

Lecture-5

Silence! The Court is in Session

Good morning, let us now, begin our discussion of a very important playwright, post-independence, Vijay Tendulkar and the for spring will be discussing by him is called, 'Silence the court is in Session', Shantata! Court Chalu Aahe which is the Marathi title and it's a 1967 production.

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Vijay Tendulkar: Silence! The Court is in Session

- The play describes the patriarchal enslavement of woman within the space of a court and a mock trial.
- The court symbolizes the space of patriarchy where Miss. Benare is trapped twice. What begins as a mock trial can no longer be distinguished from the actual play within the play by the end.
- Benare betrays her own 'crime' of bearing an illegitimate child outside marriage and falling in love with a married man named Prof. Damle, who never appears on stage despite the fact that he is also responsible.

And it's one of the first and little place, that became a part of the new Indian drama, phenomenon of the 1960s, and it's also for the first modern Indian plays where the woman, the female protagonist of the play, becomes the protagonist and the victim of the play, and what is also interesting that the play? Takes the form of a play? Within a play Right? So, you have an outer play and outer narrative frame, I never play that has big enacted inside the play, within the larger, structure of the framing play, and the distinction between the outer play and the inner play, is gradually blurred and finally collapsed, by the end of the play, the play itself has a rather, a fairly simple plot, it's about a young schoolteacher called Miss. Benare, who is accused of having committed infanticide? And for which the court condemned and-so, there is a mock trial; the play takes of a form for mock court trial, where Miss Benare is being charged with infanticide? For which she is punished she shamed, and by the end of the play there's actually no distinction between the outer play and the inner play. Now, the outer play is of these different characters, you have several characters in the play, all of whom are struggling actors. So, they're actors, playing actors, playing characters in the inner play. Right? So, you have actors, playing actors in the play, and they're all trying to put up a play. Right? In which they, play different characters and they're all struggling actors. Right? And they're all part for a truth that is headed by Mr. Kashi girl and they're all struggling to, put up a new performance for the city, and you have miss. Benare who was one of the actors, in the play? Who is also becomes the protagonist of the play within the play? There's an inner people, the inner play takes the form of a mock court trial, where Miss Benare The protagonist of the play is being charged with infanticide, the play is you know, largely thematically speaking about, you know is a condemnation, patriarchal condemnation of women, female sexuality. And you know, initially there's a suggestion that Miss. Benare has done something, which she should not have done? Which transgresses social norms? Which is to kill her unborn child? and she's also didn't later charge for having had an affair, with and much older married professor. Professor Damle, for which she is also being shamed and stigmatized and punished, and the unborn child is mister is a child she has with Professor Damle, so such for, which she has to be punished. So, the play really is about the patriarchal regulation and operation of women, who are unable to actually be sexual, independent sexual agents, of in their own nature. And what is also a part of Tendulkar's dramatic strategy in the play is to show, how Benare persecutors in the play are actually as powerless as she, is so, in you know.

So it seems to be as the editor of the collection of plays by Tendulkar. Right? So, the main editor of the collected works Tendulkar, show me upon the part there, who is also very important play write and director, says of Tendulkar's play "silence! The court is in session", is to say that, it is part of Tendulkar's dramatic strategy that Benare immediate prosecutors or persecutors in the play or as powerless as she is and all the exertions to Cut Banaray down to size are more they are striving after power as a real exercise of power. Right? So, you have Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar, you have a very innocent villager, who initially comes to watch the performance in the play but then becomes a part of the play, within the play, Samanth. Then you also have, certain other characters you have Mrs. Kashikar. Right? Who is rather you know, subservient wife to Mr. Kashikar, she's always being ridiculed by her husband and silenced, and then you also have another very important characters in the play so you have Sukhatme, who is a rather inefficient lawyer? Right? So, he wants to be a proficient lawyer, but he is struggling to be one. You also have Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar, adopted son Rokde, who was unable to attain an independent adult existence. Someone, who's independent of his parents he's always being infantilized treated like a child in the play, and you also have another character called Karnik, who is you know trying in vain to become a successful actor? Right? And Karnik also seems to be in some sense a autobiographical reflection of widget and required himself, in the kinds of understanding that he has of modern theatre, what theatre means to him ?so, these are, the some of the important characters in the play, and you will notice that, as the play proceeds you know, miss. Benare is initially the center of the attention of all that the male and female characters in the play, and because she has been made the protagonist and the victim of the mock court trial in the play, you know, you'll also notice that, that Miss. Benare is when, when aware of the insecurities of these men and women, who act with her, her fellow actors? And they're all in some sense failures, and they're all struggling to become what they are trying to become? What they want to become? in their lives, but they are unable to and so miss. Benare is constantly, ridiculing them making fun of them, as the play proceeds, but then as the title of the play itself suggests silence the courts in session, the court becomes another oppressive patriarchal institution that gradually silences Miss. Benare. So, it becomes a one of those institutions, that embodies the silencing mechanisms of patriarchy that, that forbids women from speaking. Right? From speaking up, and so, towards the end of the play when Miss. Benare actually delivers a long monologue to, it's I mean about her own plight, it's hardly a defence in her case, because she's unable to defend herself against a court, against these men, who will not let her speak? So, it's a rather unsuccessful self-defence, which actually becomes more an exploitation of the lost foregone possibilities of life itself? Possibilities that are no longer available to the woman in question, it's rather symbolic of Vijay Tendulkar to actually portray Miss. Benare the space of the court, where the mock court ,court trial takes place, as a pale as a stone of patriarchy, where the woman is trapped Right? So, you look at the opening of act 1, you know, there is a description of the space on the stage, where you have lights going up on an empty completely empty Hall ,and there are two doors, one, one to enter by and one go to an adjoining room, one side of the hall seems to go leftwards into the wings, within the hall or a built-in platform, one or two old wooden chairs ,an old box, a stool, and sundry, other things, like jumbled together, as of an answer in a number room, the clock out of order on the wall, some worn-out portraits of national leaders ,a wooden board with the names of donors, a picture of the god Ganesha hung on the door, the door is Closed. Right? There are footsteps outside, someone unlocks a door, a man's idols in and stands looking for around, as if seeing the hall for the first time. This is Samanth, in his hands a lock-and-key, a toy parrot made of green cloth a book. So, you see, this is a very innocent uh villager, you know, somebody who's come to watch the performance Samanth, entering the space of the theatre, which then becomes a space of the court ?where the mock trial takes place ?and he suggests that Miss. Benare enters later on ,with you know, holding her finger, one of her fingertips is between her lips, she obviously has injured her fingertip, which got caught in the door, or to the entrance of the theatre ,and she gets locked inside.

Right? And that's what someone says that, 'shut the door and you've had it, locked yourself in', Right? So, it's symbolic to note that, she gets trapped inside and it just gets trapped again towards the end of the second act. Right? So, she's unable to actually get out of this space, it becomes a trap and through the conversation between Miss. Benare and Samanth, Benare initially seems to be little flirtatious, as trying to get Samanth's attention and but Samanth is you know, not aware of the attentions that he's receiving from Miss. Benare, he seems or the innocent and later on, of course miss Benare exploit Samanth's innocence, to actually ridicule the other characters, who are yet to appear on stage? So, Miss Benare is you know, a schoolteacher .and she begins by talking about, how children are far better than adults? they do not have, the blind pride of thinking, that they know everything, there's no nonsense she says, stuffed in their heads, they don't scratch you till you bleed, they then run away like cowards, please, open that window it's become too hot for me. So, you can, you can notice miss Benare, comparing children to adults, of how children are not prejudiced, like adults, they are not arrogant they don't think they know everything, and they do not, as she says if they do not attack ,you they don't attack you ,and then run away like cowards Right? So, they're not insecure, there are insecure unlike adults. So, the certain innocence two children are certain sincerity that adults lack and then she suggests, that she has been charged, with some accusation that has completely ruins her reputation, as a schoolteacher and she says that she's been slandered and so she's wondering why she's been slandered, when she has been a good school teacher, she says, 'my children will do anything for me, for I'd give the last drop of my blood to teach them, that's why people are jealous, especially the other teachers in the management, but what can they do to me? What can they do? However hard they try? What can they do? They're holding an inquiry, if you please, but my teaching is perfect. I have put my whole life into it. I've worn myself to a shadow in the, in this job, just because of one bit of slander, what can they do to me? throw me out, let them, I haven't hurt anyone, anyone at all, if I've hurt anybody it's been myself ,but that is that the kind of reason for throwing me out, who are these people to say? That, what I can or can't do? 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, I'll do what I like with myself? And my life I'll decide'' and then she certainly unconsciously places her hand on our stomach, and she certainly stops, seeing someone she falls silent, gradually she regains her poise Samanth is embarrassed. So, you can make out that, she has something to conceal, we don't know, as yet, what it is? but ,when she places a hand on her stomach, and after if you've read the entire play then you will realize that, that probably the allegation is true that, probably there was a time and she did bear a child and then later we get to know that a child is [Professor Damle](#) child, one must also pay attention to Miss Benare, poems and songs, and the poems that she writes, which suggests our growing knowledge of life, of certain aspects of life, like love and sexuality and the growing control and prohibitions over a young movements, once she comes of age. Right? So, one of our English songs, that she sings to herself is like this, "oh I've got a sweetheart, who carries all my books? He plays my dollhouse and says he likes my looks, I'll tell you a secret, he wants to marry me. But, mommy says, I'm too little, to have such thoughts as these .Right? So, mommy says, I'm too little to have such thoughts as these'' Right? So, it's almost suggesting that, she is precocious, she is too young, to know things like, love, like sexual attraction, and then, she gradually mentions other, other actors and characters, who are going to act with her? and she begins reticulum them to Samanth .so, she says that so our Chairman, that is the head of the drama Troupe, our Chairman Kashikar will tell you , Kashikar can't take a step without a prime objective, besides him there's Mrs. hand that rocks the cradle, I mean Mrs. Kashikar, what an excellent housewife the poor woman is? a real hand that rocks the cradle' type, but what's the use, Mr. Prime objective is tied up with uplifting the masses ,and poor hand that rocks the cradle has no cradled Rock. Right? So, she suggests that Mr. that Mr. Kashikar is a hypocrite, someone who really was an idealistic man, who wants to uplift the masses? Right? But, Mrs. Kashikar is someone who? You know, presents herself as someone who is? a domesticated wife and, and someone ,who has

powers to be a mother? But, unfortunately she does not have a child of her own, which is why? They adopt Rokde, someone says, you mean they have no he rocks an imaginary baby in his arms, Benare 'right? you seem to be very bright too, Mr. Kashikar in the handle them, handed rocks the cradle', in order that nothing should happen to either of them in their bare, bare house ,and that they shouldn't die of boredom give shelter to a young boy and so Miss Benare suggests the hollowness of marriage the boredom of the marriage, the lovelessness of their marriage, and the fact that neither need any to shelter they need, we need to adopt a young boy, in order to bring life back to their own marriage, into their own lives, they educated him, made him toil away ,made a slave out of him ,his name's Balu, Balu Rokde who else ? well we have an expert on the law, he's such an authority on the subject, even a desperate client wouldn't go anywhere near him, he just sits alone in the barristers room at court swatting flies with legal precedents, and in his tournament he sits alone killing, for house flies, but for today's mock trial he's a very great barrister, you'll see the wonder he performs, and there's a with us hmm, scientist inter field .Right? so, she first makes fun of Balu Rokde, who is the adoptive son? Of Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar, who wants to project himself as an expert lawyer? Then you have a scientist and an aspiring scientist, who has failed his intermediate? Sukhatme, she says we have an intellectual to ,that means someone who prides himself on his book learning, but when there's a real-life problem away he runs, hides his head, he is not here today, won't be coming either, he wouldn't dare Right? So, he's again he's talking about Karnik. So, who prides himself on book learning and but, he's so bookish, that when there's a real-life problem, he does not know how to handle it. So, there's a there's a gap between, his you know, his theoretical bookish knowledge of the world, and his experiences of life, and the initial plan is to actually, perform a play, which is polemic an attack on President Johnson of the American president Johnson for producing atomic weapons and that's the initial idea, .but, then later on they changed the mind,to actually to miss Benare case of infanticide, to actually make the play a lot more salacious and gossipy and exciting. If you look at, some of Miss. Benare as other poems and songs, so, for example ,she recites a poem of hers, which again suggests her, deep sense of isolation, she says 'our feet tread up unknown and dangerous pathways evermore, wave after blinded wave was shattered, stormily upon the shore, light glows alive again, again it mingles with the dark of night our earthen hands burn out and then again in flames they're alight, everything is fully known and everything is clear to see, and the wound that's born, born to bleed, bleeds on forever, faithfully ,there's a battle sometimes, who I defeat is destined as the end. Some experiences are meant to taste, then just to waste and spend". Right? So, how poem suggests that defeat is eminent, that she will be defeated by the end, of the play. And so initially, Miss Benare seems to be someone, who was filled with a vitality? like she seems to love life, she can never compromise in her life, she can never grudge her own life and she seems rather happy, she seems rather lively but then her liveliness, her sense of vitality, seems to barely concealed a deep sense of hurt, now that she has been accused ,her reputation has been tainted, that she's been slandered, for having an affair with an older married man and also for having had a child with him, for which her whole career, as a schoolteacher her reputation as a schoolteacher is being ruined. One of the sub themes of the play is also about theatres, of the very form and function of theatre itself, and this comes through in the dialogues between, Karnik who is? as I mentioned earlier an autobiographical allusion to Tendulkar himself, who? you know, was constantly making a comment on theatre, what? What is this phenomenon called modern theatre? And of course he has a problem with the way modern theatres practice, in the way it takes place, within a very enclosed intimate space and on a raised platform are raised proscenium stage, so Karnik for example you know, in his very flamboyant lawyers voice, you know makes fun of Karnik and he says, one minute Mr. Karnik, should I tell you what's going on 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, which go over the heads in any case,yes or not on Right? So, Sukhatme is actually ridiculous Karnik , for the kinds of laser he seems to Perform, for a rather small and elite Audience, within an enclosed

space, on the proscenium arch, and so he wonders whether Karnik's plays are actually being understood can be understood by the common masses or whether they are actually abstruse and intellectual like him it's so according being the aspiring intellectual, although I mean which actually ,actually ends up being rather pretentious intellectual, by the end of the play. Then, Miss. Benare continues to actually ridicule term Mrs. Kashikar for their, pretentious marriage ,seems rather sentimental ,you must also know mother professor Damle never actually appears on stage, Professor Damle is never accused, were never charged with anything, in its miss. Benare who has to you know ,embed the charges the accusations of the other actors, of the mock court trial, for having transgressed social chords or femininity, but Miss, Mr. Damle or Professor Damle is never accused of having betrayed Miss Benare and having abandoned her ,after he gives her his child, there are also minor suggestions, in the during the mock trial for example, there are Sukhatme for example, ridicules the whole the formality of the court trial, he says that well we have the Bible and the Bhagavath geetha, for the oath-taking. I mention it because you want something to read, by the way Rokde, you did bring along the Bible and the Geetha didn't you? or have you forgotten? and Rokde seems to have forgotten the Bible in the Bhagavath Geetha, on which the oath is taken, they seem to actually have instead, rather new erotic and racy pulp fiction novel ,by this Marathi writer Suryakanth and someone seems to have a copy of it and he says that his normal's are so thrilling, this is the 115 of elephants .so, they claim to almost use that, book instead of the Gita in the Bhagavath, and the Bible too for the oath-taking. Right? So, in some sense this is all so ridiculous s a procedure of oats taking and in some sense is also a parody, the very notion of truth itself, like what does it mean to say the truth? Who's to say the truth? like truth obvious, obviously in this place seems to lie in the hands of the, of those who have power, and not those who are powerless. So the in fact the whole play in some sense is a parody of the truth, of its kind if it's a satire on, on, on patriarchy and the kind of truth claims ,that patriarchy makes in its bid to actually persecute women for the crimes the imaginary or real crimes that they have committed, and so what is interesting is that the court has condemned miss Benare To infanticide even before she has committed the Act. it's like ,Miss Benare is condemned from the very beginning, she's damned either way Right? So, she's it does not have consent, does not matter at all Right? So, the very fact that, she fell in love with an older married man, and had a child with him is enough sufficient grounds for society and for the court, to actually damn her as a loose disreputable woman and so, so she is charged with infanticide even before she has actually committed the act, and you know, it does not matter whether, whether she consented to the relationship or not, or to the affair not but then she is guilty, so she so she's so this is of course a classis instance of the structural oppression of women in patriarchy ,so irrespective whether they are active agents or not, whether they actively participate, whether they have they have any consent or not, you know ,they are damned ,as potentially guilty. Right? in the beginning of act 2 ,again there is another instance of you knowing, whether work or procedure, it's being ridiculed. Right? So, the initial scene of act 2, goes in the different actors slash characters the play, of the inner play, of the mock court trial, sharing pawn. Right? And so, there is this a rather funny competition, of between the characters and how, how quickly the characters can consume pan, and how quickly? How fast they can spit pan out? Right? and so there's, there's this whole competition on, on pan spitting which, which takes up much of the time, and miss Benare is in the who at this point the player still has a few lines to say, managers to actually make fun of the, the dignity of the court unit o she constantly has these brief comebacks, ridiculing the institution of the court, and, and Mr. Kashikar who is the judge? And when Mr. Kashikar charged was Miss. Benare with infanticide, she says, how does infant essentially work? Really I don't like your word at all infanticide, infanticide, why don't you accuse me instead of snatching public property? That has a nice sound about it; don't you think sounds like snacking? and then maybe state Mrs. Kashikar says, 'I don't think so at all, there's nothing wrong with the present charge, Benare banging or her hand on the chair, 'order, order the dignity of the court must be preserved at all costs,

can't shut up at home, can't shut up here, imitating a lawyer, milord let the courts family be given a suitable reprimand, she's never committed the crime of infanticide, also on any public property, except for my lord himself'. Right? So she's imitating the lawyer, and the judge and is actually making by reading, the entire court proceedings, then of course late initially she refutes the charges of the court. She says that I could I couldn't even hurt; kill a common cockroach, why would I kill a newborn child? so she, she refuses to accept that she's guilty, then later on, in the interrogation that occurs, between [Sukhatme](#), Ponshe and miss Benare, again they ask her, what she does? She says Ponshe, she says that, she's a teacher, a school mom and so you gradually notice how the other male characters in the play are used upping her voice? they assume miss Benare voice and they only seem to answer for her Right? So, when we she's asked a question? it's not a so she always has the opportunity to answer the questions, her voice is always being appropriated by other characters, then Ponshe tells Sukhatme, who's asking miss Benare the Questions, she tells, he's a Ponshe who seems to speak for her, saying that she's unmarried and Ponshe to the public I she's unmarried and Benare says and to the private eye Kashikar order, miss Benare self-control, don't forget the value of self-control, to Sukhatme, you may continue, I'll just be Back, then Sukhatme and the lawyer asks, Mr. Ponshe, how would you describe your view of the moral conduct of the accused? on the whole like that of a normal, unmarried woman, you should at least take this trial seriously, Benare 'but how should he know what the moral conduct of a normal unmarried woman is like', Ponshe 'say, it is different, Sukhatme for example, pong say, they accused as a bit too much, Sukhatme, a bit too much what does that mean? Ponshe, it means, it means that on the whole she runs after men too much, Benare, poor man, Sukhatme miss Ben are you committing contempt of court, when I read the court has gone into that room. So, how can contempt of it be committed in this one? There's not much point in that remarks, Sukhatme then Sukhatme, there's no point in coming to grips with you, Mr. Ponshe say. Mr. Ponshe say, has slid out of the witness box and is talking to Karnik, nobody's at all a serious, Ponshe say, returns the witness box. Mr. Ponshe, can you tell me, does the accused have a particularly close relationship with any married or unmarried man Benare interrupting, yes with the counsel for the prosecution himself, and with the judge to say nothing of pong Shan, Balu here or Karnik. Right? So, she is obviously making fun of the whole thing, she says that, she has an intimate relationship with all the men, who are present in the mock trial? So, this mock court trial is actually a rehearsal for, the play the thing that they're going to put up that very night, but then the mock trial itself becomes a farce like a farce of a trial, so, the constantly trying to decipher or read Miss. Benare behaviour. Right? Does she embody, are there any signs on her, of what it means to be a loose promiscuous woman? Right? Especially since she's unmarried at her age, she's in her early or mid thirties, and she's still not married so, which is what makes these men suspicious? Wondering, whether she is out to seduce and trick men, then they invite Karnik the aspiring actor, on stage to occupy the witness box, then they are getting interrogate Karnik asking him how much he knows, or what he knows of Miss. Benare and again he talks about the modern play, again he makes certain comments on modern plays, Sukhatme wants to know, what is the description of a mother? In the place that Karnik performs and the Karnik says the life that, the new players don't mention them at all, there and they're actually about the futility of life, on the whole that's all man's life is. So, in some sense the court, through Sukhatme wants Karnik to confirm, that motherhood is a sacred, pure institution. Right? So, it's something that all women aspire for and all women as mothers, have to honour the rules, there are socially sanctioned roles, sacred roles as mothers. Right? So, they cannot question it they cannot challenge it and of course the court is talking about women who are married and have a child Right? So, it's the court sanctifies, I can only sanction, the possibility of having a child, within marriage, thereby sanctifying corroborating the ideal notion of monogamy and motherhood within marriage, so, Sukhatme, Mr. Karnik who is the mother? The woman who protects the infant she is born or the one who cruelly strangles it to death, which definition do you prefer? Karnik, both are

mothers, because both have given birth. Sukhatme, what would he call motherhood? Karnik ,giving birth to a child. Sukhatme, but even a bitch gives birth to pups. Karnik, then she's a mother of course, who denies it? Who says only humans can mothers and not dogs? Benare, stretching lazily, bully for you Karnik, then there, there is you know, Mr. Rokdey's turn to actually appear on in a witness box, and testify against, Miss. Benare. And Balu locally, who was infantilized man? Somebody, who was rather child like who doesn't have an independent existence away from his adoptive parents Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar,. He's unable to speak, he doesn't know what to say ?and then you notice, how the all the male characters are conspiring together? To create you know, a conspiratorial narrative against that would condemn Miss. Benare. Right? So, they dig it's, it's the story of patriarchy as it were, as, as they, as the gang up, together against Miss. Benare,to confirm their suspicions of her disreputable character and Rokde, are now he makes it up, he says that he went to Professor Damle's house, and there he sees Miss. Benare and that from this point onwards, Miss. Benare speaks less and less ,her voice can be heard ,she is gradually increasingly silenced, until the very end. Then Sukhatme asks, Rokde, what he saw in Damle's house? Rokde says, they were both sitting there, what else did you see? That's all ,but I got such a shock, sitting there in Damle's room ,the night falling, and Rokde is unable to say anything beyond that, then it is Samanth's turn, to actually extend a Rokde story and to add on to its details and remember that Samant is an innocent villager ,who does not know what's happening? He does not realize the seriousness of the mock court trial.

So, even though that, the court is being parodied and ridiculed in the process, the very distinction between the outer play and the inner play is completely collapsed, the charges of infanticide against Miss Benare become real .Right? even though, initially it's supposed to be just a you know a theme for the play, in then it later on it actually becomes reality and there is now no going back, that Mrs. Miss. Benare has actually been condemned of the offenses that she's committed, Samant says that I do hereby swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, true enough for the trial over me, I mean of course, what's true for the trial is quite false really? But, I'm just taking the oath for practice. Again Sukhatme, interrogate Samanth, asking him, how he knows miss Benare, and then Samant says, that initially Samant says, that Miss Bernard is a very nice lady, that she has a rather favourable, impression, of Miss Benare and later on again Sukhatme asks him, if he saw Miss Benare with Professor Damle, and then Samant extends Rokdey's story, again making up details, he doesn't realize the seriousness of what he's doing? he does not realize that he is now part of the conspiracy to gang up against miss Benare to condemn her to shame her, and now he says that here, he went to Professor Dom day this place, to invite him for a lecture, the door was locked, not from outside, from inside, and I'm banged on the door, no that's wrong, I rang the bell, the door opened, an unknown man stood before me, guess who it was? Professor Damle, I was seeing him for the first time, so he'd be unknown to be, wouldn't he? Punkshe, Bravo Samanth, Mrs. Kashikar, who is giving his evidence beautifully? Samanth, Damle is before me, when he saw me he said with annoyed expression yes, whom do you want? Punkshe, he's describing Damle to the life, slammed I answered, Professor Damle , he said ,he's not at home and he slammed the door shut for a second I stood there stunned ,I began to think, should I go home or press the bend once more ,because I had an important errand. Sukhatme what? Samanth what? Well let's say something, let's suppose that I wanted to arrange a lecture by Professor Damle. So, you notice, how he's making up the story as he is telling it, he does lecture doesn't, he? I only ask because he's a professor, so he must lecture at times, so I stood there wondering, how I couldn't go back with her arranging the lecture? at that moment I heard a vague sound from the room or someone crying,crying yes, an indistinct sound crying, it was a woman Sukhatme? Yes. Samanth, for a moment he stood where he was, he means me, he I mean I, couldn't understand who was crying, you will ask me, why I didn't think it was some female member of Professor Damle's family? Well, from the way the woman was crying, she didn't seem to be a member of his family, why? Because, the crying was soft, that is it was secretive, now why would

anyone cry secretly in her own house, thinking over all this I stood where I was just then I heard some words, Mrs. Kashikar, some words? Karnik and Ponshe who spoke? Samanth you're not supposed to ask. This gentleman, the council he will ask me, Sukhatme, who spoke? Samant, the woman of course the one inside, Mrs. Kashikar good heavens tell us, to tell us who were she, Samanth, no he will ask me, the council will not you. Sukhatme, I am asking tell us quick Mr. Samanth, what were the words he heard? Don't waste time; tell us quick, Mr. Samant be quick. Samant the quads were should shred it, shall I tell it all Sukhatme, whatever you can remember but tell us. Samanth, if you abandon me in this condition, where shall I go? So, he's looking at a book in his hand he's reading out a line from it, if you abandon me in this condition where should I go, Benare dense, Mrs. Kashikar is that really what she said ?someone, how can I tell you? Sukhatme, then who or else on earth can, someone no, no I'm telling you the professor's answer, his answer professor Damle's. Sukhatme, oh I see. Samant, where you should go is entirely your problem, I feel great sympathy, for you but I can do nothing, I must protect my reputation and that she said that's all you can talk about your reputation, how heartless you are, he replied, nature is heartless. So, it does not matter, whether this event and this illicit relationship actually happened or not, the entire play only is an imagination of patriarchy it's, it's patriarchy's imagination of what a woman can do? Which is then being read as transgressive, something which is which goes against the social codes of chaste femininity .Right? because, the ideals of femininity lie in being a good chaste wife and a good mother. Right? So, the entire play really is a play on that, I mean is whether it really has doesn't matter, it's really a structural problem, the woman is, is ,is potentially guilty for her real or imaginary crimes, simply because she is capable of acting upon her own sexual agency, abolish the fact that she there's a possibility, that woman may want to choose her own lover, not be married to him or probably have a child with him Right? There is something which is being condemned, it's, it's being forbidden, and so miss. Benare .feebly tries to defend herself by saying that it's all a lie a complete lie, but then nobody wants to listen to her, because she's already always already been condemned with the charge. Right? So, she's been condemned even before the child begins. And so, Samant fills up the missing details of the story that is begun that is that that's begun by a Rokde, and he imagines that Miss. Benare had been jilted and betrayed by Professor Damle, who no longer wants to take care of her, once he discovers that, she has, she's barring his child. So, while he she only worshiped his intellect his mind, she claims that he only he was only interested in her body, he was only interested in you know in having fun, and not taking any responsibility for the act that he's committed and so the entire court is shocked when they get to know that Mr. Professor Damle is the father of the unborn child ,which then has to be killed, to redeem the woman's reputation and the larger reputation of society itself and by the end of Act two again Mrs., Miss, Benare is unable to escape from the court because the door has been locked from outside. so ,you see the second moment where she symbolically trapped, within this zone of patriarchy, again in act 3 there's near there's a continuation of the mock court trial ,and you know ,you also noticed by now how Samant has lost all his innocence, he begins by being a very innocent person but by now he's been corrupted the mock court trial by patriarchy, which and whose mechanisms operate through the institution of the court, and then again during the ,the interrogation between of Mrs. Kashikar and ,and Mr. Kashikar both of them disapproved the fact that Miss Benare is unmarried at the age of 34 and so therefore she says that she's not less than 34, I'll give it to you in writing ,what I say is our society should revive the old custom of child marriage. Marry off the girls before puberty, all this promiscuity will come to a full stop, if anyone has ruined our society, its [Agarkar and Dhondo Keshav Karve](#), that's my Frank opinion. Right? So you have the voice of the conservative Orthodox. Who believe that child marriage should be brought back. because they cannot tolerate the possibility of women being unmarried in there well into their thirties and so she thinks that, marriage is the only solution to promiscuity, again Mrs. Kashikar goes on to say that, at her time whether a girl was knob nosed sallow hunchback or anything, she could still get married, it's the sly

new fashion of women earning that makes everything go wrong. Right? so ,that's how promiscuity has spread throughout her our society is what she says. Right? So, give me many independents, financial independence, emotional independence and then they become from excuse it. So, women should not be given any kind of freedom, they should be bound, their sexuality should be harnessed and domesticated to serve the interests of the family. So, again Mrs. Kashikar like the other characters is trying to closely read, Miss Benare embodied behaviour .Right? she seems to be too jolly, too cheerful. Right? That itself for her is a suspicious sign of her promiscuity. Right? So, that she's she doesn't seem to be bound, she's not she her behaviour is not sure the way should calm ports and carries herself, does not suggest that she is a chaste woman. What's also important to notice that the other male characters especially Rokde and Sukhatme suggest that at way various points of the third act of the play suggests that, Miss Benare tried to seduce them and try to also convince convince them to get married to her, so that her child can have a father and so many of the men are in the male characters in the play, are secretly desire miss Benare. Right? Even though they will not openly acknowledge it, they all want to have some kind of relationship, with Miss Benare. So, they, they want to in some sense they are lured by the possibility, who of a woman who is? So you know free and bold. Right? So, they're completely, they're very attracted and drowned woman who is? So, sexually bold, seems to be therefore sexually available to them, but at the same time they will not be able to, they're not able to associate themselves with her, none of them will marry her, because they she does not embody, the ideal the, ideal type of a chaste woman Right? Of a chaste wife. So, there is this paradoxes this contradiction that operates within patriarchy, where all the men in some sense are drawn, I mean that's the very reason why they actually have a trial on Miss Benare alleged infanticide is, because they want to participate in a trial which opens up which dissects, miss Benare life, as a source of salacious gossip, and desire forbidden desire. Right? So, so they all participate in that patriarchal mock, trial where they all have a share in dissecting and exposing miss Benare and humiliating her, and they seem to derive a certain pleasure out of it, but they also have to maintain a certain distance because they don't know they cannot be seen being with someone who is not an ideal woman. so ,at various points a third act Ponshe and Rokde, suggests that miss Benare or try to seduce them and try to you know, convince them to get married to her, and then boom she discovers that she keeps a bottle of tick 20, which is a pesticide in purse. Right? So, they accuse her of having tried to commit suicide, because of her alleged past, sexual past. so, they think that, that the fact that she possesses tick 20 in her power suggests that she has she's guilty, you know, of having had any illicit affair and for having had a child out of wedlock , Ponshe said, as claims that he received a letter from Miss Benare say asking him to meet her, I have something to discuss with you, come at a quarter past one, wait in the Udupi restaurant beyond the school and then miss Benare, Ponshe she claims I came looking quite guilty, then she says Mrs. then he claims, that Miss Benare could not tell him, what she wanted to say in public? So, they go to the family room. Right? And there she opens out the purse to take her handkerchief, and out of it rolls us more a small bottle, a small bottle of tick20 and then she upon her she says that she made known her desire to marry me, Karnik and Kashikar got shocked. They say what? Kashikar says this appears, terribly interesting Sukhatme, Sukhatme. 'True my lord' it is and it will be', did she tell you she was not in love with you exception, function no ,but she told me she was pregnant, Benare sitting like a block of stone, drained of colour and totally desolate. Karnik, are you telling the truth Ponshe, Ponshe what do you think that I'm lying? Kashikar, who was the father, continued Ponshe, continued, don't stop, there Sukhatme , Mr. Ponshe, Ponshe miss Benare made me promise, never to tell anyone the name of the man who had made her pregnant. so ,if I have kept my word but who was it? Kashikar girl what will you take - shut up, he tells his wife, the cat will be out of the bag soon,and then later, on Ponshe claims that Miss Benare wanted to get married to, him and finally of course Ponshe suggests that professor Damle is actually the father of the child, Karnik and Rokde also suggests that Miss. Benare took her

turn seducing them to convincing Rockde. For example to marry her. Right? so, there are all these allegations these that they place on Miss Benare, and so finally towards the end of the play Sukhatme of course voices is the voice of the court of legal action of patriarchy, suggesting that Miss Benare has slandered the very institution of motherhood, by having a child outside marriage, and has also slandered the institution of motherhood by killing the child, that she the unborn child .Right? So, she has no choice but to kill the child, but if she kills a child then she is still charged with the offense of having you know, a slandered the very institution of motherhood .Right? So, she has no choice but to be damned and condemned for what she's done. and towards the end Mrs. Ms Benare monologue, it's not really you know ,an attempt to defend herself. Right? see she's unable to actually say anything in response to the charges that should that have been levelled up against her, and she just says that, she almost seems to be she seems to be talking to herself more than addressing the, the court Right? So, he she says that 'I have a lot to say for so many years, I haven't said a word, chances came in chances went, storms raged to one after the other about my throat and there was a way like death in my heart, but each time I shut my lips tight, I thought no one will understand, no one can understand, when great waves of words came and beat against my lips, how stupid everyone around me? How childish? How silly they all seemed? Even the man I called my own and so on and so forth'. so, she really talks about the meaning of life itself, the fact that people who take their lives for granted that she was happy or unfortunately you know, you realize you like the value of life only after you have escaped suicide, in fact she tries to commit suicide and she see she fails, but it's only after she fails that she realizes, how much had taken life for granted? she obviously wants to end her life because of the shame that she's been put through but then she also realizes that, that you know she has a way ambiguous relationship to life clearly, she has a very ambiguous relationship to her own body, because her or her body which has become the embodiment of shame and looseness and and you know promiscuity and all the charges that have been levelled up against her by society, is the only thing that she really has. Right? Her body is the sign of life .Right? Life is a betrayal, life as a fraud she says, life is a drug, life is tragedy, life is something that's nothing or nothing at something and yet life and the body is all that she has, she has nothing else, left to live for, but to live for herself to live her own life. Right? And that's exactly what? The problem is that even though she ,she tries to feebly defend herself that she has she's entitled to her own private life, she's entitled to her own body and yet she cannot she's unable to escape from the social structure ,that condemns her to a life of shame and ,and disrepute. Right? So, she it's, it's she's really struggling with herself and with her own embodiment that she said that this body this body is a traitor, I despise this body and I love it ,I hate it, but it's all you have in the end isn't it. it will be there it will be yours where will it go without you and where will you go if you reject It don't be ungrateful it was your body that once bond and gave you a moment so beautiful, so blissful, so near to heaven, have you forgotten it took you high, high, high above yourself into a place like paradise, will you deny it and now, it carries within it the witness of that time or tender little bud of what will be the lispig, laughing, dancing, little life, my son my whole existence. I want my body now for him, for him alone. So, he she only wants to live the only reason for her to live now, is for the child for the life that she's carrying within her body Right? so she of course it doesn't love the fact that , she's she could become a mother, but now she also realizes that she has no choice but to kill the child, she has been compelled to do it. Right? So, the very resonerande for existence seems to be lost now because of the offbeat sake. Right? and so ,she is condemned .Right? so, she's, she's unable to escape, the structure of patriarchy, which condemns her to a life of shame and yet she has no choice but to embrace it because that's that is all that she has. Right? So, towards the end she is completely silenced - even though, she there's a long monologue, it does not appear as a successful self-defence I mean you saw it but it's really more at us and a struggle that she has to bear within herself, with herself. All Right? So, that actually ends our discussion of silence the course in session let us just go over the slides, just summarize our discussion. So the play describes serpent up a

charcoal enslavement of women, within the space of court and a mock trial, the court symbolizes a space of cage patriarchy with Miss Benare as trapped twice, what begins as a mock trial can do long about be distinguished from the actual play, within the play by the end. Benare, betrays her own crime of bearing an illegitimate child outside marriage and falling in love with married man named Professor Damle, who never appears on stage, despite the fact that he's also responsible.

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- Miss Benare claims Prof. Damle loved her for her body while she worshipped his intellect. The other characters like Ponkshe and Sukhatme accuse her of trying to seduce them when she wanted a man to love and be a father to her child. Karnik believes she had an affair with her uncle when she was young.
- Benare has an ambiguous relationship to her body, which is a vehicle for movement and freedom but also condemned to be stigmatized by others.

Miss Benare songs and form suggests her own sense of isolation and loneliness, she's accused of being sexually promiscuous, on and off being a distributable character by the other characters. The male characters in the play including Sukhatme in Ponkshe, wished to have relationship with a bold woman like her, but end up distancing themselves from her, because she does not conform to the ideal of a chaste wife or a woman, she is charged with infanticide even before her crime has been determined, she is condemned to be punished and shamed, because she's desecrated the institution of marriage and motherhood,

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- Her monologue is hardly a defense against the charges. It is more a conversation with herself about the significance of life and her own desire to live, to be a reputed schoolteacher.
- She occasionally ridicules the other characters who are all struggling and insecure actors. But she is progressively silenced and her voice is usurped by other characters including Mrs. Kashikar who is also a participant and beneficiary of patriarchy even though she is often humiliated and silenced by her own husband.
- Even Samant who is initially an innocent villager and watcher gets involved in the conspiratorial machinations of patriarchy to trap and victimize a woman for her unconventional life.

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- Miss. Benare's songs and poems suggest her own sense of isolation and loneliness. She is accused of being sexually promiscuous and of a disreputable character by the other characters.
- The male characters of the play including Sukhatme and Ponshe wish to have a relationship with a bold woman like her but end up distancing themselves from her because she does not conform to the ideal of a chaste woman/wife.
- She is charged with infanticide even before her crime has been determined. She is condemned to be punished and shamed because she has desecrated the institution of marriage and motherhood.

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Vehicle for movement and freedom but also condemned to be stigmatized by others. Thank you.