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Translation of harsh realities in selected plays of VijayTendulkar.

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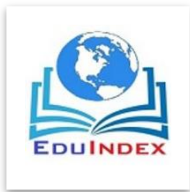
Abstract:

India is a multi-lingual and multi-cultural space where literatures are as varied as the sociological contexts. Regional works of art are carried out of their confines and are made universal through translations. This paper aims to look at how the thematic concerns raised by the renowned playwright, writer, and journalist, Vijay Tendulkar, locate a universal appeal. He wrote in Marathi, a language indigenous to India, but the themes reflected are not just restricted to contemporary Marathi or Indian sentiments or sensibilities and they are translated in so many international languages. Tendulkar's plays and film scripts exposed harsh realities and issues like violence, repression, complexity of human relations, marital status, cultural and emotional upheavals of a family ,oppression, marginalization and motives behind popular investigative journalism, to name a few. His works do not have a condescending tone; they neither preach morals nor can be dubbed immoral, rather, only lay open to thought socially relevant issues without pretending to offer easy solutions to the same. Through his plays he tries to sensitize the reader-audience to these matters. Thus, in compliance with Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory (2005), it is left entirely to the experience and exposure of the readers to interpret the underlying implications of Tendulkar's writings through translation; the words on paper are given meaning by readers- those proficient in the regional language and those who interpret with the intervention of English. The paper thus tries to map the route taken by themes from regional to universal through translation.

Keywords: regional, universal, translation, indigenous languages

Translation of harsh realities in selected plays of VijayTendulkar.

According to Plato, Drama is deeply associated with inner consciousness of human race that it has rightly been regarded as the best means for the exploration of human nature in all its varieties and manifestations. This opinion fits to Tendulkar's creative art. Reader-Response theorists actually think that readers are active participants who *create* a work of literature in the process of reading it. The meaning of a text, according to Reader-Response theorists,



exist somewhere between the words on the page and the reader's mind. Thus, in compliance with Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory (2005), it is left entirely to the experience and exposure of the readers to interpret the underlying implications of Tendulkar's writings through translation; the words on paper are given meaning by readers- those proficient in the regional language and those who interpret with the intervention of English.

Tendulkar's plays show despite man's progress in improving his material condition he has failed to free himself from barbarism of the heart. It is very difficult to define violence, since it is not restricted to a particular area, person, caste, creed, colour, class and gender and to particular causes. Violence is a fact of life in present day society. So it can be defined as a general term to describe behaviour, which deliberately harms, debases or dehumanizes human beings to damage something by the illegal use of unjustified force. In society, we find such harsh realities like oppression/tyranny of gender, marginalization and violence in different phases.

Tendulkar has been a witness to many social movements and has travelled to remote parts of the country. His dramas present social reality. But his characters are imbued with dramatic power. Tendulkar has shown interest in violence in society, the human response to violence, and individual freedom, has manifested itself in many ways. Tendulkar also involved in the translations of his contemporary dramatists from other Indian languages. He translated *Tughlaq* by Girish Karnard and *Aadhe Adhure* by Mohan Rakesh in 1971. He also translated Tennessee Williams *A street car named Desire* in Marathi. Most of Tendulkar's plays have been translated and performed in Hindi and number of other regional languages winning him recognition at the national level. Among these is *Silence! The Court is in session* (1967), *Sakharam Binder* (1972), *Kamala* (1981), *Kanyadan* (1983). Ghashiram Kotwal.

Most of the characters in Tendulkar's play seen as defeated or frustrated since they acquire deformed personalities. They seem to have a tragic dimension. Deformity of one sort or another such as gender, social, political, physical, mental and spiritual is perceptible in Tendulkar's characterization. He seeks to project men and women, not in their brighter, but in their darker aspects. Mostly, they are shown life-like, i.e., as what they are but, at times, they are shown worse than what they are in actuality. He has interest in showing disharmony rather than harmony in relationship between man and society. Tendulkar asserts," All my



creative writings begin not from an idea but from an experience, mine or somebody else's which then becomes mine". It was such an experience, another's to begin with, that provided the starting point for Kanyadaan.

Tendulkar's plays are revolutionary in the sense that they bring about a transformation in the audience's mindset. They depict the doomed or lost generation of the post-independence India, where people are victims of wilful monstrosity. *Gidhade (The Vultures)* is chronologically the next play by Tendulkar (1970). It is entirely different kind of work that underlines the astonishing range of Tendulkar's dramatic genius. About it Girish Karnard said that the staging of *Gidhade* could be compared to the blasting of a bomb in an otherwise complacent marketplace. With the production of this play, Tendulkar's name became associated with sensationalism, sex and violence. This play is a ruthless dissection of human nature revealing its inherent tendencies to violence, avarice, selfishness, sensuality and sheer wickedness. It is extremely morbid in the portrayal of its characters and action. The decadence and degeneration of individuals belonging to middle class is exposed through interactions among the members of a family.

Ramakant and Umakant's greed and viciousness, their fathers degenerate nature, their sister Manik's gross sensuality-all add into naturalistic depiction of those baser aspects of human that one would shut one's eyes to. The beating of the father by his own children, the two brother's forcible abortion of their sister's child and the mutual hatred among the members of the family underline the fundamental evil inherent in human character. But there is something more in *Gidhade* than sheer violence and evil. In the character of Rama, Ramakant's wife, Tendulkar is able to create a sensitive, naturally kind and good hearted individual. Tendulkar produced *Sakharam Binder* after this play. Some critics commented about this play that for many decades no play has created such a sensation in the theatre world of Maharashtra as Vijay Tendulkar's Marathi play *Sakharam Binder*. It brought more resistance from the censor boards than *Gidhade* had. In the words of Arundhati Banerjee,

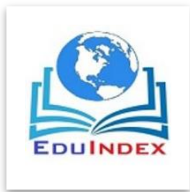
Silence! The Court is in Session combines social criticism with the tragedy of the individual. *Gidhade (Vultures)* deals with a strange blend of brutality and compassion, the economic and moral degeneration of a family. *Sakharam Binder* shows the great objectivity and complications in human nature, two necessary components of which are sex and violence.



Kamala is a denunciation of the success-oriented male dominated society where women are often victims or stepping stones in men's self-advancement. Tendulkar's plays open end may be seen as one of its striking features. In his article, Vijay Tendulkar and the Metaphor of violence, Sudhir Sonalkar rightly refers; In Tendulkar's plays, the ethical question remains both untouched and unanswered. It is perhaps inviting his audience to think about the solutions for themselves. Tendulkar is a great name in Marathi theatre and he has refurbished it with vigour and vitality to awaken the dormant conscience of society through the medium of art.

Tendulkar tend to show us how these personalities turn violent, how they come to love, hate and envy each other, how they become enslaved by passion, and why they are lonely and alienated.. Through the personal relationship of his characters Tendulkar develops the theme of man's existential loneliness. Theme of loneliness is not new in English literature but it was new in Marathi drama. Tendulkar is not one of those dramatists who use their medium for spreading favourite socio-political ideology. He is not giving us a particular philosophy of life. The playwright seeks to present the modern man with his predicament, his challenges, his difficulties and his complexities. The *Vultures* moves around the interpersonal relationship in middle class families. He has to bring out the Vulture mentality residing in the deeper recesses of the human psyche. The idiom which would confront the audience with the Vulture in man was truly shocking and unsettling. There is always and ever a general awareness of the Vulture in man. He attacks on society through his writing on feudal values and his demand for the new code of conduct and morality are clearly perceptible.

Sakharam Binder a study of human violence and terror amounted to a powerful dramatic statement. All the incidences in this play moves around Sakharam; his lasciviousness, his women, and his vulgar language. Tendulkar does not take sides in this play. He is far away from his characters. He brings out the dramatic tension among Sakharam, Laxmi and Champa. This play has evoked extreme reactions. For some it has been 'Hot Stuff'. Some found it to be extremely superficial and sensational. Some others gave the play a spiritual interpretation. One thing is clear that Tendulkar has something significant to say about marriage institutions and man woman relationship through this play. Laxmi and Champa are



not only women, but two different attitudes. He tries to make people conscious of their voices and limitations and, directly or indirectly, wants to mend their way.

The life portrayed in Tendulkar's plays is sad, miserable and full of contradictions. But it is real. The anger and frustration of the protagonist are not without any reasons. The dramas are thought provoking and make the audience sensitive to the issues. All audience leaves the theatre with their minds shocked and perturbed. Tendulkar's plays helped to refine Marathi Drama that was so far polluted by propaganda for political awakening, social reforms, social and vulgar entertainment. He turned towards drama writing after delving deep into human relations. Tendulkar has guided Marathi drama that seemed to have lost its proper track and has kept leading it for over four decades. His place and importance in this respect shall remain unique in the History of Marathi drama

Most of the characters in his plays are the victims of chance or circumstances. In the projection of life Tendulkar appears to be detached observer neither condemning cruel nor praising good characters. Almost all the plays here selected for study depict agonies and suffering, helplessness of man but they are anti-sentimental and anti-emotional. In short, we can say that Tendulkar's plays reflect socio-cultural reality as they comprise real-life situations, events, and incidents. He is social realist committed to reveal evils present in the contemporary society. He has depicted marginal position of women and their struggle against exploitation, discrimination, class conflict, homosexuality, sexual abuse etc. Tendulkar confesses "I think a lot before I write. My creativity has been shaped more by experience than by imagination."

Tendulkar's dramas deal with the problem of loss of home, sexuality, marriage and family. The playwright shows that the characters, who are suffering from identity crisis, tyranny of gender, power, caste, and complex human relationship, eventually end up in loss of home in his plays. Tendulkar's plays bring the present day issues into Indian drama in these themes – Sexuality, religious tension, and gender issues-while focusing on human relationships and personal and moral choices which are the classic concerns of the world drama. In its totality, Tendulkar's plays are rooted in the tradition of urban, realist, predominantly domestic drama by virtue of their urban settings and preoccupation with contemporary middle-class life. His vivid insight offers us the vision of harsh reality.



His views about violence and the exploiter- exploited relationship as ‘natural’ and ‘eternal’ is an indication to the political reality around us. So our playwrights unabashedly continue to depict woman as a part of patriarchal, male-dominated world in which their most glorious status is that of a victim! The concept of gender is developed by feminists to contest the naturalization of sexist- culture. Cultural practice is an essential ingredient of literature and it offers a special insight into human experience, thus enabling us to sharpen our perceptions of social reality.

Like this, contemporary dramatic writing in India has gradually grown responsive to some of the most disturbing but vital strains of contemporary life. The responses undoubtedly vary with the social and artistic background as well as the living experiences of the playwrights. Therefore, they have great divergence of tone, intensity and depth of perception. Through his plays, the playwright takes an ironic and nihilistic look at the violence generated by the process of urbanization which has resulted in the collapse of the moral and ethical values of a society. Reader does not about just understand a text better; it's also about understanding oneself better.

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