



Familial abuse in Vijay Tendulkar's play "The Vulture"

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Abstract:

This article portrays *The Vultures* in a negative light. The flesh of dead animals is the only food the ferocious and merciless vulture eats. A vulture is a metaphor for someone who seeks out opportunities to profit from the troubles of others. The play features Hari Pitale (Pappa), his two sons Ramakant and Umarkanat, daughter Manik, and Rama, Ramakant's spouse, as the Pitale family. Another member of the family is Rajaninath, Pappa's illegitimate son. Every member of Hari Pitale's family, apart from Rama and Rajaninath, possesses the vulpine cruelty, greed, and cunning. Pappa, Ramakant, Umarkanat, and Manik exhibit the vulture's ferocity through their words and deeds. The relationships between the family members are disgustingly corrupt. They devote all of their energy to devising heinous schemes of mutual deception. The play also looks at the kind relationship that exists between Rama and Rajaninath—a bond that is as welcome as an oasis in the middle of the desert.

Keywords: cunning, merciless, promiscuous, hypocrisy.

Introduction:

The play features two roles for Pappa Pitale's illegitimate son, Rajaninath. He performs the role of chorus in addition to being one of the main characters. The three poems that Rajaninath recited provide us with information about the Pitale family's past and present. It is evident from the lengthy song he sings at the play's opening that the incident took place over a period of twenty-two years. The sight of Ramakant running away from his paternal house along with Rama in order to escape from his creditors brings back all these past memories to him. He feels sorry for the plight of Rama and recalls the painful past that tries to overpower him. The high flying vulture is self-dependent. But the human vultures in the play, with the exception of Pappa, are dependent upon their ancestral property built over years by their father. Pappa is basking on his past glory. His habit of working on his toothless mouth is suggestive of his desperate condition. He was able to move from the working class to the upper middle class through his own diligence and deceit. However, he now believes that working-class individuals like the family gardener Jagannath require a

"kick as they rise and curse as they sit."

Pappa Pitale lives by the maxim "by hook or by crook." He has no qualms about defrauding Sakharam, his own brother, and taking advantage of his lack of morality. He also lacks integrity because Rajaninath, his son, is a bastard. He claims that his daughter-in-law Rama has neglected him, and he worries that no one will notice his departure, so his corpse will lie rotting for days. He feels that the company he put his blood, sweat, and tears into has been destroyed by Ramakant's unscrupulous business dealings. He may have done it under duress as he admits to his illegitimate son Rajaninath when they meet in the garage, but he

has given his business and possessions to his children, most likely so they can live a quiet old age. Even though he has shared his wealth with them, he loudly protests that his children are ungrateful wretches who treat him badly. Their cruelty and indifference have turned his life into a hellish experience. He rants and raves.

If I die, I'll become a ghost. I'll sit on your chest! I won't let you enjoy a rupee of it. I earned it all. Now, these Wolves, these bullies!... (Act I, Scene II)

His outburst against his sons is only stopped by a coughing fit. His last-ditch attempt to win back his fortune through a lawsuit, assisted by Rajaninath, also falls short.

Even with all of his guile, in his advanced years, all he faces is stress, insults, and misery. By mistreating and injuring the unfortunate gardener Jagannath, who comes to demand his due wages, Ramakant shows what kind of person he is. Ramakant is devoid of all civility and decency. He has destroyed the family business, which was once a goose that produced golden eggs under his Pappa's supervision, because he indulged in unscrupulous activities. Despite the fact that his grandfather gave him a successful business, he shows no gratitude to him. He says outright that he is waiting for Pappa to pass away. For him, his father is a

“confounded nuisance” and “A bloody burden to the earth!”

His entire being is focused on generating money through any unethical means possible. He enjoys playing games of chance. Excessive drinking has made him impotent. He has no ethical or legal boundaries when it comes to his self-interest. He responds,

"It was my complete stupidity to have produced such useless bastards like me," when Pappaden criticises him.

“As the seed, so the tree!” Did we ever ask to be produced?”

Umakant is a single man with a sharp tongue and lax morals. Like his older brother Umakant, he is also a greedy and evil person. He is extremely cunning and watchful when it comes to money. After his Pappa divided up his estate, he inherited the solid landed property in Lonavla. Umakant is able to make a substantial amount of money by selling paper on the black market, in contrast to his brother who is unable to maintain his business. He has no affection for Manik or Ramakant, either as a brother or a sister. He stays away from marriage for reasons that are unclear, so when Ramakant makes fun of it, he becomes enraged and threatens to break his jaw:

Shut up! Don't bring my personal life into this, Ramya. If you open your trap again, I'll smash it open for you! (Act I, Scene II)

He would not hesitate to criticise and make fun of their sister Manik's promiscuous behaviour, even though he would object to his brother discussing his personal life. He enjoys cruelly making fun of her for going on picnics with her lovers, rolling around the town, and then giving herself a thorough cleaning. He calls her "that cow," family, and does so in a crude and abusive way. When she responds to his crude remarks, he pulls the bath towel off her shoulders, exposing her in her blouse and petticoat, and continues to tease and bully her. He even smacks her behind while taking pleasure in her humiliation. Nor does he love or respect his Pappa. "A mangy dog would have made a better father," he exclaims. He is a better money manager than Ramakant and his Pappa. He is frugal and does not part with his money, even though he has plenty and to spare. Enraged and jealous, Ramakant taunts Umakant, saying that he can only make his bank account grow larger, not a woman's belly:

“My brother!” Swelling his bank balance! Blackmarketing paper! If you're a man, swell a woman's belly for a change.”

Additionally, he claims that Umakant's estate will be well-funded upon his passing and that he will not have any trouble continuing his line:

“When he dies, he will spread bundles of money on his bite! He'll lie down on them. And they will cart him off to the cemetery No heir to his name!”

Tendulkar portrays Rama as timid, sensitive, and kind-hearted, while Manik is portrayed as aggressive and sShe looks like a crazy person in her thirties. terical type. She accuses her brothers of plotting to eliminate her from her share of the ancestral property. She claims that all of them tried to poison her medicine and kill her when she was laid up with typhoid. It was her alertness that saved her from becoming a victim to their evil plot. Her suspicion is confirmed when she plays a game of cards

with her brothers. In order extract money due to her in the game, Umakant grabs her neck and starts twisting it. Manik raises an alarm for help. Ramakant eggs on Umakant to torture her and extract money from her, then and there:

“Don’t bloody let her go, Umya. Drag the bloody money out! Look, how she is wriggling! Squash her bloody neck! Twist it!”(Act II, Scene I)

When Manik helps her brothers attempt to take the hidden stash of cash from Pappa, she does not experience any moral dilemmas. As a result, Manik is just as wicked as her brothers in every way. These play's characters are all willing to do whatever it takes to satisfy their avarice. "Embodiments of hypocrisy, selfishness, and treachery" is what they are. The young poet Rajaninath described Rama as being similar to an innocent doe who, after getting married, had come to a home where

The harsh and avaricious people who live in her father-in-law HariPitale's home cause her to experience endless deaths every day. Even though she patiently completes all of the housework and shows careful attention to everyone, her elderly father-in-law Pappa and her sister-in-law Manik criticise her harshly and make a big deal out of little things. She is the only relative of her husband who feels sorry for Rajaninath. Despite her husband's opposition, she frequently gives him food and tea because she loves Rajaninath, Pappa Pitale's illegitimate son. She is extremely submissive and says nothing to oppose her husband's despotism. By submitting to his wishes and visiting sathus, swamis, astrologers, and doctors to seek their blessings and obey their advice in order to become a parent, she patiently bears the cross. This has continued for years on end with no apparent benefit. She has put up with her husband's foolish talks about them having a child and his inebriated infatuation. Her deep yearning to become a mother—a natural desire shared by all women, even whores—pushes her to cross the threshold and look for fulfilment from Rajaninath, her half-brother-in-law. It is the union of two forsaken souls who are looking for fulfilment in the arms of one another. However, Rama's brief display of bravery accomplishes nothing. Her happiness at becoming a mother is short-lived. Using black magic, Manik, her vicious sister-in-law, is able to abort the child while it is still inside her. She is consequently left

“empty of pain and empty of desire” as given out by Rajaninath in his poem.(Act I, Scene !)

Rajaninath is a much neglected, much hated and lonely young man. He frequently expresses his rage at being an illegitimate child and his hatred towards his parents for being the cause of it. His father and siblings, whom he views as devils in disguise, are the objects of his unwavering hatred. He turns into a resentful young man who can not figure out who he is. He rebels against social norms and breaks them out of his resentment of Pappa and his family. He goes to the Tamasha and engages in dubious activities, such as going to see a prostitute. His sister-in-law Rama is the target of his ire because he perceives her as a coward who is afraid of Pappa's family members who are dissolute. He makes love to her out of respect for her soul's desire to have a baby, not because he is infatuated with her body. As the illegitimate son of a mangy dog (the depraved and lewd Pappa), she has been a true companion to him.

With her husband impotent and all hopes dashed by Manik, the she-devil, Rama leaves the house. Even though he is fully aware of Rama's suffering, he does nothing to make it better save for berating her for her timidity in anger. He does not want his father's tainted money or property, and he resists temptation when PappaPitale uses his possessions to settle scores with his spiteful sons Umakant and Ramakant, who had thrown him out of the house despite the fact that they were subsisting on his earnings and property. The recent romance between Ramakant and Umakant's sister Manik and the Raja of Hondur appears to be a lucky break for them both. They plan to take advantage of this to blackmail the Raja by using Manik's single status as a useful tool. Together, they engage in a dishonest scheme to hold Manik captive in the house and coerce the Raja into paying a large sum of money by threatening to expose their sister Manik's covert relationship. The brothers break their sister's leg using a broken bottle and a sharp tin opener. Unfortunately, their violent plan fails as the Raja passes away from a heart attack. They choose to destroy the Raja's brat inside their sister's womb out of pure fury. After giving Manik a lethal kick to the abdomen, Ramakant aborts the child.

Manik, her white sari bloodstained and her leg broken, runs out of the house sobbing in excruciating pain. It is shocking to witness such brutality. When Ramakant and Umakant are attempting to take advantage of their sister's extramarital affair with the Raja, they do not give a damn about maintaining family honour. Ironically, though, they only become concerned about the damage to their family's reputation caused by Manik's unmarried status after the chance to profit from it is lost. Later on, Manik exacts her revenge by attempting to use black magic to abort her sister-in-law's child.

I’ve done it ... I’ve done it as I planned ... I cut lemon ... I rubbed the ash. Seven times on my loins and stomach! It’s going to abort sister-in-law’s baby’s going to abort. Ramya’s brat is going to abort-it won’t live. It won’t live! (Act II, Scene VI)

Pappa and his children are living examples of a multitude of social ills that plague society, including hypocrisy, lack of sincerity, promiscuity, dishonesty, and more. Tendulkar pokes fun at those members of society who disregard morality in order to sate their greed for wealth through these characters.

That “Blood is thicker than water” does not apply to the members of Pitale family.

Here, the fundamental element influencing relationships is money, which binds when it works for the parties involved and unbinds when it doesn't. The modern materialistic culture is embodied by characters such as PappaPitale, Ramakant, Umakant, and Manik, who are willing to forgo human values in exchange for worldly pleasures. In reference to this development, Arundhati Banerjee pens:

“Tendulkar presents modern man in all his complexities. He portrays life as it is from different angles, without trying to moralise or philosophies in any way.”

One by one, Pappa, Manik, and Umakant are ejected from the home. All of them are victims of their own malevolent schemes. Ramakant eventually finds himself penniless. Pappa wishes to try one last time to get his riches back. Throughout his life, he had never acknowledged taking on Rajaninath's responsibilities, but now he asks for his assistance in order to exact revenge on his bitter sons and reclaim his property via legal action. In order to convince the judge that his father signed the previous will under duress, he offers to draft a new will that is in the best interests of Rajaninath and Manik. He promises Rajaninath that he will support him in the legal system. However, Rajaninath declines to participate, which is why it fails. As a result of Pappa, Ramakant, Umakant, and Manik's violence and murderous deception, the house of HariPitale falls apart. They reap what they sow. The moral decay of the Pitale family is thus highlighted in the play *The Vultures*. There is a traumatic description of the evil consequences of man's avarice. Men will go to great lengths to satiate their greed and repressed ego, as evidenced by incidents such as the father's brutal mistreatment by his own children, the brothers' brutal abortion of their sister Manik's child, and Manik's abortion of her sister-in-law Rama's child to settle her score with her brothers. Tendulkar depicts the dark and shady side of human nature by delving deeply into its inner workings.

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