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REPRESENTATION OF VIOLENCE AND COMPLEXITY OF RELATIONSHIPS
IN THE PLAY 'THE VULTURES'

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ABSTRACT

Being an experimental dramatist Tendulkar tried to explore the realities of life, relationship, and existence. In *The Vultures*, Tendulkar exposes the collapse of humanity and value system due to avidity for money and luxurious life. The play explores greed, violence, selfishness, and inhumanity through the actions of the characters having vulturine nature. The present paper is an attempt to explore the violence and complexity of human relationships in the so-called modern society wonderfully demonstrated by Tendulkar through the vulturine instinct of his characters.

Keywords: Violence, Relationships, vulturine instinct, humanity

Introduction

The title of the play itself suggests that the play is full of characters possessed with vulturine instincts. As stated by Mr. A.P.Dani in *Comparative study of the Vultures* and *Webster's The Duchess of Malfi*:

Tendulkar's *Gidhade* is based on the playwright's perceptive observation of some cruel, crafty, unscrupulous and greedy man around him and even the names for some of the characters like Ramakant and Umakant in play have remained unchanged. (85). The characters of the play not only deceive others but also murder others for material gains. "The vultures are about the inhuman violence due to self-alienation as well as due to selfishness and avarice". (Babu, 53). Shailaja B.Wadikar also depicts the violence in the following statement:

In Shakespeare's plays, the tragic hero is responsible for his death. So, we feel pity and sympathy for him. But in Tendulkar's play *The Vultures*, the characters are essentially bad without having a single good quality. Still, we feel sympathy for them rather than terror, as all these characters appear to be the victims of their own wickedness or viciousness. In their unceasing efforts to inflict miseries on others, they make their lives more miserable. (17)

Representation of violence and complexity of human relationships

Hari Pitale, also known as Pappa, the head of Pitale family deceived his brother Sakharam who worked hard with him to establish their business. He himself admits how Sakharam worked hard to establish their firm:

Pappa. The property's mine! I earned it! I sweated for it! When we started the business, there was not even a capital of fifty rupees. Sakharam and I went hungry day and night. We sweated tears. We scraped and scraped for lunch. That's how such a large business grew up. The Hari Sakharam company's name became famous in the contracting business. We got an office....a phone. This property grew up out of it. (*Five Plays*, 215).

Without Sakharam's consideration, Hari Pitale divides his property among his three children-Ramakant, Umakant, and Manik. Ramakant, the elder son always rebukes his father, does not pay respect to him. To him, his father is a 'Bloody burden to the earth' (211). Once he moved his mouth in a conversation between Ramakant and his wife Rama, in return badly rebuked by Ramakant:

Ramakant . Just watch your words when you join our conversation, Pappa. I won't have you butting in when my better half and I are talking. Old man.....ought to bloody sit quiet....fat chance! Give him an inch, and he'll swallow us all. (212)

Manik also does not pay respect to her father. In Act I, Scene II of the play, she wants money to buy a necklace; ultimately fails. Furiously calls her father 'the bloody ruffian':

Manik. Oh, what a sin! There isn't enough even for us! The last two months, I've been dying for that laest necklace at Harivallabh's. but I can't bloody afford it! If I ask for money, no one's got any. Just matter of one thousand. But Pappa comes at me in a fury if I even mention it. The old man's become senile since we divided the estate. As for Umya-that miser, that lickpenny! No use asking him, the bloody ruffian! (207-208)

Umakant also has a ghoulish heart towards his father. He compares his father with a 'mangy dog'. He says : A mangy dog would have made a better father.....It is because we're here that you're still alive. Pappa, Know that? (213)

Thus, Vijay Tendulkar explored the complexity of father-children relationship in such a wonderful way to aware his readers, although the solutions were not there. One of the major issues presented by Tendulkar in the play 'The vultures', is violence and sex as a baser human instinct. He accepts the inevitability of violence and says:

Unlike communists, I don't think that violence can be eliminated in a classless society, or, for that matter, in any society, the spirit of aggression is something that the human being is born with. Not that it's bad. Without violence, man would have turned into a vegetable.

The play '*The vultures*' exemplifies both verbal and non-verbal violence. The vulturine instincts of the characters compel them to commit sin. About the violence in the play Tendulkar himself admitted in the Hindu folio Feb, 98. The dialogue is between Ms. Gowri Narayanan and Vijay Tendulkar :

Gowri : "...it seems Gidhade was terribly overwritten and Dr. Shriram Lagoo edited it ruthlessly for the production".

Tendulkar : "That's right. It was one of my earlier plays. Dr.Lagoo found it had a tremendous impact even the way it was. But that kind of violence cannot be taken by an audience for three hours. I agreed with his cuts, didn't dispute them at all". (90).

In the opening of the play Rajaninath, the illegal son of Hari Pitale compares the characters with vultures:

Five vultures

On the swinging branch....

Of her rotted hopes.....

Five... vultures....(206)

In Act I, Scene VI, he again describes the vulturine instinct of the characters:

For vultures' tears are never dry
 Though human tears dry up
 While still they fall,
 And leave behind them only shriveled
 Sobs for a sign. (232)

The dialogues between Ramakant and Rama present the violent nature of Ramakant:

Ramakant. For whom is this extra one? Aha! For our poet-brother? Go on....take it to him! That's another bottomless pit! Hogs all that's in the house. And sits writing those filthy poems. Modern poetry! Not worth a bloody paisa! Sheer waste of ink!

Rama. He didn't ask for a share of the property, so...

Ramakant. Obligated to him, I'm sure. A kept woman's bloody son! A bastard! If he'd come here begging for a share, I'd have shot him with my rifle. I'd have blasted him! And if he was so proud, then why does he come begging for food and tea?. (216)

Thus, Ramakant is a man of verbal and non-verbal violence. He is ready to kill Rajaninath with his rifle. He always uses nasty words, always ready to scold and beat someone. With Umakant he played many games of brutality. When they become aware of the fact that Manik is pregnant with Raja of Hondur, they trapped her to blackmail Raja of Hundur. Their conversation reflects their ruthlessness:

Ramakant. Oh, forget it, brother. That's very simple. Lock Manik up, we will. Eh? Won't let her out during that time.

Umakant. Then she'll find out.

Ramakant. Accident! How d'you like that, brother? We'll manage it. Supposing Manik breaks her arm...or her bloody leg? Then how'll she go out? Not with a leg in plaster! If her shank's in plaster, how can any-romance-take place? Eh? Then it's agreed? It is, isn't it?

Umakant. Let me think it over.

Ramakant. Oh....yer-mother! Wants to think it over! Go on. Think. You'll come to an end thinking. Bloody ruin yourself? Action's what we need...Think, go on, think, Eh? You'll never get another chance like this. That's for sure. Aren't many Rajas left these days? But the twenty thousand is a must. Ten for you. Ten for me, what? Fifty-fifty. If you're willing, we'll fix it up now. We'll call her down.....(*Five Plays*, 237)

Another scene of violence is the occasion when both the brothers threaten their uncle Sakharam. Once, Sakharam suddenly comes and it surprises them. The father Hai Pitale cheated him in the business and seeing him in the house Umakant asks his brother. How'd Uncle....get here, Ramya? Papa, Papa, cut his-er-throat!turned'm out of house. Fifteen years ago.

Ramakant says "Poor uncle! They are both equal bloody swindlers, brother, Papa's Uncle!

Both the brothers drag his body down to the floor. In the morning of the following day, Ramakant frightens his uncle out and he runs out for life. Hari pitale praises his son for it.

Ramakant and Umakant hurt their father also; they torture their father in need of money. Ramakant says-

"Which bank? In which bank, Pappa? Speak yup. Or this bloody Umya here may murder you for nothing.....The bloody bastard! Tell me. In which bank is the money Pappa" (96)

In this fake fight, Pappa gets injured and in order to escape from further assault, he admits to them that he has deposited some money in the Punjab Bank. He replied in a pathetic manner: "There's no more, you devils! There isn't! That's all there is, really. Please don't kill me! I'm your father, you pimps! Your father!" (96). The actions further move with violence on the stage with Manik's brutal act, when she succeeds in aborting Rama, who is childless

Conclusion

Thus, the whole play exhibits the vulturine instinct of human beings, encourages them to do violence. According to M.Sarat Babu :

The play exemplifies two kinds of violence through two major characters Rajaninath and Ramakant. The former fructifies the womb of Rama while the latter aborts it. It seems that these human vultures get as much intoxicated through resorting to violence as through drinking liquor. Though the writer tries to project violence in its variegated forms, he also depicts the loveless and joyless situation of the society caused by individualism and competition in this society of inequality. The play shows how people become loveless and inhuman in their mad scramble to the higher rungs in this comically hierarchized society. They also become joyless with anxiety. So they try to secure joy through liquor and violence. But it worsens the situation. (97).

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