



Original Article

TECHNICAL DRAMATIC TECHNIQUES IN SELECT PLAYS OF VIJAY TENDULKAR

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ABSTRACT

This paper is to study the techniques of dramatic techniques employed in Vijay Tendulkar's plays which analyze the raw realities of our society, focusing on reflecting human cruelty, social hypocrisy, and power dynamics. Vijay Tendulkar has used innovative dramatic techniques like play- within _a – play, deviation from the three-act structure which has broken the conventional structure to create a dynamic and realistic theatrical experience. His usage of authentic simple language which helps to explore deeply complex human emotions makes the audience feel genuine and relatable. Revelation of psychological depth through the dialogue which exposes their inner thoughts, hypocrisy and frustrations is a popular technique of Vijay Tendulkar. Another technique is dramatic technique is his usage of powerful Symbolism and imagery. Allegory and myth, symbolic setting and props which brings out psychological and physical violence. Postmodern and realistic elements helps to voice for the marginalized groups and lashes out court hypocrisy and judgement against truth. The study also highlights how he utilizes silence, pauses and fragmented dialogues as dramatic tools to deepen psychological tension and expose hidden conflicts. These techniques are highlighted in his plays such as *Gashiram Kotwal* and *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Sakharam Binder*. Tendulkar's dramatic approach involves bold experimentation with structure, characterization, and staging. Notably, in "*Ghashiram Kotwal*", he incorporates the Marathi folk form Tamasha, integrates chorus and multiple Sheroles for the sutradhar, and applies symbolic uses of songs, dance, masks, and mime to create a universal impact while presenting local stories.

Everyday objects like the parrot, faulty door latch, and the locked room take on symbolic significance, foreshadowing Benare's suffering and loss of freedom. The use of irony, presenting a fake trial that gradually reveals actual truths acts as a powerful commentary on societal hypocrisy.

Keywords: Play Within a Play, Deviation from the Three Act Structure, Symbolism and Imagery, Allegory and Myth

INTRODUCTION

Vijay Tendulkar was a leading Indian playwright, movie and television writer, literary essayist, political journalist and social commentator primarily in Marathi. Many of his plays derived inspiration from real-life incidents or social upheavals, which provides clear light on harsh realities. His dramatic techniques have had a lasting impact on Indian theatre. He has employed play-within-a-play technique in *Silence! The Court is in Session*. Realism and natural dialogue is used in the character's authentic speech of the leading characters in the play *Silence! The Court is in Session*. The play is conceived as a game and the idea that all is happening on the stage is part-mock and part earnest gives the play its theatrical edge. What we are witnessing is a mere enactment of what is rehearsal of sorts of nothing more than a mock-trail to be staged later in the day. Benare, who is on the offensive in the beginning,

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finds herself trapped at the end of the play. In reality the male dominated society expects women to be cowed down. The harmless door-latch which hurts her finger and draws her blood later shuts the group in and in fact, takes on the dimension of a blockade. The claustrophobic atmosphere inside becomes the kind of setting where social masks are striped off.

Vijay Tendulkar's innovative dramatic techniques transform the traditional Indian theatre landscape. Real identities of the characters are brought out by the technique of realism in dialogue. Benare exposes that Sukatme, in real life, is a lawyer without a brief; he was supported by Balu Rokde, he has a dig at the unfortunate Ponkshe, who has, actually failed his inter science exams but professes during the trial to be scientific genius. Ponkshe, in turn, mocks at Rokde for his slavish dependence on the Kashikars. The couple's childlessness was ridiculed by the group unitedly. The mock trial started as a harmless game but soon the game take on a serious aspect as they started accusing Benare that are based on conjecture, partly on hearsay. But they carry hidden venom and hurt Benare deeply. She wants to get off the scene by protesting against the indecent conduct of her colleagues, but she was trapped as the door latch got struck. She was sentenced to destroy the infant in her womb and must be dismissed from the teaching job, her only source of sustenance. Irony lies that the man who was responsible for making Benare pregnant, was left free. In a long soliloquy Benare flings at men who profess love but, in fact, only hunger for flesh.

Vijay Tendulkar's Ghashiram Kotwal (Ghashiram the constable), a musical combining Marathi folk performance styles and the contemporary theatrical techniques, is one of the longest running plays in the world, with over six thousand performances in India and abroad in the original and in translation. The play often breaks the fourth wall, the characters frequently stepping into the audience directly. This technique breaks the passive viewing and involves the audience in to the moral and political problems of the narrative, involving the spectators as participants in the dramatic action.

Tendulkar uses the device called the "Human wall", which is the use of chorus composed of twelve Brahmins serves multiple functions – it is used to spread ideas or rumors in the crowd scenes helps in changes in location and mood, also comments on the episodic developments of the play. Vijay Tendulkar includes traditional Marathi folk theatrical elements such as Lavani (song and dance), Kawali (devotional chorus), and ritualistic chanting. This technique helps to make the native to accept the drama more emotionally and artistically. It also infuses realism in representing celebration and violation especially through "death dances" and processions.

Another technical dramatic technique is language and punctuation as used in Sakharam Binder. In the context of Vijay Tendulkar, this play whole direct explicit references to "strategic pauses" in the dialogue are rare in secondary sources, the use of pauses are used as a tool to heighten emotional tension and stresses the dramatic power of the dialogue between characters.

On the surface, Tendulkar seems to have adapted the model of naturalistic drama but the integration of the play within a play adds, an additional dimension where the demarcating line between reality and illusion is often blurred. An almost "pirandellesque" effect is achieved as the characters move back and forth from make – belief to naked reality. A good example is Samant's evidence where his reading from a sensational and fictitious novel comes dangerously close to the real situation. But it is important to remember that Tendulkar's central concern, unlike, pirandello's, is not the philosophical issue involving the correlation of illusion and reality, but the relationship between individual and society. Also significant is the manner in which Vijay Tendulkar handles the courtroom drama to build a serious theatre just as Ibsen has adapted dramatists of naturalistic plays. Tendulkar too makes use of certain dramatic symbols in the play. The door latch that hurts Benare's finger at the very outset physically locks her in to the hall where her tormentors persecute her. This incident itself is an externalization of the 'no escape 'plight in which she finds herself in real life. There is also the green cloth parrot and the sad lullaby that Benare sings. Both assume symbolic significance at the end of the play. Tendulkar gives top priority to his character delineation. He develops his characters very meticulously through his dialogues, through the interaction of the character with one another and also through his well-conceived stage directions. He does not even fail to record the mannerisms of his characters so very realistically that they all appear to have stepped out of the stage of life in to the stage of the play.

Tendulkar's mastery lies in his character – centric plays, where complex, morality ambiguous characters drive the narrative. His usage of realistic language, natural dialogue and psychological depth allows audience to engage deeply with social issues like gender dynamics, hypocrisy, and moral policing. Devices such as monologues, silences, pauses, and courtroom settings amplify the dramatic tension and thematic focus.

The conclusion encapsulates Tendulkar's command over traditional and modern theatrical devices, making his plays deeply layered and impactful in their social critiques and artistic expression. His dramatic techniques makes him a pioneering playwright in Indian theatre.

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