Chapter - $V$

Conclusion
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O’Neill and Karnad’s theory starts with the notion of man as both free and determined. Man is envisaged as the master of his own fate and as the plaything of various forces – naturalistic and biological. It goes with the stratagem that the affray is both within and without. This altercation induces the denouement that the catharsis it executes is not only pity and fear as in classical tragedy, but also a purge of the base emotions in man, in order to rehabilitate him to a spiritual order worthy of heavenly rewards.

The heroes of O’Neill and Karnad are contemporary with their keen sensibility and awareness of the deterministic circumstances, which have symbolized their fate. They do not belong to the aristocratic order, kingship or the highest stratum of society. Yank, Ephraim, Jones, Appanna, Devadatta and others epitomize diverse classes in the society. They feel a sense of alienation and they have lacked an inner meaning, which induces adjustments and happiness. Some of O’Neill’s protagonists are segregated and cut off from the environment. Their despondency is born out of either their heredity as in the case of Jones and Yank, or the creation of classes in the materialistic advancement of the modern society as portrayed in Brown and Dion. The heroes agonize for their biological or sociological reasons, which cramp their spirits, thwart their ambitions and frustrate their design to get exhilaration.

Persuaded by Freud and Jung, O’Neill utilized the psychological myth to probe into the characters inner recesses, dissected the psychic disorders and analysed the perverted behaviour of his protagonists in his diverse plays. The psychological myth empowered him to ascertain how life befalls in a way, which is different from what he perceives. Emulating Freud, he conferred man as an animal struggling for supremacy and
striving to establish his authority over the other counterparts. Like Jung, O’Neill believed that human experience is an Odyssey towards meaning and a pursuit of the self and soul. Jung’s theory of archetypes provides justification for O’Neill’s belief that experience affords expectation for individual reconciliation. O’Neill’s psychological myth is a synthesis of social, political, moral and intellectual perspectives furnishing with an unrestricted sphere of literary perception.

The artistic endowment of transforming old myths, amending them and making them viable in the contemporary context is a peculiar technique of O’Neill. He manipulated the myths to give answers to the modern man’s dilemma, liberating him from his fantasies and instigating him to accede to his limitations. O’Neill reintroduces the grandeur of Greek tragedy and transmutes the Greek myths into the modern insights of man and life. He manifests the modern plays with classical myth patterns, characters and themes and weaves them into the current philosophical and psychological ideas. Traces of such influences are discernible in *DUE* and *MBE*. O’Neill has tried to track on in the ancient myth the lost stability of soul, power and sufficiency of human capacity overwhelmed in the materialistic world. In addition, this is exactly what O’Neill intended to display through his modification of ancient myth. Contrary to the Greek sources, the main characters have lost their heroic mode; they do not possess any dignity and ironically confront the steady unbroken turning wheel of fortune. The identical theme is authenticated in the works of Karnad as well.

By the use of myths that have timeless relevance, Karnad’s plays confirm a contextual continuity with the best works in world literature. They inscribe the human circumstances linking the present with the eternal and the contemporary with the archetypal, yielding new connotation to every generation of readers. Karnad, in his plays takes up moral enigmas left unresolved. Myths and legends have an enduring significance
for the fundamental human obsessions they thematise. Karnad’s enchantment for them amounts to much more than that. Their logical cessation is often open-ended leaving extensive area for reworking and arguing out a moral, philosophical and psychological aspect.

Karnad’s interpretation of the familiar old myth of the exchange of ages between father and son in *YAY* seems to have baffled and even angered many of the conventional critics. However, to others, who try to root their contemporary concerns in the old myths, Karnad’s hero Pooru is a challenging experience. Karnad places the individual at the centre of the world and depicts that each man is what he chooses to be. In his psychological exploration, the playwright reveals an impressive insight and instigates concepts, which greatly extend the area of moral self-knowledge and self-awareness.

The protagonists in the major tragedies are also victims of their neurotic pride. They face deep inner conflicts and their introversion and lopsided thinking denote their disturbed nature. The characters create their self-image in order to empower them to adjust to the external world. They constantly live in a world of delusion, which is considered as the real source of ecstasy. The inner friction is between their super-ego and the deep unconscious, primitive, abysmal, inscrutable and unfathomable. The self-realization of the heroes has been retarded and handicapped owing to their self-images. They are segregated from the reality and the neurotic pride is their hubris, which proves their annihilation. Jones, Yayati, Cabot, Yank, Nina, Lavinia, and Tughlaq fall victims to their self-images who live in a delusive world of their own. The moment of self-knowledge or self-realization comes to these characters towards the culmination of the tragedy. O’Neill and Karnad’s characters are everyman and woman at the receiving cessation of the doom. Although their plays offer no solution, they insinuate the recuperative powers, which persuade peace and harmony.
It is O’Neill’s conception of tragedy that drew him towards a profound exploration of the human psyche. O’Neill concurred with the greatest writers of the world that tragedy springs from elemental human passions and man’s blind struggle with the forces within himself, which he cannot curb. Modern psychology has given these forces specific names and definitions. Knowing of the conscious and the unconscious, it was feasible for O’Neill to give a contemporary interpretation to the problem of tragic action. The observation made about Shakespeare’s tragic protagonist Lear – ‘for he hath ever but slender known himself’ – is true of O’Neill’s tragic heroes. All his protagonists blunder into disaster and this is precipitated by the tussle between the conscious and the unconscious.

To O’Neill God, fate and mystery are all facets of the subconscious and of the scuffle of the conscious will to assert itself against an unconscious will. Often the protagonist is hampered from achieving self-knowledge of the conscious ego rising like an impediment between him and his self-realization. An eminent stratagem of Jung that appealed to O’Neill was that of the ‘collective unconscious’. O’Neill has worked out in \textit{TEJ}, the existence and the power of this collective unconscious. \textit{TEJ} depicts how under the great stress of the situation the character of Jones, breaks down. The conscious ego shatters and there surfaces his personal and collective unconscious. In the beginning, he articulates with courage and confidence, but lost in the forest his veneer of culture, sophistication and freedom disappears. Some of the ghosts that appear are from his personal unconscious and the remaining are from his collective unconscious. The slave dealer, the witch doctor and the stone alter represent the collective unconscious of the Negro race of which he is a member.

It is in \textit{MBE} that O’Neill has worked out his theories based on Freudian ideas. The play is a version of the Orestes story, which is relevant to the twentieth century as the
*Orestia* was in the Athens. O’Neill has moulded the story and has bestowed sexual motivation to every twist of the plot. The incestuous enticement within the family is explicitly stated. Lavinia’s fondness for her father and the resentfulness of her mother, Orin’s intense imputation to his mother and the insane covetousness which makes him slay her lover, are explications of Freud’s much discussed ideas- the Oedipus complex and the Electra complex. In *SI*, also Freudian ideas are explicit. Prof. Leeds’ possessive love for his daughter, Nina’s final acceptance of Marsden’s protective love and Marsden’s own clinging to his mother are all instances of exemplifying Freud’s theories.

Karnad too deals with the psychological concepts of Freud and Jung. His protagonists endure pain and the root cause of their misery is the complexity of human relationships. Apprehended in these intricate relationships, the characters suffer from alienation. They are engaged in putting an end to their inner isolation but fail to do so most of the time.

Alienation, despair and feeling of nothingness haunt all the characters of Karnad. The more they act to assert themselves, the more alienated they grow. Karnad’s Yayati, Tughlaq, Rani, Yavakri are isolated in one way or the other. In *HAY*, almost all the characters are victims of estrangement. Devadatta and Kapila suffer because of their incomplete selves. If Kapila is only the body, Devadatta is only the mind and thus they yearn for each other for perfection. Among Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini, Devadatta is the major victim of existential alienation. His mind coupled with the heart of Kapila does not furnish him peace. Even Padmini is unsuccessful in effacing the feeling of nothingness from his life on the contrary she aggravates it. Hayavadana’s problem is both alienation as well as incompleteness. The incompatibility of his head and body and his inability to procure his society haunts him. He cannot enter the world of divine since his father shuns him, the animal world is forbidden to him because he has not his mother’s
benefit from having a complete animal body, and the equine face makes him a stranger among men.

Karnad also employs the Yavakri myth in the modern context for unveiling the psychic aberrations and the existentialist dilemma. *TFTR* abounds in its hard-woven texture the rich meaning of psychology, the aversion and the jealousy of man against man, father against son, brother against brother, wife against husband, high caste against lower caste, man against God, the rituals against sacrifices, freedom against bondage, attraction against repulsion, hate against love, fire against the rain, illusion against reality and so on.

Traits of Sartre’s existentialism are found in Yank’s inability to belong in *THA*. Man has fashioned his values for his existence. Any outside force in moulding his fate does not subdue him. In case of Yank, it is the self-image, which has spawned his values and engenders him. Yank’s exertion to be a member of the animal world emanates from his collective unconscious or the racial memories, which are hidden. The scuffle between his ego and the collective unconscious has originated tensions and led to his doom generating him as a victim archetype. In all these plays, one finds the unmistakable reverberations of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Marcel, Heidegger, Camus, Sartre and Beckett and also the various emotional problems, predicaments, crises and the ferocious assaults of existence that remain unchanged, despite the passage of time. All the characters desire for a perfect life yet in the end their dreams remain as dreams itself and hence becomes existential characters.

Karnad, in *YAY* and in *TFTR*, exploits myth and does not seem to intend to converse with the puzzle of his age but with the riddle of human beings as a whole. In both plays, Karnad has unearthed communion with the past only to confer about the present and employs a particular truth to thresh out the universal truth.
Karnad has given voice to the voiceless women characters in his plays right from *YAY* to *TFTR*. Some women like Chitralekha, Tughlaq’s stepmother, Padmini, Rani, Vishakha and Nittilai are remarkable characters who act against the distress and tyranny in the patriarchal society. In his plays woman is marginalized analogous to her position in the Hindu society. In *YAY*, hardly does Chitralekha step into her husband’s palace as a bride before her husband barters his youth for his father’s old age and suicide is the only recourse left to her. Padmini, in *HAY*, is again a victim of forces, which she can neither fathom nor oversee. Though she yearns for a complete man as her husband owing to the control of the mind over the body, she continues to be impeded and encounters a voluntary death. Rani is also a passive sufferer in a set of occurrences that are beyond her domination. This is true even of the woman characters in *TFTR*. Vishakha and Nittilai both suffer and die for no defect of their own. Infact, in most plays of Karnad, the worst sufferers are woman who are wedged up in the whirlpool of Hindu patriarchy and are sucked down vulnerably.

Karnad and O’Neill starts with their heroines questioning the holiness of nuptial bond. There is hardly any character from their pen who is not indulgent or in any way related to extra-marital relationships. For them the quest for perfection does not end with the sacred saint consummation through marriage but, in fact, the search for completeness starts from there. Amrithmati, the queen of *BALI* is enticed by the manly smell of the elephant tamer, Ashtavakra. Padmini launches her pursuit for a complete man after entering into the sacred bond of marriage. Rani in *NAG* is with two people – Appanna during the day, Naga during the night and Vishakha in *TFTR*, tries to execute fulfilment with her husband Paravasu and with her lover, Yavakri. Abbie in *DUE* though married to Ephraim begets a son from her stepson. Christine in *MBE* has extra-marital relationship with Adam and Nina in *SI* has affairs with many men. The quandary is man-woman
relationship within the institution of marriage in multiple dimensions. The female protagonists attempt to rip themselves from the orthodox conventions of the society where husband is the only man with whom she can keep in touch. They appear to have started sensing that it is their right to have freedom and individuality, though they are married.

O’Neill and Karnad’s handling of sexual anxieties in their plays is a symptom of a more inclusive form of despondency examined by Freud. They deal with sex only to bring out the fact that it is an inevitable factor required for perfect communion and true understanding. Nina, Abbie, Vishakha, Christine, Padmini, and Queen Amrithmati evoke the psychological myth, which is grounded in the belief of sexual anxiety. The protagonists’ sexual failure denotes social alienation and psychic depression. The delineation of sexuality in the plays of O’Neill and Karnad is more deliberate rather than obscene; it has a redemptive effect, which augments the thematic essence. They had their characters plead for love, profess it, pursue it, but seldom experience it in any but the most elemental way. Human relationships, individual as well as social were almost invariably discordant, which led to existentialsim.

In western theatre, the impulse of manipulation of myth and history has been ascertained from the time of the ancient Greece. Miscellaneous techniques applied by the Greeks like masks, chorus and songs are also utilized by O’Neill and Karnad. Masks as a theatrical tool is probably as old as theatre itself and the dramatists use this device in their technical experiments. Even the modern drama, with all its sophisticated technical powers, still traces the relevance of mask. The use of masks is a vital stage in the development of the dramatic art of O’Neill and one, which kept fascinating him throughout his life. He made improvisations and kept turning to masks to explore his
characters at every stage of his dramatic career. In Karnad’s plays, masks are used as a device to uncover the inner traits through subtler replacements of the mask.

Mask is used to either conceal or reveal a character’s reality. In NAG, the mask becomes an imperative for Rani to decamp from the actuality. As she is alone, she talks to herself and that becomes a mask to her. She envisages an eagle guiding her to a magical garden and she converses to a stag with golden antlers. In HAY, Devadatta adorns a white mask and Kapila, a black one. The mask-worn Devadatta and Kapila retain their original nature from the beginning to the end, though there is a slight change in them in the middle of the play during the transposition of the heads. In TFTR, the spirit of the character possesses the actor who wears the mask. When Arvasu acts the role of Vritra, he becomes one with the character and assaults the actor playing the role of Indra. In TUG, role-playing is a kind of mask.

O’Neill has recommended the utilization of mask and employed it in TGGB and in other plays. Nearly all O’Neill’s protagonists wear a mask to camouflage their true selves from the world and themselves. On the symbolic level the characters can no longer be deemed as individuals, instead they typify the two dispositions of the human soul. In MBE, O’Neill prefers mask-like faces. O’Neill has used this device after he has attempted and discarded both full-masks and half-masks. The mask of the hedonist God, Pan and Mephistopheles, which Dion wears in TGGB, is the naturalistic versions of Dionysius and St. Anthony. Brown wears the mask of Dion to appeal and enchant Margaret. Cybel masks her tender womanliness under the guise of a hardened prostitute for her livelihood in the world. The device of masks plays a great role in the success and failure of the characters. While Cybel succeeds effortlessly, Margaret carries the burden of masks through her roles of wife and mother. Dion dies of sheer exhaustion in persisting in the
masked struggles. In the play, the mask emerges as a protective cover for the shifting or the declining reality of human passions.

The *SI* is a masked psychological drama without masks. As the masks portray the psychological response to the pressing demands of the situation in *TGGB*, O’Neill uses classical asides addressed to the audience to present the character's interior monologue. The ‘Thought Asides’ conceal the true state of mind of the characters and mature into the verbal mask for what they think and feel. In the Elizabethan drama, asides are utilized to throw light on the characters whereas O’Neill employs them in the light of Freud’s discoveries to present the whole order of our unspoken thoughts and feelings, which are socially irksome to be publicly accepted or expressed.

The predicaments identified by O’Neill and Karnad are perennial and the fight against them is continuous and hence never ending. The so-called solutions are temporary suitable to the particular context giving momentary relief to the person involved in it. The scope it offers for variety of solutions keep every human trying to solve it. The writers mind diagonalizes various issues and have made use of archetypes available in myth, but identification of the crises is not a solution. Going through a trouble cleanses an individual which helps in cleansing the guilt of having committed a sin. None of the characters can undo the sin committed. All of them commit the sins knowingly. All the hindrances are everlasting and hence cannot be solved which defies a definite solution. The greatest enigma is its persistence to continue. So by suffering one feeds it. In most of the plays, death can bury the problem but this death becomes the seed sown for the next generation who has to live with the sin and shame of the ancestors.

In O’Neill the characters are contemporary but the sufferings are mythological whereas in Karnad the protagonists are mythological and sufferings are contemporary. The origin of various archetypes is unknown yet it subsists even now, as fresh as ever. It
will exist as long as humankind shall survive. The writers grow along with their characters and it is evident in the compassion with which they see the characters. The writers' growth is also seen in the use of matured techniques.

Keeping in mind the panorama of proffering the present study in the near future, certain scopes are recommended. An attempt to fathom the human psyche, its unrest, inadequacy and an individual's desperation to solve a timeless problem will be a fertile soil for future research. Studies can be made on Indian writers who have dispensed woman's sexuality and adultery with such honesty, and treated it as natural and not as something sinful. Researches could be done on topics where men and women are oppressed, abused, and consequently become the martyrs of unnamed sufferings.

To conclude, Wilber Scott's perceptive remark on archetypal approach to literature deserves a mention here:

> It might be generally conceded that great works of art are rooted in some ultimate experience, the archetypal image or symbol. Sometimes the reader feels moved by a work of art, though he does not understand why. It may be that the work dramatizes some archetype, or its reflection or an echo of an echo. If the artist is a mythmaker, the function of archetypal criticism is to decode the secret language.

This holds true for both O'Neill and Karnad.