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KAMALA BY VIJAY TENDULKAR: A PICTOGRAM OF MISANDRY

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ABSTRACT

Misogyny has been premeditated and taken seriously for decades but misandry has not been addressed yet. In this Gynocentric world, misogyny is strictly observed and its disruption is totally deplorable but this is not the case with misandry even so many people are acquainted of it but they don't even worry to discuss it. The aspiration of this investigation is to discover misandry in Vijay Tendulkar's play "Kamala". This idea is developed from the trilogy by Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Younge, through this tool, the description of the two women and the central male character is studied, to see how Vijay Tendulkar presents women in favourable light while men as usurpers and exploiters. In most of his plays, women are largely at the focus. It is about women that most of the action rotates. Tendulkar being a spokesman of feminism, stands openly against male dogmatism by criticising men for their treatment, ruthless and their brutality towards woman and sometimes he becomes so much belligerent to his men that reader figures out misandry in the dialogues uttered by female characters.

Key words: feminism, misandry, patriarchy, men, women, discrimination

Introduction

In the circle of literary writings, 'woman' as a subject has motivated numerous writers for long time, especially in the phase of twentieth century writers, though this inspiration started with the work of Marry Wollstonecraft's 'Vindication of The Rights of Woman' but later on, this trend of writing attracted many writers of twentieth century to take woman as their main character. In the beginning, though these characters were presented as complex and varied, then the playwrights went far from the traditional image of women and introduced the concept of 'New Woman', means woman is no more fragile or a victim, she is determined, powerful, courageous by negating all the out dated and stereotyped concepts regarding woman and now she is being portrayed a central figure in the whole world.

In Vijay's plays, readers find out the influence of New Woman' because in his early works, it seems that he has been greatly influenced by western playwrights. Feminist research is going on, and the major concern is 'misogyny', means blaming men for everything, and this has become the order of the day. In fact, this blaming men is leading towards dehumanizing even demonizing men. After feminist movements, woman is presented as a 'goddess' and man is considered a 'demon' and as a result society has not only silenced men

but also dehumanized them, so the concept of 'we' at the 'top' and 'they' at the 'bottom' is prevailing. In order to have a balance society, there is a dire need to address and investigate this phenomenon which has troubled the fabric of society, and so become a part of popular culture.

Vijay Tendulkar is also well known due to his treatment towards women. Almost all his female characters are presented bold, confident and determined and ready to resist the so-called power of male chauvinism either in the beginning of the play or at the end of the play. He has been labelled as a 'feminist' by a good number of critics shown by the review of criticism written on him given below, but he has not been discussed keeping in view the 'misandry' that he promotes, either deliberately or unwittingly. The Misandry according to Oxford Dictionary, it's a Late 19th century from Greek, miso- 'hating' + andr- 'man', (a hateful attitude towards men). As a researcher, I find out that this misandry has a strong presence in Vijay's plays, so, he must be studied from this point of view too, in order to understand the feminism and post feminism, and their radical impact on future course.

Vijay is cogitated as "*Angry young man*" of Marathi theatre because of his rebellion against the conventional values of ostentatiously conformist society. He simply resists traditions and disrupts taboos throughout his dramatic profession. It can be seen everywhere in his plays. During his career of writing, when many playwrights were writing on feminism and their plight sufferings and status in society and showing that how men had crushed the dignity and self-respect of women, Tendulkar being a follower of Ibsen and G.B Shaw, who are the pioneer of the concept of "New Woman" he goes one step ahead from his contemporaries' and does not present the woman as product, or thing of utility or slave, he awards woman as master who can rule the society. He entirely changes the concept of woman in some of his plays. With exposing of society's inhuman face, cruelty and violence, he pictures that how females are standing against this inhumanity and violence of men towards them(women), But this reaction of women leads toward excessive hatred and anger which is flourishing the term 'Misandry. The researcher is of the view that there is a dire necessity to discourse such preponderant and uprising phenomenon which are disconcerting the fabric of human lives.

The play '*Kamala*' a naturalistic play, exposes the pitiable condition of women in male dominated society. The playwright reveals the hypocrisy of a journalist Jaisingh who purchases a woman in an auction. The cause behind this act of purchasing is noble one according to his profession because he wants to expose some politicians who are involved in this auction. He tells all this to Kaka sahib and says him that it is unbelievable that such sort of auction still occurs. So, he and his press take this task of exposing the true face of those who are misusing the power, But the thing which is very noticeable that this good man Jaisingh is presented as 'evil man' by his wife Sarita. His treatment towards Kamala and Sarita is considered as callous. In the end of the play, Sarita's conversation with Kakasahib shows that she is not happy with him and in the last she decides that one day she will take revenge from him for all his cruelty and bitterness. Her determined attitude proves that the previous concept of women is going to be end now they(women) will not bear any unjust and hostility from men but the dialogues of Vijay's female characters not only depict their determination but hatred and anger for men as well. The very lines of the play;

J AISINGH. I bought her—in the Luhardaga bazaar in Bihar

SARITA. They auction- women?

J AISINGH. Yes, women. Can't believe it, can't you? The men who want to bid- handle the Women to inspect them. Whether they are firm or flabby. Young or old. Healthy or diseased. How they feel in the breast, in their waist in their thighs and (Act one, 14)

Jaisingh is the 'good man' in this play yet even he is associated with this buying and selling of women when he says "I bought her". Vijay Tendulkar, in these lines, particularly uses the word 'the men' who inspects the women before buying them. This extract makes it very clear and emphasize through using the words, 'men' and 'women' that men are involved in this hideous trade. It's the women who are victims and the oppressed where as it is the men who are the oppressors but the later description of inspecting through touching presents men as demons who treat women as objects and not as humans.

JAISINGH. Kamala, you won't obey me?

KAMALA. How can that be? You are kamala's master.

JAISINGH. I order you to come there with me today. (Act one, 20)

Again, Jaisingh, the good man, is presented as belonging the same race of 'men' who enslave women and this is done through putting the words 'I order you...' in his mouth. Even Kamala uses the word 'master' for him emphasizing that he is also the same race that enslave and oppress women. The very moment Jaisingh becomes the master, he is the same demon who touch women breasts, thighs and waists to determine their rate. Even a good man is presented as 'demon'.

JAISINGH. That's exactly what I'm telling you. She will come to the press conference in the Same clothes she's wearing now.

SARITA. She's a woman, after all. And her sari is torn. (22, act one)

Here again, Jaisingh, the good man, is presented as demon and Sarita as goddess. Jaisingh, the good man, wants to present Kamala before the press in rags to get the maximum desired response and the writer is stressing it by juxtaposing Jaisingh and Sarita. The last dialogue of Sarita raises her to the status of goddess, simultaneously reducing Jaisingh to the status of a demon that is insensitive and cruel caring not for a woman. This extract stresses the need for a sisterhood that is not dependant on men; rather considers them unnecessary and harmful when fighting for women. It's women like Sarita who understand and can defend another woman. This text is very political, as it sets a new way for the future course of sexual politics. It is going in a direction which separates men and women.

KAMALA. I said how much did he buy you for?

SARITA [recovering]. Me? Look here, kamala. [changes her mind and sit down beside her.] For seven hundred.

KAMALA [Pause]. It was an expensive bargain, memsahib. (Act two, 34)

Sarita, again, is presented as goddess. Here a goddess is talking to a victim; both are women. Sarita knows that Jaisingh has not really bought her as a slave but she does not tell Kamala the truth about the man named Jaisingh. She probably thought about telling Kamala the truth but, changing her mind, says he bought her for seven hundred rupees; thus, presenting Jaisingh as oppressor of women. By not telling Kamala or the common reader about Jaisingh's reality, Sarita, the goddess, proves that she is out on a mission, a mission of proving men as demons. Once they prove, it will pave the way for a sisterhood free from men. This sisterhood continues on the next page when Kamala proposes that Sarita should sleep with Jaisingh for fifteen days and the next fifteen days, kamala will provide the services, Sarita, instead of telling her the truth, agrees to the settlement, stressing a sisterhood between them. Kamala is unaware of the truth and does not even know how sarita is maligning the character of Jaisingh to become a goddess and saviour of Kamala. She falls a prey to it and says, "You tell the master about it. Tell him kamala agrees to all this." (Act two 35). Kamala, like many simple readers does not really understand how writers like Vijay Tendulkar, knowingly or unknowingly, is influencing simple minds, presenting men as demons.

JAISINGH. No. you'll have to stay where we are going now. [kamala is silent. A statue.] it's a nice place. Nicer than this.

SARITA. You're taking her to the orphanage, aren't you? How can it be nicer than here?

JAISINGH. I'm telling her that so she will feel better.

SARITA. You're deceiving her! (Act two, 41)

Here again, Sarita presents Jaisingh as an uncaring monster, a demon who does not understand the feelings of a woman. Her declaration 'you're deceiving her' is an attempt to make reader realize that the apparently 'good man' is also a 'demon'. This proves that all men, including the better ones like Jaisingh, are demons. It's only a woman who understands what a woman feels; So, it's only a woman who can act as a saviour for woman. Ignoring the fact that it's Jaisingh who brought Kamala out of the miserable life, Sarita has appointed herself as her saviour. The writer helps women to present their feminist-misandrist view when Jaisingh concludes the discussion, saying "It's I who takes decision in this house, no one else do you understand?"

KAKASAHIB. You know, the reasons he gave were completely shallows ones. You see, kamala is just a pawn in his game of chess.

SARITA. Not just kamala, kakasaheb. [Trying to control the misery.]

Not just Kamala, Kakasaheb. Me too. . . me too. (Act two, 43)

Here, Kakasahib, a man, is blaming a man but Sarita still does not agree with his opinion. She challenges his opinion saying the scope of crime is even bigger. She has included herself in the list of victims, saying she is also used as a pawn. Now, this tells a wise reader where all of this is going. There is no end to the feminist movement. The text does not show that Sarita is maltreated by Jaisingh but she is deliberately abuses him with an intention of blaming him and then using it as an excuse to leave him. It is the sisterhood of women that feminist movement is now aiming at, which is ok but the tool they are using to achieve the end is presenting men as demons. This is mal-intention. She further aggravates the matter by blaming Jaisingh of not letting her have her will. Jaisingh asks the question why she is not coming and she twists his question into forcing her to do what he wants. Her question, "Aren't I allowed to have a will of my own?" (Act two, 45) is actually an indirect verdict against Jaisingh. She makes it clear when, talking to Kakasahib, she expresses him that she also wants to hold a press conference to reveal Jaisingh as a slave-driver. She says "... this man's a great advocate of freedom. And he brings home a slave and exploits her..... Listen to the story of how he bought the slave kamala and made use of her. The other slave he got free__ not just free__ the slave's father shelled out the money__ a big sum. Ask him what he did with it." (45).

She is just out to leave Jaisingh or at least be his master. When Kakasahib asks "what on earth happened between you two" She simply says "Marriage". It's now she tells what she thinks about man-woman relationship. She is against the institution of 'marriage'. (45,46)

KAKASAHEB. Sarita, the questions you are asking have only one answer.

Because he's

like that. That's why he's a man. And that's why there's manhood in the world. I too was just like this. Don't go by what I seem to be today. I gave your aunt a lot of trouble. As if it was my right. I didn't care what she felt at all. I just marched straight ahead looking in front of me. I was confident she would follow, even if she was limping. And she did follow the poor thing.

Here, the writer is putting feminist point of view of women in Kakasahib's mouth when he blames himself of maltreating his wife. This is done to make the reader see sense of hating for institution of marriage. Even Kakasahib is calling his wife the poor thing, stamping Sarita's point of view that men are demons.

Now this is the trick. The writer has even used men to blame men. This is what the feminist movement is practicing and promoting. Women are so loud about their innocence and suppression that even men like Jaisingh and Vijay Tendulkar are so impressed that they come forward and speak for them, not realizing that feminism has moved from a movement of equality of rights to a movement of the supremacy of women. The vocabulary this fourth wave of feminism bluntly presents men as evil and women as good. It is no

more a movement for gender equality and social stability, as it is a movement of supremacy of women over men. Now they want to exchange rules. Sarita's very words prove it when she talks about marriage, she says,

"Why? Why can't man limp behind? Why aren't women ever the masters?" (47)

The equilibrium of society is going to be shattered if women succeed in maligning and taking revenge from men. According to feminists, for centuries, men ruled and now this time is for women to rule. This is just a revenge not a movement for rights or equality. Here is what she says,

"Can't a woman at least ask to live her life the same way as a man? Why must Only a man has the right to be a man? Does he have one extra sense? A Woman can do everything a man can."

This clearly shows she wants to take the place of men in society. She wants to be the 'man', that Means she wants to rule like men ruled, and as Sarita says women are ready to pay any price for it. "And I'll pay whatever price I have to pay for it." (52) Her words show her determination and fearless nature who would not stop by any threats.

Conclusion

Tendulkar being a spokesman of feminism stands openly against male dogmatism by criticising men for their treatment, ruthless and their brutality toward women. Instead of mitigating gender discrimination, Vijay's style of handling his male and female characters broadens perspective of discrimination where women are 'innocent victims' and men are 'cruel victimisers' but at the same time this discrimination opens now debate regarding the status of men in society. It's really credible to appreciate the way he presents the miseries of women but it's really not fair to prepare his women foe hating men.

It is time to address the problems of misandry as well because the social fabric of society is affecting badly by such extremes. There is a dire need to solve the pervasive problems or issues of the term dualism which is very much the characteristic of ideological feminism, and becoming a source of spreading hatred among people, groups, and no one is either immune or enslaved to this way of thinking. This approach applies to all equally whether Muslim, Jews, Israelites, Arabs, Christian, Black, whites, Capitalist, Men, and women. Likewise, no one (group or individual) should be measured innately good or bad.

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