



HUMAN MIND: RESULTANT OF HUMAN PREDICAMENT AND HUMAN MILIEU

KAVITA

Research Scholar, Baba Mastnath University, AsthalBohar, Rohtak, Haryana

Email: kavitasardana8@gmail.com



KAVITA

Article Received:29/05/2020

Article Accepted: 28/06/2020

Published online:30/06/2020

DOI: [10.33329/rjelal.8.2.304](https://doi.org/10.33329/rjelal.8.2.304)

Abstract

Literature is the mirror of society that reflects the shades of human mind. It always serves social concerns and purposes. Present paper is a deep study of the plays of John Osborne and Vijay Tendulkar, viz. *Look Back in Anger*, *The Entertainer*, *Luther*, *Sakharam Binder*, *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *Kamala*. The object of the paper is to explore human mind which develops and gets change in accord of its environment, circumstances and milieu. No man is born evil or good but the circumstance and milieu in which he is brought up make him so. The human nature and mind is the product of its surroundings and the situations. The paper is an attempt to show that man's reaction to the state of affairs is not his own decisions. What he does is the after-effects of all the situations he dealt with. The development of human mind undergoes through similar process and stages irrespective of caste, color and creed. It remains same in all climes and times. Here in this paper the term 'Angry Youngman' is to be discussed along with the conditions, when and why a man gets the epithet.

Keywords: Angry Youngman, dissentience, masochism, complexity, scavenger, anguish.

Introduction

The epithet 'Angry Youngman' has been given to both the playwrights John Osborne and Vijay Tendulkar. Jimmy Porter in *Look Back in Anger* and Sakharam in *Sakharam Binder* strike multiple attitudes. When they speak, they represent anger, misanthropy and blasphemy. They are presented as neurotic full of intellectual frustration who furiously find the whole world out of step. The frustration of Jimmy Porter pervades the whole play, all the characters especially Alison his wife, are the victims of his verbal assault. Some critics even criticize the existence and identification of such a character. Richard Dutton in his book *Modern Tragicomedy and the British Tradition* defines the problem of identification:

He turned his scathing rhetoric on a post-war Britain that seemed to him to have no positive values left, trying to good his wife and friends out of what he saw as their apathy, but he had little self respect either and could be downright boorish in his treatment of other people, not an easy man to like or to identify with. (3)

It is also said that from Osborne's early childhood concept of narcissism of modern man got deep rooted in his mind and gets a reflection in his plays like *Look Back in Anger*, *The Entertainer* etc. Here he shows how an economic and social system of post-war England is hostile and breaks down the individual. Vijay Tendulkar, Marathi Indian writer also raises his voice against the established norms

and devilish aspects of post-independent Indiansociety through his plays and analyses the relationship between human beings by unveiling many facades that controls human behavior and humanmind.

Jimmy Porter, Sakharam Binder, Archie Rice, Jaisingh are the prime symbols of modern faithless man who has lost all faiths and beliefs in society and humanity as well and plunges into the abyss of moral depravity in the pretext of progress and advancement. In the modern age of single-mindedness religion has also lost its significance. It has not been proved as pillar of security but a blanket that wraps the minds of common people who in hope of redemption carry its load.

Shadow of Anger:

Owing to advancement and industrialization man has become materialistic and sacrificed his emotional needs and fulfillment. He is running after material pursuits. William Wordsworth, Romantic poet asserts this fact in his poem 'The World is Too Much with Us': "The world is too much with us/ Late and soon! Getting and spending/ we lay waste our powers".

Wordsworth laments over the self-centeredness and egotism of the modern man who has been captured in the claws of malice, hatred, isolation, frustration and anguish like negative traits. Anger and resistance has pervaded the mind of almost every human being. There are some socio-psychological elements that cause anger and resentment. Kenneth Allop offers an explicit analysis of the mood by calling anger 'dissentience'. When a man is sick with everything, feels anger at every cause, he is not angry but 'dissenter'.

Jimmy Porter remains annoyed with everything like 'Sunday Papers', books reviews and church bells etc. He is dissatisfied with his dull tedious routine of life, with the behavior of his wife Alison, with the ignorance of his friend Cliff. He has lost faith in everything. In his baffling sense of purposelessness he finds no noble cause to fight for.

JIMMY. I suppose people of our generation are not able to die for good cause any

longer. We had all that does for us, in the thirties and forties, when we were still kids. There are not any good, and brave cause left. (LBA, 84)

Jimmy has experienced death so closely in his childhood which is still fresh in his memory. When his father returns sick from the war in Spain, he needs care and affection of his family but Jimmy sits alone by the side of father's death bed watching him dying gradually. He holds war responsible for this tragic experience. He recollects his bitter experiences to Helena:

JIMMY. ...you see, I learnt at an early age what it was to be angry- angry and helpless. And I can never forget it. (Sits) I know more about love, betrayal and death, when I was ten years old than you will probably ever know all your life. (LBA, 58)

Jimmy suffers a kind of emotional maladjustment that emerges from the indifferent attitude of his mother and family towards his father. The other protagonists of Osborne's plays are also aware of the emotional hollowness of man. They have lost the essential feelings of love, mutual bonding, trust, compassion and sympathy. Thus, their life has become drudgery and a kind of slog. They go on living for their own self and physical comforts. Archie Rice in *The Entertainer* confesses:

ARCHIE. I am dead behind these eyes. I am dead, just like the whole inert shoddy lot there. It does not matter because I do not feel a thing and neither do they. We are just as dead as each other. (*The Entertainer*, 72)

The growing fashion in young generation and cultural erosion is also the cause of anger among older generation. It is hard for elders to accept obscenity in pretext of fashion and modernity. Billy Rice, Archie's father finds himself unable to reconcile with such situations. He scornfully remarks on theater scene, "Well why should a family man take his wife and kids to see a lot of third class sluts standing about in the nude".(18)

He further asserts the fact that to distinguish man

and woman from their dress code is hard.

BILLY. Now! Why, half the time you cannot tell the woman from the men. Not from their back. And even at the front you have to take a good look, sometimes. (*The Entertainer*, 18)

Youth is also angry and dissatisfied because their interests are trampled down under the ego of politicians. Youth blames them for their utter unfortunate situation. Frank, Archie's son, is a young British malcontent. He has no philosophy of life. He is intensely dissatisfied with himself and with others. Even he defies the recruitment of armed forces and accepts the sentence of six months imprisonment in dereliction of national duty. He does so because he is annoyed with the welfare state and partially he is not physically fit. Jean, Frank's sister is too annoyed with socio-political conditions. She shows her discontent while discussing her brother Mick's death with her father Archie and holds the politicians responsible for his death and sufferings of the youth of the country. She says:

JEAN. You don't need to look at me! I have lost a brother too. Why do people like us sit here and just lap it all up. Why do boys die or stroke boilers, why do we pick up these things, what are we hoping to get out of it, what is it all in aid of. Is it really for the sake of gloved hand waving at you from a golden coach? (*The Entertainer*, 78)

These are such issues and problems which are to be encountered with post war generation. There is a loss of human values, relationships and trust on one another. Man has become materialistic and money making machine who feels pride in modernity. G.H. Bantock quotes in *Modern Age*:

What was demoralizing...because it bred a poisonous cynicism about human relations, was making and breaking of personal friendship according to temporary and accidental circumstances in no way connected with personal merit : gracious appreciations and insistent intimacy being succeeded, when failure

according to worldly standards occurred by harsh criticism and cold avoidance. (29)

Martin Luther in Osborne's play *Luther* changes the religious course of world and leaves an inheritance of doubt and spiritual confusion that grapples the human mind. He translated Bible in Germany to make it accessible to the common masses and taught against the existence of Pope and Church. He speaks against the evils of church like indulgences (where remission of guilt for sins could be bought for cash). Through his reform treaties he asserts and make the people feel the freedom of individual conscience. He succeeds in making the people realize that the Mother Church intervenes in the way of individual's personal communication with God. He writes in his thesis:

MARTIN. But the truth is that just shall live by faith alone. I need no more than my sweet redeemer and mediator, Jesus Christ, and I shall praise him as long as I have a voice to sing; and if anyone does not care to sing with me, then he can howl on his own, if we are going to be deserted, lets follow the deserted Christ. (*Luther*, 63)

Luther's energy and heroism are remarkable. He wears the ring of the Doctor of Divinity at the age of twenty-nine. He is a man of commitment and letters. Then, why he rejects all the bounties of the world and selects the tough path of a monk's life. It implies that he is not free from psychic and is a mixture of opposed values. The rejection comes out from his unhappy childhood. He often gets the beating of his parents in his childhood. Probably this is the root cause for his entering the Cloister. The conversation between Hans, his father, and Martin bring out the fact:

HANS. Well (Almost anxiously) And if I beat you fairly often and pretty hard sometimes I suppose it was not any more than other boy, was it?

MARTIN. No.

HANS. What do you think it is makes you different? Other men are all right, are not they? You were stubborn, you were always stubborn, you were always had to resist,

have not you? (*Luther, 43*)

However his father Hans gives another reason:

HANS ...Yes, I'll tell you what! Like that day, that day when you were coming home from Erfurt, and the thunderstorm broke, and you were so piss- scared, you lay on the ground and cried out to St. Anne. (*Luther, 40*)

Luther got frightened by a thunderstorm and prayed to St. Anne to save him and that he vowed to become a monk if he was saved. If the psychology of a child is not understood by the parents or when he feels neglected by them either he becomes a free lance animal or enters in depression state. Vijay Tendulkar in his play *Sakharam Binder* highlights the barbaric treatment given to Sakharam by his father and thus he leaves his home in his childhood. He asserts in the play to Laxmi in Act I, Scenel:

SAKHARAM. ...but I am a Mahar, a dirty scavenger. I call that a bloody joke! I ran away from home when I was eleven. God fed up with my father's beatings. (*Sakharam Binder, 127*)

Here the playwright illustrates that how a person gets a drastic change in his personality due to the interference of circumstances. Although born in Brahmin family, he is nurtured in such an environment that he grows into a rough, dreadful and foul-mouthed who always keeps abuse or bidi in his mouth. He does not believe in the institution of marriage and codes of society and so he remains unmarried throughout his life. He settles his own norms and keeps the deserted women at his home not out of sympathy but to keep them as his wife.

SAKHARAM. In this house, what I say, goes. Understand? The others must to obey, that's all. No questions to be asked. And one last thing . . . you will have to be a wife to Me. [. . .] (*Sakharam Binder, 126*)

He criticizes his father's brutality but he himself adopts the same. The women at his home suffer a constant humiliation and severe beating at his instance. Exactly he is described as '...important

fury of male masochist' by N.S.Dharan and Tendulkar exposes the masochism of lower middle class male through his characters. This play deals with three major characters Laxmi, Sakharam and Champa but all are abnormal in their way. It is observed that they are the victims of the circumstances not of any latent immorality. Champa is violent, abusive and gross but she accepts that her mother and her husband are responsible for wickedness.

CHAMPA. No, I don't have a heart. He chewed it up raw long ago. [pulls herself free.] He brought me from my mother even before I'd become a woman. He married me when I didn't know what marriage meant. He'd torture me at night. He branded me, and stuck needles into me and made me do awful, filthy things. I ran away. He brought me back and stuffed chili powder into that god-awful place, where it hurts most. (*Sakharam Binder, 167*)

The anger and rage of Champa is the outcome of codes of the society. Yet she shows kindness to Laxmi by giving her shelter in Sakharam's house. Laxmi is helpless, poor and appears to us kind but same gentle lady displays her jealous and viciousness towards Champa by inciting Sakharam with the revealing of illicit love of Champa and Daud. Again circumstances play the major role and a simple, generous; god fearing lady like Laxmi turns into cunning, merciless and ferocious and leads Sakharam in disposing off the dead body of Champa.

LAXMI. [summons all her strength.] Hush! Don't shout. Not a word. [continues staring at the lifeless Champa.] Anyway she was a sinner. She'll go to hell...Now don't be afraid. We'll--we'll bury her. Where do you think? Not out there--no. Somewhere here. Inside. And we will say that she went away. No one will suspect.(197)

Vasant Palishkar describes the two women in contrast:

Champa's physical beauty, her lovely appearance, inflames Sakharam's sexual hunger. Laxmi's behavior, gestures, facial movements, and her verbal expressions attract Sakharam towards her. Outwardly, she appears submissive, helpless and docile but actually, she is ambitious, determined, possessive, and dictatorial. (13-14)

This is the complexity of human nature and mind which is the product of predicament and human milieu. Sarita, another woman character of Tendulkar in the play *Kamala* converts herself into a strong, conscious and self respected woman from a kind, submissive and devoted wife only at the spark of consciousness of an unintelligible question of an illiterate rural woman Kamala whom her husband bought from flesh-market.

KAMALA. How much did he buy you for?
SARITA. What?

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

SARITA. [Recovering]. Me? Look here, Kamala. [Changes her mind, and sits down beside her.] For seven hundred. (*Kamala*, 34)

The question brings a new consciousness approach in Sarita's life. It makes her aware of her slavish position in the family of Jaisingh. Her mind is changed. She is determined to expose the egotism and selfishness of her husband whom she follows blindly and worships. Sarita reveals her determination to her uncle Kakasaheb. She states:

SARITA. I'll go on feeling it. But at present I'm going to lock all that up in a corner of my mind and forget about it. But a day will come, Kakasaheb, when I will stop being a slave. I'll no longer be an object to be used and thrown away. I'll do what I wish, and no one will rule over me. That day has to come. And I'll whatever price I have to pay for it. (*Kamala* 52)

Indirectly it illustrates another aspect of society that women themselves are responsible for their

exploitation. She is ready to provide an emotional support to her hypocrite husband when he loses his job. Exploitation and oppression is the prominent feature of society since ages. Manchi Sarat Babu rightly remarks in *Indian Drama Today*, "The spiritual deformity facilitates ruthless exploitation and oppression and destroys human relations even within the family." He further observes:

Tendulkar successfully brings out the ugly cultural deformity of our society through his plays. He depicts gender deformity in *kamala*, political deformity in *Ghashiram Kotwal*, physical deformity in *Sakharam Binder*, mental deformity in *Encounter in Umbuglandand Kanayadan*, and spiritual deformity in *The Vultures*. (51)

Tendulkar's play *Silence! The Court is in Session* also highlights the struggle of women for her identity in the male dominated world. Leela Benare is a victim of this cruel hypocrite world. She falls in the claws of excessive physical lust of her co-worker, professor Damale and later she is accused of the crime of infanticide. Her private life is exposed intentionally in the pretext of rehearsal of the play that is cunningly arranged by her co-actors. They seek vicious pleasure in insulting and inflicting miseries to her. Their wickedness and viciousness is the result of their failure to achieve the desired goals in their life due to the circumstances and the milieu in which they grow and nurtured. Arundhati Banerjee rightly says:

— The latent sadism of the characters, of Sukhatme, of Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar, of Punkshe, Karnik or even Rokde, surfaces during the process of the trial. In delineating these characters, Tendulkar has their physic to the extent of revealing the hidden sense of failure pervading their lives: the inefficiency of Sukhatme as a lawyer, the childlessness of Mr. and Mrs. Khashikar, the non-fulfillment of Punkshe's dreams to become a scientist, the vain attempts of Karnik to be a successful actor and inability of Rokde to attain an independent, adult existence.(ix)

Thus, all the protagonists of Osborne and

Tendulkar's plays are the victims of their circumstances and environment. Bitter experiences make them angry, frustrated, anguish and isolated. Some of them suffer their anguish silently while others cause sufferings to others in vengeance on the society. Both the playwrights exhibit real life situations to bring to light the behavior of human beings and reaction of human mind in different situations.

Conclusion

Sigmund Freud's 'Psychoanalytical Theory of Personality' argues that human behavior is the result of the interactions among three component parts of mind: the id, ego and superego. Conflicts among these three structures, and our efforts to find balance among what each of them 'desires' determines how we will resolve the conflict between the overreaching behavioral tendencies: our biological aggressive and pleasure seeking drives vs. our socialized internal control over those drives. (<https://courses.lumenlearning.com>)

In nutshell it is observed that the gestures, actions and thoughts of the characters in the plays and of the man in real life are determined by some inevitable forces of nature over which man has no control. Human predicament, birth, family, society, milieu are such forces which form the human character by giving a definite shape to human mind.

Works Cited

Babu, Sarat, Manchi. *Indian Drama Today*, Prestige Books, 1997.

Banerjee, Arundhati. *Introduction: Five Plays of Vijay Tendulkar*. OUP, 1992. Bantock, G.H. *Modern Age*. Penguin, 1963.

Bhoi, Chittaranjan. *The Rhetoric of Resistance – An Appraisal of John Osborne's Plays*. Authors Press, 2015.

Dharan, N.S. *The Plays of Vijay Tendulkar*, Creative Books, 1999.

Dutton, Richard. *Modern Tragicomedy and the British Tradition*, The Harvester Press, 1986. Osborne, John. *The Entertainer*. Faber, 1957.

----- *Look Back in Anger*. Faber, 1957.

----- *Luther*. Faber, 1961.

Palshikar, Vasant. 'Sakharam Binder', *Pratishthan*, 1973.

Tendulkar, Vijay. *Kamala, Silence! The Court is in Session, The Vulture, Encounter In Umbugland*. Trans. Priya Adarkar, *Five Plays of Vijay Tendulkar*, OUP, 1992.

----- *Sakharam Binder*. Trans. Kumud Mehta and Shanta Gokhle, in *Five Plays of Vijay Tendulkar*, OUP, 1992.

Tendulkar, Vijay. *A Pioneer Playwright*. Shailja B. Wadikar, Atlantic, 2008.

----- Interview by Priya Adarkar, Enact, 1971.

----- Interviews by Shailja B. Wadikar, L.S. Deshpande, 2007.

Freud, Sigmund. *Psychoanalytical Theory of Personality*, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com>.

Phillips Brian (17 August 2007). "SparkNotes on Wordsworth's Poetry "The world is too much with us". *SparkNotes*.