CHAPTER II

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The concept of Kala or Time is one of the most fascinating issues of enquiry to the philosophers, scientists, psychologists and creative artists through the ages, in all cultures. Sri Ramanuja as the propounder of Visistadvaita is no exception to forward his views on Kala or Time. This chapter will see how Shakespeare looks at Time in his works and investigate how far his ideas reflect Sri Ramanuja’s views in particular.

Time is one of the world’s deepest mysteries; no one can say what exactly it is. One way of thinking about time is to imagine a world without time. The timeless world would be a standstill. But if some kind of change took place, that ‘timeless’ world would be difficult ‘now’ than it was ‘before’. The period - no matter how brief- between ‘before’ and ‘now’ indicates that time must have passed (World Book of Encyclopedia, Vol. 11). So both Time and Change are mutually related because the passing of time depends on changes. In the real world, changes never stop happening. When people began to count repeating events, they began to measure time. Time begins with the recognition of two successive experiences, the event that happens now and the one that follows. Time means a succession of events. The changes obviously depend on time, which cannot stand still and be continuous.
Time is indeed one of the most interesting as well as important categories which had varying fortunes in the history of Philosophy. It is the basic component of the measuring system used to sequence events, to compare the durations of events and the intervals between them, and quantify the motions of objects. Though Time has been a major subject of religion, philosophy, and science, to define it in a non-controversial manner applicable to all fields of study has consistently eluded the efforts of greatest scholars. In physics and other sciences, Time is considered as one of the few fundamental quantities.

Among philosophers, there are two distinct viewpoints on Time. One view is that Time is part of the fundamental structure of the Universe, a dimension in which events occur in sequence. Sir Isaac Newton subscribed to this realist view, and hence it is sometimes referred to as Newtonian time (www.thefreedictionary.com). The opposing view is that Time does not refer to any kind of “Container” those events and objects “move through”, or any entity that “flows”, but that it is instead a part of a fundamental intellectual structure together with space and number within which humans sequence and compare events. This second view, in the tradition of Gottfried Leibniz and Immanuel Kant, holds that Time cannot itself be measured. (www.librarythinkquest.org)

There is a distinction as subjective time and objective time or subjective duration and objective times, or standard times which vary from place to place. But the Indian conception of time is that Time can be defined generally as having
triple stages or successive moments such as the past, present and the future. It is irreversible though events may be cyclical. Time extends both sides up to infinity. And the secret of Time is its present tense according to some well-known thinkers not because of the other two being irrelevant but because the present has the consequence of the past within it and also holds the potency of the future. If one knows the ‘Now’ then he knows ‘all’ about Time. What Dr. K.C. Varadachari says about Time in his article ‘Time and Mysticism’ is worth quoting:

The whole problem of Time must be viewed... in terms of the larger standpoint of the ‘ingression’ of the eternal in the temporal which is characterized by different grades of times or durations or measures (chandamsi). The subjective conception of Time as the process of becoming and not the arbitrary social (spatialised) time is valuable. The speed of time is calculated by the vigour which attends upon the upward process. In matter the speed is reduced to a dull uniformity of repetition without any attendant variations (Tamas). The speed of life is at a new tempo indeed very much different from the speed of matter the most attenuated or wavicle form. Kala thus is different in the level of the mind - which has become a classical metaphor of the highest speed - manojava. Higher levels of consciousness have higher speeds so that the succession is ultimately reduced so far as the lower level is concerned to simultaneity. Contraction of time or slowness occurs. Equally this entails the contraction of space or distinction between the intervals between two points.
Thus the problem of time turns out to be the problem of space also, and the
solution of the problem of Time is the solution of the problem of space.
Ultimately this turns out to be the problem of energy, of consciousness or
intelligence. (1)

(Pujya Dr. K.C. Varadachari Complete Works Vol I.
www.drkcv.org/Books/kcv1chap_4.htm).

The unceasing, continuity of time or event neither refers to the same individual
nor to all or the whole, nor to the other alternative of unperturbed stillness of
everything. Time and Space then are integral to man’s experience. Philosophers
of time are deeply divided on the question of the ontological difference among
the present, past and future. There are three competing theories.

The Presentists argue that only present objects and present experience are
real; and man as a conscious being recognizes this in the special vividness of his
present experience. According to the ‘growing-universe theory’, the past and
present are both real, but the future is not. The third and more popular theory is
that there are no significant ontological differences among present, past and
future because the differences are merely subjective. This view is called
‘eternalism’ or the ‘block universe theory’. In the journal The Indian
Theosophist, (Vol. 105, No.7&8, July – August, 2007), S.Sundaram in his article
“A Step Forward” explains how genius and great people look at time which is
universally accepted:
Their outlook is universal and so they do not give importance to personal narrow considerations and achievements. Since they are concerned about the present and want to have a better future for all, they understand the significance of the present in order to shape the future. While planning for future, they never ignore the present because they know it well that in the seeds of present lie the harvest of future. In fact the present becomes their beautiful means to shape the future based on brotherhood and love. (275)

T.S. Eliot reflects the same idea in his poem *Burnt Norton*:

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.

*(The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot 171) (1972)*

Physical time is public time, the time that clocks are designed to measure. Psychological time is private time. It is perhaps best understood as awareness of physical time. Psychological time passes swiftly for a person while he enjoys reading a book, but it slows dramatically if one waits anxiously for the water to boil on the stove. The slowness is probably due to focusing of attention on shorter intervals of physical time. Some philosophers claim that psychological time is completely transcended in the mental state called “nirvana”. Physical
time is more basic to understand shared experiences in the world, and so it is more useful than psychological time for science. But psychological time is vitally important for understanding varieties of human thought processes.

Time can be understood in different perspectives, such as in the ordinary perspective, the philosopher’s, the scientific and the religious perspectives. In the ordinary perspective or in the general perception, Time is seen as seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, and years. But, it is different in philosopher’s perspective. According to Plato time is a moving image of eternity, which almost corresponds to Visistadvaitic equation of Time with God, that will be discussed later. To Aristotle Time is “the number of movements in respect of the ‘before’ and ‘after’” (Encyclopedia Britannica). Most philosophers have defined Time by employing temporal notions. In the scientific perspective Time can be explained in terms of physics, classical mechanics, modern physics, plank time, time and big bang, time and psychology, astronomy, physical time, geological time, biological time, nautical time, sidereal time, standard time and radio geology. In most religions Time has been equated with God, may be because Time is as abstract as God and like God, Time is beyond conception. In his article “God and Time” (www.the-highway.com) D.M. Lloyd Jones while referring to Apostle Peter’s views about God’s relationship to time (4.8.2009) says:
In the first place, Peter tells us that *God is altogether above time*. . .

God is eternal, God is above time. We must never think of God as being involved in the time process or in the flux and movement to time and history. . . . although God is above and beyond time, He still controls and acts in time. (4 & 5)

He considers the happenings in the world as those which “show His control over it and His interference with it, according to His own eternal will and counsel” ("God and Time” 5). He also names it as “Divine Chronology”, meaning that there is a rhythmic pattern in the cosmic order.

The Hindu *Vedantic* thought, however, has a distinctive notion about Time that has been well-discussed by different scholars. According to Ramanuja *Kala* or Time has a special status in the *Visistadvaitic* system. Srisaila Chakravarti in his book, *The Philosophy of Sri Ramanuja – Visistadvaita* (1974), adequately illustrates the *Visistadvaitic* view of Time. In his profound explication he says that Time is the cause for all transformation and its results, that Time transforms itself into units of Time. Time is eternal like God as it also has no beginning or end. Time is an instrument of sport for God for creation, protection and destruction, God’s other two instruments *prakriti* and *purusa* are not only instruments but also objects of creation while Time is not an object but only an instrument. Above all, Time constitutes the body of God (185-190). Scriptures like *Vishnu Purana* confirm that “*Prakriti* (individual soul) and time constitute
the body of Iswara”(189). Further, Ramanuja himself affirms this in his work Sriranga Gadyam. The first sloka says: svaadheena thrividha chethanaachethana svaroopa sthiti pravruththi Bedam”. This can be explicated thus: [Ramanuja] first mentions three types of cit namely Nithyas, Mukthas and Bakthas. Then he talks about Suddha Satwa, Misra Thatwa and Satwa Sunyam. The Suddha Satwa has only Sathwa guna like things used for pooja. That which has three Gunas (Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas) is Misra Thatwa, which hides the Gnana about God and that which has no gunas is Kala or Time. Each has its own Swarupa or form, Stithi or existence and Pravruthi or worth. The Swarupa of Time (natural swabava) is to be without any Guna. Its Stithi is minutes, hour and so on. Its Pravruthi is to create and destroy. Ramanuja is of the view that all these form the body of Iswara and Iswara is the Atma for all these.

The arguments go to prove that Time constitutes the body of Iswara. To Ramanuja time exists even in the state of Nithya Vibuthi (Pure Sattva State) but it produces no effect or transformation there. Time then is also eternal like God. Prakriti (unmanifest), Purusa (soul) and Kala (time) are the instruments of God in his sport. In this, time is said to be the cause of transformation of the unmanifest into visible manifestation. When it is said that time forms the body of Iswara along with cit and acit, it is only logical that God is the soul and His body is time.
In *Visistadvaita*, the word ‘body’ does not invariably denote an object of uniform shape but denotes objects of utterly different shapes such as a worm, snake, bird, beast, man and so on. One species differs totally from another in shape and in other respects. Says Srisaila Chakravarti “the body assumed at will by God is not a collection of elements” (59), in case of bodies like living and non-living are the result of *karma* and made of five elements. The definition given by Ramanuja for body is: “That substance which can be invariably controlled and sustained by a *cetana* or soul for its own sake and whose nature is to subserve that soul, is the body of that soul” (60). *Cetana* that controls the substance in turn is subservient to Him and hence is the soul of His body.

Ramanuja, conceives of a congruent universe in which the harmony of body and soul is repeated in the accord of matter and souls that form the body of God. In ordinary life a body is dependent on the soul which tenants it for its very existence. Body is intact only so long as the soul is within it and begins to disintegrate as soon as the soul departs from it. Every substance in the universe becomes a substance and expressible only by the entry of the *jiva* animated by the supreme soul. *Chandogya Upanishad* (6-3-2) confirms this says Swami Swahananda: “That deity willed, “Well, let me, entering into these three deities through this living self (Jivatman) differentiate name and form”” (422).

God as the master of all uses His body Time as an instrument and not as an object. This idea can be explained through the analogy of ocean and waves.
The ocean can exist without waves but there are no waves without ocean. Texts like *Vishnu Sahasranama* and the *Bhagavad Gita* affirm that God and Time are synonymous. For instance, in the 33rd sloka in the 10th Chapter of *Bhagavad Gita* the Lord avers: “*Aksharanam akarosmi dwandha samasi kasya cha / Aham evakshaya ; kalo dhathaham viswatho mukhaha*”. Swami Sivananda in his translation of *Bhagavad Gita* (1957) explains this sloka: “Among letters the letter ‘A’ I am and the dual among all compounds. I am verily, inexhaustible or everlasting time; I am the (all – faced) dispenser (of fruits of actions) having faces in all directions. (Srimad Bhagavad Gita 397). Similarly, in sloka 30 of the same chapter Lord Krishna declares: “*Pralada asmi daithyanam kaalaha kalaiya thamaham / Mrugaanam cha mrugendra aham vainetheya cha pakshinam*” - And I am Prahalada among daityas; among reckoners I am time; among beasts I am the lord of beasts (lion); and vainateya (garuda) among birds. (395). The alwars, the divinely inspired saints of Tamilnadu, have established in their songs that God and Time are synonymous because Time is the body of *Iswara* just as *Prakriti* and individual souls, and that God assumes at will a body as He likes. It is to be noted here that His is a divine body.

*Visistadvaita* avers that God with time as causal instrument for any transformation, converts *prakriti* (*Avyakta*) into *praakrta* (*vyakta* or manifested results) by His mere will, awaiting for a particular time and when the time for the action comes, produces changes in them. Therefore it is to be understood that time is necessary for the production of changes and changes in turn depend upon
time. When the appropriate time comes God produces, sustains and destroys everything thereby giving magnitude to time. Therefore it can be understood that in an *avatar* He exhibits many of His graceful qualities in protecting His devotees through *Kala* or Time; the indispensable tool in His manifestation.

At this juncture, one of the well-known scholars of Ramanuja’s Philosophy, P.N. Srinivasachari’s succinct views on Time in general and particularly in *Visistadvaita* will be a valuable appendage to this discussion. In his erudite book *The Philosophy of Visistadvaita*, (1943) he states:

Time does not vanish in the abyss of the absolute as a stirless state of nothingness, but it enriches the blissful experience of Brahman, which is an eternal now. . . . The meaning and value of time in the *Visistadvaitic* system can be determined by distinguishing the three meanings of time expounded by western philosophers, namely, endless duration in the phenomenal realm, the eternal that transcends the temporal and process, and the eternal that is in the temporal and beyond it. According to the first interpretation, time in the world of sense is finite and relative, but is not subjective, nor is it an internal sense, which is illusory. Time is the succession of events and not a series of exclusive moments. Nothing is static, and everything is in a state of ceaseless becoming. Things pass away and perish, as they come into being. . . . Thus, according to the
second view, that eternal is pure being and the temporal is an illusion that exists but is not real. (497-98)

The scholar cryptically explains further the concept of time in *Visistadvaita*. He says:

*Visistadvaita* gives a different exposition of the nature of time. It steers clear of the two extremes of endlessness and eternity by affirming the eternal as immanent in the temporal and transcending it . . . the *lila vibhuti*, the world of splendour which exists for the sport of the Lord, is the play of the eternal in the temporal and the *nitya vibhuti* or eternal splendour of *Paramapada* is time as eternity. The former is the realm of karma or causal necessity without any contingency, and is the sphere of soul-making . . . The finite self feels its finitude, and seeks freedom from the passing shows of empirical life by attaining immortality. As the eternal alone gives meaning to the temporal process and is its final consummation, the reality of the progressive attainment of eternal life is assured. . . . In the former, time is finite and affected by the *gunas*, while the latter, it is not causally related, but is infinite and beyond the plane of space – time. . . . The Lord is the goal of cosmic *lila*, and, in the attainment of eternal life, the self transcends the transient dimensions. . . . It is like a symphony in which each
note sweetened by it; but no analogy drawn from human experience can adequately bring out the ecstasy of eternal life. (498 – 99)

These elaborate expositions from The Philosophy of Visistadvaita, not only offer a brilliant elucidation of the Visistadvaitic concept of time but also provide a background to analyze the theme of Time in Shakespeare’s Sonnets and in his plays. Before taking up the analysis, a brief note on Shakespeare’s Sonnets will be presented. The single most important fact about Sonnets of Shakespeare is that they regularly outsell everything else he wrote. It can even be said that there exists no work of comparable brevity and excellence that digests such intimate emotional experience.

Sonnet is one of the poetic forms of lyric poetry from Europe. The Italian word ‘sonetto’ means 'little song' or 'little sound'. By the 13th century the word 'sonnet' had come to signify a form of fourteen lines that follows a strict rhyme scheme and specific structure. The most famous Italian sonneteer was Petrarch. The Italian sonnets included two parts in which the first octave (two quatrains) described a problem followed by a sestet (two tercets) giving the resolution to it. Thomas Wyatt during the early 16th century introduced English sonnets. He and his contemporary Earl of Surrey brought out many translations of Petrarch. Edmund Spenser (1552–1559) made a further innovation in the sonnet form with three quatrains and a couplet. This type of Sonnet came to be known as Spenserian Sonnet. Sir Phillip Sydney in 1591 published the first sonnet
sequence *Astrophel and Stella*. Soon after, the English poets developed a fully native form of English Sonnet, William Shakespeare being the foremost practitioner of this kind and it came to be known as the Shakespearean Sonnet.

The form consists of fourteen lines structured as three quatrains and a couplet. The third quatrain generally introduces an unexpected sharp thematic or imagistic ‘turn’ called a volta. In Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, the couplet usually summarizes the theme of the poem or introduces a fresh new look at the theme. The *Sonnets* of Shakespeare are 154 in number, a kind of sequence dedicated to one Mr. W.H. and also to a ‘Dark Lady’ whose identities have attracted much criticism. The major theme of the Sonnets is Time, especially the ravages of Time. In the book *The Sonnets* (1997), G.Blackmore Evens, the editor explains the Shakespearean Sonnet with an example: “Sonnet 73 is a perfect example of the Shakespearean sonnet which begins ‘That time of year thou mayst in me behold’ and ends ‘must leave ere long’ with three quatrains each with its own governing figure of decline serving as incremental parts of a discourse and with other details of beauty and delicacy” (7).

In his *Sonnets* Shakespeare embodies Time as a living agent representing an authoritative power. He does not fail to see time as the cause of creation, preservation and destruction, and communicates clearly through imageries and metaphors these vital activities of Time. Frederick Turner in his book *Shakespeare and the Nature of Time* (1971) describes profoundly by apt
paradigms how Shakespeare has dealt with time as a changer and destroyer by its non-stop movement. He views that to pursue Shakespeare’s ideas about time, it could be done only by studying the usage of images because “he thinks in symbols and in emotional and moral intuitions” (7). He further says in the introduction of the same book:

> The theory of evolution in biology, the ideas of class struggle, political innovation, and economic progress in history, the various psychological theories of conceptual and emotional development in the child and adult, the mathematical concepts of space–time and relativity are all symptoms and cause of this new awareness of time: especially of time as dynamic, as process and becoming. (1)

It is quite clear that Shakespeare must have been closely watching these societal as well as human activities, have taken note of them and converted them as appropriate imageries. A few sonnets can be analyzed to show the dynamism of Time and how it concurs with Visistadvaitic idea.

Shakespeare in his *Sonnet* sequence repeatedly and tirelessly emphasizes the invincibility of Time. Many of his sonnets project Time as a Destroyer. The poet pleads to the fair young man to preserve his awe inspiring beauty against the onslaught of Time by perpetuating it in his offspring, which in the natural process may not be so. Shakespeare, however, decides to immortalize the young man’s beauty in his poetry that cannot be ruined by Time. A point of interest is,
that while the poet talks about the raging quality of Time he conserves Time’s
debacle along with his plea to preserve his beauty. The aesthetic provision
rendered to the ravages of Time also preserves it. The sonnet sequence then,
provides a timeless benediction to Time as a Destroyer, Preserver and Creator.

Shakespeare explains through sonnet 60 how Time destroys the order and
coherence of things. As the waves move toward the pebbled shore, so do the
minutes of life hasten toward their end, each moment changing place with the
one before, striving to move forward with successive efforts. Everything that has
been born, though it once swam in that broad ocean of life that exists before
birth, crawls its way up the shores of maturity, where it faces cruel obstacles to
its glory. Time, which gives everything, now destroys its own gift.

Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned,
Crooked eclipses ‘gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.

Time pierces the beauty of youth, drawing wrinkles in beauty’s forehead. It
devours the choicest specimens of nature; nothing exists that it would not mow
down with its scythe. However, Shakespeare is confident that his verses will last
into the future, praising the young man’s worth despite Time’s cruel hand: “And
yet to times in hope my verse shall stand, / Praising thy worth, despite his cruel
hand. Shakespeare perceives Time in its different aspects and relates some of its aspects with the fair young man as well as the dark lady.

Sonnets 1 to 126 deal with the duty of procreation wherein the fair youth is urged to win time by getting married and perpetuating himself through his offspring. This theme, the uncontrollable ruinous action of Time, the Destroyer, is seen throughout the sonnets. Sonnet 12 with different metaphors declares the mightiness of Time and its relative movement as the poet’s experience. Shakespeare could realize that through its destructive operations such as, “the brave sky sunk in hideous night”, “the violet past prime”, “sable curls all silvered”, “barren of leaves” and so on. These images sternly record the onslaught of time. His plead is that the fair young man should not go in the wastes of Time. The final couplet records his concern as well as his plea: “And nothing ‘gainst time’s scythe can make defence / Save breed to brave him when he takes thee hence”.

Time as a destroyer has been repeatedly stressed in many of his sonnets for instance – 1, 2, 11, 12, 16, 18, 25, 55, 60, 64, 82, 83, 104, 124 and 125 and several images indicate the destructive quality of Time, for instance, ‘Devouring Time’, ‘swift footed Time’, ‘Old Time’, ‘Thief’ and so on. Time, the Destroyer not only carries men towards the end of their lives but also conducts its operation in every moment of their lives. Referring to Sonnet 60, Frederick Turner observes: “Shakespeare sees in one sweep all of man’s life from birth to death
and identifies the process of Time with death. The passing of minutes is part of the whole system of death in which Time involves us”(8). The changes happen inevitably without one’s knowledge as Time silently carries on its destruction by slowly leading a person to the portals of death.

Shakespeare, by means of a wonderful metaphor points to the flux of time and its inexorable nature – time is like the waves that dash tirelessly at the shore. Every minute washes off the previous one, creates a fresh one to be washed off again.

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end,
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend. (60)

In this incessant annihilation and creation, Shakespeare promises immortality to the young man who personifies Beauty and confirms that his verse will remain to live in spite of the iron hands of Time.

Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty’s brow
Feeds on the rarities of nature’s truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.
Turner views that in the philosophical sense an individual cannot be the same as he had been an year ago or even a moment ago. He further observes:

We do not possess that instantaneous and eternal consistency which is ascribed to God or the angels; we are almost a succession of entities, each giving way to its successor, ended by only the last death of many. Death itself is not a single event at the end of a life but a continuous process. (8)

Turner seems to echo P.N. Srinivasachari’s Visistadvaitic view of time: “Time is the succession of events and not a series of exclusive moments. Nothing is static, and everything is in a state of ceaseless becoming. Things pass away and perish as they come into being” (497). In other words, Time also preserves as it destroys and hence the passage of time is a ‘process’. In the Visistadvaitic thought, Time is the body of God that acts as a tool to the Lord’s commandments. Shakespeare repeatedly affirms that his poetry would remain for ever, and seems to assert that his words represent divinity.

Shakespeare is not tired of talking about the negative aspects of Time. To him, Time represents death, decay and doom. Men believe that firmly created and founded things survive challenging Time. But these things however fall and get decayed, says Shakespeare in his sonnet 64. Once again he receives lessons from nature and historical monuments. This sonnet repeats the ‘when – when –
then’ mode, like sonnet 12. The proud kingdoms, the lofty towers and the brass monuments are erased off by Time.

When I have seen by time’s fell hand defaced
The rich proud cast of outworn buried age;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed,
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage; . . .

Kingdoms won, the lofty towers and the monuments erected in brass become nothing before Time’s fury, as Time seems to tease man’s proud aspirations and intentions. The poet is surprised to see the rage of the oceans, how they easily gulp the shores and thereby balance gain and loss: “When I have seen the hungry ocean gain / Advantage on the kingdom of the shore”, Shakespeare then contemplates on this ‘interchange of state’ and ponders about Time’s invincible mightiness that produces havoc throughout. He then sadly thinks about his dear young man that he also would be captured by Time. This thought, says the poet, is as Death. The sonnet once again talks about the flux of Time and its constant mobility. The rhythmic pattern of the sonnet seems to accentuate the first line of sonnet 60, “Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore”.

While sonnet 60 reverberates the perpetual noise of the tides that dash against the ‘pebbled shores’, sonnet 64 enlarges its momentum and zest that reminds the reader the havoc of Tsunami. None could predict it, which means none could guess Time’s operation. In the Indian thought, this is an aspect of the
lila vibhuti conducted joyfully by the Lord. Such a tremendous destruction is also the means of magnificent construction. Shakespeare indicates this vital truth in a single line, “Increasing store with loss and loss with store”. Turner also makes a powerful observation on this aspect.

There is in this sonnet a curious acceleration of the destructive processes of time which makes the cliffs and towers seem to crumble in a moment – a mockery of their seeming strength! In a thousand years even enduring stone will crumble; how much swifter will be the decay of human beauty and the ending of human life. (9)

In a typical Hindu way of thinking, Srinivasachari illuminates this aspect:

Worlds are dissolved periodically at the end of each kalpa or epoch, and even Brahmas come and go in the ever-changing universe. The destruction and withdrawal of the cosmic process is itself conditioned by kala or time. The time sense varies with the process of the sun and other celestial bodies, and the infinite time taken up by the passing away of the cosmos is but a day for Brahma, and even the cosmic will of Isvara is self-conditioned by kala. (497-98)

The crucial cosmic processes – creation, protection and destruction – are symbolized in the Hindu thought as Trinity of Gods, namely, Brahma, Vishnu
and Siva, each one of them performing their duty relentlessly and methodically abiding kala, which seems to be the controlling feature. Just as the body performs different actions to the command of one’s soul, Time acts according to the dictates of the Supreme One and hence Ramanuja quite pertinently takes Time to be the body of God. Sri Aurobindo’s explication of the Bhagavad Gita in his scholarly work Essays on the Gita (1976) will be rewarding at this juncture. He says:

God is imperishable, beginningless, unending Time; this is his most evident Power of becoming and the essence of the whole universal movement. Aham eva aksayah kalah. In that movement of Time and Becoming God appears to our conception or experience of him by the evidence of his works as the divine Power who ordains and sets all things in their place in the movement. . . . He appears to us too in the universe as the universal spirit of Destruction, who seems to create only to undo his creations at the end – “I am all snatching Death,” aham mṛtyuh sarvaharah. And yet his Power of becoming does not cease from his workings, for the rebirth and force of new creation ever keeps pace with the force of death and destruction, - “and I am too the birth of all that shall come into being.” The divine self in things is the sustaining Spirit of the present, the withdrawing Spirit of the past, the creative Spirit of the future. (348–49).
The same idea gets repeated in sonnet 65 in more beautiful poetic lines. In
an exasperated mood, the poet rues how beauty can withstand Time’s fury,
beauty that is like a tender flower.

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,

But sad mortality o’er sways their power,

How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea

Whose action is no stronger than a flower?

The poet does not know how to protect this best property begot from Time’s
chest – the very thought makes him shudder.

O fearful meditation! Where, alack,

Shall time’s best jewel from time’s chest lie hid?

Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?

Or who his spoil or beauty can forbid?

The irrefutable answer is that no one can hide the jewel nor can hold Time’s
swift pace, unless a miracle happens, that is in the black ink, his verse could
preserve his beauteous jewel love that sparkles brightly. The poet now receives
an assertion to himself that protection and preservation is possible – in spite of
Time’s violent destruction – through his poetry. The Supreme One is the
Supreme Poet. If this dynamic vibration of Time readily puts an end to
everything, His artistic creation compensates it with beauteous forms, including
superb poetry. Only in the ‘objective time’, time can be seen as a static one. As
time is always on the move, Shakespeare has himself accepted the fact that time
can only preserve the essence of a thing – whether it be the beauty of literature or the essence of the odour of a rose or any historical beauty. In his Sonnet 55, Shakespeare is sure of his poetry outliving the monuments and calls the verses as ‘living record’ of the youth’s memory. He immortalizes the youth in this sonnet by saying:

‘Gainst death and all obvious enmity
Shall you pace forth; Your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity . . .
You live in this, and dwell in lover’s eyes.

Howard Felperin in his article “Toward a Poststructuralist Practice – A Reading of Shakespeare’s Sonnets” after his comment on the sonnets 60, 63, 64 and 65 observes: “These great ‘ruins poems’ that dominate the sonnet of the sixties in Shakespeare’s sequence may be read as a dark post script to the biggest promise of sonnet 55” (109).

At this point, one is reminded of Nammalwar’s poem in *Tiruvaymoli* 7.9.2.

How shall I my gratitude express unto the Primate,
Who as Trinity functions and Who would from within me dictate
And sing His glory in words, this mean vassal would repeat,
Bring out this hymnal and, as its author, make me out?

What Nammalwar means is that the Lord with His immeasurable potential manifests in any form He chooses. To quote K.C. Varadachari from his *Time and Mysticism*:

> It is His beneficent willingness to take any kind of form – which is in that order the perfect expression of His sovereignty and Puissance, virility and transcendence, Beauty and light – for the protection of His creatures. . . . The Divine Lord may project Himself fully or partially, in His form as Avatara – Descending Divined, and for ever in some for certain definite cosmic purpose or act in multiple personalities also. (5 – 6)

Accordingly the Lord becomes the Poet. What Nammalwar says of himself reflects Shakespeare also. Perhaps, Shakespeare is the only poet who has portrayed the nuances of the indomitable Time relating to Beauty.

Frederick Turner in the ‘Introduction’ to his book *Shakespeare and the Nature of Time* remarks that time can be analysed in nine major aspects. (3-5)

1. The objective time, that is time viewed as from outside, a space in which events occur. Time is then seen as a spatial dimension.

2. Time is seen as a personal experience, as the process of change and becoming.

3. Time is an agent, the “Creator or Destroyer, Time as the nurse of growth or the architect of decay”

4. Time is seen as a realm or sphere
5. The natural time which possesses its own cycles, rhythms and periods.

6. Time is the medium, of cause and effect.

7. Time is that of particular moments or periods of time.

8. Time is a revealer or unfolder.

9. Time is seen as rhythm.

However, Turner warns the reader: “Such a system of classification should be used as a framework to aid clarity of thought, not as a schema into which one seeks to force the actual literary material” (5). This categorization helps the analysis of the concept of time in some of his plays. The critic details and studies these aspects in the plays like *As you Like it, Twelfth Night, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth*. The significant aspect to note in Turner’s classification is that it is hemmed in Ramanuja’s *Visistadvaitic* system.

Incidentally, many of Shakespeare’s plays discuss the impregnability of Time and its triple actions in different contexts. Critics tackle the issue of Shakespeare and time from a broad range of approaches. They discuss time as a thematic device, as a structural principle, or as a means of delineating character. The notion of time itself has a variety of connotations in Shakespeare scholarship. It represents, apart from other things, the personification of destructive or restorative forces, the medium through which action moves, or the pace at which a story line develops.

Nonetheless, the ‘Speech of Time’ in the play *The Winter’s Tale* (Act IV. Sc.i) is worth investigating. Turner in his book devotes one chapter for this that
runs about sixteen pages. In the ‘Speech of Time’, the personified time remarks that it pleases somebody, but tests all, gives joy to the good and threatens the bad, makes and unfolds the error in its course: “I that pleaseth some, try all, both joy and terror, / Of good and bad, that makes and unfolds error”. (IV.i.1–2)

In the play, Time is presented on the stage as a character and enacts the role of the chorus. Time in its speech rounds off sixteen years and recounts what had happened during that period. Nevertheless, Time strongly indicates that it is a force both of destruction and of preservation by launching a healing effect in human lives.

Critics are of two views about Time in this play. A few argue that “the sixteen years between the first and second halves of the play represent the destructive movement of Time as it inexorably marches forward, bringing human beings ever closer to the hour of their own deaths. Despite the happiness of the final reunion, the sixteen years of separation and suffering Leontes and Hermione have lived through will never be given back”. Some others stress that the play’s focus is on regeneration and redemption and argue that “Shakespeare exalts Time in *The Winter’s Tale* as the necessary medium for human growth and healing. They point out that what seems to be a purely destructive movement of Time is countered in the eventual triumph of the Perdita and Florizel generation”.

Both the points of view at once indicate the indispensable dynamics of Time, that of destruction, preservation and creation wonderfully poised by the dramatist in the lives of Leontes and Hermione, the King of Sicilia and his queen Hermione wronged by him, and in the lives of Perdita and Florizel, the heirs of Sicilia and Bohemia. Frederick Turner compares the characters’ temporal environment in the tragic first half of *The Winter's Tale* with the harmonious reconciliation of temporal and timeless worlds in the pastoral second half and asserts that the speech of Time, the Chorus, marks the point at which the emphasis on time the destroyer unexpectedly changes to an accent on time the creator. The World of Time acts here as the invisible hand behind the scenes, guiding and controlling the plot at the same time telling the story giving clues. Turner views that “Time’s speech overthrows the laws and customs of society, that it may be healed. And so follows a ‘self-born hour’ . . . I should like to . . . characterize this act as a ‘liminal’ period, on the threshold between one state of society and another, not bound by the ordinary laws of time and society” (160). He continues to assert that it is more than a structural device:

It is surely significant that a speech of such structural and thematic importance should be put into the mouth of Time. ‘Time as Chorus’ is not merely a sort of stage manager smoothing over Shakespeare’s violation of the Three Unities; he expresses and represents the basic mystery of *The Winter’s Tale*: the strange,
ambiguous nature of change and of Man’s environment, the world of time. (161)

In brief, ‘Time’ as a creator is well-delineated in Time’s speech. As Caroline Spurgeon in their book _Shakespeare’s Imagery and What It Tells Us_ (1935) puts it, ‘time’ is the medium, “by the aid of which events, qualities, projects, ideas and thoughts are born into actual and material being”(173).

In the same play Shakespeare quite casually brings into the conversation between the two rustics, the old Shepherd and his son the Clown the Time’s performances -- destruction, preservation and creation -- that they are not three different activities, but are contiguous. In the scene previous to _Time’s Speech_, the old shepherd has found a baby. The clown talks about the ship wrecks that he had witnessed and the destruction caused by the wrecks previously. But the shepherd chides him saying: “. . . Thou mett’st with things dying. / I with things new born” (III.iii.99). Quoting the above lines, Turner affirms: “In every moment the old world dies and a new world is born. . . . In Time’s speech ‘one self born hour’ (IV.i.8) perhaps implies that since past is dead, every hour is self – generating” (150). This long discussion on the destructive power of time does not rule out the fact that time is also the cause of creation at once generated during destruction. Ananda Coomaraswamy in his _Time and Eternity_ (1989) remarks:

> From Time flow forth all beings,  
> From Time advance to their full growth,  
> And in Time, again win home, -  
> ‘Time’ is the formed (murti) and formless both.  
> (8)
Interestingly, Shakespeare’s villain character Iago in the play *The Tragedy of Othello*, strangely thinks in terms of causality and logic which depend on time. He says: “There are many events in the womb of time which would be delivered” (I. iii.364-365) and he distinctly uses cause and effect of time to his advantage. *Othello* is a tragedy of love in which the protagonist struggles against the moral opponent of love, Iago, the notorious villain acting with motiveless malignity. The jealous Othello reifies his innocent wife Desdemona into a thing so that he willingly accepts “the demonstrable result of a chain of reasoning, a sequence of cause and effect, rather than the uncaused and unprovable evidence of his own faith in his wife. Faith can transcend time and cause and effect; in order for Iago to be successful, Othello must be able to look at Desdemona not as a person, but as a temporal object, subject to cause and effect” (Turner 105). Shakespeare clearly indicates that time is the manipulator of cause and effect, its negative force shown pathetically in *Othello*. Turner rightly affirms: “In *Othello* time acts as a corrupter through the agency of Iago. Iago destroys Othello’s faith ‘in’ Desdemona; Othello, by choosing to believe in Iago, ceases to believe in his wife” (113). The critic also refers to Arthur Sewell’s penetrating remarks about the society portrayed by the dramatist in *Othello*, in his erudite work *Character and Society in Shakespeare* (1951):

There is, however, a significant separateness of ‘worlds’ in *Othello*; it is the separateness of Othello’s world from that to which all the other characters equally belong. . . . Iago’s world is the
world of Venice, to which all the Venetians were born and in which they were imagined. . . . It is a world, indeed, from which spirit has been drained, and all is measured by use and entertainment and position. It is a kingdom of means, not ends. . . . In Othello, two worlds are set in opposition: the world set in time and inhabited by the Venetians; the world of spirit, in terms of which we apprehend Othello. (114-115)

Othello thinks in terms of values that exist in man’s mind without any alteration for many years and Iago, in terms of causality and logic which depends on time. Such a conflict is obligatory to the play’s progression. Likewise, such a toil is mandatory to the world’s rejuvenation. The answer for the puzzling question why a virtuous, moral man like Othello should be shattered by a wily, deceitful Iago, is found in Lord Krishna’s answer to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita: *kalosmi lokaksayakari pravrddho / lokan sama hartum iha pravrttah* (XI. 32) – Time am I, world-destroying, grown mature, engaged here in subduing the world. (tr. S. Radhakrishnan, The Bhagavad Gita 279). S. Radhakrishnan also explains further:

Kala or time is the prime mover of the universe. If God is thought of as time, the He is perpetually creating and destroying. Time is the streaming flux which moves unceasingly. The Supreme Being takes up the responsibility for both creation and destruction. The *Gita* does not countenance the familiar doctrine that while God is
responsible for all that is good, Satan is responsible for all that is evil. If God is responsible for moral existence, then He is responsible for all that it includes, life and creation, anguish and death. (279-80)

Sri Aurobindo extends this view in his *Essays on the Gita*. He elucidates thus:

It is the Timeless manifest as Time and World-Spirit from who the command to action proceeds. For certainly the Godhead when he says, “I am Time the Destroyer of beings,” does not mean either that he is the Time Spirit alone or that the whole essence of the Time-Spirit is destruction. But it is this which is the present will of his workings, *pravrtti*. Destruction is always a simultaneous or alternate element which keeps pace with creation and it is by destroying and renewing that the Master of Life does his long work of preservation. More, destruction is the first condition of progress. Inwardly, the man who does not destroy his lower self-formations, cannot rise to a greater existence. (370)

Othello obviously does not allow to wipe out his lower self, permits the Titan to take hold of him by shifting his faith from his innocent wife to a vicious villain. Loss of faith is self-betrayal. Personal constancy gives a continuing identity to a person and perhaps is the only defence against the onslaught of time. Turner makes a valid statement about Shakespeare’s perception of disorganized time that is internally related to faith. He states:
The most catastrophic event that can take place in a play by Shakespeare is the breaking of faith. . . . The breaking of human faith seems, in Shakespeare, to cause an imbalance or discontinuity in the temporal world which points to a disorder in the timeless world of values and of the spirit. . . . Shakespeare’s vision of disjointed time is an externalized view of something very real which takes place within the human psyche. It is as if the loss of human constancy were a symptom or cause of a universal destruction of constancy, of the regularity and order of time that gives us faith in the future, that it will not too greatly differ from the past. (76)

*Hamlet* is another play that demonstrates the unquestionable fact that loss of faith leads to unimaginable calamities in the personal and public lives.

Consequently, Shakespeare in his comedies harnesses the meaning of faith in terms of marriage. In her illuminating essay “As You Like It” in the edition *More Talking about Shakespeare* (1959) Helen Gardner while discussing the differences between comedy and tragedy declares: “The great symbol of pure comedy is marriage by which the world is renewed, and its endings are always instinct with a sense of fresh beginnings. Its rhythm is the rhythm of the life of mankind, which goes on and renews itself as the life of nature does. . . . A comedy, which contrives an end which is not implicit in its beginning, and which
is, in it, a fresh beginning, is an image of the flow of human life”. (http://www.wvup.edu/mberdine/Shakespeare/ShakComedy.htm). For instance, the significant feature of the last scene of *As You Like It* is the series of marriages. “Marriage is the reconciliation of the subjective faith, love and hope of the individual, the objectivity and common-sense of society, and the mighty forces of fertile nature” (Turner 44). In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare manipulates different time schemes such as ‘subjective’, ‘objective’, ‘natural’, ‘musical’ times and so on, enacted through his dramatis personae, Jacques, Touchstone, Oliver, Adam, Rosalind, Duke Senior and others, which get reconciled in the blessed bond, the sacrament of marriage. Hymen sings: “Then is there mirth in heaven / When earthly things made even / Atone together. (V. iv.81-83)

In this context, one should not forget that time and space are essentially linked up. Time incorporates itself within space, since space itself undergoes changes. What Helen Gardner says deserves mention: “Tragedy is presided over by time, which urges the hero onwards to fulfill his destiny. In Shakespeare’s comedies time goes by fits and starts. It is not a movement onwards so much as a space in which to work things out: a midsummer night, a space too short for us to feel time’s movement, or the unmeasured time of *As You Like It* or *Twelfth Night*. The comedies are dominated by a sense of place rather than of time”. The forest of Arden seems to represent the ‘present’ time, the living time, the only time in which one exists, the present moment. This is where reconciliation happens and the lovers are protected as the lover joyfully sings:
And therefore take the present time,

With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino;

For love is crowned with the prime

In springtime . . .  

(V. iii.16-19)

The moral order of the society is thus restored. God’s work of protection to all beings is seen in time also. During the days of protection time acts as the ‘subjective’ cause, effect, creator, rhythm, dynamic, incessant, musical, as a tester, revealer, judge, and so on. When it is considered as ‘objective’ then it can be felt to be static as in the case of time spent by the followers of the Duke in As You Like It, in the forest of Arden.

What is seen in the present are the new creations of time. Dr. P. Narasimhan in his book Gleanings from the SRIBHASYA (1996) reflects Ramanuja’s views of a sloka in Vishnu Purana (VI.ii.42):

Ramanuja observes that creation and destruction are none but the same substance attaining different forms or states. When the substance attains a particular form, it is said to be created and when it attains a new form, it is called destruction of the previous form, in which the matter is not totally annihilated, but exists in a different form. And the destruction of one is the creation of another. (159)

The words affirm that Time is the creator and destroyer and also the protector. Time performs the triple deeds of God – creation, preservation and destruction,
just as the body acts to the dictates of the soul. The Visistadvaita so confirms that Time is the Body of the Lord, the Saririn. Shakespeare has purported this in varieties of ways in his sonnets and plays.

Visistadvaita confirms that Brahman, the Supreme One is the metaphysical ground of the world of acit and cit, the inner ruler of finite self and this inner relation between the Brahman and the finite world is known as sarira-sariri bhava. Its aesthetic perception, nonetheless, provides a systematic exposition of the nature of Brahman as Bhuvana Sundara or the Beauty Essential, which will be dealt with in the ensuing chapter.