



## The Impact of Gynocentrism in Vijay Tendulkar's Play "Silence! The court is in session"

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### Abstract

Gynocentrism or centrism means a study of women in their female fame-work in the modern social aspects of production, motivation, analysis, and interpretation. It shows that in the patriarchal society, women are marginalized in the society as well as in literature. In her fiction, *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf pointed out the cultural, economic, and educational disabilities of women in a patriarchal society. Women are prevented from realizing their creature possibilities and human potentialities. Simone D'Beauvoir, a French writer, in her book *The Second Sex*, malies a wide-ranging critic of the cultural identification of women as a merely negative aspect.

Keywords: Gynocentrism, Male Chauvinism, Hypocrisy, Harassment, Motherhood.

Tendulkar, in one of his interviews, observed that *Silence!* Is not a feminist play. He is not a feminist, but in his novels women are central characters, and they are shown as victims of male chauvinism. In *Silence*, the central character is Benare, who is a school teacher and lives a happy, independent life. She is confident and cheerful and considers herself superior to her male chorts in the theatrical party to which she belongs. In the beginning of the play, we find Benare happy with her profession as a teacher. Children are superior to adults because children are simple and innocent, and they do not run away from their responsibilities (here is a dig at Prof. Damle,

who ran away from his responsibilities). She is lively, joyful, and assertive. She sings, makes jokes, and indulges in sairic references to her colleagues, who are inferior and ineffective by contrast with her. What is most important in her character is her independent spirit. She makes a difference between public duty and private life. Her life is her own, and she has every right to think and do what she wishes. No one has any right to interfere in her personal conduct and actions. Here is an anticipation that an inquiry is being conducted by the school committee against her personal conduct. She is ready to face inquiry and punishment if there is any lapse in her discharge of duty. We have hints at the

beginning of the play that Benare is unmarried, but she is pregnant. Benare, however, has no sense of wrong in being pregnant without marriage. It is the fruit of her love, which is her personal affair. Thus, through Benare Tendulkar, she depicts a modern woman who has progressive ideas about marriage and motherhood.

But Benare lives in a society dominated by the male and by the made standards of morality and social behavior. Thus, here progressive ideas of Benare are pitted against the traditional, time-worn moral and social values held chiefly by the males. In the play, Benare belongs to the theatrical party, whose members are chiefly men who are unsuccessful and therefore happy in their lives. They suffer from inferiority complex and sexual starvation. Tendulkar devises a unique dramatic device – “play” within a play – for the sexual harassment of Benare. In the mock trial that is devised for acquainting Samat, a simple village young man with the proceeding of the court is utilized for persecuting and harassing Benare. The mock trial begins as a game, as a fun one, but gradually turns into a serious trial of Benare. In this mock trial, Benare is selected as the accused, but before the declaration of Benare as the accused, there are whispers between Ponkshe and Karnik that suggest their conspiracy against Benare. As a matter of fact, they know some secrets in the life of Benare, and they would publicly expose the secrets of a female who is lonely and helpless in the midst of these mal represents. These show the hypocrisy and cruelty of the males who find a helpless woman before them and who take malicious delight in grilling and humiliating her. Indeed, the mock trial begins in a lighthearted manner. Benare accepts her role as the accused in the mock trial with her characteristic sense of humor and liveliness of temper. She interrupts the proceedings of court with her natural humor and cheerful spirit, but gradually it takes a grave turn. Benare’s personal life is dragged in. Rokde, in his

evidence, tells the court that one evening after the performance. Benare held his hand in the dark. Rokde is a simple, nervous boy, but his goaded to give this evidence by Mrs. Kashikar and by Sukhatme. Ponkshe, in his first evidence, says that Benare is the woman who runs after the male. Rokde further says, provoked by Mrs. Kashikar’s exhortation and Benare’s taunting that he had seen Benare once in Prof. Damle’s postage room. They were alone together, and Benare’s face as the lawyer finds a clue to this statement of Rokde. When Benare finds her condition, assuming gradually gravity and seriousness once to go out, but the door is locked from outside by her own mishandling of the bolt. Thus, Benare is made captive both literally and symbolically. There is no escape that route for her. She is trapped by the male patients.

Now, the trial continues, and further grilling of the woman is carried on. Ponkshe has the greatest grievance for Benare because he is inferior to Benare and unsuccessful in his life. So, there is psychological prejudice against the young, independent, successful woman. He divulges many secrets in the life of Benare. Benare once took him into confidence and told her many secrets of her life. She exposed her displeasure with men like Sukhatme, Rokde, and Karnik. Mrs. Kashikar is dominated by her husband, Rokde is dependent on the Kashikars, and Sukhatme is a briefless barister. Thus, to a great extent, Benare provoked her own fate by looking down upon her male companions. Ponkshe tells the court further that she proposed to him and told him that she was pregnant and she wanted a father for her unborn child. he, however, gave her the word of promise that he would not discredit the name of the criminal who was responsible for her pregnancy. But he broke his promises, and thus, in exposing Benare, he exposes his own hypocrisy and faithfulness. He is actuated by the eagerness to molest Benare psychologically. Sukhatme shows the greatest vigor in disclosing out the secrets of the life of Benare. Both Sukhatme and the judge, Mrs. Kashikar, accused Benare of

immorality and of unmarried motherhood. They make eloquent speeches on social and moral values, but the strange thing is that no one mentions Prof. Damle, who is the real culprit. Thus, the male culprit spreads the guilt of adultery while Benare is single out for harrasment and punishment. Tendulkar's main interest in the drama is not so much to point out the marginalization of women as to expose the hypocrisy and cutely of the males In the patriarchal society. In her moving monologue, Benare justifies her conduct. She loves life and nature; she wants to enjoy life, and so she loved a man in her teens, and again, she loved an intellectual. Her life was worship, but both the men disrespected her love and exploited her body. Body is the traitor. But still she loves her body, and when she remembers her supreme moments of physical enjoyment, which resulted in her pregnancy, She respects her motherhood and wanted a father and the house for her unborn child. That is why she proposed to Rokde and Ponshe. But they did not understand her mind. Thus, in this monologue, there is no protest or revolt against the social system. She admits that she had committed a sin, but it is her own affair, her personal conduct, and she makes only an implied protest against male interference. It is also surprising that she does not even accuse Prof. Damle in her speech. She loves Prof. Damle in spite of his betrayal.

### Conclusion

Thus, the play cannot be called a feminist play or a play about ynocentrism. It shows the sexual harassment of a woman by the male perverts. These males are ineffective, powerless, and sexually starved. They are insensitive, cruel, and malicious. They find pleasure in the psychological tortures of a woman. So the focus of the play is on the male chauvinist and not so much on Benare, the harassed woman. The role of Samant is very significant. He is a simple, innocent villager who plays into the hands of these malicious and conspicuous city men. At the end of the play, he is the only sympathetic

and affective young man who is sensitive to the pains and mental agonies of Benare. He is identified with the parrot, who sympathizes with the sparrow. Prof. Damle is the crow who destroyed the sweet nets of Benare.

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