

**Explication of the Game Theory in  
*Silence! The Court is in Session***

**K. Santhini, M.A., M. Phil., M.Ed.**

Asst. Professor

Department of English

Thanthai Hans Roever College (Autonomous)

Perambalur

Tamilnadu, India

[santhfriends@gmail.com](mailto:santhfriends@gmail.com)

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**Abstract**

A game is a play between two persons, between two players, two communities or between two countries based on a certain formulated approach. A game obviously ends in triumph or loss for one player and the other. But at times a group emerges as a single player to wage a war against an individual to accomplish certain vested interest. In the play *Silence! The Court is in Session* by Vijay Tendulkar the male society plays a deliberate game to entrap the heroine of the play Leela Benare in its own web through a subtle scheme. Mrs. Leela Benare a self-made and free girl suffers under various male characters in the play. But in the mock trial the male characters through a radiantly and deceitfully crafted strategy made the sinned the sinner. The various games played at diverse level in the drama offers us a chance to read the text from Game theory outlook.

**Keywords:** *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Game, De-construction, Unconsciousness, Jealousy, Existentialism

Vijay Dhondopant Tendulkar, a most important contemporary Indian Experimental and satirical playwright, a political journalist and a social critic has been in the forerunner of the Indian Theatre for nearly five decades and most of his plays contain a dormant analysis of modern male dominated Indian society and the middle-class pretense. He took a disinterested look and uncovered the mistreatment of woman both sexually and physically in male centered world. He successfully ventures into unveiling the social turpitude and the holocaust in which the interests of the fairer sex are almost strangled. In a hectic decade of avant-gardism (1960s), when the impact of the 'absurd' was heavy on the theatrical scenario of India, Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session* brought in need strategies of postmodernism. Yet, the play retains most of the deceptive features of proscenium realism shunning the temptations of existentialism. The

planned paper aims to deal with Silence! The court is in Session, one of his theatrically most successful plays from a new perspective. The play within a play structure provides us scope to analyze and anatomize the play from the recently developed theory –the game theory.

In the play the male subjugated society or patriarchal society used the plan of game as a potential instrument to entrap Leela Benare in the web created by the different male players who played as a group to defeat the lonely and single player Leela Benare who is as depicted in the play lives on her own term in a world designed and crafted by her, “My life is my own-I haven’t sold it to anyone for a job! My will is my own. My wishes are my own.” The game that emerges is an enchanting and enthralling one in which two groups of players are concerned in a rational battle. The different male members are failures in their respective occupation and field. They came jointly as a group to play an irrational game in an apparently rational way to outwit the disagreement who is a solo player in the complicated and subtle game of dishonoring and engaging a free bird.

Over the years there has been a development of myriad theories and many are evolving that have enlightened and brought in new ways of reading a picky literary work. Game theory is one of such theoretical tools which has handed over to the critics and theoreticians a fresh and new tool to read a particular text, appliance of game theory to the humanities have grown-up over the years in such disciplines as history, philosophy, faith and linguistics. Moral issues in business and law have also been examined using game-theoretic models. It is fiction that has confirmed to be the most fertile for humanistic application of game theory, novels, short stories, plays, opera librettos, a narrative poem – all have been subject to game theoretic exegesis, as have stories in the Hebrew bible. Game theory may also provide a thrifty frame work and an important set of tools for the literary analyst. Although there are no scrupulous tests to determine what the ‘right’ understanding of a work of fiction is, some understanding is more reasonable than others. Game theory has proved useful in explicating the tactical options of characters by making tighter the connection amid motives and events in plot construction.

Tendulkar’s play Silence! The Court is in Session assumes an important part under the above-mentioned quote where the different members of the group played a planned game with regulations and conventions formulated and devised by the members and any objection by Mrs. Benare to those self-crafted rules is immediately overridden with the banging of the gavel. She is restricted by unspoken rules and systems. This is where the game starts. Tendulkar deliberately drew our attention to the nature of the game as Peter Hutchinson, in his book Games Authors Play, states “Another characteristic of literary play is its self-conscious nature: in order to function as a game, the play must draw attention to itself”. The of the playwright is to channelize the reader/spectators’ concentration to a realism which always remain dormant in our

objective world. This objective of Tendulkar is self-evident by the fact that he states the word 'game' as many as 18 times or so in the play.

Jacques Derrida in his article Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences avers that the game disrupts or breaks down the present structure and signifiers. Derrida attacks the concept of the centre which allows for a certain structure or organization. He insists that we must break with the structure's points of reference in order to obtain or enter into the game. In other words, disrupt the centre. He defines centre or structure as a 'point of presence', a fixed origin that is governed by a set rules, 'the function of the centre' was not only to orient, balance and organize the structure but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit any deviations or prohibit anything outside the centre or we might call free play of the structure. Generally 'drama' means action. As Aristotle puts it drama is an 'imitation of action'. But in *Silence! The Court is in Session*, we understand that the play is not an imitation of action, rather it is a game of word play, and the whole play is verbal rather than a spectacle of action.

The de-constructionist reading of a play teaches us to read between the lines and excavate the unconscious of a text. If we read this text from this perspective, then we can unconditionally state that the insensible of the text discloses the social structure and stereotyping of woman. Though the whole play turns around Benare and the game, but the insensible of the text highlights the dichotomy between male/female, freedom/bound, tradition / modernity, progressive / regressive, professionalism / amateurism, motherhood / womanhood, law/human spirit and justice/injustice. And it is obvious from the way the whole game is played that the later part of the dichotomy is marginalized, disparaged and sub-ordinated to the first part. The left is on the centre while the right is on the periphery.

Shanta the play and its structure revolve wholly round the idea of a game and include the essential element of turnaround. Benare, who is on the unpleasant in the commencement, finds herself trapped at the close of the play. The claustrophobic environment within the hall gives a kind of setting. The setting helps to transport us into the second level or the unaware of the text which is the real one. When the charges which were based partly on conjecture and somewhat on gossip were brought against her, Benare looks astonished. All are soundless for the moment. The environment is tremendously boring. Unexpectedly the ambience is changed. From joyful and candid environment, it shifted into a serious and crucial environment.

In the act I, we find that in the sub-conscious mind of the players, there was already the seed of playing a game was already sown;

Sukhatme: ...Shall I tell you what's going through your mind right now? This hall, you are thinking, is ideal for Intimate Theatre-in other words, for those plays of yours for a tiny audience. Rawte's sickness and to teach Samant the proceeding of court and their willingness to kill the time before the actual performance give them their golden opportunity to play the game and thereby trap Benare and have some fun which is an intrinsic part of game. Mrs. Kashikar who had repressed hatred and jealousy for Benare, since Mrs. Kashikar is not as much educated and free like Benare and does not have financial independence and above all she is infertile, unable to produce children unlike Benare and she continually lives under the dominance of Mr. Kashikar.

Mrs. Kashikar: ...That's what happens these days when you get everything without marrying. They just want comfort. They couldn't care about responsibility... It's the sly new fashion of women earning that makes everything go wrong.

Mrs. Kashikar: ...Should there be no limit to how freely a woman can behave with a man? An unmarried woman?

And it was Mrs. Kashikar who first proposed for a rehearsal and suggested that there must be a change in the accused. Even during their discussion as to who should be the accused, a latent and hidden game being played.

Karnik: ... [Aside to Ponshe, who has reached him] Do you know something Ponshe?

Ponshe: What?

Karnik: [Indicating inner room] about her? About Miss Benare. Rokde told me.

Kashikar: Whispers some plan to them, gesticulating every now and then, he points to the room where Benare is.

Finally, Miss Leela Benare was charged with the crime of infanticide under section No.302 of the Indian Penal Code. Later in the play Kashikar confessed that he deliberately picked the charge labeled against Benare Kashikar: The question of infanticide is one of great social significance. That's why I deliberately picked it.

To conclude, the reader or spectator is not fixed on a particular meaning; rather the game of the play provides the reader/spectator to decipher the totalizing subject or thought within the play. The organization of the play and the open conclusion nature of the text present us an chance to do away with the centre. The reader has the chance to liberally participate in the text and cheer the diversity of the literary game, meaning, and the connotations also hands over to us a tool to undermine the overt and understood actuality and go deep into the sub-conscious strata

of the text. In conclusion the game breaks with regularity and causes revolution and entropy in the textual space. The play offers us a scope for a sensible application of Game theory.

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