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## WHY IS VIOLENCE INELUCTABLE IN THE PLAYS OF VIJAY TENDULKAR?



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### **Abstract**

India is a country with many states, languages, cults, creeds, castes, races and traditions. But in spite of its bewildering variety and diversity, she has continued to be a nation down the centuries. A survey of the panoramic history of Indian literature, from early times to the present, reveals a running thread of continuity against the background of regional diversity. The regional culture and languages grew freely and absorbed what they liked from other one. Still they preserved the unity of theme and design. Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan used to say that Indian literature is one though written in many languages. The rise of Indian English Literature thus was a significant aspect of the Indian renaissance.

**Keywords :** Plays, Vijay Tendulkar, violence, Kamala, '*Silence! The Court is in Session*'

## Research Paper

Almost all the literary genres are scholarly handled by many eminent writers of India. Poetry in English is rich in depth and variety. It is remarkable in its vitality and fecundity. Many eminent poets like Nissim Ezekiel, Kamla Das, R. Parthasarthy, A.K. Ramanujan, Shiv K Kumar, Rabindranath Tagore, Keki Daruwala, Gieve Patel, Jayanta Mahapatra, Arun Kolatkar and numerous others have made the poetic region rich and fertile. Comparatively Indian drama did not develop. It was due to lack of a living theatre. However, English plays are occasionally staged, especially in big cities with the help of foreign troops. It is matter of great satisfaction that some of the Indian-English plays like Gurucharan Das' *'Mira'*, Pratap Sharma's *'A Touch of Brightnes's'* and Asif Currimbhoy's *'The Dumb Dancer'* have been staged in the west. Indian English drama found a remarkable growth only after that. Now many dramas written in regional languages have been translated into English. The major language theatres that were active during the sixties, seventies and eighties that rejuvenated and consolidated are those of Hindi, Marathi, Bengali and Kannada. A study of Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sarkar and Girish Karnad clearly shows that they are the symbols of the new resurgence in their own areas and have made bold innovations, fruitful experiments and given new directions which go in the history of Indian drama as a significant mark of achievement. This endeavour attempts to explore why violence is ineluctable in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar.

It is generally remarked that the theme of violence is rampant in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar. But *'Silence! The Court is in Session'* is an exception as it deals with the issue of social morality and shows how a young and attractive woman school teacher is trapped and coerced into making a confession about her illicit love-affair. Sumit Mitra opined that 'the raw brutality and lewdness of *'Gidhade'* make a triumphal return in the post-*Shantata!* Phase, particularly in *'Sakharam Binder'*. It is evident here that *Silence* is 'free from the naturalistic theme of violence, unlike *'Vultures'* and *'Sakharam'*.

Benare, the principal character in *'Silence! The Court is in Session'* grows rebellious like the women characters in Shakespeare's romantic comedies and frightens other characters. She makes fun of other characters like Ponshe and Rokde. The fun and laughter that Benare makes comes out of psychological violence. The variety of comments on Benare like 'the soul of seriousness', 'hava a long face', 'amazing', 'has exemplary manner', 'nice lady' by other characters in the play makes her violent. They do not think of her mental condition. This kind of common rebuke

naturally gives birth to violence. Benare is ridiculed at the false statement. This is nothing but middle class exploitation.

A group of teachers with Benare plans to stage a play in a village and a rehearsal is arranged to teach the role of a substitute actor. Benare suggests a different play other than the atomic weapons trial. The atmosphere becomes serious when all the men conspire together against her in her absence and a mock charge of infanticide is labelled against her by considering it as a social significance. She pleads that she has not even killed a cockroach and how could she kill a new-born child. This poor and helpless plead could not reach the ears of *vultures*. This deafness gives birth to violence. Though the crime is considered imaginary, the accused is taken real. It is wonderful that the fact and fiction is mixed together that made the mock serious. The comments made by the male characters on the character and the personal life of Benare are absurd. Ponshe makes the stark comments: 'To the public eye she is unmarried' and 'she runs after men too much'. Rokde, a timid young man lacking the nerve even to stand in the witness box, gets enough encouragement from other characters and who is also a puppet in the hands of Mr and Mrs Kashikar makes a devastating statement that he has seen Benare in Prof. Damle's room in the college hostel. As soon as Prof. Damle's name is brought to light, the mock seriousness of the play becomes serious. It is also surprising that Samant, the innocent villager stabs into Benare's heart when he says that when he went to see Prof. Damle in his house he found the door locked from inside and heard an argument between the lady and the professor. The lady was pleading not to abandon her if he did he would be guilty of 'murdering two'. Benare loses the control over herself and violently asks to stop it. She came to know that all have ganged up against her and so tries to run away from the hall but it was too bolted up from outside.

Benare is thus accused of series of darts and evidence after evidence is heaped on her. It is declared that 'it is a sin to be pregnant before marriage and hence it would be still more immoral to let such a woman teach in such a condition! There is no alternative-this woman must be dismissed. The desperate Benare tries to swallow the poison but Karnik strikes it away. Leela Benare's defence in a long soliloquy is famous. It is the middle class fear that makes her crave for marriage and beg undeserving man to marry her and father her child on one hand and makes her violent by exposing her publicly. When Benare collapses sobbing, the other characters took it as joke and say that she has taken it really to heart. This is Tendulkar's 'cold blooded moral impartiality creates violence in play within a play. It can be said that the violence that the other

characters in the play towards Benare is a result of their own failure and helplessness in life that usually middle class people have to face ineluctably.

The flesh trade in '*Kamala*' also witness violence that rises out of slavery- slavery of helpless and poor middle class people and slavery of bourgeois voluntarily accepted by mentality of so-called learned and educated hence qualified. A journalist named Jaysingh Jadhav goes to purchase a woman to prove that illegal flesh trade is still prevalent in some parts of Bihar. It aims at advertising dictum where the news editor wants pictures to speak louder than print can. Jaysingh unexpectedly changes his plan and dupe Kamala who becomes his bonded keep because she could never imagine that a young man is buying her for a boring journalistic coup. To her the smart journalist looked like a knight from dreamland while he faithlessly sends her to Nari Niketan.

Jaysingh spends his time only in narrating stories and drinking. Due to this, bad habits Jaysingh becomes furious and demands unnatural service. The plight in which Kamala falls creates pity and horror on the stage. Hectic phone calls, stratagems, maneuvering to get the best results from the illustrated story, police threats and marital discord, much drinking and bonhomie are the other aspects that make the scenes violent. It is hidden truth that the play is about buyable commodities that women in our society are, or about the male chauvinists, that journalists are who for a handful of silver play into the hands of capitalist bosses thinking they are doing their downtrodden and duped masses a service. Jaysingh is a journalist in a free democratic country but he is also a slave of the bourgeois mentality of the society. The play is about the wickedness of the society that gives birth to the violence. Thus, we may conclude that the personal grievances as well as societal misconceptions give rise to violence, which becomes ineluctable in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar.

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