Chapter - IV

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As a literary composition, drama is written, published, read and studied, meeting the functions of any other literary work such as novel, short story, poetry or essay. However, what distinguishes it from all these literary composition and assigns it a place among performing or audio-visual art forms is the fact that it is written not merely with the intention of being read and studied, but acted on stage by means of dialogue and action. Thus, it simultaneously becomes two types of art forms - a literary composition and a performing art.

There is a close parallel between drama and cinema. In the initial stage of cinema, many directors looked upon drama as a model for cinema. The usage of the phrase ‘screen play’ instead of ‘script’ illustrates the indebtedness of film to theatre. The directors take the drama troupes to film centres, have made them enact the plays and have photographed the entire play on a movie camera. It is the stage actors, stage musicians, stage dancers, stage writers and stage lyricists who have form the core of the film making apparatus. In fact, the early film has suffered from the mindless imitation of the theatre. James Monaco says, “On the surface, theatrical film seems more closely comparable to stage drama. Certainly the roots of the commercial film in the early years of the century lie there.” It is these differences, which prove that drama has a different objective and perspective. Inspite of the onslaught of powerful and technology based media’s such as cinema, television and radio, drama remains to be a popular and meaningful form of art.

The most obvious disparity between drama as a written text and drama as a performing art is the presence or absence of the stage. The word ‘stage’ includes the functional aspect of the participation of actors and settings. They are an active element in every production, yet they are not entirely absent even from the written text. Visualisation
is extremely essential even while reading a play. The plays of O’Neill and Karnad figure in university syllabi around the world to be taught in classrooms as texts; they are equally popular as performance texts, re-produced repeatedly by different directors. It is remarkable that, whatever be the physical or behavioural embodiment given to the mythical, historical, social or psychological horizons of their plays, the issues that build the plots are drawn from the experimental world of the readers and spectators. Yet, the theatre must focus on transcending cultural specificities to reach out towards a universality of human knowledge. Thus the plays of O’Neill and Karnad, fruitfully implemented by theatre groups of different countries and extremely well received by the audiences of diverse cultures, corroborate this point.

The chart of O’Neill’s growth as a dramatic artist can be drawn in the ascending curve. During his dramatic career, extending from his early one-act plays to his late masterpieces, he experimented with a variety of dramatic modes. There is hardly any dramatic form or device, which he does not assay. A study of his plays hauls up a number of questions about his dialogues. The most distinctive trait of O’Neill’s dialogue is the structural use of soliloquy and the subtle variations in it.

Soliloquy has been a cogent dramatic unit of the theatre in the past. Nevill Coghill, while discussing the professional skill of Shakespeare, says:

“Nothing is more certain than that soliloquy is the most intimate and potent of all the instruments of discourse in theatre; it is a perennial power in a medium that has ranged from heaven to hell and can explore the internal as well as the external world.”

In the case of O’Neill, it is an exceptionally potent instrument. As O’Neill is concerned more with the inner thoughts and feelings of his protagonist, he makes use of startling novel devices on the stage. Leon Edel hints that, “Joyce’s internal monologue
technique influenced O’Neill’s style.” Gelbs also records that O’Neill might have been inspired to use the technique of ‘thought asides’ by James Joyce’s *Ulysses* which he probably read shortly after its appearance in 1922. The real breakthrough of the use of soliloquy has much to do with the invasion of psychology in literature. The influences of psychoanalysis have already taken strong grounds in the art of fiction. The technique of internal monologue is the cardinal virtue of the fiction of Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, Joyce and a host of modern novelists in as much as it communicates properly the inner consciousness of the characters or the atmosphere of their mind.

O’Neill has been working on the various nuances of this technique right from the beginning. There are subtle differences among soliloquy, monologue, modified monologue and thought asides. The soliloquy is a speech by a person who is the only flesh and blood character on the stage or who believes himself to be so. Monologue is a speech by a character, which may be addressed to other characters, but in fact, it is no more than thinking aloud. The modified monologue is addressed neither to the audience, nor to the fellow actors. It is spoken inspite of the presence of another character out of inner compulsion, not in reaction to a previous speech nor as an interpolation of the dramatists. ‘Thought Asides’ handled by O’Neill are diverse from the ordinary asides applied in a well-made play. They are akin to Shakespearean soliloquies, as they serve to reveal the characters’ more or less conscious thoughts, as well as their unconscious emotions. The technique of ‘Thought-Asides’ is also in fact a modification upon monologue.

Monologues are occasionally resorted in full-length plays with the abundance of visual and aural effects and O’Neill has employed it in *TEJ* and *THA*. In *TEJ*, O’Neill has incorporated realistic dialogues only in the first and the last scenes and it is conceived as a dramatic monologue. In the rest of the scenes, as an alternative of realistic dialogues, he
depends on monologue that is in the nature of long soliloquies. According to the
traditional definitions a soliloquy properly belongs to the drama while a dramatic
monologue, which has been brought into existence and popularized by the great Victorian
poets like Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning, is one of the techniques of poetry.

In order to prove that O’Neill’s TEJ, is a sustained dramatic monologue, scene by
scene analysis of the whole play has to be discussed. The first scene offers the relevant
background for the introduction of the psychoanalytical monologue, which is uniformly
sustained, from the second to the seventh scene, and the final scene is meant to be a
conclusion with the death of the hero.

Jones in TEJ, who is caught in the grip of an extremely intensified fear complex,
is continually talking to himself in order to get rid of the nervousness of fear. He has
miscalculated the route which he should have taken, and when he scours for the white
stones under which he has hidden his food he discovers that they have disappeared. He
talks to himself while searching for the food, “…Ain’t heah, neither! Grub, what is you?
Ain’t heah. Gorry, has I got to go hungry into dem woods—all night?” (188-89). This
makes him even more nervous and the strain of his strenuous journey of three hours
weakens him. Finally, he is overcome by the pangs of hunger and has the horrifying
hallucinatory vision of the ‘Little Formless Fears’ squirming towards him. Throughout
the scene, Jones is alone on the stage and the nervous fear, to which he is a victim, is
conveyed to the audience in a dramatic manner with the aid of a monologue.

O’Neill employs dramatic monologue when Jones envisages that he perceives the
ghostly figure of the Negro Jeff, whom he has killed in a skirmish over the gaming table.

JONES. Who dar? Who dat? Is dat you, Jeff? (Starting toward the
other, forgetful for a moment of his surroundings and really believing it
is a living man that he sees- in a tone of happy relief) Jeff!I’se
sho’mighty glad to see you! Dey tol’me you done died from dat razor cut I gives you. (192)

This figure is nothing but a hallucinatory apparition conjured by the over-wrought brain of Jones. He addresses it directly and tries to talk to it. Finally, not obtaining any response, he gets nervous and fires at the apparition with furious rage. The moment the smoke clears away, he finds that he is desolate in the forest. The whole scene is re-enacted on the stage of his mind. The impression is so vivid that he actually gets into the posture of striking at the guard. Just as he feels sure that he has captured him, he perceives with sudden horror that his hands are empty. He bellows with baffled terrified rage, tugging frantically at his revolver addressing the figure of the guard directly and fires on his back.

Later Jones, in a repentant mood, prays to Lord Jesus and beseeches to reprieve all his sins. He concedes that he is a great sinner and wants the saviour to have mercy on him.

JONES. Oh, Lawd, Lawd! Oh, Lawd, Lawd! (Suddenly he throws himself on his knees and raises his clasped hands to the sky- in a voice of agonized pleading) Lawd Jesus,heah my prayer! I’se a po’sinner,a po’sinner! I knows I done wrong,I knows it! (196)

His morbid imagination is carried back to the days when the slave trade was practiced and he fantasizes himself in the company of the common slaves who are about to be auctioned. When the auctioneer is in the act of taking him off and the purchaser is in the act of paying for him, he all of a sudden, gets of the hypnotic trance. He addresses both of them directly, fires at them with such rapidity that the two shots are almost simultaneous. Only dark remains and the silence is broken by Jones as he rushes off whooping with trepidation.
These visions make Jones discern that he has already been sold as a slave and finds himself on a board galley, where he is playing at the oars like a common galley-slave. The pathetic wail of the slaves in which Jones also joins is symbolical of the bottomless pit of despair into which he has cascaded. It is not possible for a man to descend lower than this. He has lost all hopes of being saved and has turned into a perfect nervous wreck. Here there is a combination of a dramatic monologue and pantomime, and the dramatic monologue merges into the interior monologue of Joyce, Richardson and Woolf.

The unconscious associations in Jones’ mind transport him to the original home of his ancestors, into the dark and dreadful jungles of Africa. In a horrifying vision, he joins the dancing of the Congo witch doctor who, by gesture, seems to tell him that he must submit himself as a sacrifice in order to appease the angry God. Then the huge head of a hallucinatory crocodile with wide-open jaws appears on the stage and Jones, hypnotized by the fascinating glare of its green eyes, moves towards it with deliberately slow steps, pleading to Lord Jesus to have mercy on him. All of a sudden the spell is broken and, coming out of his trance Jones fires into the eyes of the crocodile. Immediately the whole vision dissolves and “Jones lies with fear to the ground, his arms out-stretched, whimpering with fear as the throb of the tom-tom fills the silence about him with a somber pulsation, a baffled but revengeful power” (202)

Throughout TEJ the form of the dramatic monologue is uniformly sustained whereas in THA, the focus is on the interior monologue.

The entire action of THA concentrates on the consciousness of Yank, the central figure of the play. The dramatist has exploited the techniques of the interior monologue to lay bare the anguished soul of Yank. The long monologue of Yank, after he has been thrown out of the I.W.W is a clever piece of psychological analysis. Yank is bewildered
and confused and his mental confusion has been skilfully rendered. He has gone to the I.W.W with the conviction that he belongs to it. This firm belief receives a rude shattering shock, which is too much for him. His suffering is spiritual and not physical, and it is the spirit, which is being ignored in the modern mechanized age.

YANK. I’m a busted Ingersoll, dat’s what Iam. Steel was me, and I owned de woild. Now Iain’t steel and de woild owns me. Aw, hell! I can’t see –it’s all dark, get me? It’s all wrong! *(He turns a bitter mocking fare up like an ape gibbering at the moon).* Say, youse up dere, Man in de Moon, yuh look so wise, gimme de answer, huh? (250)

He belongs neither to the earth, nor to heaven. The proper place for him might be ‘Hell’ and that too is not assured.

The long monologue with the gorilla in the cage is an admirable study of Yank’s thought process, and it fully conveys the disintegration of Yank’s personality. Abducted by his obsession, Yank sees himself as a hairy ape. He addresses the gorilla as a ‘brother’ and ponders that they both belong to the same club of ‘de Hairy Apes.’ (252). His mind has been thrown completely off the balance. The gorilla belongs to nature, but Yank does not belong even to that beautiful world. He lets the gorilla out intending to take him to the Fifth Avenue, and with the gorilla’s accomplice, he intends to have his reprisal on the class to which Mildred belongs. However, the Gorilla crushes him to death and as he dies, he grumbles in deep agony, “Even him did not think I belonged. Christ, where do I fit off at? Where do I fit in?” (254)

Peter Steins’ at Britian’s National Theatre produced the film version of THA, which had tremendous impact on the audience. Nevertheless, as it was in German, questions based on many issues arose as to were the targets of O’Neill’s carried out? What are the discernible intentions and the appropriate effects of THA? etc. O’Neill
doubted that any audience other than an American was capable of deducing the play, for
the idiom and the pace of the speech was German. He wrote to George Jean Nathan of his
opposition to its translation as he felt that it would lose:

… just the quality of it that is most worthwhile its rhythms of colorful
dialogue, its dynamic drive of language. And its emotional significance
and meaning is nothing the French mind could get in a million years. 5 (68)

The most consequential query is whether it is possible for another language to
mirror the punctuating sounds and rhythms of *THA*. What is demanded is an equivalent of
the short sharp sentences, which, for the most part, end in a question mark or an
exclamation point. Yank’s speech is largely monosyllabic and very few words have more
than two syllables. Is the German language sufficiently economical to achieve this
accentuated brevity, this grunting non-verbosity? The barking metallic sounds (men are
dogs, men are machines) that O’Neill highlights could probably be organized in German.
The question is about the sounds O’Neill employs, because they constitute the crude,
powerful, soulful, aggressive substance of his play. The “a” sound becomes “I” (can
become kin); the “ir” or, “ur” sounds are transformed to “oi” of ‘boid, goil, woid,
moider’. “Th” becomes “d”, another hardening of sound and O’Neill follows these harsh
consonants with the keening “e” sounds (de, dey, steel). Unexpected consonants and the
repetitively emphasized twisted vowel sounds make for an idiosyncratic speech which
characterizes Yank and the play he dominates.

O’Neill proceeds with the modified monologue in *DUE*. Alienation and isolation
are the common lot of man in the modern industrialized world and urbanized society, and
the full perturbation of the contemporary predictions has been forcefully enunciated by
the treatment of the technique of the ‘interior monologue’. In *DUE*, O’Neill has written a
clipped and credible New England’s speech, one, which is in harmony with the characters
of the play. Their inner worlds are unveiled emphatically through the modified monologues. The third scene of the first part ends with Eben’s monologue, “Yes, Siree! I tuk her. She may’ve been his’n – an’ you’n, too-but she’s mine now!” (214) This monologue about the village harlot, Min prepares the way for his love for Abbie. In the later scene, Ephraim procures reconciliation with his forlornness and with his hard God in a speech, which is targeted, to nobody on the stage:

CABOT. It’s a – goin’ t’ be lonesomer now than ever it, was afore – an’

I’m gettin’ old, Lord – ripe on the bough …. (Then stiffening) Waal-

what d’ye want? God’s lonesome, hain’t he? (268.)

O’Neill’s technique of soliloquy matured into that of ‘Thought Asides’ in SI. Jordan. Y. Miller views that, O’Neill’s “monologue- soliloquy style exploded the bomb without previous warning.”6 Kenneth Macgowan, shows, a more systematic sense of the historical perspective of O’Neill’s style when he declares that, “O’Neill’s device is his own because he has worked long and painfully over it and brought it to a complete development.”7 O’Neill bequeathed the external realistic aspects of his people and their outward realistic talk, but between almost every pair of speeches he gouges out into the minds of his character and shows clearly their thoughts in a speech that the audience hear but not the other characters. The ‘Thought Asides’, show intricate connections with the themes of the play and serve multiple functions.

In SI, as O’Neill is preoccupied with the subconscious control of activity, he needs a technique that would deliver the normally unexpressed, merely hinted, or even unrecognized feeling to the point of direct utterance. He resolves to use the soliloquy and the aside much more freely than any dramatist before his time. Soliloquy was not new to him, as Jones and Yank have freely uttered their thoughts, hopes and fears. In SI, he uses it as the basic feature of the long play and demonstrates a counterpoint between the
affairs, which the societies allow the members to say but which, out of politeness and
shame, an individual normally, refrains from saying. *SI* is O’Neill’s longest play, and that
is partly because the action has continually to freeze while the character or characters
concerned enunciate what is sonorous within them.

The use of asides and monologues has been necessiated by a sense of alienation
and lack of contact. The flow of the character’s thoughts is the product of ‘inner
compulsion’. It has been pointed out that when the characters are faced with a conflict the
asides are lengthened; and when they have passed over the tension, the dramatist has used
ordinary dialogues.

As in *DUE*, it is the other characters who diagnose and characterize the various
impulses which haunt Nina. On the other hand, her asides bequeathed the necessary clues
to her attitudes towards these characters. For example, in her one moment of triumphant
joy she says to herself:

> My three men!... I feel their desires converge in me!... to form one complete beautiful male
desire which I absorb… and am whole … their life is my life- I am pregnant with the three!
...husband! … lover! … father! … and the fourth man! …little man!…little Gordon!…he is mine
too!... that makes it perfect …( 616).

Though her love is made complete by including the love of a daughter, lover, wife, and
mother, the love is divided among the four individuals, which leads to antagonism and
conflict.

In *SI*, seven out of nine acts begin with a monologue and the expository function
is retained throughout the play. The play commences with Marsden’s soliloquy. He
undergoes varied fluctuating emotions. Beginning with smiles and passing through
self-mockery and self-assurance, he rolls into the aura of intense pain, torture and disgust.

> MARSDEN. … I must start work tomorrow … I’d like to use the Professor in a novel
sometime … and his wife … seems impossible she’s been dead six years … so
aggressively his wife! … poor Professor! Now it’s Nina who bores him … that’s
different … she has bossed me, too …. Mother said she’s become quite queer lately
… Mother seemed jealous of my concern … Why have I never fallen in love with
Nina? … could I? (487)

In fact, this opening soliloquy of Marsden and the scene between Marsden and
Professor Leeds expose the sexual relationship and emotions that are basic to the play,
which leads to the finale. The expository monologues are an ‘economic means of
handling the rather complicated machinery’ of the play, which is full of twists. This
technique also serves the role of ‘mask’ as it shows the gulf between a character’s thought
and his open words. Inner thoughts divulge the real feelings of a character - love, hatred
or disgust. A few instances illustrate the point. Marsden who is worried about his
mother’s health, thinks, “she’s sixty-eight …. I can’t help fearing … no! (555)” Furthermore, he
takes objection to any reference to his mother’s old age and says that, “she’s still under sixty-five…” (556). The speech is followed by an aside: “Why did I lie to him about her age? …. I must
be on edge.” (556) Marsden’s lie is a rationalisation of his fear and his desire that he should
not be deprived of her. Darrell too tells Marsden that he has returned to America because
of his father’s death, but soon he utters to his inner self, “Lie …. Father’s death just gave me an
excuse to myself …. Wouldn’t have come back for that …. came back because I love her!” (605)

This dichotomy between words and thoughts is brought into focus by the author
and the suppressed motives behind the conscious mind of the characters are disclosed.
Thus, the whole of man, his rational behaviour, his internal desires, the conscious and the
subconscious are compactly projected. This device concedes O’Neill a free hand to pump
into the continuous fluctuations going on in the minds of his characters. In this sense,
‘Thought Asides’ are modified monologues. The characters lay bare their true and
genuine self with the support of such monologues. These asides impart an air of mystery
to the play.
After *SI*, O’Neill has exercised, ‘Thought Asides’, sparingly. In *Dynamo*, he uses this tool in a way that suggests he was writing an epitaph to this technique. After the second draft of *MBE*, he has given up the idea of ‘Thought Asides’. He uses it again, in *More Stately Mansions*, especially in the scene where he depicts the neurotic disintegrated souls of Simeon, Sara and Deborah.

O’Neill’s reliance on modified monologue increased further. In *MBE* when Ezra returns weary of war he tries to defeat the puritan heritage that has made his marriage a fiasco. He communicates with his wife in a voice that has a ‘hollow repressed quality’ as if he were continually withholding emotion from it. Ezra converses of the large-scale death he has seen on the front, of his alienation from Christine, and his aspiration for a better future. Christine closes her eyes, yet Ezra continues with his monologue. In *Macbeth*, on the night of his murder, King Duncan enjoys the cool breeze blowing in the garden and sends a gift to Lady Macbeth for her kind welcome. The audience knows how kind Lady Macbeth, is and what preparations she has made that night for the king. The irony ensues from the audience’s perception of the contrast with the situation, which the king is fated to know. In *MBE*, Ezra is not what the audience has been led to expect. He is a changed man after his homecoming, but he is to die for what he has been before this metamorphosis. There must be a relationship between the audience and the stage characters, otherwise the life or death of the latter will have no effect at all. This correspondence is established through Ezra’s monologue when he recalls his past. His confession adds to the suspense and is structured in creating the irony of the situation in the play.

Soliloquy, like other expressive instruments on the stage, is a dynamic unit of stagecraft in O’Neill’s hand. It is the most heightened points of his dialogue, as it brings the whole of the man on the stage. In applying soliloquy, O’Neill is well equipped and
extends the frontiers of drama without impairing the dramatic illusion. O’Neill’s management of the soliloquy is matchless in the modern times; it reveals what cannot otherwise be obtained out of the depths of the speaker’s mind.

O’Neill has allured with two styles of theatre rather than one. Equally adept in the styles of realism and expressionism and with two radically disproportionate types of drama, he is equally effective in one-act plays and in cyclopean dramas. The scour for expressive form leads him to undertake numerous experiments with symbolic figures, masks, chorus, scene-effects, rhythms and schematisations. This multifarious engagement with the possibilities of dramatic art, combined with an endeavour to apply them to significant subject matter makes O’Neill a playwright of international importance.

O’Neill’s one-act plays are dramas analysing the miseries, delusions and obsessions of a man adrift in the world. Beginning with *Bound East for Cardiff*, he has perfected the form of one-act plays in the cycle of sea plays. It is representative of his early naturalistic symbolic style with its mordant treatment of a New England sea captain’s obsessive pride in his ability to hunt for their “ile” (oil). Finding the one-act form no more apposite to his objective, O’Neill shifted his attention to longer plays. He made his first significant attempt in the creation of full-length realistic drama in *Beyond the Horizon*. Other plays of the early realistic period include *The Straw, Anna Christie, Diff’rent, Gold* and *First Man*.

O’Neill switched over to expressionism with his powerful plays, *TEJ* and *THA*. The essential realism of the early plays allowed the use of symbolism. Mysticism became his next target in his dramatic experimentation. In *The Fountain*, there is an element of fantasy in the visions of the fountain, and the symbol lies at the heart of the play. Later he reverted to his favourite style of writing, that of tragic realism, especially in *DUE*. In technique, O’Neill’s final masterpieces, *TIC, LDJIN, A Touch of the Poet* and *A
Moon for the Misbegotten represent a return to the pure realism of his earliest plays wedded to an organic symbolism.

Symbolism is an effective and efficient technique utilized by the playwright to insinuate the deeper reality and the profound essence of his theme. It imparts depth and richness of texture to his plays. Though he has applied symbolism in his early plays, however, it is in TEJ and the other subsequent plays it has been employed with great efficacy and mastery.

O’Neill has devised a beautiful network of symbols to render the soul of Jones. To set on with the name of the protagonist, Brutus Jones grooms the reader to see the ‘brute’ in everyman. The action starts in the afternoon, which signifies confidence, continues at night, which is the symbol of darkness and terror, retrogression and disintegration, and ends at dawn symbolising retribution. The real action takes place in the daylight, whereas the vision appears in the moonlight. The setting is symbolic. The forest with its sensuous darkness exemplifies Nature, while its primieval terror typifies the primitive consciousness. Jones, who loses his hat, coat, spurs, and shoes and left alone naked at the end, is a physical symbol of the corresponding stripping off the layers of civilization to reveal the barbarian savage in him.

The settings, the costumes, the silver bullet and the beating tom-tom are all symbols through which Jones’ inner anguish, terror, decay, and disintegration have been externalized. Along with this, importance is given to the colour symbolism as well. TEJ is a play intimately concerned with colour. Jones is a black man and Smithers, a white; their relationship is an uneasy negotiation of power, with Jones’ superior political power operating in conflict with Smithers’ presumption of power through his whiteness. The appearance of Smithers reveals his positioning as disempowered in relation to Jones, “The tropics have tanned his naturally pasty face with its small, sharp features to a sickly
yellow, and native rum has painted his pointing nose to a startling red” (174). Smithers discolouration exposes the complexity of his social position as ‘white’ in the play and this labyrinth is enlarged by his nationality and class identity. Smithers’ whiteness is tainted as his outfit, “a worn riding suit of dirty white drill.” (174)

The destabilization of colour is ascertained in the figure of Jones, an African American who mimics “whiteness”. He is portrayed in the first scene as, “a tall, powerfully built, full-blooded Negro of middle age. His features are typically Negroid, yet there is something decidedly distinctive about his face …” (175). The fact that Jones is cross-dressed as white is a kind of parody of white clothing, a garish version of a western military outfit. This is an outfit that O’Neill describes as, “not altogether ridiculous” (175) which uncovers O’Neill’s view of the combined comedy and menace of a black man’s dressing up in the garb of whiteness.

Not only does Jones approximate whiteness visually, O’Neill also recounts how Jones has internalized ‘white’ behaviour through his observations of white people while he was a porter. By emulating and imitating the ‘white quality’, Jones has become a brutal colonizer as those who once colonized him, and this is another kind of masquerade. Jones has learned to mask himself as white by exploiting others and he achieves power and domination over the natives, whom he contemptuously depicts as ignorant ‘bush niggers’.

Jones’ retreat from his white palace to the darkness of the forest and his escape from the mutinous natives becomes an act of unmasking, doffing his signs of whiteness and displaying his black body beneath the mask of civilization. Jones’ expedition through the forest is a journey through history. He visits his personal past on a chain gang, meeting the man he murdered as a Pullman Porter. Later he moves further back into the history of his race hallucinating a slave auction, a slave-ship, and finally his “primordial”
roots in Africa with a vision of a crocodile and a masked witch doctor. Jones not only experiences these mirages but he himself sets out to revert to what O’Neill considers a “primordial state”. He loses his clothings as he proceeds, and his body becomes progressively more apparent throughout his jaunt. By the end, “his pants have been so torn away that what is left of them is no better than a breech cloth” (198). Relocating from the white space of civilization to the black space of the forest, Jones’ ‘white’ mask is stripped away to make known the identity beneath the black.

Besides the colour symbolism, the beating of tom-tom is equally symbolic. The tom-tom sound symbolizes the all-pervasive and inescapable presence of the primitive. It beats in the camp of the ‘bush niggers’ to which Jones is helplessly drawn and its beat in Jones’ body represents the primitive blood which charges through his arteries. Beginning at a rate corresponding to the normal pulse beat and only faintly heard, it becomes perceptively louder and more and more rapid as Jones becomes increasingly terror-stricken, as his visions are aggressively aboriginal.

In his fantastic creation _TEJ_, O’Neill has achieved an incredible synthesis of symbolic and dramatic action of the inward and the outward, the inner mind of the hero and the outer reality of the world he lived in and so on. O’Neill, through this beautiful fusion of dramatic action and symbolic devices, has made Jones and Yank of _THA_ surface as gigantic universal figures whose terror bashes a responsive chord in the hearts of the readers.

In _THA_, symbols express the inexpressible in a manner too deep for words. The symbol of Rodin’s Thinker is presented in four occasions in _THA_. Rodin’s Thinker is the fountainhead in _THA_, which symbolizes the conjunction in human nature of the ‘brute’ and the ‘angel’. O’Neill’s expressionistic device is seen in its most purposeful effect in suggesting the stone sculpture of the famous French sculptor, Rodin. It assumes the role
of a living character over-shadowing even the most articulate flesh and blood characters of the dramatis personae in the play.

The huge figure of the Rodin’s sculpture confers a wonderful impression of deep thought, which is expressed in every part of the stance. The pose itself is that of a nude figure seated on a block, a little to the left, both the legs close together and the left arm resting on the left thigh across to the right knee. The head is slightly bent, the chin resting on the back of the right hand, the elbow dug into the right thigh. The face is keenly expressive of mental pain while the body is muscular, taut and suggestive of great strength. It is highly suggestive of Emerson’s concept of the ‘Thinking Man’ captured in stone by Rodin, Emerson’s contemporary.

O’Neill unobtrusively instigates the idea of Rodin’s Thinker in the fourth scene in his description of Yank seated on a bench in the forecastle after the crucial confrontation of Mildred in the stokehole. Yank is said to be seated in the posture of Rodin’s Thinker. For the first time Yank begins to think while the rest of his mates look at him apprehensively. He has not cared to wash away the soot, grime and dirt from his face, which looks ghastly. The sight of Mildred has stunned Yank and O’Neill describes him as having been turned into ‘stone’ in that context. Rodin’s Thinker is imaged to denote Yank who is hurt in the heart of his pride.

The sculpture assumes a more formidable role in the Blackwell’s Island prison where Yank is seated on the edge of the cot in his cell, closely resembling the posture of Rodin’s Thinker again. His head is bandaged as he has been beaten by the police. Yank’s fragmentation of self-hood has begun. He envisages himself to be ‘the hairy ape’, and says so when questioned by the fellow prisoners. The magistrate who consigned him to jail says that he is sentencing him for thirty days to ‘think’, and so Yank thinks. Rodin’s
Thinker, which is a symbol of man’s struggle to higher manhood through deep cogitation on the meaning of life, takes the role of dragging Yank down to the lower manhood.

The destructive fragmentation of Yank as Rodin’s Thinker is portrayed when he is kicked out of the I.W.W office. He is depicted as trying to assume the pose of Rodin’s Thinker in the moonlight. The bench is not there any more which means that Yank has lost his support to cogitate clearly. It is in the last scene that the Rodin’s Thinker takes the fantastic and ghastly role in the form of death. O’Neill, as a masterstroke of genius, points the huge gorilla as sitting in its cage on its haunches on a bench in the posture of Rodin’s Thinker similar to Yank. It is a flashback to the fourth scene where originally it is Yank who is seated on the bench in the forecastle. Rodin’s Thinker as a character at last serves the purpose of linking Yank to the gorilla expressively suggesting their kinship in a tragic silence, foreboding Yank’s final belonging only in death.

In *DUE*, the symbolism is portrayed through the elm trees. The tree protects and shelters the house with its long branches. It symbolizes the primordial past. It is also a symbol of youthful energy and rejuvenation. Jung explains the meaning of the tree symbol:

> “Taken on average, the commonest associations to its meaning are growth, life, unfolding of form in a physical and spiritual sense, development, growth from below upwards and from above downwards, the maternal aspect (protection, shade, shelter, nourishing fruits, sources of life, solidity, permanence, firm-rootedness, but also being rooted to the spot) old age, personality and finally death and rebirth.”\(^\text{10}\)

Apart from the colour symbolism in O’Neill’s plays, the costumes also play a vital role. In *MBE*, all the major male characters are dressed in uniform since the play begins on the day of the last day of the Civil War. The uniform has significance beyond the
realistic one. At an early point, it is learnt that when Christine falls in love with Ezra, “He was handsome in his lieutenant’s uniform!” (48). Adam’s uniform links him with the Mannon men, yet it differs significantly from those of Ezra and Orin. As a merchant captain’s blue uniform, it is peaceful and connected with the sea. There is a striking costume contrast between the mother and the daughter.

*Lavinia severly dressed in black, is seated on the steps in the black moonlight,while above and to the right of her stands Christine, the light from the hall glowing along the edges of the dress and in the colour of her hair.*(45)

At no other point in the trilogy is the juxtaposition between life affirming ‘paganism’ and life denying ‘puritanism’ so vividly visualized. Christine takes on the majestic proportion of an Earth Mother, celebrating the values denied by the daughter. The black that Lavinia wears in several scenes of the trilogy has many connotations. In the first part, her choice of costume testifies her spiteful jealousy and hatred for Christine. Throughout the play, her black attire is linked with her father’s judicial robe. Above all her blackness indicates puritan life denial. It also denotes mourning. ‘Mourning becomes Lavinia’, accentuates that she never wanted to be born. This elucidates the exquisite hatred for her mother who brought her into this world, the world that she renounces in the end. The colour symbolism used by O’Neill in *MBE*, is remarkably different from the theatrical version.

When *MBE*, was produced at the Royal National Theatre (London 2003- 4) there was slight variation from O’Neill’s prescriptions of costumes. O’Neill was specific in his symbolic choice of green satin for Christine’s gown. In the RNT production, Christine’s identifying colours were altered from the life affirming green to variations on an iridescent red. After Ezra’s death she wore a black silk, less full, crinoline mourning
gown elaborated by a black velvet cape effect on the shoulders and in the final scene she was dressed in a simple reddish umber-coloured, higher-waist, crinoline-supported skirt with low-cut white silk shirt. However, in Christine’s portrait with which Orin confronts Lavinia, she wore a vibrant green satin opulent gown. The choice of different colours and fabrics dissipated the effect of O’Neill’s symbolic use of colour, so that when Orin accused Lavinia of robbing their mother of her colour the effect was less powerful. The design of the gowns used in RNT, served to sexualise Christine in contrast with Lavinia.

In accord with O’Neill, the RNT Lavinia wore a simple black dress buttoned up the front to suggest her alliance with her military father. O’Neill described Lavinia as having her hair pulled back to disguise the similarity with Christine, but the RNT, chose to tie back Lavinia’s hair more in the manner of a schoolgirl in contrast to Christine’s womanliness.

In Lavinia’s transformation into her mother, the RNT foregrounded Lavinia’s sexual transformation and on her return from the South Sea Islands, she wore a corseted gown, which signaled her development into womanhood. The use of costume to symbolize the character in repeated situations was also evident in the male costumes: their military uniforms linked Ezra and Orin initially, but in The Haunted, Orin’s transformation into his father was signaled through their similarity of clothes. Orin wore a black dress suit with a high collar and sloping shoulders like the clothes his father wore in the portrait, not in the regalia of a judge as in O’Neill. In a theatre like the RNT, it was impossible to appreciate the facial resemblances that were so necessary to O’Neill’s sense of the inherited Mannon spirit, but the costumes served the purpose admirably, as natural or chosen affiliation was communicated through costume colours. Music and dance too play an imperative role in the plays of O’Neill and Karnad.

The dance enthralls the dramatist, and Egil Tornqvist notes that “dancing or dance like movements occur in many of the plays, usually as an expression of an affirmative
attitude toward life.” In *DUE*, the absurd capers of Simeon, Peter and Ephraim dramatize the vigorous vitality of primitives living close to nature, as well as the power of the irrational passions that dominate them. Similarly, the witch doctor’s grotesque contortions in *TEJ* depict the intense demonic forces within the collective unconscious, which overpower Jones. In *TGGB*, the distorted dance portrays the movement of the modern confused man trying to convince himself that he is a passionate pagan. In all these plays, the dance assumes thematic importance expressing contrasts between conscious and unconscious, animal and human, adjustment and alienation.

Dancing serves to show the powerful passions which prevail in *DUE*. Their origin is not pagan African but pagan Greece. The deliberate classical echoes of the play are most obvious in the use of three Greek myths – that of *Medea* (the murder of child by mother), *Phaedra* (the love of step-mother for step-son), and *Oedipus* (the love of son for mother). The pagan myths underscore O’Neill’s objective to picture great passions, and the dancing in the play suffices the same aim. The departure of Simeon and Peter from the farm is preceded by a wild, unrestrained dance and the central discovery by Ephraim of his cuckolding occurs at a celebration where his own distorted dance dominates the festivities. The Dionysian dancing dramatizes the intensity of the irrational desires that rule the characters, while its grotesque nature emphasizes both the animal aspects of Simeon and Peter and almost the mythical status of Ephraim.

In O’Neill’s plays, his own harrowing experience in life has endowed him with a tragic vision, very close to that of the Greek dramatists. Tragedy is to him, the very texture and rhythm of life. He has traced that this tragic sense of life could not be produced by the popular theatre, and so like Eliot he turns to the Greeks. He shares the Greek view of the human beings as the helpless and tortured victims of the formidable forces of Fate. O’Neill unearthes modern equivalents for the ‘Fates’ and the ‘Furies’ in
the psychological concepts of Freud and Jung. His endeavour is to deal with the ‘relation between man and God’, the Greek Gods being, substituted by the unconscious.

The protagonists of *TEJ, THA, SI* and *MBE* are guilty of ‘hubris’—in their case a form of neurotic pride—arising from the rebuff of the real self and their faith in a false self-image. Their moment of self-realization or epiphany as in Greek tragedy approaches to them through either death or self-sacrifice when the barrier set up by the conscious ego is finally overcome. For Jones and Yank, self-realization is granted through death; for the heroes of *Beyond the Horizon* and *Straw*, through self-sacrifice. Lavinia’s self-knowledge comes through the death of Orin, when she returns to the Mannon fold ready to undergo retribution.

O’Neill’s *MBE* is unique among his works, which is modelled on Greek tragedy in theme and technique. Brooks Atkinson remarks, “Using a Greek legend as his model, he has reared up a universal tragedy of tremendous stature—deep, dark, solid, uncompromising and grim. It is heroically thought out and magnificently wrought in style and structure.” In this trilogy, O’Neill essays a retelling of the Greek story of revenge, dramatized by Aeschylus in his *Orestia* and Sophocles and Euripides in their respective *Electra’s*. It is a saga of the way in which fate calls upon Electra and her brother Orestes to avenge the murder of their father Agamemnon, by slaying their mother Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus. O’Neill turned to Aeschylus for the model of *MBE* choosing to give the entire story in three parts—*Homecoming, The Hunted and The Haunted*—the first organizing the way for the revenge story, the second capturing the reprisal at the zenith of its action and the third following the avengers pass the awful deed that fate has demanded them. O’Neill deviates from the Aeschylean pattern in giving the trilogy to his Electra. It is she who preponderates its action and fuses it.
O’Neill has fashioned the story MBE apprehending great liberties with the classical myth. The first part in the play entitled ‘Homecoming’, has a close resemblance to Aeschylus’ Orestia, which is confined to the story of the return of a war hero and his murder by his wife and her paramour. In the second part ‘The Haunted’, O’Neill’s most important deviation from Aeschylus play is the suicide of Christine but the pangs of conscience on the part of Orin remain the same. In the third section ‘The Hunted’, Orin promulgates his incestuous passion for Lavinia, and on her rejection, he commits suicide. The introduction of incest and Lavinia’s self-immolation make O’Neill’s play different from its Greek model.

In DUE, O’Neill employs the Greek model of incest to project Eben’s unconscious desire for his mother. He utilizes the tragic elements of the Greek tragedy. Normand Berlin remarks that:

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\text{Desire Under the Elms is surely his first ‘Greek’ tragedy – not as imitatively Greek as Mourning Becomes Electra, but Greek none the less-going to sources that deal with the Greek myths, to the subject matter the Greeks treated, and invoking a determinism that is as potent as that found in Greek drama.}^{13}
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\[
\text{DUE has the element of classical tragedy namely Seneca’s Phaedra, Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex and Euripides’ Medea.}
\]

O’Neill’s debt to Greek drama is not immured to his interests in the Greek myths and symbols, which he created in terms of modern experience. He borrowed liberally from Greek dramatic techniques as well. The concept of the chorus is used very effectively in The Iceman Cometh and Lazarus Laughed. O’Neill hasindividualized the chorus and has given it a distinct identity and dynamism that the Greek chorus lacked. The play THA opens and closes with a chorus. The chorus is used inorder to bring closer
the feeling of alienation endured by the inarticulate hero. In the prison, the chorus consists of fellow prisoners and its function is ironic. He provides silent chorus when Yank is ousted from the I.W.W.

The mask, borrowed from the Greeks, is an important stage device in the evolution of the dramatic art of O’Neill, and the one, which mesmerized him throughout his life. He has made improvisations and keeps turning to masks to reconnoitre his characters at every stage of his dramatic career. In *TEJ*, all the figures that flee along with Jones through the forest are masked. In *THA*, a much more extensive use of the masks is of great value in stressing the theme of the play. From the opening of the fourth scene, where Yank begins to think, he perforates into a masked world. Even the familiar faces of his mates have become bizarre and alien. In *TGGB*, masks symbolize more definitely the abstract theme of the play, where people wear masks before other people and are misconstrued by others for their masks.

The masks of *TGGB* represent a drastic experimental device for insinuating an internal conflict of two antithetical impulses distorting and perverting each other, and obliterating the individual in the process. In Dion Anthony, there is an amalgamation of Dionysius and St. Anthony. He is a man who exists on two levels, evinced by the literal masks he dons; the one face he disposes is the face of Pan that resembles the sneering visage of Mephistopheles and the inner face is that of a sensitive frightened man that becomes in time the face of a martyred saint. O’Neill, in a letter clarifies certain ambiguities he has perceived in his play and elucidates the origin of the two faces of his hero and the two names that he bore. He took Dion from “the creative pagan acceptance of life…” represented by Dionysius and Anthony by Saint Anthony, “the masochistic life-denying spirit of Christianity…” 14
O’Neill turns to masks to traverse the hidden nuances of the human personality in *TGGB*. Masks are as old as the theatre, but O’Neill uses them as a psychological device for exhibiting the distinct selves of a single person. Dion hankers to merge the two aspects of his fragmented self, but is unable to do so. It is only to Cybel, a prostitute he can exhibit his real face. He indicates that the loss of his mother is one of the major factors in his retreat from life and his procuring up of his protective and isolating mask. Brown kills Dion, takes his mask, lives his life but cannot be Dion, for he has simulated not Dion’s Pan-like genius for love and creation, but Dion’s Pan-mask, which is transformed into Mephistophelian character. In the final scene, Cybel places Dion’s mask on a stand and Margaret kneels before it and kisses it recognizing her lost husband. On one occasion, O’Neill has viewed that one’s outer life passes in a solitude haunted by the masks of others; one’s inner life passes in a solitude haunted by the masks of oneself.

In *MBE*, O’Neill preferred mask-like faces, the ‘mask’ consisting of heavy make-up. This device he arrives at after he had tried and discarded both full masks and half-masks. The mask-like faces are better suited to the action in *MBE*. Without debilitating the realistic illusion, they imply all that is essential of the underlying reality: the two basic impulses, identified as paganism and puritanism, the fateful identity between the Mannons, their connection with the house, their isolation from the world, their puritan secretiveness and death-in-life. The masks worn by all the Mannons and on those long and intimately connected to them represent a life-denying factor. Although the theme of the trilogy necessitates a far-going similarity among all the ‘masks’, O’Neill indicates some differences as well as modifications in them. Thus, the mask-like look is more pronounced in Ezra, and it is virtually a death mask. Christine’s, on the other hand, is initially a wonderfully lifelike pale mask, a thin almost transparent veneer grown on her by the Mannons but foreign to her real nature. The instant she resolves to murder Ezra,
her face is transformed into ‘a sinister evil mask’. Shortly after the massacre when she is
haunted by guilt feelings but still hoping to escape, it is found that “beneath the mask-like
veneer of her face there are deep lines about her mouth, and her eyes burn with a feverish
light.” Thus, O’Neill’s idea of the mask is primarily a psychological alternate state of
existence, which, by virtue of foregrounding alternative selves, undermines realism as his
preferred theatrical mode. O’Neill uses mask-like faces because he wants to synthesize
realistic and expressionistic techniques in order to present the Mannons as emotionally
and psychologically detached.

The term mask may be defined in many ways. From prehistoric times, masks have
been an integral part of pre- and non-industrial societies in the ‘ritual’ context in order to
reveal the many dimensions of existential reality. Children alone really exist in this free
world of unlimited fantasy and imagination until adult’s condition them to conceal their
innocence so that they will be able to deal with the harsh outer ‘real’ world. This is how
each one of us maintain a façade, by wearing social masks, largely in order to feel
psychologically ‘secure’ by living in conformity. These masks emerge within the context
of the avoidance of pains, hurts, and other social pressures during childhood. This is how
one learns to wear various manipulative masks for different social occasions even though
each one of us are aware that there is something hidden going on behind. It is believed
that these masks – persona- keep the society together, but does not make us feel secure.

All these attempts take us far away from the real situation, since the social masks
are expected of one in conformist modern world. In a world of performance – dance,
drama, and music – there are theatrical masks, and those others meant for aesthetic and
artistic purposes, which allow for a multiple of expressions that may correspond with the
mythological dimension. Often theatre masks reveal to the spectators insights and truth
about ethics and the human condition. In traditional society’s masks in dance, music,
theatre, plays, drama etc., reveal the mythological – collective unconscious – dimensions, which are reflected during various enactments of archetypes of images, like heroes, demons, animals and much more. In this case, masks are therefore indicators about the ideal, ethical and aesthetic models and dreams in any particular society.

Lighting is given a vital status in O’Neill’s works and the moonlight plays a crucial role. The moonlight in Where the Cross is Made is not beautiful but ghastly. Greatly aided by the stage designs and lighting, O’Neill has been able to use the harsh realism. When the boiler doors open in THA, six red searing search light glare into the eyeballs of the audience like flashes from the inferno. In the jail scene, only Yank’s cell door shows in a beam of pallid light and the rest is darkness. Yank is close to his grotesque death anticipated by a fateful moonlight in scene VII.

Preoccupied with his idea of lighting, O’Neill later omits his description of setting specifying only a studio apartment with a stairway as the main place of action. In MBE, the outdoor scenes (scene II and IV) are placed between dimmer interiors, while the two final scenes belong to the dimmer end of the scale, with their moonlight and twilight. When Ezra’s homecoming takes place in Act III, one of O’Neill’s favourite lighting effects is employed to invoke fatefulness. The light of a half moon falls on the house, giving it an unreal detached eerie quality. O’Neill resorts to the moonlight to evoke an atmosphere of weirdness.

The other techniques experimented by O’Neill are apparitions, fog, flashback, pantomime, epilogue and prologue in his plays. He has used apparition in TEJ, DUE, SI and in The Ancient Mariner. The entire play Marco Millions with the exception of the last scene is a flashback. The device of pantomime is used in DUE, TEJ, The Sniper, The Rope and Long Days Journey into Night. Instead of opening the play with a conversation, he has begun DUE, with pantomime that is crucial to the story. It links
action and interpretation at the same time unifying and interesting the audience, without wasting time in divulging the theme of the play.

O’Neill has instigated many contrivances to the American drama. He has renovated the soliloquy and the use of the masks, experimented with the use of film on the stage and made use of the expressionistic technique in *TEJ*, *THA* and *TGGB*. He also employs chorus, resurrects the stage asides to reveal repressed desires, and reworked the Orestia myth in *MBE*. Like O’Neill, Karnad has also made ample use of the devices of chorus, asides, soliloquies, myths, and masks in his plays.

According to Karnad, a play comprehends its full potential only through performance on stage. “Drama really comes into being only on stage; and only then the creation of the play gets completed. … In fact, it can even be said that a play which cannot be presented on stage is no play at all”, declares Karnad in one of his early articles. This is the reason why not only he gives intact autonomy to the directors of his plays but also modifies his plays in the light of their stage presentation. From this point of view, he stands apart from most of the other successful Kannada playwrights, who deem their written plays as sacrosanct.

More than any other literary form, the drama is a visual and collaborative medium designed to be performed by actors in front of an audience. Drama is more dominated by dialogue. Karnad elects apt and appropriate words from a rich treasure of Indian vocabulary. His words are suggestive and expose both character and situation. He writes dialogue in a lucid, terse and precise language. In the opening scene of the play *TUG*, the protagonist’s language is highly poetic and imaginative as it promulgates his idealism, “Let’s laugh and cry together and then let’s pray, till our bodies melt and flow …” (10). Karnad has corded the poetic elements to accomplish the sentiment of the spectators who feel with Tughlaq when they heed to his visionary and convincing utterances. Tughlaq
plays with the emotions of the people when he says, “Come my people, I am waiting for you. Confide in me your worries … into air” (10).

Apart from the dialogues, Karnad has instigated a number of words from the Indian language into his English. He has suitably indianised his English. In TUG, he freely uses Arabic and Indian words for creating the atmosphere of the fourteenth century India when Tughlaq reigned. “Sultan”, “Jizaya”, “Darbar I Khas”, are some instances. Karnad uses Indian lexical terms like “Oops”, “Ullame”, “Aflatoon”, “Hakim” and “Kafir”. The simplicity and preciseness of language have given the play TUG an entirety and comprehensiveness. By writing in Kannada and then translating, it into English, Karnad succeeds in surmounting, at least to a certain extent, the cultural barriers posed by the English.

The devices like ‘silence’ and ‘pause’ are very commonly used by Karnad. Pauses in dialogues serve more than words and “mark a silent interplay of conscious and unconscious motivation.” In TUG, the meeting between Muhammad and Sheikh Imam- Ud-din is punctuated by pauses. The long silence of Muhammad during the dialogue speaks of his crooked motives. Similarly, his studied pauses are noteworthy when Muhammad informs his mother about the death of the Sheikh. In NAG, the opening speech of the man is full of pauses that show his sad state of mind, his fear of death and his frustration as a playwright. They set up the mood for Rani’s sad story. In TFTR, when the actor manager and the court are convincing Paravasu to let them play a drama during the Yajna, the dialogues are marked by pauses.

Instead of using soliloquy or a monologue, the dramatist’s handling of the situation by the use of dolls in HAY, proves his rare and genuine ability as a creative artist. The dolls allot Karnad to initiate the voice of the ‘society’. Karnad makes it clear that the dolls are intended to fulfil various functions. He says:
I had a definite reason for using them. In the first half, the Devadatta-Kapil\[a]\ -Padmini story goes on without interruptions. Even the Bhagavata sings or comments only when there is no character on the stage. No song interrupts the flow of the story. In the second half the story is continually interrupted by the dolls, the songs and the Bhagavatha, interferes with the action, talks to the characters, comments on their mental state. This is done merely to bring out the disintegrated state of the three people’s lives. In the first half everything is neat and clear, but in the second I wanted to create the impression of a reflection in a broken mirror—all fragmented, repetitions, out-of focus, all bits and pieces.\(^{17}\)

Karnad has exercised miscellaneous *alamkaras* while depicting Rani and Padmini. Similie is used in *NAG* in the portion where Rani’s hair is tied up in a knot. It is as though, “a black king cobra lay curled on the nape of her neck, coil upon glistening coil” (6). In *HAY*, he uses metaphor in the line “… her face is a white lotus. Her beauty is the magic lake. Her arms the lotus creepers …”(13). The images are specifically Indian when Devadatta characterizes, “Padmini as Shyama Nayika born of Kalidasa’s major description- as Vatsayana had dreamt her”(14).

Inspite of the dominance of verbal expression, Karnad’s plays manifest a marked difference from the purely western type of drama. They are linked to the Indian traditions of story telling as is apparent in the play *NAG* and *HAY*. The king of *Tale-danda* speaks a rustic language. Karnad also uses short sentences and his style is simple, straightforward and idiomatic. Idioms and phrases abound in *TUG* and *HAY* like ‘light our path’, ‘went wild’, ‘hold your tongue’ ‘to have the cheek turn up’, ‘powder to dust’, ‘to look at with dogs eyes’ are some among them. Karnad borrows immensely from myths, legends and folklores for his plots.
It was in 1960 that Karnad began to write *YAY*. Initially it was written in Kannada and not in English, the language of his education. The theme of the play was a story taken from the Hindu epic *The Mahabharatha*. It is a reinterpretation of the myth of King Yayati. Karnad departs from the myth in respect of the fact that he chooses not to make Puru the product of Yayati’s union with Sharmishtha, but his son by an earlier marriage of an Asura princess. This is in order to emphasize Puru’s personal choice of self-sacrifice rather than as atonement for his father’s sin. Yet unlike the tranquil end of the myth, where Yayati finally comes to the realization that enjoying physical happiness does not result in ultimate satiation, Karnad’s play ends tragically in death and sacrifice.

*TUG* was written in Kannada and completed in 1964 after Karnad’s return to India from England. In this play, his attention turns again to roots, to the most controversial figure in the turbulent history of the Delhi sultanate, the fourteenth-century ruler Tughlaq. Structurally, Karnad incorporates in *TUG* the aspects of Natak productions he has seen as a boy. The Natak companies are simply touring troupe of professional actors who perform in semi-permanent ‘end-on’ proscenium stages, with simple wings and backdrops. For evening shows, the stage would be lit in a rudimentary way by paraffin lamps.

Like many dramatists who choose to locate contemporary concerns in an historical setting, Karnad has been unwilling to make overt reference to contemporary political figures and incidents that may have been in his mind in writing *TUG*. Any experience of the play will make it clear that *TUG* is far more than a costume drama. Karnad views:

What struck me absolutely about Tughlaq’s history was that it was contemporary … within a span of twenty one years this tremendously capable man had gone to pieces. This seemed to be both due to his idealism as well as the shortcomings within him, such as his impatience,
his cruelty, his feeling that he had the only correct answer. And I felt in the early sixties India had also come very far in the same direction – the twenty-year period seemed to me very much a striking parallel.  

In a letter to Pratibha Agarwal on 25 October 1970, Karnad announced the completion of a new play called *Hayavadana*. He has used Mahabaratha mythology and western dramatic form in *YAY*, medieval Indian history and scenic conventions of natak companies in *TUG* and in *HAY* he has displayed another approach. He says,

Technically it’s a departure for me, since I have used many of the techniques of local folk theatre …. Entry curtains, songs etc. But I doubt if I could have even thought of this play if I hadn’t been involved with *Evam Indrajit*. The open, fluid form of Sircar’s play changed or rather expanded my feelings for the stage enormously.  

In many ways, *HAY* exemplifies a perfect synthesis of folk theatre performance traditions, Indian mythology and thematic contemporaneity. Karnad’s use of particular conventions drawn from the *Yakshagana* folk theatre bestow in many ways to the overall style of *HAY*. The word, *Yakshagana* derives from ‘yaksha’, which means ‘demi-gods’ and ‘gana’, meaning ‘song’. *Yakshagana* begins with invocatory rituals to Ganesha, a garlanded statue that is kept in the ‘green room’. A musical director called Bhagavata, not only beats time with his cymbals as he begins to sing the first episode from the story the patron has selected for presentation, but also takes on the responsibility of the arrangement of the play’s subsequent actions. He is accompanied by two or three instrumentalists, who play different kinds of drum, the ‘*maddale*’ and the ‘*chande*’, against a harmonium drone that provides a continous single note. His primary job is to pick up the thread of the narrative between dances and improvised scenes performed by the actors and keep the performance moving along. After the invocation a fool character
known as the Hanumanayaka, arrives, and remains on the stage with Bhagavata. The main characters are introduced with an introductory dance called an ‘oddolaga’ and reveal themselves gradually from behind the curtain (yavanika) held up by two stagehands, emphasizing the dramatic quality of the revelation. The actor’s dance is often energetic and exuberant, with high leaps and kicks made even more demanding by the characteristic giant, brightly coloured crown or turban, an embroidered and ornamented jacket and some nine yards of check-patterned dhoti tied around the waist.

These elements from the yakshagana tradition are visible in HAY. There is Bhagavata who acts as a narrator and sings for and about the characters in both the first and third person often revealing their thoughts and orchestrating the extemporized dances and prose exchanges of the performance. In HAY, the yakhagana tradition is followed in Bhaghavata’s opening song providing an invocation to God Ganesha, the remover of all obstacles. In Karnad’s play the musicians sit to one side of the stage where they accompany the Bhagavata while a chorus also sings though in poetically descriptive evocation of particular moments rather than presaging the narrative’s development. The Actor in HAY plays the role of Hanumanayaka. The arrival of the horse-headed Hayavadana is wonderfully theatricalized with the use of the brightly coloured stage curtain, gradually lowered by two stagehands to reveal the actor’s full form.

Along with the similarities, there are significant differences in the use of the techniques of yakshagana. This can be found in Karnad’s use of mask for two of his main characters rather than elaborate make-up, and in his inclusion of the dolls in the second act. Only Devadatta, Kapila and Hayavadana wear masks. The astute device of the exchange of masks affects the head swap of the narrative and crucially ascertains the actor’s playing style both before and after this moment. Each actor embodies the change the head swap brings about, taking on the vocal characteristics of the other actor as
consistent with the new mask. The actor playing Kapila reverts to the physicality suggested by the mask, therefore adopting the distinctive movement characteristic of the other actor’s original performance. This is perhaps more confusing to hear, than to witness in practice with skilful actors.

For the play BALI, Karnad draws upon the thirteenth century - Kannada epic, Yashodhara Charite by Janna which in turn refers back to an eleventh-century Sanskrit epic by Vadiraja and to the ninth-century Sanskrit epic, Yashastilaka by Somadeva Suri. The motivation for the using of the figures of dough for sacrifice is explained by Karnad in the Preface to Bali, “And why dough rather than, say, mud or chalk? Because an offering makes sense only if it is meant as food for Gods and is therefore, cooked and consumed by devotees.”20 This play is a tribute to the astuteness and sensitivity of Mahatma Gandhiji as the writer sees so clearly the importance of non-violence to the cultural and political survival of India.

In an interview in 2001, when Karnad was asked whether he directed his own plays he replied:

   No, I have never directed … never acted … never. Once I finish a play, it is finished if I keep something for me to do later, then I will not put it in my play. Then I will say, ‘when I direct it, I’ll do it’. That is unfair. When I complete writing the entire play, then I have nothing else. 21

The reviewers have accepted YAY enthusiastically, but no theatre person touched it. The professionals in Karnataka discorded its form as well as sensibility alien while the amateurs traced the demand for four female actors impossible to meet. After many years of struggle to get the right budget and cast, Satyadev Dubey presented Yayati in Hindi by the Indian National Theatre at the Thejpal Auditorium in Bombay in 1967. The eponymous role of Yayati has been played by Amrish Puri.
Most of the plays of Karnad have been staged in India and abroad. Several people in Karnataka were engrossed in staging TUG. Incidentally, a bizarre incident got associated with the play. G. V. Shivanand rehearsed the play and actor Basavaraj was the protagonist but unfortunately, he passed away. The play could not be staged. After a brief interval, Shivanand started rehearsing TUG again. This time his brother Shivaraj was playing the role of the Sulthan. Unfortunately, he too passed away suddenly, and the play could not be staged. Finally, Shivanand himself decided to enact the role of the Sultan. However, due to his own ill health, the play could not be staged at all. Due to such serious hindrances, Shivanand dropped the idea of staging TUG. In Bangalore, the theatre artists grew superstitious and felt that something terrible had befallen the play. The play’s evil spell was finally broken in 1969. In 1972, the Nataranga’s production of TUG comprised of actors like Lokesh, Uma, Shivakumar and others was staged and elaborate settings were used for each scene. Critic C. R. Simha views that:

the character of Tughlaq is like Macbeth or Hamlet. For the past four hundred years many artists have enacted the roles of the Shakespearean protagonists. They continue to do so. I feel that there is the same kind of future to our plays and characters like Tughlaq.22

B.V.Karanth’s versatality as a director was evident in Karnad’s HAY when it was produced by a Delhi production, Dishantar. This production was quite overwhelming in its style of presentation. All the trimmings of a folk play were retained using traditional costumes, masks, elaborate make-up for many of his characters. Bhagavata and the natas were used effectively by keeping them on stage along with the musicians throughout the performance. Satyadev Dubey’s Bombay production, Theatre Unit was remarkable for its bare simplicity. An empty stage with a chair for the Bhagavata, a few accompanying musicians off-stage, the actors doubling roles and an occasional use of the Kathakali
curtain were used in this production. Rajinder Nath’s Calcutta production, Anamika mounted the play on the small basement stage of the Kala Mandir. It used three pillars and a bench – actually vertical and horizontal blocks which were movable – to redefine acting areas and scenes. The musicians wearing ordinary clothes sat on one side of the extended stage while Bhagavata sat on the other. Rajinder Nath used masks and that too oversized for the dolls and Kali.

All the three productions were consistent with their styles, yet it had certain flaws. In Karanth’s production, due to the crowd of the fifteen-odd musicians and singers and attendants, the importance of the main actors was lost. They tried an acting style characteristic of the folk tradition in terms of delivery, stance and gesture but the limited range of their voices failed them completely. Bhagavata (V. M. Badola) on the other hand came off as a dignified and charming leader of a performing troupe. Though the production was visually colourful and pleasing, one was left with the impression that it had been unnecessarily complicated.

Dubey on the other hand, went to the other extreme of a bare stage and hardly a cast. Therefore, his actors were far more successful. However, the production started with such a fumble. Lighting agarbathí with damp matches and placing a coconut downstage was an indication of the arrival of Lord Ganesh. The Bhagavata sang his invocation accompanied by a few instruments off-stage. It was only when the two actors who double as Devadatta and Kapila (Amol Padekar and Amirish Puri) appear that the production came to life. It was unfair to have Bhagavata sing alone without prop and a chorus. Another shortcoming was the tape-recorded song, which is the central theme of the play. Yet, Dina Pathak’s performance as Kali was marvellous. It was much better than the disembodied voice of Karanth’s production or the masked Kali hid in the murky shadows of Tapes Sen’s lighting in Rajinder Nath’s production.
Rajinder Nath’s production was very sophisticated and professional but unlike Karanth’s, the attempt was to adopt the play to suit modern theatrical sensibilities. He had his musicians and singers at one end quite separate from the main acting area and Bhagavata at the other presiding over the performance. The most remarkable thing about the production was the mobile set. It consisted of three pillars and a bench, blocks, which could be wheeled around. The two actors kept changing the position of the blocks after each scene and they did it choreographed to a jingling rhythm from the musicians. They performed this dance so often that it became integrated with the play and it was quite beautiful to observe the various geometrical patterns that could be formed with simple settings. Without being untrue to the play or storytelling, tradition the play tried to blend it in Karnad’s style. Meenakshi Raykar has quoted some of the important views of Karnad on production. She says that Karnad did not believe in controlling the production of his play by various stage directors and that he felt flattered when his play was interpreted in a different way.23

Karnad remembers with gratitude an early production of BALI in Hindi by Satyadev Dubey, featuring Nazeerudin Shah, Ratna Pathak Shah, Sunita Pradhan and Satyadev himself. Karnad rewrote the play when the Leicester Haymarket Theatre commissioned him to write it for them. He says:

My grateful thanks are due to Vayu Naidu, the Commissioning Producer, and Nona Shepphard, the director, who also worked closely with me on text as dramaturges. Happily Nazeerudin and Ratna again agreed to act in the play, but as the Mahout and the Queen Mother rather than as the royal couple.24

When Neelam Chowdhry directed NAG in Punjabi for her group, Company, in Chandigarh on 9th March, 1991, Rabindra Sadan, Calcutta, the change in the title of the
play as ‘Naga Chayya’ hinted at the change of focus of the play. Actually, she chose to misinterpret the text by making the husband ‘transform’ into Naga. However, the idea in Karnad’s text is not that the snake lover and Appanna symbolize two faces of a single person, but that Naga represents the wife’s wish-fulfilment as well as divine intervention. Chowdhry’s fix ing of the design in Punjabi folk traditions is quite defensible. Yet it unnecessarily elongated the short tale with songs and dances for over two hours when it should not normally take more than ninety minutes of production time. Chowdhry did not use puppetry, and thus one interesting dimension of the Kannada version was absent in her production.

The reputed Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, U.S.A staged \textit{NAG} in English directed by Garland Wright. He had made certain changes. Wright no doubt wished to emphasize the universality by using an inter-racial cast – Appanna was played by a Japanese actor, Rani by an Indian and Kurudavva by a Black actress. When Chaman Ahuja asked Karnad if he was worried about the growing trend to underplay the role of the script and to change the script in the name of interpretation he answered:

I have no choice, there was a time when changes upset me, but now I have learnt not to bother. Hayavadana and Nagamandala have been so variously interpreted that I have come to see great virtue in directorial interpretations. I take it as a compliment that the same play of mine has the potential of yielding such diverse levels. When they were rehearsing Nagamandala for the Guthrie Theatre, they called me for discussion and the director, Garland Wright, asked me how he might do it. I said, do it as an American play - as an American director would do a Brecht or Lorca for the American audiences. As you would never get the Indianness right, I said, don’t make it kitsch – by putting a little sitar here and a little ghagra
there. So when Garland did it his own way, it was a different production –
different from anything done here but great in its own way. So I just write
without bothering about what might happen later. Maybe, I can make some
fuss today, but what about tomorrow when I shall be no more to
intervene. What can poor Shakespeare do about what the directors have
been doing to his play – at times mangling them beyond recognition? 25

Karnad’s powerful emotion-packed story, *TFTR* was turned into a motion picture
with Bollywood stars with the title, ‘Agni Varsha’ by Arjun Sajnani. Nagarjuna played
the role of Yavakri, Milind Soman as Aravasu, Raveena Tandon as Vishakha and Sonali
Kulkarni as Nittilai. The role of Brahmarakshasa was assigned to Prabhu Deva as it
involved rigorous dance movements. The role of Indra demanded someone extraordinary
– tall with striking personality and blooming voice – and it was played by Amitabh
Bachchan. The story and the depiction of these characters and their motivations presented
certain challenges to Indian stereotypes: Vishakha’s smouldering sexuality and adultery,
hints of incest, and son killing father. The location for the film was Hampi and erected
sets were used for the elaborate Yagnya Mandap in which Aravasu’s burning of the
temple and Paravasu’s self-immolation are played out. The film was fairly received by the
critics. It was also chosen as the opening feature at the CommonWealth Film Festival in
Manchester, England. This film got enthusiastic and glowing reviews in both the New

In short, myths and legends have an enduring relevance for the fundamental
human obsessions they thematize. In his article, Theatre in India, Karnad observes, “The
energy of the folk theatre comes from the fact that while it seems to support traditional
values, it is also capable of subverting them, looking at them from various points of
view.” 26
Karnad’s interest for tradition is not confined to the themes alone. In his
techniques, too his relationship with tradition remains intact. In order to constitute the
desired form, he analyses devices of his own land and those of the west as well. He
experiments boldly with the folk and classical devices. The use of Sutradhara or
Bhagavatha, play within the play, masks, mime, songs and half-curtains fuse with the
most modern devices like the light and sound.

The Sutradhara in YAY and Bhagavata emanate from the classical drama in India.
The Sutradhara, as the chorus in the Greek drama, plays the role of an introducer or a
commentator. YAY opens with the Sutradhara’s hint to the spectators that, though the
characters and the incidents of the play relate to earlier times, they could as well be
applicable to contemporary times. The function of Bhagavata is to sing songs, conduct
the performance, respond to soliloquies and much more. Technically, he is the director of
the performance. He selects the verse and opts for the time segment allotted to each
sequence of narration. He can intervene when he feels a particular scene is being
prolonged or that it is an unnecessary deviation from the text. In an interview, Karnad
said:

The Bhagavat could have been called the Sutradhara as in
Sanskrit plays. My Bhagavat is different from the Bhagavat in the
Yakshagana. The Bhagavath in Yakshagana sings but I have used
chorus. In the pure folk forms it is the male chorus. I, however, have
used the male and the female chorus. 27

In HAY, Bhagavata functions as a character and commentator. The play opens with an
offering of worship accompanied by singing to the God Ganesha by the Bhagavata, who
is an avatar of the Sutradhara of ancient Sanskrit drama. He instigates the major
characters in the story and later supplies the connecting links in the action, enlightening
the audience about major development such as the marriage of Devadatta and Padmini in Act I and the Rishi’s verdict on the conundrum of the transposed heads in Act II. Some of his songs reveal him as a choric commentator on the action. Occasionally, he is the vehicle for the revelation of the deepest thoughts as seen in Act II where Padmini meets Kapila with the transposed heads in the forest. At times, he becomes a minor character as when he tells Devadatta where Kapila lives in the forest, and in the midway through the drama he is found signalling the end of the action by telling the audience, “There’s a break of ten minutes now. Please have some tea, ponder over the situation and come back to your solutions. We shall then continue our enquiry.” (39.)

The Sutradhara and the Bhagavata in HAY become one in NAG and turn up as ‘The Story’ and ‘The Man’. The Story is personified as a woman in the play. The comments made by ‘The Story’ regarding the names of the main characters are crucial. The narration begins thus: “A young girl. Her name … it doesn’t matter”, and later “His name was well, any common name will do” (6). There are circumstances when Rani endeavours backing from ‘The Story’ before she pours the paste of the root in the curry. ‘The Story’ even succors when Rani gets upset as the curry boils over, blood-red in colour by saying to her, “Rani, put it in that ant-hill” (17). Playing the role of Bhagavata, ‘The Story’ addresses the audience in the course of the play: “As you know, a cobra can assume any form it likes. That night, it entered the house through the bathroom drain and took the shape of” (18). She finishes exactly where she has to, sustaining the curiosity of the audience. It is she who recounts about the feud between the cobra and the mongoose.

‘The Flames’ aid the Story with the Song. As Act 1 ends, they sing and dance with Naga and Rani. As ‘The Story’ concludes the narration in Act 2, they leave with mutterings like, “That was a nice story! …” (40) Soon the Man intervenes, “These Flames are worse than my audience. Can’t they wait till the story is over?” (40). He finds too
many loose ends in it. When The Man is not convinced about The Story’s justification of the disappearance of Kappanna and the misery in store for Appanna, The Story retaliates saying that, Rani too underwent much trauma in her confusion between Appanna and Naga. She ends the story by saying that out of dejection, the Naga strangles himself in her long tresses. The Story is gone by then and The Flames are disenchanted for such a tragic end. They force The Man for an alternative ending. He ends by saying that Rani hides the cobra in her thick tresses and says, “This hair is the symbol of my wedded bliss. Live in there happily forever” (46). The Flames vanish happily and The Man bows at the audience and goes out.

The songs along with the other authorial comments in BALI execute the role of Sutradhara for the development of the plot and the characters. The earlier devices like Bhagavata, mime, stage manager, dolls, and the presentation of Gods and sages merge into the folk motifs of the song that reveal the character’s motivation. Out of the seven songs in the play, four are sung by the singers for theatrical performance, two by the King and one by the Queen to inform the audience about her tragic situation. The first song is nearly synonymic to the prefatory remarks of Karnad for the dialects of two religions - the Hindu and the Jain.

The technique of the use of Prologue and Epilogue brings Karnad very close to the modern playwrights like George Bernard Shaw. The Prologue in NAG seems to be less influenced by the classical Indian tradition. Prologues in Indian classical dramas are generally known as either ‘Prasthavana’ or ‘Sthapana’. Kalidasa’s Abhijnana Shakuntalam, Bhasa’s Swapnavasavadattam, Krishnamisra’s philosophical allegory Prabodhacandrodaya, are examples of classical prologues. A. B. Keith confirms that, “… the Indian Prologue is closely attached to the preliminaries, and has a definite and independent character of its own….” Karnad deviates from the classical tradition in the
process of adapting the play to his theatrical requirements. Trodding a widely divergent path, Karnad has made his surrealistic prologue quite influential upon the main plot. Its occasional interventions are however apt and often critical.

In *NAG*, the prologue introduces ‘The Man’ who is sitting lonely in the temple and is yawning ‘involuntarily’ (1). Turning to the audience, the first sentence he utters on the stage is, “I may be dead within the next few hours” (1). After a long pause he utters, “Actually dead. I might die in front of your eyes” (1). After he sets an atmosphere of melancholy, The Flames being out in the village join him in the temple. They narrate stories of their respective households together with that of The Man which become the precursor of the alienation that is to follow. The Flames launched in the Prologue play a vital role later in the play. The Prologue in *TFTR* also provides background to the main action of the play. The devices of irony and supernatural elements are introduced in the Prologue itself. It presents some of the main characters like Paravasu, Arvasu, Nittilai, Actor manager and his brother in the beginning. An important issue in the play- fire sacrifice versus theatre – comes under focus in the prologue itself. If Prologue and Epilogue are put together, an independent plot emerges that attains added meaning being related to the rest of the play.

In Indian folk theatre half - curtain is another device, which function as mask to initiate a character. It displays as well as conceals the face of the character. It is a tool for prolonging the entrance of new characters who will be revealed in all their glory. Mask can create a fantasy and a bizarre world. Tughlaq’s role-playing is a kind of mask in *TUG*. Sultan, as a king has to perform many tasks in his life. Aziz uses disguise as a mask for his survival who shaves his head and poses himself as Vishnu Prasad. Later he kills Ghiyaz-ud-din-Abbasid, wears his dress and goes to bless the Sultan and his people.
In *HAY*, the figure of Hayavadana is subjected to ridicule because his horse head is understood to be just a mask in a derogatory sense as the Bhagavata repeatedly mentions it as ‘a stupid mask’, or ‘silly mask’. He tries to pull the mask off Hayavadana’s head until he grasps that it is not a mask at all. Apart from visual irony of the scene, whereby a mask is declared not to be a mask, it also establishes the connotative of masking - a disguise or deception. In the play, Devadatta wears a pale one and Kapila a dark mask and the exchanging of masks represents the transposition of the heads. This device corresponds to the conventions found in Indian dance drama, particularly in *Kathakali*, where there are scenes in which the characters either after death or after transformation into another figure re-enter wearing another mask.

In *NAG*, the mask becomes a necessity for Rani to flee from the reality. When she is locked in the home, she begins to converse to herself and her self-talk is a mask to her. Rani dreams about a fantasy world. In *TFTR*, the spirit of the character possesses the actor who wears the mask. When the play goes on Arvasu loses control over him, becomes Vritra, and attacks the Actor-manager who plays the role of Indra. Since Arvasu is good at dancing, the Actor-manager asks him to play Vritra and gives Arvasu the costumes and the mask of Vritra with a warning that he should not surrender or pour his life into it. He also admonishes Arvasu to have a tight control over the mask lest it may dictate him. When the play proceeds, what the Actor-manager told about the mask becomes authentic. Arvasu loses authority over himself, becomes Vritra and attacks the Actor-manager who plays Indra. The Actor-manager begins to run but Arvasu pursues him saying, “You can elude me, Indra. But you can’t escape me. Even if you fly like a falcon across ninety nine rivers I’ll find you. I’ll destroy you” (57). Hence the Actor-manager shouts at him, “It’s the mask it’s the mask come alive. Restrain him or there will be chaos” (57). In the end Aravasu takes off his mask and throws it away saying, “I don’t
know what came over me, Nittiilai” (58). Thus it is because of Vritra’s mask and Arvasu’s identity with Vritra’s position, Arvasu becomes Vritra in *TFTR*. Masks are thus used in Karnad’s plays to depict how fantasy (*NAG*) and bizarre worlds (*HAY*) can be created, and to show how the actor can turn into the character (*TFTR*).

Like O’Neill, Karnad makes use of traditional and personal symbols. His anxiety for the psychological problems of man and his revolutionary outlook towards the old values dispose him to employ different symbols at different times. Symbolizing inner alienation of Muhammad, the game of chess in *TUG* suggests the complexity of the Sulthan as a person. Life is like a chessboard for him where his only aim is to win. His love for chess suggests his complexities in relation to others. As it demands isolation from others, the game of chess can also be equated with the rose garden in *TUG*. Both are Muhammad’s love and can be taken as his desperate effort to avoid his inner alienation. The ‘rose garden’ that ends up as a rubbish dump is suggestive of the burial of the dreams of the Sultan.

In *NAG*, *HAY* and *TUG* symbols are portrayed through the empty courtyards, locked houses and deserted temples. Rani is locked in a house, which has an anthill in the courtyard. The locked door symbolizes that all doors are shut against her freedom. It also suggests the constraints her husband has imposed on her feelings. The Naga, who meets Rani, keeps the locked door intact without endangering her social image as a married woman. The fort in *TUG* especially seen at night becomes the symbol of a puzzle. The young guard describes the fort as a magnificent thing, which no army could occupy. The fort like the self of Muhammad and his rule has ‘strange and frightening passages’ within it. The guard rightly says, “if it ever falls it will crumble from inside” (51). The road coming to the fort appears like a ‘thin snake’ and the old sentry agrees, “Yes it is a long passage, a big passage coiled like an enormous hollow python inside the belly of the fort.”
And they shall be far happier when that python breaks out and swallows everything in sight—every man, woman, child and beast” (52). Thus Muhammad is associated with a snake or python and his fort is the anthill – both are so inimical to the life of the common people.

Like the symbolism, the story-within-the-story device is also a typical feature of Karnad’s plays. It is sometimes meant to divert attention from the main plot but the purpose is equally important. Studied closely it becomes an integral part of the play. In \textit{YAY}, the story narrated by Swarnalatha to ‘fill up the gap’ is of the sort. The story of Swarnalatha is the story of every character in \textit{YAY}. By narrating this event of the past, she falls in line with other characters. Like her, every character is suffering because of one or the other person. Sharmishtha suffers because of Devayani, Devayani because of Yayati, Chitrakha because of Puru and Yayati because of Sharmishtha.

\textit{NAG} also makes use of the story-within-the-story device. Here it deals with the story of Kurudavva’s getting three pieces of root from a mendicant and getting married with its aid. Apart from keeping the right balance between pathos and comedy, the story of Kurudavva furthers the main action. Rani’s desire for marriage coalesces with her desire to win her husband for her marital bliss. Incidentally, the piece of the same root, which fortified Kurudavva, solves Rani’s problem as well.

The play within the play device is also seen in \textit{TFTR}. By staging ‘the triumph of Lord Indra’, the playwright once again adopts the mode of traditional theatre. The play dramatizes the scene of Brahma’s attempt to murder his brother Vritra. However, the story of the relationship between Brahma and Vritra and the fire sacrifice arranged by the former has many points in common with the main action of the play. Indra, like the other main characters in the play, appears to be enduring from alienation. He burns with jealousy against none other than his own brother. In order to kill his brother and clear his
way to supremacy, he organizes a *Yajna* in honour of his father Brahma. The king aligns the fire sacrifice to save the people from the famine but the God Indra arranges to kill his brother. It is seen that both the chief priest and Indra commit patricide. Moreover, Brahma’s murderous attack on his brother reminds of Paravasu assaulting Arvasu when the latter tries to join the fire sacrifice. This similarity between the main and the sub plot serves an ironic and thematic purpose.

Karnad uses the technique of flashback to give a glimpse of Tughlaq’s youthful idealism, juxtaposing with his alienation. In an idyllic scene on the ramparts of Daulatabad, Tughlaq shares his youthful aspirations with a young guard. He also recaptures a magic instant from his youth when he feels in harmony with the world around him. It was a moment of total communication with nature, the elements and man’s work.

Like the flashback technique, the modern devices like sound, light effect and music remain essential in the plays of Karnad. In *YAY* when Puru and Chitralekha is about to enter the palace the sound of the drums is played – ‘*The deafening sound of drums erupt again. Panegyrics. Hosannas by the crowds fill the air*’ (32). Later when Pooru accedes the old age it is once again represented by the sounds in Act 4, ‘*There is a thunderous eruption of the drums and conch shells. Startled by its suddenness and ferocity, Chitralekha runs to the window*’ (55). In the same scene, Chitralekha insists on performing the arati and the device of the light is beautifully portrayed – ‘Chitralekha takes the lamp to his face and moves it in circles in front of it, performing an arati. The flame cast its light upon his face. His withered features look even more terrifying in the dim light. Chitralekha screams and drops the lamp to the floor’ (57). The use of light enhances the over-all effect of action.
Use of light, miming, freezing and quick shifts of the scenes remains special features of *NAG*. As the play starts, it is night and, “moonlight seeps in through cracks in the roof and the walls” (1). On the moonlit stage, The Man and The Flames are talking. In Act I the stage is lit up to exhibit that it is the daytime. As Appanna leaves Rani, she talks to herself and her words become distinct, “as the lights dim” (7). Again it is dark on stage. The scene shifts into the night and Rani is found dreaming of her parents. As she gets up, “it gets light” (7). She mimes splashing water on her eyes. Appanna also arrives and mimes taking a bath.

The moment Appanna goes out, Rani falls asleep and the stage gets dark again. Kappanna and Kurudavva also appear in the dark, “She falls asleep. Midnight. Kappanna enters carrying Kurudavva” (15). When Act II starts, it is again night as Naga is seen caressing the sleeping Rani. It is dark at the end of Act I and continues for a short time in Act II, “When it is totally dark, the cobra moves toward the house” (18). Rani’s disclosure of her pregnancy to Naga is followed by a sudden splash of light. They both freeze and, “the lights change sharply from night to mid-day” (33). All of a sudden Naga turns into Appanna and starts beating Rani. As he says that he is going to report to the Village Elders, “Lights change to night” (33). Again the stage is lit up and the scene changes into the village square.

Music and light play an imperative task when Rani is declared as a Goddess. As the cobra slides up Rani’s shoulders and spreads its hood on her head, “Music fills the skies. The light change into a soft luminous glow” (39). The Elder’s shout, “Palanquin! Music!” When Naga enters her tresses, “a beam of light is thrown on him and the rest is plunged in darkness” (43). As he ties a tress into a noose and places it around his neck, the stage turns out to be dark slowly. Again, the music is played in the background when Appanna kills the cobra and Rani presses it to her cheeks. Unlike the beginning it is not
dark on the stage at the end of the play. It is morning, “the sunlight pours in through the cracks” (46) revealing the happy ending. Thus, the treatment of light and sound facilitate in a sudden shift of scenes too.

*TFTR* is also a perfect fusion of music and light. In the Prologue, after Paravasu permits the theatre troup to perform a play, Arvasu is perceived carrying a mask. The Actor-manager and his brother are accompanied by a couple of women who are to provide music. The moment the Actor-manager starts singing a benedictory verse, the stage darkens and only Arvasu is left in a ‘pool of light.’ In Act I after the scene between Arvasu, Nittilai and Andhaka is over, the stage darkens again for a contrasting effect. Later, the light falls upon another part of the stage representing the hermitage of Raibhya. The long scene between Vishakha and Yavakri, when he wooes her standing in her way is also enacted in the light. However, when *Brahma-Rakshasa* runs in the direction of Yavakri the light fades out. It is dark on the stage when *Brahma-Rakshasa* kills Yavakri. The light and music are sometimes collectively used. When Indra appears on the stage, it is preceded by melodious music and, ‘soft and gentle light.’ This special use of light and dark creates special impact on the stage.

Karnad’s plays mark an authentic endeavour to confer a new-fangled trend to Indian English drama, which hardly contours itself from the cultural amnesia that set in with colonization. The rich heritage of Sanskrit theatre lay fallow as dramatists sought western dramatic modes to relate their Indian tales. By a deliberate riposte to the rich tradition evolved by Bharatha’s *Natyasastra* and the parallel art forms popularized by folk theatre, Karnad bestowed immensely to Indian drama. No playwright would be buoyant to have his plays only between two covers, it has to be staged and it is true in the case of O’Neill and Karnad. Both of them have employed some similar devices like chorus, masks, myths, soliloquies, music, light and sound effects in their own ways. The use of
masks as a device to reveal the inner traits through subtler replacements of the mask is seen in the plays of both the writers. The continuing relevance of mythology for both these dramatists, even at later stages of their dramatic career, leads one to ponder over the essence of mythology for enunciating what is essentially human through all the ages and changes.

Any literary work hence is the upshot of the creative genius of a writer. Moreover of all genres, drama is unique in the sense that the dramatists skilfully fuse their ideas, ideals, thoughts, passions etc. and views into the expressions of their own creations and deliver the message to their audience. They make a tremendous impact with their technical innovations and such matchless devices in theatre create an indelible mark on the minds of the viewers. Theatre is an illusion, which should enchant the spectators, making them spellbound and get them immersed in it for a while to experience the truth. O’Neill and Karnad master their techniques to transport the spectators to another world.
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