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Some Current Poetic Postures in the Indo-English Tradition

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The paper attempts to identify some current poetic postures in the Indo-English tradition seen as a result of cross-cultural creative assimilations. The illustrations are mainly drawn from the poetry of Ezekiel, Parthasarathy and Ramanujan. At every point, it is the individuality that is striking even in similar postures. The poetry exemplifies the fragmentation of contemporary art and life and no trend or group movement can be traced.

The twentieth century is "an age of arbitrary migrations and displacements" and a certain denationalization of literatures has become inevitable. Hence the 'national flavour' of a body of writing in this case 'Indian and English' is hard to discover; it finds its realization in the universal dimension of a work of art in a cross-cultural content. The connotative associations of 'Indian' or 'English' defy any imaginative capsuling.

Creative artists like Randolph Stowe, Walcott, Naipaul, even Eliot and nearer home Ramanujan, Sharatchandra, Dom Moraes are expatriates who project the creative tensions of their inherent and acquired sensibilities. While it would be futile to 'track' the qualities of an expatriate sensibility, one cannot ignore totally the situation of the artist for the "situation is the poetry" in some cases. Strangely enough, the expatriate feeling of non-belonging is seen even in the poetry of those who remain at home.

This finds vivid and poignant articulation in the poetry of Indian and African writers. The conflict of agonising linguistic and cultural choices is expressed with intensity by Walcott.

'How choose between the Africa and the
English tongue I love
Betray them both or give back what
they give
How can I face such slaughter and be cool?
How can I turn from Africa and live ?

Parthasarathy expresses this accusingly and with a sense of guilt :

"The only language you speak is not your
own".

Kamala Das protests against this conflict and desires the freedom to "speak in any language (she likes) and even English may be an English but her very own". The Englishman in Jussawalla's 'Scenes from life' is resentful of the Indian's use of English.

"You're polluting our sounds, you're so
rude
get back to your language".

The dilemma of realising a cultural identity through linguistic choice is the burthen of Parthasarathy's poetic sequence 'Rough Passage' published in 1976. The 'Whoring after English Gods' depicted in "Exile" results in a loss of native roots. However his anglicised sensibility is not accepted in England. Twice-alienated, the poet realises the need to synthesize experience and to understand its value in the search for identity. This awareness is achieved in the corpus of the poem and is evidence of the anglicised Indian mind accepting the need not only for nativisation but also for assimilation for "the heart needs all".

This posture of alienation is unique to Parthasarathy. In Ezekiel it is manifested as a need to belong. In this context, it is interesting to take note of his antecedents. A Bene Israel with an ancestry dating back to the fifth century, Ezekiel is more of an Indian than most Indians in his spiritual acceptance of India in an 'as-is-where is' condition. He has never expressed the desire to leave India because of his Jewish origins or even through the escape route of his art. In his personal poems like "Background Casually" and 'Island' he sees no pleasures of exile and expresses his desire to stay in Indian shores :

"I have made my commitments now
This is one : to stay where I am

(Background Casually)

"I cannot leave the island
I was born here and belong

(Island)

Confiscate my passport lord
I don't want to go abroad
Let me find my song where I belong

(Poster Prayers)

These poems and others show that Ezekiel's muse is inspired by a desire to resolve personal and cultural tensions and expresses his inner compulsion to be in harmony with his environs. He is singular in this respect being the product of three cultures—the Indian, the Hebrew and the English. To Walsh, he represents the "permanent expatriate who has freely elected to stay having been able to discover the point of balance at which inwardness can combine with the essential externality to produce a great work of art". He accepts his loneliness as part of his Jewish inheritance. But India is in his 'brain and bones' and he cannot leave Bombay, the city which nourishes his imaginative life even though it is a 'barbaric city sick with slums'.

To Ezekiel, the English language has become the means of communicating in poetic terms

not only his isolation—"a mugging Jew among wolves' but also his desire for integration with this India. His imaginative commitment, unlike Parthasarathy is unequivocally to his place of birth. He affirms this in realistic terms thus showing the influence of the modernist tradition on his art. His act has become the means of his identification with the mainstream of life and not the reason for his alienation. Poetry, even if written in English, to Ezekiel, becomes life-experience and mirrors the self's search for balance, poise and equanimity. This also gives rise to an affirmation of faith in tradition as seen in a 'Time to Change' for only when human values are preserved can integration take place.

Unlike Ezekiel or Parthasarathy, Ramanujan's poetry reflects the critical—intellectual stance in alienation. The loss of identity is the failure of the past tradition to continue into his present expatriate state except through memory. Like Sharatchandra he too is troubled by a sense of the loss of his native roots. Where Ezekiel emphasizes the general human need to belong, to establish harmonious relationships and acquire an identity. Ramanujan perceives only the impossibility of it. The theme of his poetry is not the need to belong in an alien set-up but the need to belong to one's own tradition which appears alien because he perceives the disparateness between things as he would like them to be and things as they are.

His stance is that of an outside-insider, who is hurtlingly and embarrassingly frank about the inside story. He is at times hypercritical of the contemporary value-confusions in India. Having taken India with him in his imagination, he explores every nook and corner of the landscape of the past and the result is a ruthless exposure of its glaring ills. There is ample evidence in his poetry to incriminate this Indian past peopled by aunts who pick the corpse of their mother, cousin looking for a cousin on every swing,

Maharajahs gambling, jaundiced unborn daughters, even grandmother taking revenge and grandfather with a knifing temper. Only true to the Indian tradition, he leaves out 'mother'. In spite of this, there is a sense of nostalgia and Ramanujan returns to the Indian past which nourishes his poetry. While Parthasarathy's recollection of the past is to enable the nativising of his anglophile sensibility, Ramanujan's recollection seems to be in terms of 'losses', an exposure of the the topsy turvydom of life and its values. Ramanujan's alienation lies in the inability to come to terms with this world. The self in his poetry becomes a stranger to its own self as in 'Self Portrait' and the 'Hindu' poems. In 'Self Portrait' is seen an under-current of protest for the self desires an autonomous identity without familial likeness — the irony is that the Self Portrait is signed in a corner by its father.

in a poem like 'Conventions of Despair' he just exposes tradition and modernity. His traditional Hindu upbringing is posed against the antithetical life style of a technocratic and permissive society for which his adopted land is a kind of archetype. The first part of the poem with its staccato style lists the items of western life.

As a Hindu self, the person is 'outside' this materialistic culture and chooses to "finds its hell in its Hindu mind". The self is actively critical in the rejection of modernity and its malaise of loneliness and chooses tradition to find its identity. The commitment to the Hindu way of life in spite of its conventions of despair implies alienation from the Western. The poem exemplifies not merely the tradition—modern conflict but also the Indian—Western confrontations, which inspire Ramanujan's genius. It illustrates the doctrine of 'Karma' which is not only 'Salvation by works' but also the way of obedience. "To suffer hell" thus becomes part of the discipline of action. This ironic paradox is a quality of Ramanujan's poetry.

This intellection of Ramanujan with its ironic overtones is carried over to the poetry of Daruwalla and Kolatkar in the late 70's. The 'sense of place' is more strongly felt as also the 'criticalness' which has a rapier thrust. They are objective in their critique of Indian life and are 'outside-insiders'—but without Ezekiel's genteel humanity.

The posture of alienation may serve to show that these poets are within and without tradition; this is reinforced in the posture of love. No 'trend' can be isolated for the poets play on the many stringed instrument of love.

To Parthasarathy, love is a period of trial, a testing ground of the soul and the section, 'Trial' becomes a symbolic love affair with Tamil even as 'Exile' symbolizes his 'love-affair' with English. The poetry with its clinical intensity focussing on love as a 'rainbow of touch' is marked by superb craft; but the emotion is pared. The philosophy is that of sharing and supporting with the acceptance that love is perishable, trite.

Ramanujan sees the non-relationship paradox in love in his poems. While Parthasarathy feels that the love-experience is significant in discovering one's identity, Ramanujan seems to protest against the loss of it even in love in such poems as 'Love Poem, for a Wife'. It is Ezekiel who sensitively responds to the varied aspects of love. There is no rejection of sense-experience and his poetry includes the entire curve of the love-experience including marriage and even separation. Ezekiel insists on its multi-factness and sees it as a haven for the self in its search for identity. His poems on love and sex manifest the inbuilt paradox of relationship and non-relationship. Here he is no maker of a new tradition. He is only recasting and re-interpreting the old in his individual style.

The remarkable feature of his style is the absence of images in the sense of simile or

metaphor. While he thinks it is his weakness, it is in fact his strength. The poetry becomes an everyday reality and the poems speak to us as if there was a live person airing his views on love, sex, marriage and broken relationships. This realism is his forte. He hardly ever leaves this world even in a theme so rich in romantic possibilities. His allegiance is to the concrete reality — this explains the absence of romantic excesses even at the verbal level. The romantic is also seen with dimmed lights. There is no blare of trumpets, or riot of colours. The tone is subdued, mellow and reading his best love poems is like dining by candle light.

Any consideration of the posture of love in poetry would be incomplete without a reference to Kamala Das. It is love which inspires her poetic vision. There is a fascinating insistent preoccupation with the experience for public gaze. However, in her better poems which are full of lyricism and pathos, is evident that search for identity in this experience. Her poems rarely move out of this theme and portray the pain, the agony of the surrender in love without a reciprocal satisfaction. She achieves a certain transcendence in her Krishna poems but cannot escape from the physical principle of love to make it a sublimating experience. The violence in 'Love' makes her a confessional poet for there is self-rejection and love is seen through 'a' 'fractured eyeball'.

The poetry of the 70's has succeeded in coming out of the shell of introspection and reaching out to the community. The gentle irony of Ezekiel in speaking of the truth about the floods has moved towards satire and even protest in the poem of Kolatkar. This 'criticism of life' is the positive result of a cross-cultural confrontation moving towards assimilation.

In expressing the need to belong, or the need to love, the poetry is always the poetry of the self. Most of the poets are concerned

with the individual past, its immediacy and direct appeal to the intuitive understanding. The poem can be typified as the poetry of the existential self as against the poetry of the divine or transcendental self in Sri Aurobindo's School of Poetry. The exploration in poetic terms is the relationship between man and woman, man and his own self or the world. Very rarely does this poetic self enter divine territory. The poetry tries to concretise personal experience and unlike the romantic poets they do not go back to Indian love. The poetry is lyrical - though not in the traditional sense for the persona is 'I'. However, the identity of the 'I' is left ambiguous - it is poet, or mask, a persona, a surrogate of the poet but neither himself in the full literary sense nor someone else. In contemporary poetry the 'I' is invested with a universal dimension and cannot be 'Indian' or 'English' alone, for it is the symbol of the cross-cultural assimilation in terms of man and artist. In Ezekiel, the self is in quest of a human identity without Jewishness or even Indianness, in Parthasarathy it is the cultural identity of the self synthesising Brahmanic and English traditions. Ramanujan's is the autonomous identity of the self without familial or traditional affiliation. It is relevant to stress the fact that this poetry of the 'self' has nothing of the trauma of the confessional mode. While the world is a private world with the human self at its centre, the quest is the search for order, pattern and perfection, not an insistence on fragmentation and the failure to relate.

These three poets as pioneers and pacesetters on the Indian-English poetic landscape share a common dedication to craft which has inspired the later artists. If Ezekiel's forte is the ironic statement, Parthasarathy's, the image, Ramanujan's is felicitous diction. The superb control over their medium is both an asset and a drawback. The poems built on intellect and criticalness make for sparing art. The epigrammatic tenseness, especially of Parthasarathy is reminiscent of the Augustans

who imposed discipline and order of form. The resultant poem may be accused of lacking in emotion but the lines are packed with suggestion for control seems to heighten the impact.

In conclusion, the paradox of being within and without tradition, of being individual yet universal has to be confronted, if not resolved. Being within and without tradition, they belong to the main tradition of English poetry their deviations have heralded the 'new poetry' - while the artists make a leap into the past to draw forth treasures of Indian love in English, the poet goes deep into his personal past. Either way, there has been no rejection of India or English and the poetry reflects the reaching out to a universal dimension based on the belief in a common humanity. Even the act of rejecting 'Indian noise' or relations becomes a gesture of acceptance for the artists come back to India - the source of their inspiration - be it barbaric city, mother's turmeric days in Nanjangud, or the river which becomes poetic twice a year

or Jejuri and the ghats of Benares. In critically examining India, they have moved so close to it that they cannot escape from it - as Kolatkar's Jejuri testifies. The superb mastery over the medium shows no cleavage between intellectual and emotional states or between inner and outer forms. This movement towards India is seen even in these artists taking to translation.

In fact, their total and unequivocal acceptance of English and the resultant cross-cultural human dilemmas have invested their poem English sincerity, the quality of seeking the truth in terms of their own immediate experience, without convention to cloud the clarity, intensity of their vision. Here they transcend parochial or regional insularities and their attempt to reconcile tradition and individual experience make them ideal examples of the cross-cultural assimilation in creative endeavour.

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“The Heart of the Matter” as a novel which studies religious struggles in the heart of man.

In his interview with Gene D Phillips¹, Graham Greene says he has "simply written one (a book) about a man who goes to Purgatory.

In simplest terms, the novel examines the dichotomy between personal faith and religious assertion, ethics, morality and the practice of these in actuality; Catholicism, and its working in an individual life.

The focus is always
'on the dangerous edge of things—the honest thief, the tender murderer

We watch while these in equilibrium keep
the giddy line midway'²

George Orwell in his essay, significantly titled 'The Sanctified Sinner' observes that 'the central idea of the book is that it is

better, spiritually higher to be an erring Catholic than a virtuous Pagan'.

The protagonist is Henry Scobie, and it is in him, in his life, that the conflict is depicted.

The background, leading to the conflict deserves to be traced: Scobie, when we first see him is Deputy Commissioner in the locale of the Gold Coast: He has no illusions about the milieu; for well he knows that only in the brief glow of twilight is the island briefly beautiful.

The world Scobie inhabits is characterised by ambivalence: Scobie has gradually realised that guilt and innocence are relative. When a Miss Wilberforce reports to him, against her landlady, he recalls his earlier zeal to secure justice for the apparent victim. It is not a world of clean-cut morality, as illustrated by Scobie's feelings towards the Portuguese Captain, and the protagonist is certain that "In human relations", kindness and lies are worth a thousand truths'.

Misery prevails in the world portrayed in the novel. Thinking of Pemberton, a colleague who had committed suicide; Scobie tells himself, 'What an absurd thing it was to expect happiness in a world so full of misery. Point me out the happy man and I will point you out, either egotism, selfishness, evil or else absolute ignorance'.

In this world of ambivalence and misery, relationships are a potent cause for conflict. There is the problem of Priority. How does one love one's wife, and one's Mistress, without disloyalty to God - not even so much a question of disloyalty as a moving away from Him. Scobie captures the essence of this conflict thus, 'How can one love God at the expense of one of his Creatures?'

Scobie chooses to protect Louise, his wife and Helon Rolt, his mistress, from possible deprivation of himself. It is a voluntary act it seems, for, he confesses - 'O God, I am the only guilty one because I've known the

answers all the time. I've preferred to give you pain rather than give pain to Helen or my wife, because I can't observe you suffering. I can only imagine it'.

In this context, Frank Kermode's comment is relevant - 'Much of the torment' he says, 'comes from the position that natural knowledge, knowledge of sex is real, and knowledge of God, by comparison, notional³.

An acute, even obsessive sense of Responsibility, is a bane to Scobie's peace of mind. In a visualised duologue, Scobie's inner voice replies to God's. 'I don't trust you. I love you but I've never trusted you'.

He carries the sense of responsibility like a 'sack of bricks', and maintains, 'I am not a policeman for nothing. I can't shift my responsibility to you. If I could, I would be someone else'.

Therefore, the situation is an 'Impasse'. He cannot love God and insult Him at His own altar. Scobie's responsibility is equivalent of the Vice of Pity, as explained by Auden. Many would accuse him of the Sin of Pride, for, as Evelyn Waugh puts it, motivated by pity, and responsibility he 'arrogates to himself the prerogations of Providence.'⁴

Scobie's Pity is directed towards 'the face for which nobody would go out of his way., and when Louise, towards the end, after her return to the coast, startles us in her new found composure, he asserts, I love failure - I can't love success. And how successful she looks sitting there, one of the saved. At one point when he prays for the child, a victim of a 'torpedo attack' his pity and God's Mercy, are forcibly drawn into contrast, and his prayer, is as Frank Kermode calls it a Test of God, Himself.

The actual conflict may now be examined. A facile simplification could perhaps capture the conflict with a single question - 'How to be a good Catholic?'

The conflict is actualised, concretized through the 'Sins' Scobie has committed. According to Evelyn Waugh they are five, - namely, those of Professional delinquency, Scobie degenerating into a criminal from his state of a man of moral rectitude, secondly adultery, and thirdly as responsible for the murder of Ali his servant boy. Besides Scobie is guilty of sacrilegious communions Louise forces on him, and lastly, of Suicide, for he dies believing he is offering his damnation as a loving sacrifice for others.

The tension then, is in the situation of a Catholic being tortured by his faith. This being the case, the nature of the conflict is that it is indecisive in its result. Scobie is not a representative of an erring Catholic alone, he is Everyman in effect, in his response to his faith. As Traversi⁵ observes, Scobie desires a coherent spiritual conception, wills it as an end, without accepting it or fully assimilating it.

Hence the reader's puzzlement as to the solution. Is Scobie damned or not? Perhaps. Greene himself is the most decisive authority to be adduced to here. In an interview with Martin Shuttleworth and Simon Raveri⁶ Greene explains that redemption isn't the exact word. Scobie has understood in the end.

To reach this understanding, Scobie traverses through Catholic Theology and Ritual. At every point in the novel, he is faced with essentially Catholic and Christian pre-occupations. He is aware of the duplications of Suicide, Adultery, and just before he thinks of suicide, decides to pray and then wonders- 'What was the good? If one was a Catholic one had all the answers'

The Rituals of Confession, Absolution and Prayer do not help Scobie in his predicament due perhaps, largely to his psychological make-up. When he goes to confess to Father Rank "the awful languor of routine fell on his

spirits." When Father Rank explains that neither Confession nor Absolution is automatic, Scobie still remains in doubt for according to him in his condition, "there's nothing to absolve." and words constitute a 'formula'- the Latin words hustled together - a hocus pocus- for a moment it seemed God was too accessible --- like a popular demagogue.

Prayer, is a habit and he adds an act of Contrition as a pure formality, and the "Lord's Prayer" lay as dead on his tongue as a legal document. It wasn't his daily bread that he wanted but so much more.

Nevertheless he prays, with absolute intensity, for the child.

Thus there is essential conflict in that Scobie has absorbed Catholicism into every fibre of his being - but is unable to effect a synthesis of religious beliefs and rational deductions.

This is best illustrated by the relationship Scobie shares with God. When he postpones Communion, he muses, 'God has just escaped me but will He always escape?' God is vulnerable in this instance, and Scobie is mystified as to why God had put himself at the mercy of man. How desperately God must love, he thought, with shame.

On seeing Ali dead, he feels he has killed God. 'You were faithful to me and I wouldn't trust you', and at another point we hear God's generous offer. 'Can't you trust me as you'd trust a faithful dog? I have been faithful to you for 2000 years'.

But all this solicitious concern is accompanied often, with savage defiance: 'Take your sponge of gall - You made me what I am'.

Thus the character of Scobie is complex. His is not a personality that assimilates religion without conflict; but conflict caused, in the long run by himself and not imposed

on him. R. W. B. Lewis comments on the schizophrenic cast to Scobie's character. He is capable of being both Christ and Judas. He is Christ, when he sacrifices himself for the apparent good of others, and in his frequent comparisons of himself to Christ. He comments on their analogous predicament. Christ committed suicide for humanity and he too is now on the brink himself, of suicide, Scobie is Judas in the betrayal of Ali, of goodness, and thus the betrayal of God.

Waugh brands Scobie a very bad moral coward for he attempts to give an air of moral responsibility to his sins and suicide as though they were helping others.

Orwell argues that 'if he were capable of getting into the kind of mess that is described he would have got into it years ago. If Scobie really felt that adultery was mortal sin, he would stop committing it, and if he believed in Hell he would not risk going there merely to spare the feelings of a couple of neurotic women'.

David Pryce Jones⁸ isolates Narcissistic tendencies in Scobie, complicated with love of failure, as a propensity to romanticising of despair.

But, there are so many levels of approach to this situation, that though we find Scobie, through the vice of Pity, incapable of obtaining Grace from Catholic Theology and Ritual though his perception of his predicament—which in him is determined by his character the novel does not end concluding Scobie is a dead Catholic as Louise is wont to think.

To prove this, the preface to the novel is the most authoritative source. The epitaph to the novel, from Peguy, shows us the use of Catholicism, Greene has effected. Hence, not only the saint but the sinner too is a rightful Christian: Christianity is a City to which a bad citizen belongs and a good stranger does not. Peguy visualises Saints and sinners, with clasped hands, pulling up to God.

Scobie then as a sinner, with his acute consciousness of transgressions, does not appear a sinner except to the conventional Catholic sensibility.

This does not of course, dismiss comment to the contrary as products of Conventional Catholic Sensibility. Orwell complains that there is an impression that to be damned is rather distinctive.

Philip Teynbee⁹ "declares" conflict is a vulgarization of the faith. Waugh calls it all "Mad blasphemy" - for one can't do evil that good may come of it, and what's more, neither Louise nor Helen is morally uplifted by Scobie's acts. While these critics are to a certain degree indisputable in their claims, the vindication for Scobie's acts is that he is convinced of the propriety of his actions at every stage.

True, it is that he prefers Helen Relt's illicit relationship with himself, rather than Bagster, but only because it never crosses his mind that Bagster might eventually marry her. Scobie is not an unredeemed sinner in so far that after ascribing to himself the responsibility of providence in shaping the lives of Louise and Helen, he understands finally his presumption and submits wholly to God, in his act of self obliteration.

The vindication of Scobie's character and acts, is phrased most usefully, by Father Rank in the novel, when he queries - "What happens in a single human heart?" Attkins clarifies the relevance of the title "The Heart of the Matter" when he states "The Catholic intellectual must at sometime or other become aware of the incompatibility of his religious beliefs and the world as it is revealed to him."

Scobie reaches this point, and when he does so he submits, surrenders, but before that, "What happens in a single human heart" is an infinitely complex essentially personal assimilation of Religion. Scobie interprets Religion in personal terms, agonises over paradoxes of God's Mercy - when he lets the

child die, and the interpretation is rewarded with understanding when he accepts the paradox, giving up all pretence of understanding it. But the surrender, to one of Scobie's nature, can be realised only through annihilation of self in Death in the shape of suicide.

Greene himself, in an interview avowed that he was not depicting Manichaenism so much as

Jansenism, and in conclusion it may be affirmed then, that Scobie too would be saved by "Interior Grace" for Christ died for all.

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| <p>(1) Graham Greene. A Twentieth Century Collection of Critical Essays-ed. by Samuel Hynes</p> <p>1. Graham Greene on the Screen - Gene D. Philips</p> <p>2. Bishop Bloughrams' Apology - Graham Greene the man within—Anonymous</p> <p>3. Mr Greene's Eggs and Crosses</p> | <p>4. Felix Culp</p> <p>5. Graham Greene the earlier Novels</p> <p>6. The Art of Fiction—Graham Greene</p> <p>7. The Trilogy</p> <p>8. The Observer (London) Dec 4 - 1955</p> <p>2 & 9 Graham Greene 'Writers and Critic' —David Pryce Jones</p> <p>3 & 10 Graham Greene—John Atkins.</p> |
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Language and Style in Virginia Woolf's "TO THE LIGHTHOUSE"

The novel as an art form gained in popularity in England from around the 18th century. Writers from the time of Richardson onwards have been trying to capture reality in some measure or other, using their own peculiar methods to do so. Conventional methods have been the use of letters, conversation and narrative, keeping more or less to a chronological sequence. But such methods were felt to be superficial and incomplete by some modern novelists, outstanding among whom are James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. They adopted instead a method known as "stream of consciousness" or 'interior monologue.'

This method is based on Freudian principles of psychoanalysis which holds that the most important human activity takes place below the level of consciousness. Virginia Woolf writes in an essay on the modern novel: "Examine for a moment an ordinary life on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions - trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel." Accordingly, the main action and plot in such novels develop in the minds of the principal characters, and are presented through an apparently unorganized succession of images, connected by association rather than logical argument. The creation of an

atmosphere, a kind of poetic effect is more important than the 'story-telling' part of a novel. Yet, even such novels must have a structure, a method of narration. The method differs not only from novelist to novelist, but also among the novels of a single author.' 'To the Light House' for example, is the only one of Virginia Woolf's novels having a tripartite structure.

'To the Lighthouse' has no real story as there is, in say, 'Pride and Prejudice' or 'Mill on the Floss' or any other conventional novel you may choose to think of. In keeping with this lack of a conventional story, Virginia Woolf's style and manner of presentation is different. This is apparent from the very first chapter. 'The opening sentence'— 'Yes, of course, if its fine tomorrow,' said Mrs. Ramsay'—is an answer to an unspoken question which the reader has to infer by picking up clues as he goes along. This goes for all the relevant background information too. There is no one central character providing details of setting and biographical thumb-nail sketches of other characters and the situation. Instead, Virginia Woolf makes the question of going to the light house act as a kind of stone thrown into the water, creating ever widening ripples, as one critic, Mr. Davenport puts it. These ripples cause reactions in other characters whose thoughts and words gradually supply the reader with relevant details. This information is coloured by the personalities of the various characters and involves the reader in the under currents and tensions which bind the group.

Virginia Woolf uses a combination of conversation as it is actually taking place, and associated thoughts ranging over an indefinite length of time. This enables her to weave the past into the present, and reveal the latter in the light of the former. For example, Mrs. Ramsay's mental recreation of her walk with Charles Tansley helps put him in perspective.

Virginia Woolf also makes use of the common and accepted technique of the third person narrator. As omniscient author she provides her views on some of the characters. For example we are told that Charles Tansley is an atheist even before he is presented through some of the characters in the novel. The author uses indirect speech for the interior monologues of the characters, thus making it easy to weave in such comments as lie outside the scope of the characters she is dealing with. This style makes the transition from one character to the other smooth, and unifies the novel as well.

'To the Lighthouse' is the only one of Virginia Woolf's novels which has a tripartite structure - each of which has a title. The first part is titled 'The Window', the second, 'Time Passes,' and the third simply, 'The Lighthouse'. Part one deals with the actual events taking place during the course of one single evening and the myriad associated thoughts these events arouse in each of the major characters. The characters with all their idiosyncracies are presented from various angles, and the complicated web of inter relationships and problems is cleverly woven. This part is very similar in style to part B. The use of the third person narrative makes the transition to the second part easy. This is a little different from the other two sections, and, as the title indicates, records the passage of time. The people in the earlier narrative seems a little unreal-seen at a distance and fragmentarily at that. The identity of the characters take second place to the depiction of the working of external forces. Time and nature break up the community and the house. We are no longer involved in the thoughts and feelings of the characters, and such an important event as the death of Mrs. Ramsay is presented in parenthesis. It's main function is to bring the book into perspective, by forcing a distant view on us. It amplifies ideas already touched on in Part I, especially the

questioning thoughts of the characters. It begins rather pessimistically depicting a neglected and empty house, which the previous section depicted as housing a nest of tangled emotions and passions. But from the point from which the family, or, at least, some members of it are expected back, there is an upward swing, and the foundation is laid for some positive answers to the questions posed in Part I, notably—"what remains?".

The third section again uses a mixture of action and reflection, but reflection is more strongly emphasised. Mr. Ramsay, James and Cam journey to the lighthouse, while Lilly and Carmichael stay behind, watching them. James, who had a very complex relationship with his father, hating him, yet wanting his praise, comes to achieve a harmony, in thought at least, with the old man sitting with his legs curled, reading a book. Cam too comes to a better understanding of things, and Lilly, thinking of Mrs. Ramsay while watching the progress of the boat, mentally unites her with Mr. Ramsay whom she has come to see in a new light, thus achieving a sense of completeness.

The sense of completeness is echoed by the completion of her picture which reflects the attempt to bring together the different masses in the story.

Virginia Woolf wrote of this novel "I feel as if it fetched a circle pretty completely this time". This circular nature is emphasised in many ways through the novel. 'The Window' begins and ends with a conversation about a lighthouse: 'Time passes' progresses from night to day from sleeping to waking. 'The Lighthouse' repeats the pattern. Lilly's opening question, "What does it mean then? What can it all mean?" is answered in the final, "I have had my vision". As a whole too, Virginia Woolf accomplishes a sense of wholeness. The proposed journey to the lighthouse at the beginning of the novel is achieved at the end, and dissensions end in harmony.

Lilly, who is involved in the action, yet stands out-side it as an artist, acts as an observer of sorts.

Virginia Woolf's characterisation has been cited as one of her chief drawbacks even by some of her more favourable critics. F. M. Foster writes "She could seldom so portray a character that it was remembered afterwards on its own account as Emma is remembered for instance...". It is true that Virginia Woolf's characters are not the rounded portraits one meets in the best conventional novels. Yet, they are convincing to a certain degree. Her intention was not to portray characters simply as rational human beings, but to enable the reader to enter into the complexity of their minds. Her idea of the nebulousness of character is brought out through Lilly's attempt to paint Mrs. Ramsay and James.

She wrote of the true self in one of her essays: "We are streaked, variegated, all of a mixture, the colours have run" This indefiniteness and fluidity of character is what she meant to convey. She does this mainly by presenting the characters through several points of view. For example, Mrs. Ramsay's character is built up through the admiring eyes of William Bankers (though the admiration wanes at one point), the analytic eyes of Lilly, and through the author's own comments. One also learns about her through her relationship with the other characters. We are shown her good and bad points in the course of the novel, yet we find, as Lilly does, that it is almost impossible to evaluate and compartmentalize her. In Lilly's words: "Fifty pairs of eyes were not enough to get around that one woman with". The same can be said of almost all the other characters in the novel. Yet, in spite of the apparently contradictory evaluation of the same person by different characters, some effort is made to make them convincing. For example, Charles Tansley's background is provided so that his behaviour can be viewed in perspective. Joan Bennet's

words effectively sum up Virginia Woolf's method of characterisation. She writes, "instead of defining an identity or epitomizing it in a particular incident, she invites us to discover it by living in the minds of her characters."

Virginia Woolf's use of language is in keeping with 'the special effect' she wanted to achieve in the novel. The major part of it consists of the rumination of characters, and hence there is a predominance of words such as "feel", "seem", "perhaps", "strange", "as if" etc. She makes use of a large number of present participles such as 'rising', 'eating', 'holding, etc. which give a sense of time standing still.

She marks innovative use of punctuation too, especially of quotation marks. Some spoken passages are not enclosed within inverted commas, such as Mrs. Ramsay's words to William Bankers during dinner :

'And the waste, said Mrs. Ramsay. A whole French family could live on what an English cook throws away'. On the other hand, some passages of what is obviously recorded thoughts are thus enclosed. 'The Window' ends with the lines, "Yes, you were right. It's going to be wet tomorrow" she had not said it, but he knew it..." which illustrates this point. A clue to the reason behind this may be found in Lilly's view of speech as an inadequate vehicle for communication of important matters. She says: "words fluttered sideways and struck the objects inches too low". This unorthodox use of punctuation marks are also a result of Virginia Woolf's firm conviction that thoughts are more important than speech.

Her use of the parenthesis is unorthodox too. It is used to convey shifting points of view within a paragraph, to convey visual images; and to separate actual happenings from wandering thoughts. It gives a sense of the two occurring simultaneously.

The use of images is central to Virginia Woolf's manner of writing. They are necessary to convey the exact shade of the impressions she desires to portray. She uses many types of imagery, ranging from the simple to the complex.

Very beautiful as well as apt examples of simple imagery can be found almost throughout the book. To cite at random: "Mr. Carmichael 'basking with' his yellow cat's eyes ajar," and, a more beautiful one: "Rose's arrangement of the grapes and pears made her think of a trophy fetched from the bottom of the sea, of Neptune's banquet, of the bunch of grapes that hangs with vine leaves over the shoulder of Bacchus (in some picture among the leopard skins and the torches lolloping red and gold...")

Then there are the groups of related images which Virginia Woolf uses in describing some of her characters. For example, Mrs. Ramsay is associated with flowers several times in the novel. She walks in fields of flowers, and is shown considering "next year's flowers". At one point she is described as "shoving her way up under petals that curved over her", to convey her return from her thoughts to reality. Similar related images are used in connection with Mr. Ramsay and one or two other characters. This, together with the use of symbols form one of the many threads that bind the book together."

The use of symbols, like the use of imagery, is liberal. However, there are a few outstanding ones, such as the painting, and, of course, the lighthouse.

Lilly's painting symbolises the attempt to balance several contrasting moods and characters. She tells William Bankers; "A light here required a shadow there" Her original intention was to paint Mrs. Ramsay and James at the window, but her efforts to harmonize its' different parts are only successful ten years later, when her attitude towards Mr. Ramsay has undergone a change.

Literature is used in a symbolic way too. 'To the Lighthouse' contains several quotes from Scott, Tennyson, Cowper and others. Though the quotations themselves may be simple, they imply complex ideas. A prime example is Mr. Ramsay's dramatic quote from Cowper in Part III: "We perished each alone/But I beneath a rougher sea/And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he." The quote is from Cowper's "The Castaway" which tells of a man who died bravely at sea. When used in this context it adds something to it.

The lighthouse is of course the most important symbol in the book, and it stands for many things, in keeping with Virginia Woolf's belief that a writer should take one thing and make it stand for twenty. Mrs. Ramsay identifies herself with its' light, and Mr. Ramsay is associated with it through such phrases as "that flash of darkness" and "his own little light". The multiplicity of things the lighthouse stands for makes it also a symbol of diversity. Its ambiguity is expressed in James's different views of it with a gap of ten years in between. It was once "a silvery, misty-looking tower with a yellow eye", and now it was something concrete—"a tower stark and straight." However, he recognizes the validity of both perceptions, because, "nothing was simply one thing."

Virginia Woolf uses personification as the dominant technique in Part II which deals with the subordination of individual characters to the force of time and nature. One of the most striking examples of this technique can be found in the personification of the gentle night breeze. Virginia Woolf writes: "So some random light directing them from an

uncovered star, or wandering ship, or the Lighthouse even, with 'its' pale footfall upon stair and mat, the little airs mounted the stair case and nosed around bedroom doors....." But Virginia Woolf broke up these references to the abstract by references to the house as the reader saw it in the previous part, filled with people and emotion.

The use of imagery and symbolism and her unique use of language give the novel, which is otherwise necessarily restricted to sparse and commonplace actions, a satisfying richness and colour. They help the reader to adjust to the new style of writing and to enjoy it.

Her novels have been criticized as being too limited in subject matter. But Virginia Woolf was aware of these limitations and the important thing is that she has the skill to present her novel, in however limited a framework, in a convincing, and even enjoyable manner.

In conclusion I would like to quote a passage from Jean Guignet's essay on "To the Lighthouse." She writes: "Such as it is, retaining enough traditional elements and characters and a semblance of plot to satisfy the common reader, yet brimming with inward life and with a lyricism which gave it a density characteristic of Virginia Woolf, 'To the Lighthouse', by the synthesis which it achieves and the balance which it maintains between contradictory tendencies, won the favour of reading public and..... was at least granted indulgence by some who unhesitatingly condemn her other novels."

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II M.A. Literature

Chinu Achebe, Alan Paton

The Tragic Tension - Things Fall Apart and Cry, the Beloved Country.

If tragedy implies a tale of suffering ending in death, then "Things Fall Apart" and *Cry, The Beloved Country* are tragedies. Yet, they are more than just a casual story of suffering. It is the story of an entire society, with the heroes in each novel being representative of their societies - Okonkwo in Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart' and Stephen Kumalo in Paton's 'Cry, the Beloved Country' and in their personal tragedies lie also the fall of their societies.

Now, before examining the tragedy in the two novels one has to decide whether it is truly tragic or merely an exercise in melodrama and pathos. Going by the Aristotelean definition of the truly tragic as an imitation of an action that is both serious and cathartic in its effect, Paton and Achebe seem to fit - both do 'imitate' an action which is serious. They deal with an entire culture and not an isolated incident in some anonymous character's life. The recreation of the past adds to the seriousness of the action. Besides the action itself in both the novels is serious. *Things Fall Apart* is about the heroic efforts of the protagonist to preserve his culture and tradition against the heavy odds of the white man's intrusion upon native soil, and *Cry, The Beloved Country* dramatizes the attempts of the bewildered Stephen Kumalo to find a solution to the problem of evil, of an African solution that 'bleeds' because of the injustices of the rich and powerful.

The principle of catharsis works differently in each novel and is perhaps more evident in 'Cry, The Beloved Country'. Here, we grow with Kumalo as he passes through the agony of loss and increased responsibility. He suffers intensely and his 'humour' (in this case, his blindness to evil, which paradoxically enough,

is born of his innate saintliness) is reduced to a balanced proportion, and it is not difficult to understand his calm acceptance at the end of the novel. Thus, in the last pages of the book he is a new and fuller human being. But in 'Things Fall Apart' the reader is so carried away by the torrent of Okonkwo's struggle that one can only like Obierika be choked with emotion'. No doubt, Achebe's style displays a remarkable restraint, but the action of the novel excites neither pity nor fear, but a furious indignation that the white man could have trampled upon a traditional society so mercilessly.

In both novels, there are certain Greek conventions of tragedy that are too glaring to be missed. Primarily, there is the characteristic inclusion of "violent situations". 'Things Fall Apart' has several instances of violence - which one notices is linked to the very nature of the Igbo society itself. The first few lines of the book state how Okonkwo's fame rested on "his solid personal achievements" such as success at wrestling matches. This may be meant to illustrate his triumphs, but Okonkwo is also a representative of his society, and as such achievements only serve to show how much the society placed on physical strength. Violence is implicit in the Igbo value system as can be seen from the brutal hacking down of Ikemefuna. Okonkwo hates having to do it because he loves the boy, but he has to swing the axe or else be called a coward - a label which every Omofian dreaded. But Okonkwo lives not merely as archetypal of a decaying society but also as an individual in his own right, and such violent incidents as the whipping of his wife during the Week of Peace must be put down to nothing else but his own personal idiosyncrasies. But in *Cry, The Beloved*

Country there is none of the tempestuousness of Achebe's novel. The style is slow, rhythmical and biblical and there is only one really "violent" situation, and even this is not dramatised, but only reported-the murder of Arthur Jarvis by three black youths. It is a very matter of fact report and if there is any emotion involved, it is in the passage following the report. 'There is not much talking now. A silence falls upon them all. There is not time to talk of hedges and fields, or the beauty of any country. Sadness and hate and fear, how they well up in the heart and mind, whenever one opens the pages of these messengers of doom. Cry for the broken tribe, for the law and the custom that is gone. Aye, and cry aloud for the man who is dead, for the woman and children bereaved. Cry, the beloved country, these things are not yet at an end. The sun pours down on the earth, on the lovely land that man cannot enjoy. He knows only the fear of his heart" (Lpg 66) This is a passage reflective not only of the immediate feeling following a violent situation, but also of the moral and spiritual decay of a once glorious humanity.

The use of masks is another Greek convention evident more literally in 'Things Fall Apart' than in 'Cry the Beloved Country', It is a part of the Igbo culture that they reject abstractions and so the masks depict not only a physical but also a psychological reality. Theirs is a total view of life in which nature, gods, people and ancestors are mystically linked. The egwugwu are the protagonists of the religious rituals and the masked ancestors preside over religious ceremonies and administer justice. Okonkwo, because of his "solid personal achievements" can wear the ceremonial sacred mask of the ancestral spirit of the village. The egwugwu, the guardian spirits of the village appear symbolically through the living figures of the masked elders, and Okonkwo is one such privileged person to embody the spirit. Now, this is psychological reality and there is physical

reality too, because unofficially all the villagers could identify the masked wearers. Eg. Okonkwo could be recognised by his springy walk-nevertheless, this makes things to different and the spell does not break.

There is another level of masking in Things Fall Apart and more similar to that in 'Cry, the Beloved Country. In both novels, the characters assume a mask because of fear. We are told that in all his actions of bravery and courage, Okonkwo is motivated by the single fear of becoming like his father. His father did not care for "heroic" virtues and consequently was called an "agbala" or womanly-man. Okonkwo has to fight against this reputation and if his struggle seems frenzied or fanatical, it must be traced back to this fear. It is tragic because this makes him inhuman (or perhaps super-human) and because he wants to live upto his society's highest ideals, he breaks himself in isolation. One cannot but note that it is part of the tragedy of the society, that in being so rigid about its principles, it carried within itself the seeds of its own decay and collapse. (The influence of the Yeatsian theory of gyres and that every civilization carries within it the seeds of its own decay are too obvious to be overlooked.

The idea of masks to hide fear is well brought out in the character of John Kumalo in Cry the Beloved Country. He is a loud character and fully confident, but Paton shows how hollow this confidence was, because it is born of fear - fear because he knows his own son is an accomplice in the murder of Arthur Jarvis. "Yes, he remembers-that his own son and his brother's son are companions. The veins stand out on the bull neck and the sweat forms on the brow. Have no doubt it is fear in the eyes. He wipes his brows with a cloth. There are many questions he could ask. All he says is, yes, indeed, I remember" (pg 88). This silence of John Kumalo resembles the unnatural silence that Okonkwo lapses into after he kills Ikemefuna,

and in both cases it arises out of guilt and fear of ridicule.

The tragic tension effected through masks in both novels is that the society is so rigid that anyone who wishes to succeed has to do it through deception. In Okonkwo's case it is self-deception for he ultimately dies in the very manner he would have hated to. John Kumalo makes himself evil (a compromise with his society) and thus succeeds through unchristian means.

The effect of tragedy is heightened through horror and suffering. In *Things Fall Apart* there is a terrible sense of horror in some of Umefia's customs eg. the monstrous killing of twins just because they are twins. The tragedy of the society lies in this kind of rigidity, and the culture begins to collapse when people like Nwoye fail to find an answer as to why his society permits the taking of innocent life. Evil forest becomes symbolic of darkness and despair, - a place to which outcasts are dragged and left to die in abandonment. It is therefore significant that it is these Umofian 'rejects' who are the first converts to the whiteman's religion.

The picture of Johannesburg in *Cry the Beloved Country* as something that ensnares is equally horrifying. Paton shows only the negative aspects, thus establishing it as a dark city. "All roads lead to Johannesburg. If you are white or black they lead to Johannesburg. If the crops fail, there is work in Johannesburg— If the farm is too small, to be divided further, some must go to Johannesburg. If there is a child to be born, that must be delivered in secret, it can be delivered in Johannesburg". (Pg. 48)

But the heroism with which Okonkwo bears his pain makes him almost superhuman and therefore difficult to be identified with. He realizes with characteristic humility that he is not above the sanctified system of law and justice jealously guarded by the ancestral spirits. On the other hand, the reader is

more at home with Kumalo, who is so bewildered by the mystery of living that though he is basically humble, there are times when he gives vent to his savage emotions—such as his taunting of the girl, his son has made pregnant.

The entire society itself does not escape suffering. In *Things Fall Apart* there are people who can foresee the tragedy in such happenings as the coming of the white man, the breaking apart of the traditional bonds of kingship and conversions to Christianity. In "Cry the Beloved Country", Africa is referred to as "Bleeding". But with *Absalom* one gets the impression that his life is desecrated not because of any inherent trait but due to his environment and bad companions."

According to one concept of tragedy, the hero falls because of a flaw - a tragic flaw. So, that the excessive love of his society is Okonkwo's tragic flaw. His intolerance and insistence on 'manliness' makes him blind to the more humane virtues of gentleness, (which he terms effeminacy.) Similarly, by the rigidity of its internal workings, the society crumbles because brother is set against brother in a land where it is evil, a sin against the earth goddess to shed the blood of a clansman.

Paradoxically, this flaw makes Okonkwo a tragic hero. He knows the consequences of suicide. But he would rather die with dishonour rather than live with dishonour and his situation is especially tragic because as Obierika says: he was one of the greatest of men but he will now be buried like a dog.

In 'Cry the Beloved Country' both Stephen Kumalo and James Jarvis are good men, but they never recognize the reality of evil. So their tragedy comes when both lose their sons and find themselves responsible for it. If Kumalo is initially shocked at Absalom's claim that he had no parents, he soon realizes that this was true for he had failed in his Christian duties as a parent.

James Jarvis learns from the diary his son Arthur left behind that though he had given his son everything, he had left out something vital—a knowledge of Africa. But Kumale and Jarvis are purged by their suffering and this is what makes the tragic tension so different in both the novels. In 'Things Fall Apart' Okonkwo's death ends the novel on a note of despair, but in Paton's novel the fact that Jarvis in spite of knowing Kumale to be the father of his son's murderer, can still form a lasting and sincere relationship with him shows that it is a novel of hope and faith—in keeping with all Christian ideology of faith and trust in God. It is a point worthy of note that in 'Things Fall Apart' it is people like Obierika who do not possess the tragic flaw, who survive. He survives, because, like the bird in the folk tale, he has learnt to fly without perching, since the man has learnt to shoot without missing his mark".

Tragedy necessarily involves a conflict. In 'Things Fall Apart', for a man of thought like Obierika, it is a conflict between two kinds of good - one has to suit oneself to changing times because "who knows what will happen tomorrow." For Okonkwo, it is a battle between good and evil-good which he associates with his own native culture and evil with the white man. Similarly, Kumale finds himself confused in the teeming activity of Johannesburg, because by the ideals by which he lives, he cannot find in this city. He realizes that there is at least an element of truth in his son's statement that it is dangerous not to be carrying a gun, and he fights hard to save Absalom's spirit from total destruction. In 'Things Fall Apart' the conflict is between the whiteman and the black and in 'Cry the Beloved Country' the struggle lies in the right and wrong, injustice and justice.

In both novels, the tragedy arises because of changing social circumstances. In 'Things Fall Apart' the whiteman offers economic prosperity in return for converts. But

Achebe shows that the collapse had begun even earlier, "Turning and turning in the widening gyre. The falcon cannot hear the falconer. Things Fall Apart the centre cannot hold mere anarchy is loosened upon the world." The Igbo society falls apart because it cannot hold firm against the pressures introduced by an alien culture, and Achebe's controlled 'detachment' expresses the conflict between two widely disparate cultures in social and individual terms. This cross-cultural conflict is crystallised in Achebe's dramatisation of a moment in history—the arrival of the whiteman in Eastern Nigeria.

In 'Cry the Beloved Country' the white man disrupts Zulu life by setting up a city to which the natives are ensnared. But there the tragedy is not that a culture collapses but as Msimangu says: "The tragedy is not that things are broken. The tragedy is that they are not mended again. The white man has broken the tribe..... But the house that is broken, and the man that falls apart when the house is broken, these are the tragic things. That is why children break the law, and old white people are robbed and beaten It suited the white man to break the tribe. But it has not suited him to build something in the place of what is broken..... They are not all so. There are some white men who give their lives to build up what is broken" (pg. 25). Thus in both the novels the entire blame is on neither the blackman or whitemen only. Everyone together has erred somewhere and precipitated the tragedy.

Fate plays a big role in tragedy. In 'Things Fall Apart' there is always an implied suggestion of cosmic irony being at work - the theme of the irony of fate central to this is the concept of the Igbo "Chi" - each man's personal fate which is a reflection of a supreme divine force. Okonkwo exerts himself to realize the utmost potential of his "Chi" because the Igbo people have a proverb that "when a man says yes, the 'chi'

says yes also'. But one must accept a stoical approach in times of trouble, as Uchendu tells a despairing Okonkwo. "You think you are the greatest sufferer in the world. Do you know that sometimes men are banished for life, that they lose all their yam and children. ...There is none for whom it is well". Okonkwo incurs the wrath of fate by trying to exceed his "Chi" and control his own destiny for enemies called him "the little bird who so far forget himself after a heavy meal that he challenged his "chi". "Therefore Fate and a divine justice combine to punish him for presumption.

'Cry the Beloved Country' is a Christian novel and so there is no question of the Irony of Fate determining a persons's destiny. Nevertheless, there is irony: For example: Arthur Jarvis is killed, by the very people he had dedicated his life to. But basically, it is the will of God and the power of prayer that is stressed eg. "Father Vincent said to him, (Stephen Kumale) Yes, and rest.....and do not for yourself and do not pray to understand the ways of God. For they are secret. Who knows what life is? For life is a secret. Pray for Gertrude and for her child, and for the girl that is to be your son's wife and for the child that is to be your grand child..... Pray for all the white people, those who do justice and who would do justice if they were not afraid. And do not fear to pray for your son, and for his amendment" (Pg. 98).

In both novels, death comes as a release, not an end. Okonkwo prefers to die rather than live to see corruption flourishing in his beloved land. For Absalom, it is a release because he had never been at home in this world and death frees him from the pathos of his situation.

Tragedy becomes grandest when the soul is purged. Stephen Kumale and James Jarvis undergo spiritual transformation and by the end of the book they are, what would

be called 'born again' Christians. Paton brings on the Christian concept of free-will as opposed to the "chi" in 'Things Fall Apart' because both of them try to make the best of their left over lives and look forward with a spirit of hope. But in 'Things Fall Apart' Okonkwo undergoes no educative process. He makes no painful voyage of self-discovery because he is a man of action, not of thought, so his progress is retarded and he learns nothing from his trials.

With Okonkwo's death, dies the spirit of the clan. He has acted in a way which was fitting before the coming of the white missionaries, but which Achebe shows to be irrelevant in the present context. Okonkwo is neither fully wrong or fully right-his moral position has a tragic ambiguity... Like the Aristotelian hero, he emerges both as hero and archetype - and he is the first protagonist in Black African fiction to symbolize the position of the African tragically under pressure in a rapidly changing social situation.

'Cry the Beloved Country' never attains the heroic proportions of 'Things Fall Apart' and perhaps that is why it is more appealing. It is a novel of protest - not against an alien culture, but against moral decay as epitomised in the settlement at Johannesburg. Stephen Kumale, unlike Okonkwo is symbolic of no particular race, but of any Christian making a journey from darkness to light.

So, to conclude, one can say, that both novels basically deal with the loss of a past. But they deal with different points in time. In 'Things Fall Apart' the white man has just begun to filter in and therefore there are more instances of physical combats. In 'Cry the Beloved Country' the white man has already become an institution and the fact that he has integrated himself into African life is shown in the relationships between people like Father Vincent (white man) and Msimangu and Kumale (black priests).

Because the age treated is different, the tragedy takes on a different perspective. In 'Things Fall Apart', the white man becomes symbolic of evil, but in 'Cry the Beloved Country' evil is a collective vice for which everyone is responsible. Nevertheless, whatever the perspective, both novels display remarkable control and there are no traces of emotional excesses. Achebe's tone is that of an omniscient onlooker who narrates with

subjective detachment. Paton includes the reader in the experience of the novel by directly addressing it to him and though at points the omniscient threatens to break loose and spill over, it never really does and this has to be attributed to Paton's craftsmanship and control over both language and emotion.

Claramma Xavier.

Illusions—A Study of Much Ado about Nothing

It is because illusion is potentially life-enhancing that when we enter the theatre we leave outside with our umbrellas and overcoats the hard-headed rejection of the unreal and the untrue that must of necessity characterize our day to day dealings. And we enter the world of Messina on Shakespeare's terms, not ours, accepting his conventions and the illusions he offers us, without shoving them on the dissecting table of verisimilitude and reality. The price we pay, along with our ticket, for entering the terrain of the Romantic Comedies whether Arden, Illyria or Messina is just this—a willing suspension of disbelief.

And it is good and proper that we have done so. For the world of Shakespearian comedy is a warm, golden world, a world we dare not live in too long lest lotus-eater-like we long to surfeit on "amarnath and moly" a world we dare not confuse with the real world. It is a world of illusions in which

characters with alacrity trap others into entering along with them the web of illusions that is "Much Ado about Nothing."

The title of "the most-aptly-named of Shakespeare's Comedies"¹ both forewarns us and consoles us before we enter the topography of Messina. There shall be "a great coil", dynamite, shattering into light Claudio's illusions of deep love for Hero and in the process, almost shattering her too, but it is not dynamite, however, but "a mere paper bullet of the brain, an illusion—nothing. Like "The Taming of the Shrew" the play explores the power of illusion in transforming role and identity—the fantasies they overhear shatter Beatrice and Benedick's illusions of hostility. In this play :

"Loving goes by haps,
Some Cupid kills with arrows; some
with traps."

(III.*I.105-106)

1 Bertrand Evans : Shakespeare's Comedies.

Messina seems made of the stuff of dreams, "a cheerful world of carnival"¹ where people are constantly capable of the type of wit we can only reach in our best moments, it is a world of benevolent good nature devoid of stresses and strains where characters are relieved of the necessity of working for their living, rather like the world of "A Midsummer Night's Dream".

Messina's world, however is a world of illusion; a kaleidoscopic rainbowed bubble that shatters at the touch of reality. We watch Messina grow before our eyes into a Garden of Eden, a demi-paradise and into this Garden creeps the serpent. With the approach of Don John we realize that the gaiety was brittle, that we were walking on ice which now cracks, plunging us into a vortex, an abyss of cruelty. We watch, shivering, patterns of avaricious cruelty, (a thousand Ducats "to vex Claudio, to undo Hero and to kill Leonato"); perverse, malign cruelty, (if I can cross her any way, I'll bless myself every way); histrionic, spectacular cruelty, (Leonato, give not this rotten orange to your friend); of self-pitying cruelty, (But mine, and mine I loved and mine I praised. Do not live, Hero, do not open thine eyes). And with a sigh we admit that the attractive social surface was but an illusion beneath which is the reality—"a hard self-centredness".²

Were the character of the play in more continual contact with reality, their files on the tables of today's Freudian critics would be slimmer but they would not be "characters" and we would not have the play. For Bertrand Evans compares 'Much Ado' with 'As You Like

It' and 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' in being a compact of 'practices, practisers and practi-sees',³ In fact the plot of Much Ado is but the sum of its character illusions—Act I: Don Pedro decides to woo Hero in Claudio's name. Act II: his action is misinterpreted by Antonio, Leonato, Don John, Benedick and Claudio himself; Benedick is gulled into belief in Beatrice's outrageous passion for him. In Act III Beatrice is similarly gulled; Borachio enacts the seeming proof of Hero's disloyalty; the Watch are erroneously on the trail of 'one deformed'; Act IV, : F. P. Wilson comments that this scene which forms the focus of the play hinges on a suppose⁴—that Margaret was Hero; Hero's feigned death: Act V: Hero is resurrected as Leonato's daughter. (Was Claudio's penitence a mere illusion? It is an interesting question).

Shakespearian Comedy makes use of convention—illusions of reality — 'artificial situations, contrived marriages, and elaborate happy endings'.⁵ Much of the plot will not bear the search-light of realism, of psychological verity. That the sensible Beatrice and Benedick should believe the outrageous tales they hear of each other's passion is not easily credible even in the presence of natural human vanity. Lewis Carrol queries, "Why in the world did not Hero, or at any rate Beatrice provide an alibi to the charge and say that she had slept in another room that night? How could Borachio possibly fashion it that Hero should be absent?⁶ Granted that the unsentimental, Beatrice and Benedick should compose 'halting sonnet' is it at all likely that Hero and Claudio should carry them (in their pockets?) to their once-aborted wedding.

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- 1, 2 : Arden Edition of Much Ado About Nothing ed. A. R. Humphreys
 3. Bertrand Evans : Shakespeare's Comedies
 4. F. P. Wilson : Shakespeare and other Studies
 5. Ken Deighton : Introduction to Much Ado about Nothing
 6. Lewis Carrol : Letter to Ellen Terry

But the shades of Shakespeare would frown and understandably. For these are vain cries from another world altogether with which the world of the play has no treaty relations.¹ And indeed, this judge-and-jury method would shatter the delicate framework of illusions which constitutes much of the charm of the play.

The themes Shakespeare explores here are the same that have activated plays as diverse as *Othello*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. . . . illusions. In *Much Ado* he deals with appearance and reality with its concomitants of inward and outward beauty, fancy and true affection, and themes such as apparel and fashion, credulity, deception and self-deception, and love disturbed by misconceptions, and treachery.

The central theme reaches a painful culmination in Claudio's agonized repudiation of all appearances,"²

"Out on thee!! Seeming! I will write against it,

You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it is blown,
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus". (IV 1.55-59)

Ironically this extravagant denunciation was addressed to one who was as chaste in reality as she was in 'outward seeming'. This theme of love disturbed by treachery, disloyalty and misconceptions, in a word illusions, is a consistent one in the body of work from the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* to the *Problem-plays*.³ *Much Ado* too explores the admixture

of truth and illusion in the central reality of love.

Common themes of deception, self-deception, credulity and illusion link the main and sub-plots of *Much Ado About Nothing*, which is indeed an interesting study of what psychologists have called 'the will to believe', here coupled with the will to deceive. Everyone in this play is either the perpetrator or the victim of a trick, ⁴ their alacrity in believing is paralleled by their alacrity in deceiving. "Everyone in this play is disposed to believe that faith melteth into blood", every one is vulnerable to diabolically slanderous suggestions.⁵

Illusions seem to have a power of intoxication as gradually all the cast step into the web of illusions that is the plot. The sensible Benedick sees 'marks of love' in the 'infernal Ate' and Don John's appeal to illusion "I will show you enough and when you have heard and seen, proceed accordingly" is loaded with the tragic potential of *Othello* and *Cymbeline*.

Don John's bluff is never called until it is too late. A. R. Humphreys comments that this impercipient is normal in Elizabethan plays where the Machiavel works undetected save by his cronies until his schemes have taken effect

Apparel and fashion, the difference between the doublet and its wearer, the fashion and the man, is a constant preoccupation in several plays of Shakespeare, actor, playwright, man of theatre. Claudio, creature of illusions and hot-blooded fantasies (the heat of a luxurious bed) significantly is specifically associated with apparel and fashion throughout the play.

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1. George Gordon : *Shakespearian Comedy*
 2. Derek Traversi : *An Approach to Shakespeare*
 3. *Much Ado About Nothing*, ed. A. R. Humphreys.
 4. Derck Traversi : *An Approach to Shakespeare*.
 5. Arthur Kirsch : *Shakespeare & the Experience of Love*.

Claudio's love for Hero is a mere illusion of the tender love he fancied it was. It springs up in a moment of idleness, 'warthou-ghts leaving their room vacant'; it was spurred on by the fact that Hero was the 'only heir' of the Governor of Messina and besides, was beautiful. The verdict of the eye counter-mands itself he sees the "seeming proof of Hero's disloyalty and he pitifully yelps, "In the congregation where I should wed, there will I shame her".

Had his love for Hero been love and not a mere illusion, if not believing in her innocence as instantly as her cousin does,¹ he might have atleast noticed that her blush was modesty, not guiltiness as the Friar does. Instead, he falls into the rather obvious trap at the suggestion of his enemy.²

This histrionic young cub, of course acts in character, his wooing rejecting and repenting are all formal and in public conducted under the spot-light. Show beyond substance, illusions rather than reality—that is characteristic of Claudio.

Shakespeare partly exonerates his least amiable lover³ by letting his plea. 'Yet sinn'd I not but in mistaking', pass unchallenged.' On this cause, Othello killed himself, Claudio, no Othello, accepts a substitute Hero "who alone is heir to both of us" with just a whimper "Poor Claudio".⁴

Like Othello, Claudio's jealousy springs from an illusion, both of them have a similar "marcissistic orientation, a similar vulnerability to diabolically slanderous suggestions⁵ a

similar painful experience of the difference between appearance and reality.

Beatrice and Benedick are presented as light-hearted critics of every illusion, acutely conscious of the difference between heavenly protestations and earthly realities, between the spirit of love and the demands of the body".⁶

Nevertheless, Shakespeare shows they are not exempt from the universal human condition, (in the play) of susceptibility to illusion. Their professed self-sufficiency, their confidence of their ability to live and die in single-blessedness is gradually exploded as an illusion. Isolation and self-sufficiency in Shakespearian comedy accompany evil, not loveable scamps like Beatrice and Benedick.

Declarations of hostility are really professions of love in this inverted courtship which John Palmer compares to that of Berowne and Rosaline, Petruchio and Katharine, Rosaand and Orlando. They are both obviously treading a measure that will leave them at the altersteps, though they do not know it. Then they hear the ingenious fictions designed for their consumption and seize the opportunity to be themselves as a godsend⁷ and believe them 'better than reportingly.'

The theme of illusion extends from Kings and Governors to petty officialdom as we see in the gorgeous, rich comedy of the Dogber-ryisms of Mrs. Malaprop's predecessor. Words fascinate him with the illusions of pomp, importance and semantic dexterity that they convey. "Who is the most senseless and fit man to be Constable of the Watch?" and "It is proved already that you are little better

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1. W. H. Auden : 'The Dyer's Hand'
 2. John Bailey : Shakespeare
 3. Harbage, quoted by A. R. Humphreys
 4. Bertrand Evans : Shakespeare's Comedies
 5. Arthur Kirsch : Shakespeare and the Experience of Love
 6. Ibid
 7. John Palmer : Shakespeare's Political and Comic Characters.

than false rogues and it will go near to be thought so shortly." And we almost feel outrage with poor Dogberry who had "two gowns and everything handsome about him" when Conrade suggests that he was an ass. However, Dogberry and his fellows cling doggedly to truth as they see it and by so doing become the instruments of saving all.' "What your wisdoms could not discover these shallow fools have brought to light." . . . the Biblical concept of truths being hidden from the wise and revealed to the simple. It is in accordance with the intention of the play that truth should lie hidden in the least expected places.

In Shakespearian Comedy, marriage is 'a happy ending', That's illusion for one. Marriage is not a full stop, but a capital letter and happiness depends on the rest of the sentence. Hero's feigned death transparently recollects the death and resurrection of Christ,² but whether it redeems Claudio is as much a matter of surmise as whether that other death and resurrection has redeemed you and me. I feel that it is just a matter of time before he suspects a Don Pedro of loving her of a Don John's slanders against her. And when he speaks of 'poor Claudio', I am rather tempted to echo, 'poor Hero'.

My post-marital prognostications for Beatrice and Benedick would not be much more cheerful. Their temperaments are too similar; the sword shall probably never fly into the scabbard, but be flourished in a perpetual merry war, perhaps growing less merry as water flows under the bridge. But of course, they know the stars foretold a 'predestinate scratched face and that he who 'catches the Benedick runs presently mad.'

Petruchio could declare

"For I am as peremptory, as she proudminded,

For I am rough and woo not like a babe"

(The Taming of the Shrew, II. i. 132)

But Benedick is no Petruchio (or is Beatrice no Katharine) and accepts that "Thou and I are too wise to woo peacably". Will they who are too wise to woo peacably be wise enough to live together peacably? That is the question. Nevertheless their warm and generous natures give them as fair a chance of happiness as other Shakespearian pairs.

The action of *Much Ado About Nothing* begins with a masked Ball and the complex of ill-assorted partnerships and misunderstandings it gives rise to. It slowly flows through a miasma of misapprehensions and deceits (both malevolent and benevolent) to truth. It significantly ends in another Ball with the partners unmasked this time and truly united.³

The complex verbal gyrations with which the emotions of Beatrice and Benedick pirouetted before us in the earlier scenes are replaced by a new simplicity—with the terse, 'Kill Claudio' and the charming admission, 'No, I was not born under a riming planet; nor I cannot woo in festival terms.

Deception, and illusion become instruments leading to truth both on the apron-stage of plot and the inner stage of character as illusions of fanciful romantic love or fancied antagonism are discarded. The current of *Much Ado About Nothing* meanders slowly from darkness to light, from unreality to reality, from illusion to truth.

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Thematic Concerns in 'THE GRAPES OF WRATH'

"And in the eyes of the people there is failure; and in the eyes of the hungry, there is a growing wrath. In the souls of the people, the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, growing heavy for the vintage,"¹

The novel's title taken from "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" ("He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored") is a re-assertion of the theme of eternal unity and progress, that is growing within the people, a result of their desperate situation. With this grows the smouldering resentment that would soon come to the fore—the slowly fermenting wrath that would suddenly spill over and swamp the enemy.

Steinbeck's novel, written during the Great Depression early in the century was a protest and exposure of the socio-economic inequities faced by small-time farmers, of their economic insecurity. "They's somepin' worse in the devil got hold a the country."² In 1936, Steinbeck followed groups of migrants to California and wrote an article, *Their Blood is Strong*, showing the indomitable courage and the ultimate dignity of man under the most trying of circumstances. Anybody can break, it takes a man not to."³

Set in the "red country and part of the grey country of Oklahoma"⁴—hot, dry, dusty, unhappy—the story continues across Oklahoma

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1. Steinbeck, John, *The Grapes of wrath* (Harmondsworth : Penguin Books Ltd, 1939) p. 320.
 2. IBID : p. 117.
 3. IBID : p.
 4. IBID; p. 5.

to California, with the Joad family who are representative of the lives of the rest—poverty, unemployment, hunger and death. In the midst of much confusion and unease, hope comes to the Joads in the shape of orange handbills, promising California to them—the land of plenty. Lured by these, they leave with the barest of essentials on a long, arduous journey and are split up by circumstances leaving only six of the original twelve. The book is divided into three main sections: drought, journey, and California and parallels have been drawn to Biblical history of the Old Testament—the Egyptians, the exodus, and the Promised Land.

“The prime function of life is to nourish life.”¹ The Okies move not because they want to, but because they have to—the economic depression wrests them from their native country into hostile California. “It’s need that makes all the trouble.”²—

“The causes lie deep and simply—the causes are a hunger in the stomach, multiplied a million times; a hunger in a single soul, hunger for joy and some security, multiplied million times; muscles and mind aching to grow, to work, to create, multiplied a million times—this is man. This you may say of man—when theories change and crash, when schools, philosophies grow and disintegrate, man reaches, stumbles forward, painfully, mistakenly sometimes. Having stepped forward, he may slip back, but only half a step never the full step back.”³

The positive theme is the ultimate realization of the eternal unity between the people—the gradual conversion of “I” to “we”, of inevitable progress. Jim Casy does much towards this theme. “May be all men got one big soul ever‘body’s a part of. Now I sat

there thinking it and all of a sudden—I knew it. I knew it so deep down that it was true and I still know it. There was the hills, an’ there was me, an’ we wasn’t separate no more—we was one thing. An’ that one thing was holy.”⁴ Casy’s philosophy influences the rest—Ruthie sharing her flower petals with Winfield because she “felt the fun was gone”⁵, Rose of Sharon’s unexpected generosity in the end, and Tom and Ma, when Tom says, “But I know now a fella ain’t no good alone”⁶. This feeling reaches a climax when Tom is about to leave and Ma asks him how she would know of him. He says, “Well, may be like Casy says, a fella ain’t got a soul of his own, but only a piece of a big one—an’ then—then it don’t matter. Then I’ll be all aroun’ in the dark. I’ll be ever where — where ever you look. Wherever they’s a fight so hungry people can eat, I’ll be there. Wherever they’s a cop beaten’ up a guy, I’ll be there. If Casy knowed, why I’ll be in the way guys yell when they’re mad, an’ —I’ll be in the way kids laugh when they’re hungry an’ they know supper’s ready. An’ when our folks eat the stuff they raise, an’ live in the houses they build—why I’ll be there.”⁷

Another theme is a protest against mechanization and industrialization—the machines were causing unemployment, but more important—they were a threat to the balance between nature and man. The tractor “raping methodically, raping without passion”⁸ and its driver who “could not see the land as it was, he could not smell the land as it smelled, his feet did not stamp the clods or feel the warmth and power of the earth. He sat in an iron seat and stepped on iron pedals.”⁹ “The land bore under iron, and under iron gradually died; for it was not loved or hated, it had no prayers or curses.”¹⁰ The machine becomes

1. Carlson, Eric W. “Symbolism in the Grapes of Wrath”: Ed. Peter Lisca.

2. Steinbeck, OP. CIT. P. 350.

3. IBID; P. 137, 138.

4. IBID P. 24, 76.

5. IBID; P. 414.

6. IBID: P. 383.

7. IBID: P. 385.

8. 9. & 10. IBID P. 34, 35.

symbolic of the industrial age with its growing inhumanity, like the NO RIDERS sticker on the truck.

The dust that is all pervasive becomes an important symbol—it represents the intensity of the drought and famine, and the infertility of the land. The “life force” that drives the Joads is symbolized by the turtle. Just as it picked up seeds and carried them over to the other side of the road, so the Joads “carried life and set it down”¹ in California. The turtle encounters trouble on the way, as do the Joads, and its south-westerly direction symbolically foreshadows what is to come. Highway 66 is the way to hope and unity—66 is the mother road, the road of flight.”² The grapes that Grampa was so looking forward to, once a symbol of plenty, begin to symbolize the wrath.

Steinbeck’s language is colloquial and therefore, realistic. He uses vivid, intense images —“the sun was as red as ripe new blood”, “jumpy as a stud horse in a box stall”, “scraggly as a moulting chicken”, “a torn cloud, like a bloody rag”, “the earth was bloody in its setting light”, and “the men worked jerkily like machines.” He has no inhibitions about language like “I know you’re wetting your pants to know”, “knocked his head plumb to a squash” and “my guts is yelling bloody murder”³ and all this adds undeniably to its authenticity.

“There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolize.”⁴ The tone of the novel is depressing, yet strangely not without hope. Exploitation adds to the desperation. People

had to sell all they had—“You’re not only buying junk, you’re buying junked lives. And more—you’ll see—you’re buying bitterness—a packet of bitterness to grow in your house and to flower some day.”⁵ Despair, hopelessness—“How can we live without our lives?” “How will we know its us without our past?”⁶

In the beginning of the novel, though the tone is bitter, all hope is not done away with:

“The women studied the men’s faces secretly.....after a while the faces of the watching men lost their bemused perplexity and became hard and angry and resistant. Then the womanknow they were safe and that there was no break.”⁷

Towards the end of the novel, the same thread is picked up again, in an almost identical passage :

“the women watched the men, watched to see whether the break had come at last..... the woman stood silently and watched. And where a number of men gathered together, the fear went from their faces, and anger took its place, And the women sighed with relief, for they knew it was all right.”⁸

There was hope for the future to be found in unity. A day would come when the future would be secure, happy, and the growing wrath made this inevitable. “The break had not come; and the break would never come as long as fear could turn to wrath.”⁹

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1. Ibid : P.

2. Ibid : P. 108.

3. Ibid : PP.

4. & 5. Ibid : P. 319, 320.

6. Ibid : P. 82.

7. Ibid : P. 7.

8. Ibid : P. 398.

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Symbol Themes in Girish Karnad's "Hayavadana"

In Thomas Mann's "The Transposed Heads", the argument is that the human body "is a fit instrument for the fulfilment of human destiny". The protagonists retain psychological limitations imposed by nature inspite of the transposition of heads.

Girish Karnad's "Hayavadana" according to Kirti Kurketi poses a different problem—that of human identity in a world of tangled relationships. This issue is most obviously presentend in the scene where Kapila goes to inquire about Padmini and on seeing her, asks to be shown to her father or master of the house. She tells him: "Listen, my father could be a servant of this house. Or the master of this house could be my father's servant. My father could be the master's

father, brother, son-in-law, couisn, grand-father or uncle."

It is carried to its dramatic climax when it has to be decided whether Padmini had been married to Devadatta's head or body. This question of identity or self-hood again comes up in Act II when Kapila tells Devadatta—"With what confidence we chopped off our heads in that temple: Now whose head—whose body—suicide or murder—nothing is clear"— and again when Padmini commits Sati, she prays to Mother Kali - "Other women can die praying that they should get the same husband all their lives to come. You haven't left me even that little consolation".

The problem of human identity, dramatically symbolised by the metaphysical riddle of the

superiority of the head or the body, should be seen in relation to the sub plot - the state of Hayavadana—who at the beginning of the play has a horse's head and a human body. Later, he manages to become a complete horse, but still retains his human voice. His reply to the Bhagavata in this connection is illuminating: "I have become a complete horse — but not a complete *being*." The problem of identity may be seen in juxtaposition to this statement. Karnad's dramatic preoccupation is not to establish the superiority of either the head or the body. He explores the lead in Mann's rendering of the tale—the psychological self which asserts itself in spite of the transposition of heads but he leaves the beaten track in that, ultimately, he places the experience of all the characters on the scale of relativity, beside inexplicable forces like fate, and phenomenal flux.

The psychological self as worked out in the play is not dissociated from the head or the body. Devadatta is a man of intellect: Kapila the man of action. Devadatta with Kapila's body finds that his body acts without the conscious volition of his intellect or head. The body of Kapila has a reason of its own which takes over Devadatta's will. Similarly, Kapila's head is influenced by the sensitivity of Devadatta's body, his new awareness of the things around him. What the two bodies held a kind of reason of its own, as it were, is actually an extension of the nature of their original selves which seems to have its seat in the head. Hence, after a short time this essence of the self located in the head begins to assert itself like a burning incense stick which can perfume a whole room. Devadatta reverts to his old self, while Kapila gradually manages to bury the haunting memories of Padmini's love in his new body, and beat it into shape. However, the body retains these memories - hence, Devadatta wakes up suddenly with the memory of the gymnasium and Kapila finds his body responding to Padmini in ways which his reason

or head cannot comprehend. Therefore, what makes them what they now are, is a mixture of each other's psychological selves which cannot synthesise, but retain their identity.

Padmini is like the double headed bird engraved on the door of her house. She is able to experience both the intellectual Devadatta and the physical Kapila. But like the bird which seems to become alive only for a moment, the double experience cannot be imprisoned in simultaneity. Devadatta changes, Kapila changes - she is the "stem drunk with the thick yearning of the many petalled, many-flowered lantana" which will not be tied down to the relation of a single flower; She is like the "river which can tickle the rushes on the sands, turn a top of dry leaves in the navel of the whirlpool....." but again, although she has the capacity for living each experience, unlike "the scarecrow on the bank (which) has a face fading on its mudpot head and a body torn with memories" she cannot control the inimitable laws of nature or life. She needs to go on experiencing but unlike the river, she cannot flow on unconcerned. She tells Kapila, "May I sit here and look at you? Have my fill for the rest of my life?" - showing that her capacity for complete experience has not been satisfied. She has experienced more than Devadatta or Kapila, but in earthly life, even completeness is relative. Padmini reaches the state of completeness that is possible for a human being - and the incompleteness which persists when seen in relation to Hayavadana's achievement, seems to be a condition of and for humanity. Here, he comes close to Ted Hughes who sees man as being unable to triumph and achieve his ends because of his mind whereas the animal is not deflected by sophistry or moral arguments, and Auden who saw the animal state of being as natural because a lion for instance acts without asking itself, "Am I a good lion?" or "Am I a morally good lion?" and so on. However, Karnad desists from making any explicit qualitative or value judgements.

Hayavadana becomes a complete horse, for a time, he retains the *being* of man. The change towards perfect being (of horse) is gradual. When Padmini's son asks him to laugh again, he finds it difficult but finally, the laugh changes to a neigh. The innocent joy of the boy's laughter is dismissed by Hayavadana as mere sentimentality which stops one from accepting Reality : which encourages escapism.

After he achieves completeness, he becomes oblivious to the world around him. He does not listen to the Bhagavata when he asks him to be careful with the boy. He becomes the white charger of Padmini's song which carries its dead rider into nowhere. It is significant that Hayavadana should start becoming inhuman as he nears completion.

The song of the rider and the white charger may be seen in relation to the theme of incompleteness versus completeness. The first line that Padmini speaks is "Here come the rider—from which land does he come?" Padmini is in search of her ideal man or the complete love experience. The rider symbolic of the romantic aspirations she has. When she next sings the song she has reached a state where she has become weary of the new Devadatta because he has changed to his old self. She realises that the splendid rider of her song has turned out to be dead and cold, only the white charger - the powerful yet monotonous rhythm of life will keep going on and on into nowhere. It is significant that now it is the white charger which directs the course of travel - the rider is powerless. Padmini has realised the implications of her situation, but she is incapable of controlling or directing it. She is human, beyond which she cannot go if she has to remain human—the cause and effect merge into the condition of humanity.

The dolls too point to this aspect of life. The first pair is articulate—they appear to be exteriorizations of Padmini's unconscious self, apart from their function as stylised choric characters. They echo the dissatisfaction of

human life, the gradual disillusionment of Padmini's herself. When Padmini reaches the stage beyond which she cannot grow, ie, when she starts longing for Kapila again, the dolls tear each other apart, they are thrown out. The new pair which Devadatta gets from Ujjain is significantly made of cloth, unlike the previous pair (which could be acted out by children according to Karnad's stage direction). Padmini's state is in a way similar to that of her son who has yet to live the Heroclitian idea of the beginning and the end point in a circle, being the same—hence the inarticulate and inanimate dolls, apparently, fresh beginnings have to be made. Padmini's son remains silent as long as he holds himself back from living and life. The moment he sees Hayavadana laughing, he drops his dolls which had until then been his sole obsession. He has begun to live, it is his turn to be the rider even if ultimately, the white charger will take over.

Here, the sub-plot seems to be significant in more ways than one. Hayavadana's mother falls in love with the physical form of the horse, not the self or being, hence she is repulsed.

When the stallion becomes a celestial Gandharva, when she herself is turned into a horse, she achieves her completion. She runs away happily. Her happiness or completeness is possible because she disregards her selfhood and that of her lover - and in the play selfhood seems inextricably linked with moving ceaselessly into nowhere.

When the heads get transposed, and Padmini opts for the person with Devadatta's head and Kapila's body, Kapila remarks - "How can Padmini's fancy be taken as the solution."

Padmini as an abstraction and Padmini as a person is beautifully coalesced in the song of Bhagvata 'I spread my wings, and kicked away the earth...an astrologer's bird' Where the 'I' or the aspiration of the inexperienced

Padmini in "I spread my wings..." and the "you" or what life makes of her in "Now because you have a child...mouth, coalesce to show the descent in "I pick a picture here, and there a card of fate and live for the grace of a grain - an astrologer's bird. The bird which picks the card of fate is unaware what the card holds. Though the fate of those who visit the astrologer seems to lie in the hands of the bird which picks their card of fate, the bird itself is a pawn in the hands of fate. It becomes the astrologer's bird because of the grace of a grain it lives for - Padmini, as mentioned earlier is the agent of fate or change - Devadatta's and Kapila's lives are decided through their relationship with her, they kill each other because of her - and she herself is a prey to fate or change. The grace of grain is the double experience in simultaneity she hankered for, the mix up of heads (wishfulfilment) she admits is her fault and she must suffer for it. Here, one is inescapably reminded of the greek figure of Nemesis as modified by Shakespeare - a character like Richard III for instance who is an agent of Divine Justice and is himself destroyed for the destruction he unleashes—strange are the ways of the divine as the Bhagavata says in his prayer to Lord Ganesha.

The Bhagavata presents Padmini's plight with greater psychological depth. He speaks for Padmini, "If Devadatta had changed overnight and had gone back to his original form, I would have forgotten you completely. But that's not how it happened. He changed day by day; inch by inch, hair by hair." Had the change been sudden, the cleavage would have been sharp enough to evoke comparison to keep the two experiences distinct. Then Padmini could have defined her dual experience in their own distinct terms, but the change that occurred gradually, insidiously, resulted in a state that was neither 'this' nor 'that' - again, the question of identity and definition in terms of relationships in terms

of experience. The characters are thwarted in their efforts at achieving completeness, because of the state of flux which makes one thing run into the other. They too participate in this process of change because ultimately, the relative completeness they achieve, is in terms of an awareness of the human situation.

This awareness or knowledge is arrived at through a gradual process of learning and realisation. Relative completeness that is available for human beings is the growth from a state of incompleteness to one of comprehension. This is symbolically presented in the dramatic action of the play - the reversals that are worked out at plainly obvious to obscurely subtle ends.

When the play begins, the Bhagavata, interrupted by the frightened Nala tells the audience - "God alone knows what He saw and what He took it to be" There's Truth for you. Pure illusion". This is immediately followed by "How strange! Some one's sobbing behind the curtain. It looks as though the Terror which frightened our Actor is itself now crying."

The Bhagavata who seems way up on the scale of awareness (mainly due to his vantage point in time—being like Eliot's Tiresias, both of the past and the present) is also included in the learning process. He mistakes Hayavadana's head for a mask - "Slowly, truth dawns on the Bhagavata". He says, "Truly surprises will never cease!" That knowledge cannot be achieved through mere book learning (a subtle comment on Devadatta) is revealed in Hayavadana's telling admonition to the Bhagavata. "Do you think just because you know the puranas you can go about showering your Sanskrit on everyone in sight?"

This theme is reiterated in the apparently perfect friendship between Devadatta and Kapila. - "Two friends there were - one mind, one heart - of the Bhagavata's choric

chant, shows not union but disparity. The friendship apparently complete with a veneer of perfect understanding the human state of being. The Gandharva goes back to his heavenly abode; evidently, he is happy with achieving his original human self. Only their offspring Hayavadana is left to go in search of his completeness. Similarly, Padmini, Devadatta and Kapila achieve knowledge of their situation. They achieve a relative completeness, but Padmini's son has to arrive at his realisation himself. The legacy which the parents leave their child is incompleteness. Their experience is not of validity to their offspring. In this connection the comment of the Dolls (when Devadatta snaps at Padmini for expressing her sympathy for Kapila's mother who had died recently) is revealing: "Each one to his fate! Each one to her problems." Each one has to work out his way himself.

Death is the corollary of the realisation or knowledge which is the limit of man's search for completeness. With knowledge comes Death. This idea is foreshadowed when Kapila remarks about the small engraving of the double headed bird on Padmini's door. He had missed it, rather, at the first attempt he had dismissed it because of its obscurity. When he checks again, he exclaims "Almost gave me the slip..But it's so tiny, you cant' see it at all unless you are willing to tear your eyes staring at it." Knowledge destroys, as is seen when Padmini becomes weary of Devadatta - the dolls tear each other apart. When Devadatta and Kapila realise that both of them love Padmini and that they cannot share her as the Pandavas shared Draupadi, they see that only death is the solution. The Bhagavata's song when Padmini and Devadatta are left alone outside Kapila's hut is again the poetic symbol of this life situation.

" After sharing with Indra
his wine
his food

his jokes

I returned to the earth
and saw from far
a crack had appeared
in the earth's face exactly
like Indra's smile

Devadatta lives his life with Padmini, so does Kapila through his body and later with his head and Devadatta's body in the forest when Padmini seeks him out: they partake of the feast of Indira, but in terms of reality, this same feast is to swallow them up. On earth, with realisation, the feast becomes the funeral. In contrast to this, the princess who achieves completion by becoming a horse, the horse which becomes a complete celestial Gandharva, and Hayavadana himself, do so at the expense of their humanity.

Completeness in absolute terms is impossible for humans because they are subject to change. Padmini's love would have satisfied both Devadatta and Kapila. Padmini herself would have been satisfied if the person having Devadatta's head and Kapila's body had remained without undergoing change. In that sense, they remain unchanged till death, they desire the same thing. Change in their experience occurs because what life offers, or their object of desire changes.

"Change' 'Change' 'Change' 'Change' Change
The sand trickles. The water fills the pot,
and the moon goes on swinging, swinging,
swinging from light to darkness, to light."

The sand, the water and the moon in themselves remain the same—but the rhythm of life confines them to a monotonous dance of change. It is interesting that Padmini who cries viciously against change, is herself the agent of change where Devadatta and Kapila are concerned. This symbolic aspect of Padmini is imaged in the songs that the female chorus sings:

"Why should love stick to the sap of a single body? When the stem is drunk with the thick yearning of the many - petalled, many flowered why should it be tied down to the relation of a single flower?"

And

"The river only feels the pull of the water fall..." The sap and the river do not stick to one relationship—they signify a kind of disinterested movement, like the trickling of the sand, and that of water flowing into the pot—like the inexorable movement or rhythm of life itself—the strides of the white horse that gallops, and rapport, crumbles the very first time that the two friends are presented together :

"Devadatta : You call yourself my friend. But you haven't understood me at all.

Kapila : And have you understood me? No, you havent..."

Not only does incomprehension and lack of understanding dog relationships with others, it is a part of one's relationship with one self.

"Devadatta : I was blind. All these days I deceive myself that I understood Poetry—I didn't. I understood nothing. "The complications of the play arise as the Bhagavata foredooms—"Two friends there were..... But they could not understand the song she sang."

Incomprehension leads to reversal of expectations. Hayavadana's mother falls in love with the stallion while her father and the Arab Prince who rode the stallion thinks she's fallen in love with the Arab. Padmini sees the rider bedecked and splendrous. Later she realises that the body is cold, the eyes are pebbles, the virgin-white jasmines are bleeding red- and the rider is dead. Indra's smile becomes the crack on earth's

face that swallows Devadatta (when Padmini calls Indira, after the transposition of heads) and Kapila- the feast turns funeral. Hayavadana wishes to become a complete man, but becomes a complete horse, and even the Goddess Kali who according to the Bhagavata is "ever awake to the call of devotees" appears trying hard not to fall asleep when the characters meet her.

The transposition of the heads crowns the tendency of reversal in the play. Here, irony operates on four levels. Devadatta had promised his head to Lord Rudra and his arms to Kali. It transpires that he sacrifices his head to Goddess Kali. Secondly, Padmini transposes the heads. Here, the mix-up, though Padmini regrets it and is horrified, is what she really wants. Jaku hints at the unconscious / conscious wish in Padmini. "My dear daughter, there should be a limit even to honesty"—the transposition being a kind of wish-fulfilment. The inner import of the action is the reverse of what it externally implies—this is on the third level. However, the fulfilment does not last long—the complacency with which Padmini leave Kapila : "It is my duty to go with Devadatta. But remember, I am going with your body, let that cheer you up, (in a low voice that Devadatta can't hear)" turns to bitter recrimination and self-pity : "Yes, you won, Kapila, Devadatta won too. But I the better half of bodies - I neither win nor lose."

This state of incompleteness and incomprehension seems to be the essence of the human situation - the question mark at the end of the riddle which the Vetala asked King Vikrama. The solution of King Vikrama fails to satisfy Karnad's characters. The rishi's solution of the Padmini Devadatta-Kapila triangle is shown to be as inadequate as the rishi's aphorism that "Knowledge gives rise to forgiveness." That there is no intellectual panacea for the human situation is re-inforced by the fact that those who attain completion pass beyond the human state- on a lower plane are Hayavadana and his

mother, a little higher is the celestial Gandharva. Hayavadana's father, and indisputably supra-human, is the Lord Ganesha Himself, and the dedicatory verse to Him both sets in motion and resolves the dramatic action and philosophical issues of the play :

"An elephant's head on a human body. . . . whichever way you look at him, he seems the embodiment of imperfections of incompleteness. How indeed can one fathom the mystery Could it be that this Image of purity and Holiness, this Mangalamoorty, intends to

signify by his very appearance that the completeness of God is something no poor mortal can comprehend? Be it as it may.

"The only wisdom we can hope to acquire"
Is the wisdom of humility : humility is endless"

-The Four Quartets" : East Coker
-T. S. Eliot

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