).

Indeed, Gauri passes through an extreme sense of pain that brings her separation, alienation and a complete withdrawal from her marital and familial life. On the contrary, Jhumpa Lahiri exhibits the failure of patriarchy in the form of Udayana and Subhash who could not safeguard the present and future of Gauri. Subhash, after the death of Udayana fails to win the heart of Gauri, though he marries her, and accepts the custody of her daughter Bela. The narrative passes through an extreme sense of love, and affection, rendering emotions succor and interplay of memories that make Gauri's life traumatic with unbearable pain and suffocation in given circumstances. Lahiri portrays Gauri with dried emotionalism where she cares for none in her life. Yet, her dried emotionalism is circumstantial as she is been brought up in unusual circumstances in life. Her final escape



from the familial role is no surprise as she abandons her parents, her husband and her daughter. Being betrayed and abandoned by the man she loved extremely throughout her life, she is left with no choice but a complete withdraw from life. Yet, she finds an expression of her feminine aspirations in her pursuit of the doctoral programme and a university job. Indeed, she is a successful teaching and academic professional, but as an individual, she bears a lonely life that brings no fruits to her. This internal conflict in Gauri arises due to a complex set of circumstances and unusual treatment offered to her by fate where she is unable to find consolation in life. She passes through variables coming together and reinforcing each other at multiple levels and critical junctures of a country or region's developments. The consequences of her internal conflict show an alarming vision of the expression of free will by Indian women rejecting the so-called traditional values enforced upon them by patriarchy. Though, it is a little heroism to some extent, the same set is a precursor to the positive change in society expressing the identity of emergent new women in contemporary society.

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