

Unleashing the vulturine quality in Vijay Tendulkar's The Vultures

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Abstract

Vijay Tendulkar is a well known contemporary play wrights in modern Indian Theater. He has written more than twenty plays and most of his plays are classics of modern Indian theater. He is also a journalist ,novelist and a profound dramatist in modern Marathi theater and a short story writer. Most of his plays portraits the cruelty,evilness,selfish and discrimination in gender and other forms, these are covered with modernism in the so called democratic and modern society. He unleashes the power politics in the Indian middle class family. Suppression of the weaker ones is his core theme in majority of plays. This play “ The Vultures” is unique among his works , it is based on the story of a middle class Pitale family , with a business background. He brings out the evil spots of human characters such as, greed, lust,violence,diabolic villainy, depravity and so on. These characters symbolizes vulturine in a man. He forecasts the exploitation of a human by his own blood related members of the family, which is more open to threat to the so called cultured society, where there is no humanity for even name sake. Such a play was very new to our Indian theaters and Vijay Tendulkar is the fore runner of these domestic dramas.

Keywords: Domestic vulture, violence, the so called cultured society, exploitation, greedy.

INTRODUCTION

The play “The Vultures” was produced in may 1970 and published in 1971. It was originally written in Marathi his mother tongue and later on, it was translated to English. This play is based on the story of a middle class Pitale family. Pappa Hari Pitale and Hari Sakharam established a construction company “ The Hari Sakharam company” and were prosperous. Hari Pitale had two sons Ramakant and umakant, and a daughter Manik , daughter in law Rama and the play revolves around these characters.

The vulture is the preoccupation of contemporary middle class life. “The Vultures” forecasts the satanic qualities in man right from the beginning of the play. The construction company “ Hari Sakharam company” was initially a joint company by the brothers and later when the company flourished , Pappa Pitale grabbed the company from his brother Sakharam could not regain it back from him, even through court.

Pitale's children Ramakant , Umakant and Manik come to know about their corrupt and deceitful father. And they started hating their father . This hatred deep rooted vulturine

in character among them. They had complex moral, distrust among themselves and spiritual emptiness in greed of money. The author justifies the title vulture through certain scenes like, Pappa's beating of Sakharam, Ramakant beating Jagannath the gardener, Umakant's and Ramakant's behaviour with Manik and Pappa. All these shows the vulturine behaviour of violence, wickedness, selfishness and greed for money. Nobody shows mercy and spits out their utmost evil characters in them.

In another scene Vijay Tendulkar portrays the money minded selfishness among their familial relationship. Ramakant, Umakant and Manik play cards, rummy, while playing they discuss about the love affair of Manik and later when she left Ramakant and Umakant plan to blackmail king of Honduras for Rs 20,000/- regarding love affair with Manik, their sister. And they further conspire to break one leg and arm.

“ 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.”

Ramakant and Umakant beat up their own sister, to such an extent that one of her leg is fractured . for their bad luck King of Honduras dies in heart attack. Getting frustrated, in greed of money they thrash Manik, and she comes crawling down the stairs in white saree full of blood stains. This pictures the deep rooted rapacious vultures perversity and domestic violence. These domestic vultures are cruel, crafty and unscrupulous. All these sufferings of Manik is being watched by their father Hari Pitale with devilish laughter.

At a point the three vultures Ramakant, Umakant and Manik turn towards their father and plan to kill him for enjoying the property and money. Coming to know about this conspiracy he uses abusive words

“ If I die , it we'll be a release ! they're all waiting for it . But I'm your own father, after all! If I die , I'll become a ghost. I'll sit on your chest! I wont let you enjoy a rupee of it. Now these wolves these eh! (209)

First they planned to him and when they came to know about hidden properties and money they changed their mind to cunningly flatter him and get the money. They make him drink and asked about bank details and so on. Still they could not get any information from Pitale , he was such a crafty eviled vulture. His greedy sons, so as him couldn't restrain them any more and started blowing him merciless. Pitale was injured and bleeding. In fear and pain he prays to them pathetically leaving behind every wickedness.

“ please don't kill me I'm your father , your pimps! Your father!”

Using this pain and blood of their own father , they ask him to write a cheque for seven thousand rupees. Ramakant and Umakant don't have any kind of respect towards their father Hari Pitale . they used abusive words such as “ rascal, crafty old swindler and scoundrel”.

Umakant commented at his Pappa as,

“ A mangy dog would have made a better father”

Ramakant utters that “ as the tree, so the seed”

All these devilish creatures have barren heart and satanic qualities.

These vultures did not pray only upon their family members but also cheated the other out siders. They prayed upon the gardener Jagannath. The greed Pitale sons did not pay the employers for two months, as the gardener asked for salary, they yelled at him.

“ ungrateful bastard ! get out of the house, this minute! Comes here at an ungodly hour. Asking for money , the bastard! As if it is your fathers money! Get out on the road! Or I’ll shoot you! ... what are you waiting for Ramya? Kock the bastard in the balls! Give him another! Slam him! (206-207)

And adding more Ramakant beats the gardener that he breaks his teeth and bleeds. The vulture proves power to the powerless creature in a cruel.

This does not end here, even Manik shows in humanity to him.

“He and Ramya haggle away. Every morning. Ruin my sleep,
the swine! Does money grow on trees here? Or is there a mine of it somewhere? Bloody
cheek! (207)

She shouts at him that he is disturbing her sleep early morning as he comes home asking salary, Jagannath and Ramakant quarrel and this spoils her rest. This shows the exploit of the powerless and moneyless people among the powerful ones.

The evil Ramakant was not even a good husband to his wife Rama. He was a liquor addict . they did not have any child. Poor Rama was left barren. This cunning Ramakant was only a greedy human. Rama was one good soul among the greedy vultures . No body listens to her words, instead she was tortured by her husband and in laws. The only poor soul in the house of evil. In the last scene of the play, Rajaninath reveals himself to the merciless vultures :

“The tale of five vultures had this end

The story of men accused

Or else of vultures cursed

To live their lives as men

Oh, show them some compassion

Show a path to them

A merciful hand

That will bring release. (265)

Conclusion:

The play touches various boundaries of themes such as power, violence, lust , sex, exploitation , power politics in society, family and human relationships. He shows the barbaric characters in the modern men. All his views and themes are new to the Indian theater which were boldly telecasted, breaking the image.

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