
The Treatment of Violence in Plays of Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar

Dr. Priyanka Pasari

Research Project Fellow, Department of English, MJB Govt Girls PG College , Indore

Violence can be defined as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation. “Generally speaking, anything that is turbulent or excited in an injurious, damaging or destructive way, or presenting risk accordingly, may be described as violent, even if not signifying violence by a person and against a person.

Globally, violence takes the lives of more than 1.6 million people annually. Violence often has lifelong consequences for victim’s physical as well as mental health and his social functioning and can slow down his economic and social development. It is a very significant, yet common, underrated and ignored factor of human existence.

Violence, by and large, is a social phenomenon and we can prevent violence by understanding the social influences contributing to violence. Many a times, violence dominantly evolves as a direct result of social dogmas, and can be prevented by addressing this social phenomenon rather than by attempting to alter the individual.

The causes of violent behavior in humans have often been a topic of research in psychology. It is a social phenomenon; the cause of violence cannot be attributed to a single factor. It is a complex phenomenon which occurs at different levels.

The first level identifies biological and personal factors such as age, education, income, genetics, brain lesions, personality disorders, substance abuse, and a history of experiencing, witnessing, or engaging in violent behavior. The second level focuses on close relationships, such as those with family and friends. The third level explores the community context, which is the environment in schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods. Risk at this level may be affected by factors such as the absence of social networks, and concentrated poverty. Finally, the fourth level looks at the broad societal factors that help to create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited: the responsiveness of the criminal judicial system, social and cultural norms regarding gender roles or parent child relationships, income inequality, the strength of the social welfare system, the social acceptability of violence, the availability of weapons, the exposure to violence in mass media, and political instability.

The oldest references to violence in literature have evolved two completely diagonally opposite views and manifested themselves in the theories of Plato and Aristotle. But, after the World War II, images of violence in all forms of media had become so commonplace that

most modern writers who wished to convey the historical, psychological, and artistic landscape of the modern world could not fail to confront violence as a dominant subject.

Thus, in many respects, twentieth century literature defined itself by reflecting the prevalent violence of modern society from the destruction of large scale warfare to individual crimes of murder, rape, and abuse; Critics of modern literature have generally attributed this trend to both the sensational appeal of violent behavior and its potential to shock readers by shaking their beliefs.

This paper attempts a comparison of the treatment of violence in plays of Girish Karnad and Tendulkar . It tries to determine the respective similarities and differences in their approach in dealing with violence which has become a multidimensional thematic element in contemporary literature and is an inevitable and potent phenomenon of modern life.

Girish Karnad is one of the brightest shining stars of Indian English Literature. Born on May 19, 1938, in Matheran, Maharashtra. He earned international praise as a playwright, poet, actor, director, critic, and translator. With his best loved play, *Tughlaq*, Karnad had established himself as one of the most promising playwrights in the country. Vijay Tendulkar (1928-2008) was a leading Indian playwright, literary essayist, political, journalist, movie and television writer and social commentator. He wrote twenty eight full length plays, twenty four one act plays and eleven children's drama and he has been one of the most prolific writers of his time. His plays have been translated and performed in English and several Indian languages.

The World Theatre Ambassador of the International Theatre Institute, Paris, Karnad was a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford. Apart from his work in theatre, he has directed and acted in films. He has served as Director, Film and Television Institute of India; Chairman, Sangeet Natak Akademi (National Academy of Performing Arts and Director, The Nehru Centre, London). He has been honored with the Padma Bhushan award and was conferred the prestigious Jnanpith Award. Recipient of numerous prestigious awards such as the Padma Bhushan, the Vishnudas Bhave Memorial Awards, and the Katha Chudamani Awards, Tendulkar was one of the greatest play wrights of his time. (Prasad and Barbuddhe, 95). Some of his best known plays that are *The Vultures*, *Sakharam Binder*, *Silence*. *The Court is in Session*, *Ghasiram Kotwal*, and *Kanyadaan*

Based on his serious explorations of folklore, mythology and history, the subject of his plays reflect the problems and challenges of contemporary life, and endeavour to forge a link between the past and the present. The creative intellectual that he is he obviously views the subjects of his plays from his own perspective, develops them in the crucible of his own imagination and personal experiences, and employees them as a medium to communicate his own independent and original feelings, thoughts and interpretations. (Dodiya 89).

Though known for his controversial themes, his plays are widely read and enjoyed because of his wonderful dramatic techniques, vivid images and symbols and his outstanding ability to portray some of the harshest and bitter most realities of life with forthright simplicity.

There are many identical themes in the plays of Karnad and Tendulkar who have Indian stage theatre and screen world to their heart. Karnad has acted in the films which are based on the scripts of Tendulkar like *Manthan*, *Ardhasatya* and *Umbaratha*. Tendulkar has translated Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* into Marathi. Both the Dramatists have made noteworthy contribution to the stage and have made some changes in the art of writing. They have made significant contribution to the Indian National Theater Movement. Their plays are not based on the value of entertainment but they provoke the audience to think. They are contemporary writers and both of them share the contemporary social and national concerns of the country.

However, in Tendulkar's plays, sex, violence and power politics is at the centre. The human instinct of violence is dealt with at every level physical, sexual, verbal and psychological. In his own words, Tendulkar says, "I write to express my concerns, vis -a - vis my reality. The human conditions as I perceive it". Tendulkar does not bother about the consequence of writing the plays. He writes for himself.

Whereas Indian classical and folk theatre is at the centre of Girish Karnad's plays. Karnad keeps the reactions of his audience in his mind while writing his plays and thus he deliberately uses myth and history to sugar coat the bitter realities of life. Therefore, though both deal with violence Girish Karnad's plays are more acceptable to the stage, where Tendulkar's plays are more controversial and have created bitter reactions. (Prasad and Srivastava 122).

WORKS CITED:

- i. Article on India Forums about Vijay Tendulkar's life 27 Feb. 2014. Web.
- ii. Deepak, Kp. Indian English Drama : Translation, July 2012. Web. 24th March 2014.
- iii. Dodiya, Jaydipsinh, eds. The plays of Girish Karnad: Critical Perspectives, Sangam Books Limited, 1999, Print.
- iv. <http://www.india-forums.com/celebrity/1835/vijay-tendulakr/biography>
- v. http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?iframe &page=imprimable&id_article=49859
- vi. Manyon, Peter Gai. Tribalism and Violence in South Sudan, 6 Feb. 2014. Web. 20th March, 2014.
- vii. Prasad, Amar Nath, and Ajay Kumar Srivastava, eds. Indian Literature in English : Critical Assessments, Volume 1. New Delhi : Sarup & Sons, 01 Jan. 2007. Print.
- viii. Prasad, Amar Nath and Satish BARbuddhe. The Plays of Vijay Tendulkar : Critical Explorations. New Delhi : Sarup & Sons, Pinnacle Technology, 08 – Nov – 2008. Print.