

THE PLAYS OF JAMES REANEY AND PUNDALIK NAIK :  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

by  
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IN  
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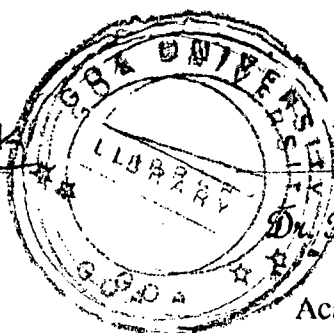
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# CERTIFICATE

I certify that the thesis entitled *The Plays Of James Reaney And Pundalik Naik : A Comparative Study*, submitted by Smt. Sandhya N. Bhandare for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English of Goa University, is completed under my Supervision. The thesis is a record of research work done by her during the period of study and has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma to her.

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# CONTENTS

	PAGE NO.
I. CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION	1
II. CHAPTER II : THE <del>CONCEPTS</del> WORLDS OF JAMES REANEY AND PUNDALIK NAIK	49
III. CHAPTER III: THE VEHICLES OF VISION	163
IV. CHAPTER IV: TECHNIQUES	192
V. CHAPTER V : CONCLUSION	229
VI. A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	253

# CHAPTER – 1

## INTRODUCTION

The thesis deals with a Comparative Study of the Canadian playwright *James Reaney* and the Indian playwright *Pundalik Naik*.

*JAMES CRERAR REANEY* (b.1926--) is Canada's leading dramatist, poet, novelist, historian and Professor of English Literature at the University of Western Ontario in London. Thrice winner of the prestigious Governor General Award for poetry and drama and Chalmers Award and Massey Award both for drama, Reaney is possibly the greatest living writer in Canada.

*PUNDALIK NARAYAN NAIK* (b. 1952--) is a poet, novelist, short story writer and critic. He is a reckoning force in the field of Goan Drama in Indian Literature. He is a man who is committed to the development of regional language Konkani. In 1980's he was at the forefront for the inclusion of Konkani in the VIIIth schedule of the Indian Constitution giving the language a full-fledged status. He successfully led the rebellion for the Statehood of Goa as well as for Konkani to be rendered the Official Status in Goa. He has been awarded the State Award and the National Award by Sahitya Akademy for literature.

The study is intended to lead us to a comprehensive and adequate understanding of the works of Reaney and Naik and to discover certain dominant trends in Goan Literature in India and Canadian Literature with special reference to drama. It would give us an insight in the literatures and cultures of both the regions.

Both the playwrights are pioneers in the field of drama in their specific context. These two dramatists belong to two different countries and diverse cultures. At the outset they appear to be genuinely regional and consequently dissimilar in their aesthetic and cultural expression of their society ; yet, I venture to place them in comparative, critical, cultural and philosophical contexts.

The Canadian theatre as an indigenous professional institution took its birth only after World War II. Modern drama in Quebec had its inception with Gratien Gélinas' *Tit-Coq* in 1948. For English Canada the year 1967 was of crucial significance. It was the Centennial Year of Canada. It was the all - Canadian Dominion Drama Festival Year, a unique extravaganza in dramatics. It was only since 1967 that English Canadian drama began to achieve legitimacy and on par with Robertson Davies, James Reaney began writing for theatre.

Incidentally, here in India Pundalik Naik made his debut into drama around the same time. Although he belongs to the ancient tradition of drama in India through a few millennia, he is the pioneer in Goan Konkani drama, which has received recognition only after the liberation of Goa in 1961, for the language Konkani was just in the process of being officially recognized and he is the major playwright of Konkani among the very few who ventured into writing of plays.

Introducing the term 'Comparative Literature,' Matthew Arnold wrote :

And everywhere there is a connection, everywhere there is an illustration : no single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in its relation to other events, to other literatures. <sup>1</sup>

The Prophetic statement envisages the significance of comparative literary studies the world over.



In the words of Wellek and Warren :

We recognize that there is one poetry, one literature, comparable in all ages developing, changing, full of possibilities. Literature is neither a series of works enclosed in time-cycles of Romanticism or Classicism, the age of Pope and the age of Wordsworth. Nor is it, of course, the "block-universe" of sameness and immutability which an older Classicism conceived as ideal<sup>2</sup>.

René Wellek further asserts :

Literature is the most humanizing force and relations between its relations in various parts of the world may be appreciated on the basis of sound comparative studies. If it is done properly *national vanities will disappear* and *Universal Man* will emerge and the study of literature will never degenerate into an antiquarian pastime, a calculus of national credits and debits.<sup>3</sup>

Comparative literature originated as a reaction against the narrow nationalism of nineteenth century scholarship in Britain. There has been a tradition of occasional comparative evaluations in certain parts right from the beginning of the Christian era. The Romans were highly conscious of their dependence on the Greeks and worked out elaborate parallels between Greek and Roman creators and poets. Quintilian and Longinus were the pioneers in Comparative Criticism. Longinus refers us to Homer, to Plato, to Demosthenes, to Thucydides and others to recognize the spiritual comradeship between great minds. In India Sanskrit commentators had realized the significance of the comparative approval at least by the sixth century A.D. as is evident from certain commentaries on Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Shakuntala* and *Meghaduta*. There is textual criticism and stylistic observation in their work.

The French term *philosophie comparée* refers to the activity of comparing which implies in-depth knowledge of the constituents compared.

Comparative Literature means *any literary work that compares*. Such a comparison could be in terms of structure, style or the philosophic vision.

According to Mainker :

Comparative literary studies can include the application of the usual aesthetic values to a literature, an understanding of the different literary movements and tendencies of an age, studies of themes ideas that appear in different literatures, and finally the study of genres, of structures and patterns. But perhaps the most important of all are literary relations.<sup>4</sup>

The immense possibilities of comparative literature cannot be fully realized merely by clinging to factual relations. A holistic approach will be definitely better than a stratified one, which look at a work as a diversified totality.

Halliday pointed out :

A literary text is meaningful not only in virtue of what it is but also in virtue of what it might have been. The most relevant exponent of the *might have been* of a work of literature is another work of literature.<sup>5</sup>

Comparative literature enables us to savor and cherish the richness of literatures within and beyond national boundaries. The literary theory which is supposed to account for the ever-growing phenomenon of literary events across time and space is essentially comparative, as it seeks generalizations based on comparable events. Margarete

Chatterjee quotes Sir Joaquim Wach :

Comparative studies take their stand on the appreciation of otherness and the delightful discovery of what is akin.<sup>6</sup>

Comparative literature as conceived by scholars like Munteano means a complementary synthesis of *horizontal general literature* and *vertical history of ideas*. There is a need for *juxtaposing literatures* of diverse cultures in order to arrive at a more inclusive literary theory ; we have to rise above the limitations of conventional taste into the realm of Universal Art.

It is, therefore, the ever-growing, interlocking and overlapping of literary events across time and space which by definition leads to a comparative literature as it is the comparative that is essential.

Comparative literary theory seeks *universals* through *particulars*, which it interprets in a wider perspective. The intersection of the particular and the universal as well as of the historical and the *timeless* is essential to a comprehensive theory of literature which is in a triadic and reciprocal relationship with the atomism of analysis and relativist historicism.

Comparative literature broadens one's perspective by discerning certain dominant trends in a literature and culture and to understand precise relations between two or more literatures.

The object of comparative literature is essentially the study of diverse literatures in their relations with one another.

As stated by R. K. Dhawan :

A study in literature ought to lead us to a more comprehensive and adequate understanding of the works and their authors. Mainly it seeks to study interactions between literatures written in various countries in various languages. Comparative literature is a literary discipline and ought to be recognized as the most important academic activity of the present era, in which the east and the west are merging and unifying the world into a single whole.<sup>7</sup>

Let us take a note of different types of comparative studies undertaken in Canada and India. Canadian comparatists aim at exploring binary relationship between Francophone and Anglophone literatures. Canada has followed the policy of bilingualism and the official language Act recognizes the importance of preserving and enhancing the use of languages, other than English and French. India has officially accredited twenty - two languages. The National Academy of letters, known as *The Sahitya Akademy* seeks to foster progress and development of these languages by offering *The Sahitya Akademy Award* to the best of creative writing in each of these languages every year. The objective has been to attain a sort of oneness and unity at social, political and literary levels.

As observed by Chandra Mohan :

The bilingual and multilingual situations that essentially prevail in Canada and India seem to be strong fountainheads which help provide an atmosphere of natural curiosity and congenial inclination for undertaking formal and nonformal studies in comparative literary areas in both the countries.<sup>8</sup>

To facilitate the comparative study Indian comparatists have made language clusters such as Hindi-Oriya-Assamese, Hindi-Urdu-Punjabi, Telgu-Tamil-Malyalam, Hindi-Marathi-Gujarati or Hindi-Konkani- Marathi. It also has a strong connection with the use of English as a creative association that already exists between Indo-English literature and Indian language literatures.

The 'sharedness' of Indian literature written in many languages has been a fact of Indian literary trends. For instance, there are numerous versions of our epics Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Thus the scene that emerges of comparative Canadian Literature seems quite similar to the comparative Indian Literature in its practice in a bilingual or multilingual socio-cultural infrastructure, its diversity and also its possible democratic liberalization. In both cases, comparative study not only becomes a comparison of one literature with another or with other spheres of human expression, but also with other areas of knowledge, belief, other arts, social sciences and religion. These trends show shared concern for the application of concepts like *cultural crossfertilization or international contextualism* or multilingual study or literary history and pluralistic studies which could be termed as hall marks of comparative literature. Unhesitatingly these areas have opened new vistas of comparative literary studies in Canada and India.

According to Krishna Kripalani and other literary scholars :

Indian literature reflects the impact of diverse ages, races, religions and influences, simultaneously, maintaining different levels of cultural consciousness and intellectual development, by the virtue of being an off-spring of its own composite socio-cultural unit.<sup>9</sup>

The very structure and framework of Indian literature is comparative which precludes a spontaneous comparative response by any researcher. Chandra Mohan has recorded several studies that have been undertaken as far as Canada and India and the world at large are concerned :

The comparison of Canadian Literature with other national literary texts, particularly from the thematic point of view. For example :

- (a) Alienation in the fiction of Margaret Lawrence and Anita Dessai (or) Dispossessing identities in the fiction of Margaret Laurence and Ruth Pravar Jhabwala.
- (b) The study of influence / reception of the British French or American author / movement / period of Canadian and Indian English literature, for instance : Imperial images in the Canadian and Indian English Poetry !
- (c) Typological or ideological comparative studies with the literature of the Third World. For example, colonial nationalism in Canadian and Indian English literature.
- (d) Creation of a market place of international literary traffic in the form of translations, criticisms, journals devoted to foreign literatures and foreign reception to one's own literature.<sup>10</sup>

I would like to point out that the above studies pertain to Canadian Literature in English or French and Indian Literature in English. However, mine is a different sort of a venture for I have aimed at comparing a Canadian playwright James Reaney who writes in English with an Indian playwright Pundalik Naik who writes not in English, but the regional language of Goa i.e. Konkani.

I have focussed the study of drama written by the two major playwrights of these countries since I believe that the stage constitutes a very important chapter in the social

and political history of a people, and the bend of national genius cannot be fully comprehended without its study. Moreover, it is no exaggeration to say that a *nation is known by its theatre*.

There are many similarities between Canada and India. Just as Canada is a conglomeration of a variety of identities, India is a land of assimilation of the cultures from all over the world. Although both these countries have multifarious cultures, they were influenced by the general cultural ethos of their respective countries which prevailed in the contemporary world of their times.

At first, one would agree that both Indian and Canadian literatures are linked together in a commonality of cultural and linguistic heritage. Secondly, both Indian and Canadian literatures equally share the essential heritage of world literature in English and are subtly strung together in the intricate web of ideologies, values, humanistic trends and universalism.

Both James Reaney and Pundalik Naik have been dramatists of ideas as much as they are artists of delicate and sublime sensibilities. While Naik may be justifiably described as a philosophical playwright deeply involved in the knowledge and wisdom of the East and the West, Reaney is a dramatist of sharp sensibility and perception of the fundamentals of living, of a philosophical mode and a Christian moral and social order.

It should be noted that although drama has developed in India since ancient times, the regional theatre of Goa has developed as in Canada, only since 1960's. It would be worthwhile to make a brief survey of the Canadian and the Indian theatre in order to understand the major trends prevailing in Canada and in India with special reference to Goan theatre.

## Historical Survey of Canadian Drama

The Canadian theatre has a remarkably long and fascinating history. In 1606 French dignitaries were welcomed at Port Royal by the performance of *Le Theatre de Neptune on la Nouvelle-France* written and produced by Marc Lescarbot. However, although English Canadian plays date back to the eighteenth century, the Canadian theatre houses flourished in the nineteenth century with the pretext of accommodating American and British touring companies. The dawn of the twentieth century witnessed a thriving amateur theatre movement along with the best radio drama on the continent. The movement was conducive to the emergence of a few noteworthy playwrights. Yet, until 1945 hardly any professional theatre company was established. Nathan Cohen, the foremost theatre critic wrote woefully :

There is not in Canada a single person who earns a living as a playwright, or who has any practical hope of doing so <sup>11</sup>

Canadian dramatic work by Canadian playwrights written for performance in professional theatres is a new phenomenon.

In 1967, the Dominion Drama Festival competitions attained the mark of sixty-two play-presentations, twenty-nine of which were maiden performances. Robert Gurik's *Le Pendu* from the more mature Quebecois theatre bagged all the major awards. Reaney's *The Killdeer* obtained five of the most coveted top honours. Incidentally, the new plays were given professional productions from coast to coast as part of the centennial celebrations : Gélinas' *Yesterday the Children were Dancing* at the Charlotte town Festival, Reaney's *Colours in the Dark* at Stratford, Ann Henry's *Lulu Street* in Winnipeg, John Coulter's *The Trial of Louis Riel* in Regina, George Ryga's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* in Vancouver. Besides this John Herbert from Toronto presented *Fortune and Men's Eyes* which was a major hit in New York. Jerry Wasserman States :

Right across the country audiences and critics, buoyed by a new national self-consciousness and pride, were taking note of this latest cultural phenomenon-plays written by Canadian playwrights, performed by Canadian actors in Canadian theatres.<sup>12</sup>

These events during the stage revolution of 1967 and the subsequent explosion of Canadian Drama were culminations of social and cultural forces that had been gathering momentum in an evolutionary process that began around the time of the first World War.

The Canadian Theatre was inspired by Irish Abbey Theatre which was a definite model for Canadian Amateur Groups such as Toronto's Arts and Letters Club Players devoted themselves to performing contemporary works from the world repertoire as a solution to the problem of raising funds to meet the exorbitant charges due to commercialism and imported talent offered by the circuit theatres. A need was felt for Canada to have its own dramatists. Vincent Massey a theatre pioneer forcefully insisted :

If we are to have a Canadian drama, we must have a Canadian theatre in which to produce it.<sup>13</sup>

Under Massey's auspices and guidance both these ideals began to take form with the founding of Hart House Theatre in 1919. Hart House became a focal point of the developing Canadian theatre in the subsequent years.

Throughout the 1920's and into the thirties amateur theatre made a positive progress under the banner of the Little Theatre movement. During the years of its existence (1933 - 70) the Dominion Drama Festival fostered the growth of the amateur theatre in Canada. One of the major drawbacks of the Dominion Drama Festival was its inability to contend with the multi-media expressionism of Herman Voaden's plays, which could never go beyond Regional competitions. Voaden combined modern dance, Wagnerian opera and symbolist drama to create a synaesthetic form and baptized it as "symphonic expressionism". He used this form in *Rocks, Barth Song and Hill-Land*.



The play Workshop and Hart House were not the only centres of Canadian playwriting activity. A group of women journalists organized the playwrights' studio group in Toronto in 1932 and produced more than fifty new plays in a few years, most of which were social comedies. The progressive Arts Clubs in Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg and Vancouver and the leftist workers theatre groups created and performed agitprop and social protest plays throughout the Depression years.

The Banff school of the theatre was founded in 1933. It evolved into the Banff school of Fine Arts which is an important centre for theatre training and workshop production.

It must be remembered that the Canadian Broadcasting Centre began broadcasting plays since 1936 and it was highly instrumental in the creation of a genuine Canadian drama. Although the advance of the television in the fifties hampered the growth of radio drama, it continues to spend a lot for the Canadian playwrights.

However, neither DDF nor CBC were able to bring about a real Canadian theatre. John Coulter, a renowned dramatist and a vocal critic emphasized through his article "Canadian Theatre and the Irish exemplar" in 1938, that Dublin's Abbey Theatre was a model for Canadians. He was convinced that Canadians don't offer to stage a new play until someday Americans or British do it. He himself turned to Canadian history and produced a trilogy of stage plays about Louis Riel in 1950. *Riel* would serve as a paradigm for the history plays of James Reaney and the Theatre Passe Muraille dramatists of the 1970's. Unlike Coulter, they have revised Canadian history with the rebel or under-dog as hero, synthesizing documentary and myth.

The *Crest* was founded in 1954, which easily superseded the New Play Society for thirteen years upto 1966. The major playwright of the form was Robertson Davies. He

played the most crucial role in organizing a world-class Shakespeare festival theatre in Stratford, Ontario.

However, Stratford hardly supported the development of Canadian playwriting. Writers like Herbert and Reaney would receive grants for workshop and small scale public performances of their plays and therefore in 1971 a third stage was added.

Smaller theatres with their shoestring budgets were perceived as being more central to an emerging national drama than a theatre devoted to Shakespeare. One cannot help accepting that Canadian drama came of age in the early seventies as a kind of poor theatre nourished on just those "sour slops" that Davies had complained of in 1953. The Canadian Council founded in 1957 changed the nature of theatre in Canada by providing a sudden massive influx of government funding for buildings, companies, and individuals engaged in the arts.

In 1958, Tom Hendry and John Hirsch with the committed ideal to the regional professional theatre merged their amateur theatre 77 with the Winnipeg Little Theatre to create the Manitoba Theatre Centre. Hirsch became its first artistic director. The MTC combined the mainstage productions in Winnipeg with a touring company, Children's theatre and a school. It succeeded so well in galvanizing the support and resources of its constituency that it became the basis for a new concept : a Canadian national theatre that would be decentralized and regional, like the nation itself-a professional theatre version of the Canadian mosaic. Toronto also had regional theatres by 1970 to train and supply actors for the new national theatre network. The National theatre school was opened in Montreal in 1960. Shaw Festival began in 1962 and P.E.L's Charlottetown Music Festival was inaugurated in 1964. St. John's Arts and Culture Centre was founded in 1967. The period 1969-70 saw the completion of three major centennial construction Projects -

Ottawa's National Arts Centre, Toronto's St. Lawrence Centre and a new building for the M.T.C. The decade thus saw the extraordinary growth of the Canadian theatre.

With the infra-superstructure finally installed, there was felt a need for the plays similar to Gratien Gélinas' *Tit-Coq* and John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* in Quebec and Britain. Those plays had in common vernacular speech, anti establishment anger, characters, settings and situations that were definitely of their own time and place fitting in cultural core of Canada. Likewise, the English Canadian Play *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* premiered at the Vancouver playhouse on November 23, 1967, was a landmark production that was vantaged for the opening of the National Arts Centre in 1969. That year the play was also broadcast' on CBC - TV and produced in a French translation by Gélinas' in Montreal as *Rita Joe*. It shook the Canadian consciousness. However, in the 1971 study, it was found that the seven major regional theatres had produced work of a total of two Canadian dramatists and paid them less than \$5000 out of combined budgets of more than \$2 million. The fever of Canadian play production in 1967 had been no more than Centennial Year tokenism.

By the late 1960's, Canadian theatre had already become conservative. Rather than living upto the original promise of the regional to create new models adapted to the distinctive needs of the communities, the large subsidized theatres mostly tried to emulate Broadway and the West end. When artistic directors were asked about Canadian plays and playwrights, their responses were often similar : George Ryga writes :

- I don't see how a play can be Canadian.
- I don't think there are any plays that you could call strictly Canadian.
- But if you start to define what is a Canadian and what is a Canadian playwright, what do you end up with ?
- What does the phrase mean ? <sup>14</sup>

*Ecstasy of Rita Joe* and *Fortune and Men's Eyes* were marked by strong social consciousness and critical, anti-establishment perspectives. The playwrights too, by virtue

of their alienation from the cultural mainstream, were in synch with the temper of the times. Both Ryga and Herbert were outspoken and uncompromising in their social, artistic, sexual and political views.

Modern Canadian Drama was born out of an amalgam of the new consciousness of the age-social, political and aesthetic - with the new Canadian self-consciousness. Since the larger theatres were generally unsympathetic and unaccommodating to both these forces, a newer Canadian theatre had to be invented, *an alternative theatre*. One of its prime movers was Martin Kinch.

Paul Thompson steered Theatre Passe Muraille to focus on local subject matter and collective creation involving his actors in first - hand research, improvisation and continual revision, and utilizing their particular skills as key elements in the play.

It was Passe Muraille under Paul Thompson Stewardship that became the most important theatre in Canada in the early seventies. Creations like *Doukhobors*, the *farun* show, *under the Greywacke* and *the Adventures of an Immigrant* made often stirring theatrical poetry out of material that was sometimes mundane and always local. Docu-drama with a high degree of theatricality became the Passe Muraille trademark : a small company of actors using little but their own bodies and voices to create ingenious stage metaphors. The company also specialized in resurrecting, popularizing, dramatizing and often mythicizing Canadian history in collective scripts : *Buffalo Jump* with Carol Bolt, *The Farmer's Revolt* with Rick Salutin, *Them Donnellys* with Frank MacEnany and *Far as the Eye Can See* with Rudy Wiebe were some of the best collaborations. It should be remembered that the most exciting Canadian playwright to emerge in the 1980's was Judith Thompson, who came out of Passe Muraille with her extraordinary play *The Crackwalker*.

John Gray, Larry Lillo and a group of other UBC theatre graduates formed Tamahnous theatre in 1971. Toronto's Tarragon Theater was founded in 1971 by Bill Glassco. David French's *Leaving Home* is a story of generational conflict and as a singularly Canadian form of grant alienation elicited strong audience identification, and its straight forward, accessible style had broad appeal. *Leaving Home* created domestic realism. Tarragon also introduced English Canada to the plays of Michel Tremblay with Glassco as director and co-translator. These plays were domestic in setting but hardly realistic in style. Moreover, from 1973-75, Tarragon produced James Reaney's *Donnelly Trilogy*, which is altogether a different exercise from stylistic realism or naturalism. It greatly succeeded in bringing Canadian drama into the mainstream. The great wave of new alternate theatres in Toronto Free Theatre by Tom Hendry, Martin Kinch and John Palmer.

However, drama in Canada in the early seventies was in danger of falling victim to an insidious form of ghettoization. Canadian plays were relegated to small, low-budget theatres that lacked the financial and technical resources available to the heavily subsidized festivals and regional theatres. While non-Canadian works had success to lush productions, large casts and relatively highly paid actors, Canadian plays were doomed to what George Ryga called "beggar's theatre". The Canadian playwrights could not make a living by practicing their craft. Strongly worded recommendations were made for government grants. An informal policy decision was made by the Canadian Council to appeal to its theatres to do more Canadian plays and this decision was materialized with the consequent promotion of dramatic activity in Canada.

This new policy brought about a "regional" boom. There was a mushrooming of playwrights with local roots and interests contributing to their respective theatres : Sharon

Pollock's work for the Vancouver playhouse and theatre Calgary, John Mursell and W.O. Mitchell also at theatre Calgary, Ken Mitchell and Rex Deverell with Regina's globe, David Fennario with the Centaur in Montreal, the Blyth and Kawartha Summer festivals moulding Anne Chislett have proven the value of a homegrown product in the commercial milieu of summer theatre. The plays made their way into theatres across the country with an immense success. The long elusive "National Theatre" of Canada became a reality. The prestigious awards like Chalmers Award, Governor General's Award, the Doras, the Jessies have been instituted and the drama has achieved a prominent place in the nation's cultural profile.

### **History of Indian Drama**

Any study of Indian drama begins with Sanskrit drama which is purely of Indian origin. It has been proved beyond doubt that Indian drama was developed quite independent of any Western influence. Dr. Horace H. Wilson, who took much interest in Sanskrit Literature and translated a number of Sanskrit dramas emphatically maintains that whatever may be the merits or defects of the Hindu dramas, they were unmixedly its own. Hemendra Nath Das Gupta quotes Dr. Ward :

There is no real evidence for assuming any influence of Greek examples upon the Indian drama at any stage in its progress.<sup>15</sup>

The logical starting point of the Indian Theatre is the Classical Sanskrit Theatre. It is the earliest known form of Theatre in India.

As perceptively observed by M. L. Varadpande :

The rudiments of drama are found in Rig Vedic dialogues. The Vedic rituals are full of theatrical elements, so much so that they can be termed as cult dramas. From these elements evolved the Sanskrit drama.<sup>16</sup>

The Sanskrit words for play (*nataka*) and actor (*nata*) are from the root *nat* which is the Prakrit form of Sanskrit '*nrutya*' meaning 'to dance'. We presuppose a development from the religious to the dramatic, which is not essentially different from that found in Greece. It must be remembered that earlier stages which were connected with religious festivals, and especially with the worship of Krishna-Vishnu, were not unlike the early primitive Christian mystery - plays of the middle ages in Europe.

Despite all controversies, it is certainly true that drama flourished and progressed in ancient India. The plays had a considerable freedom of choice of subject and treatment and can be described as melodramas or tragic comedies. Primarily their elements are mixed : gravity and gaiety, despair and joy, terror and love - are all combined in the same play. India did not have a tragedy in the real sense for it was compulsory that every drama had a happy ending. According to the rules death cannot be represented on stage. The usual subject for dramatic treatment is love, and according to the rank or social position of the hero and heroine the play is placed in one or another of the ten chief (*rupaka*) or eighteen minor (*uparupaka*) divisions of the drama recognized by the Hindu text books. The defect of the Sanskrit drama is attributed to its conventionality, with the result that originality and life are sacrificed for a hackneyed arrangement and a stereotyped manipulation of threadbare sentiments and action.

Although the plots have the least originality, the details of the plots were clearly worked out and the development of the intrigue was presented. One of the most striking features of the Sanskrit drama is the jester, who is indispensably a Brahman, a person of slow intelligence whose uncouth attempts seem often lacking in every element of humour. The jester is a glutton, greedy for money and an invertebrate gossip, always on the watch for some fresh bit of news. Ironically, this figure of a degraded besotted Brahman was

allowed to appear as a typical stage-figure though the court drama was controlled by the Brahman priests. Other stock characters were the parasite ministers, Buddhist monks and nuns, servants of the harem, dwarfs, mutes, and the female attendants of the king.

A Sanskrit drama always opens with a *nandi*, or benediction, usually addressed to Ganesh or Shiva for the prosperity of the audience by the Sutradhara or director. At the end of the *nandi* the Sutradhar compliments the audience on their critical ability and introduces one of the characters of the play, after which the action goes on with the regular divisions into acts and scenes. Scenes are marked by the exit of one person and the entrance of another, as on the classical and the French stage, and the stage is never left empty until the end of the act. The theory of unity of time, place and action, which played so important a part in the Greek drama, appears in rather a modified form in India.

Sanskrit drama flourished between 200 B.C and about 700 AD. No other theatre in the world has had such a long and continuous history. Many attempts are being made to resuscitate and reinterpret our classic drama. Sanskrit plays of Bhasa are performed in the pure classical *Kudi-Attam* style with all medieval stage-sets in Sanskrit itself by university students. Vijay Mehta produced *Mudra Rakshasa* in Marathi, reconstructing Bharata's stage-form, *Bhagvadujjakiyam* was produced as a force in Gujarati by Shanta Gandhi. *Mrcchakatika* has been staged in Delhi in several styles like the Nautanki in Hindustani Theatre by the late Qudsia Zaidi and by the National school of Drama.

Given the importance of Sanskrit theatre in the history of Indian stage, one could have expected the drama to inspire at least some of the playwrights investigating the "Indian" identity of their theatre. But no playwright of the twentieth century not even Tagore, who tried hard has shown any genuine influence of Sanskrit drama.

Let us take a brief survey of Modern Indian Theatre :



With the coming of the British to India, came their forms of entertainment. The stimulus given by the English theatre and education led to the emergence of modern theatre in India.

Various diverse influences operated upon the Indian theatre. Firstly, many English plays, particularly of Shakespeare, were translated or adapted in various regional languages. Secondly, with the spirit of resurgence, the dramatists started translating and staging Sanskrit plays particularly in the educational institutions. Thirdly, the folk and traditional theatrical forms prevalent in the country did not completely lose their hold on the masses and were quite active. These three factors shaped the newly emerging Indian theatre independently.

Bengal and Maharashtra led the neo-theatre movement in India. However, the three models - Western, Sanskrit and folk - were imitated independently or in unison. In the post - British period Indian theatre provides an interesting synthesis of different influences. The influence of English theatre was first felt in Bengal. However, it took a few more years for this dramatic trend to take roots in Bengal and other parts of the country. As a result the theatre went near the people. The plays were written exposing social incongruities and hypocrisy in a subtle manner. We may call it a theatre of purpose.

The writers started analysing human emotions and feelings by depicting characters in conflicting situations. The narrative character of the traditional Indian theatre changed considerably in the process. Thus came into existence the theatre of aesthetics. There also emerged a theatre full of music, dancing and singing a kind of hybrid growth - blending of the techniques of folk and modern drama into one. Here, along with the actors the singers dominated the stage. It was the theatre of entertainment.

The above categories in the theatre never function as water tight compartments. There were plays reflecting nationalistic sentiments like *Kichaka Vadha* written by K. P.

Khadilkar in Marathi which shook the foundations of British rule in India. Theatre was used by social reforms also to attack out-dated customs and social norms. Number of plays like *Sharada* in Marathi decrying uneven marriages or *Ekacha Pyala* by Rama Ganesh Gadkari ~~attracting~~ <sup>attacking</sup> the evils of drinking were presented.

In 1940's the Army lined artists and touring of performers to entertain the soldiers. In 1942 the Communist Party organised propaganda in folk - forms and the Indian peoples Theatre movement began with a Gusto and eclat. In 1948 in Puri an Oriya play named *Bhath* (Rice) was performed for hundreds of nights. It was based on Bengal famine, showing the landlord as a cruel ligo and the hero and heroine as social workers doing famine relief.

Thus between 1942 and 1945, the political movement brought renaissance in Indian drama. In its content, the drama became more realistic. In its form, the drama became a mirror of the society. The 'staginess' became less and less jarring, the characters dressed like ordinary human beings ; anything over decorative became humorous, acting became natural and gradually the roles of women were done by females and not by boys dressed up as girls.

In its language, the drama borrowed freely from the dialects ; the idiom used by the audience was used by the actors on the stage. Indian Peoples Theatre Association could not maintain its glory of the 1943 after the war was over. Since no art can tolerate dictation for long, the artists of IPTA broke away and formed Indian National Theatre Association under the leadership of the then social worker Mrs. Lamaladeir Chattopadhyaya. This functioned as one of the active theatre - groups, well - organised, connected with the UNESCO theatre wing and put out a journal of its own. While both were opposed to Art for the Sake of Art, IPTA aimed at exposing the ills of the

bourgeoisie and forging the anti-imperialist struggle towards the people's democracy, whereas INTA cared more for the traditional spiritual values and tended to give greater freedom to art and aesthetics.

Mention must be made also of individual efforts of artists in reviving the stage. For instance, Prithvi Theatres of Prithviraj Kapoor, Indra Anglian Natya, Manvantar in Bombay and Dharwar Natya Samaj. This added to a New Theatre Movement in the country.

In the category of theatre of entertainment comes the professional Parsee dramatic companies which moved all over the country and some of them even visited Europe with their theatrical productions. The musical theatre emerged with full force in Maharashtra in 1880, and under actor Balagandharva and dramatist Khadilkar. The theatre reached its height in the first quarter of the 20th century. Musical theatre was in fact an extension of folk theatre, probably more polished in presentation techniques and developed in terms of dramatic art. However, sometimes, the performance looked like a musical concert with intermittent prose passage as small announcements of the songs to follow. As a reaction prose theatre emerged in different parts of the country which took the theatrical art still further in terms of play - writing and presentation techniques by imbibing the spirit of modernity.

In almost every region theatre in the modern sense of the term emerged. According to M.L. Varadpande, South Indian theatres, particularly in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh were inspired and influenced by the Marathi theatre. With the emergence of Cinema Indian theatre suffered immensely.

Prabhakar Machwe notes :

Around this time some technical blow to drama came to the fore. The first talkie Alamara was produced in Bombay in 1931. Consequently, there was a constant erosion of the stage - talent stage - craftsmen and stage - writers, who were swept away by the lure of the silver - screen.<sup>17</sup>

The major concern of the Indian theatre in the Post - Independence period has been to try to define its "Indianness" and to relate itself to the past from which it was cut off. Several revival theatres grew and developed. After 1960, Indian theatres took a new turn. As noted by Pundalik Naik in his paper presented at Sahitya Academy Seminar at New Delhi, the Indian theatre has been influenced by Brecht. His techniques of play production being very close to the production techniques of Indian folk theatre, he was quickly accepted. He was found meaningful for the Indian folk theatre. The narrative technique of the folk theatre --- Sutradhar and his chorus --- returned meaningfully, so also dance and music. The drama was more or less freed from tyranny of proscenium theatre and the performers and the audience once again started coming closer on open air locals. The theatre once again gained its freedom and started breathing freely. As the Indian theatre started looking 'inward' to explore the potentialities of its own theatrical traditions, it also started looking out at theatre activity all around. Sartre, Camu, Becket and a host of other dramatists inspired Indian theatre people. Their influences were assimilated in a meaningful way.

The beginning of 1960's saw Mohan Rakesh bursting on the Indian theatre scene with his play *Ashadha Ka Ek Din* and Dharmaveer Bharati with his *Andha Yug*. In this play, audience saw the reflection of the contemporary world *Adhe Adhure* by Mohan Rakesh explored the complex world of human emotions in clash with the hard realities of life. The play was translated in the Indian languages and created a new awareness. Shombhu Mitra was active with his Tagore plays in Bengal. Badal Sircar with his plays *Baki Itihas*, *Pagla Ghoda* came with a new kind of sensibility. Girish Karnad with his plays in Kanada *Yayati*, *Tughlaq* and *Hayavadan* made his mark in the Indian theatre.

Vijay Tendulkar made a very significant contribution to Indian theatre by his Marathi play - *Shantata Court Chalu Ahe*. His plays - *Sakharam Binder*, *Gidhade* and his most important play *Ghashiram Kotwal* are studies in sex and violence inherent in human nature in subdued or pronounced form. His candid exposition of bold themes gave new dimension to Indian theatre. They are certainly a milestone in the history of modern Indian theatre.

Jabbar Patel who directed the play *Ghashiram Kotwal* used various Marathi folk theatre forms while staging this play. This trend of using folk theatre forms was well established by Habib Tanvir through his play *Mitti Ki Gadi*. In Karnataka Chandrashekhar Kambar used folk form in his play. Use of folk theatrical forms by contemporary writers and direction has given rise to a powerful trend. In the words of M.L. Varadpande, "this emerging trend is termed as the theatre of roots".<sup>18</sup>

In Maharashtra the dramatist have been portraying the agonies of the oppressed. This is evident in the plays of 1970's. The theatre in Maharashtra has made a tremendous influence on the contemporary Konkani theatre.

The traditional Marathi theatre in Goa while enriching the knowledge of the Goan playwrights strengthened their understanding of drama in its full-fledged form. Such an understanding coupled with lucid expression in mother-tongue Konkani nurtured Konkani theatre. One cannot but acknowledge the subtle, yet tremendous contribution of the Marathi drama for the prosperity and the pride of the Konkani stage.

The Konkani theatre has still to broaden its base and bridge the gap between the indigenous folk forms and the modern ones with a desirably foreign inspiration. It has still to enter a new era of prosperity. Both on the writing and the producing side it has

tremendous talent to offer. It has succeeded in developing decisive tastes among a wide cross-section of Konkani speaking people.

Tiatre is the specific folk drama of Goa just like Tamasha in Maharashtra. It is of the people, for the people and by the people. The word 'tiatre' has been etymologically derived from Portuguese legacy of Goans. It is the reflecting mirror of the Goan Catholic community. The community laughs and cries through it. Goan tiatre is highly inspirational. The local artist moulds the script in the way he desires to suit the occasion and spectator. It is more effective than the lessons given by a teacher as well as the sermons of a preacher. The tiatre is the beautiful potpourri of the green vegetation of Goa. It is supplemented by side shows and 'Kataram', meaning songs. These have absolutely no connection with the main theme. Every song is self sufficient with a different theme. Therefore, the tiatre requires a band of singers and musicians.

In the interview Pundalik Naik had with the writer of the thesis, he admitted :

I use Portuguese music too to give the flavour of real Goan spirit in my plays ; for instance, the toddy tapper in *Raktakhev* (Bloodbath) sings 'Kantaram' (meaning 'songs' in Portuguese) I also use the folklore of the real Konkani region.<sup>19</sup>

Thus this is the acceptance of the inescapable Portuguese Legacy as well as the obvious national legacy.

Tiatre is supposed to be a family melodrama. It contains all the combats and violence of the commercial Hindi cinema. It may be based on a Soap opera which contains emotional appeal, excitement of feelings, stirring of heart, thus leading to the flowing of tears and reaching a point of 'Catharsis' !

The difference between 'tiatre' and a play in any Indian language is the difference between the romance in Roman script and the 'Kadambari' or 'the novel' in Devnagri script. The tiatre quenches the cultural thirst of Goans. It contains drama, music, comedy,

action, etc. It might contain circus, magic, different rites of catholics, the display of strength, etc. But the main emphasis is on action and a vivid presentation of the theme.

While *Dashavatari Khell* were very popular in Konkani, it was *Jagor, Lalit, and Gavalankalo* in which a kind of drama could be located. Even on the occasion of Church festivals, *fell*, a kind of drama was presented.

The Mochemadkar and company presented Marathi drama with the mixture of Konkani language. But Shenoy Goembab was the founder of Konkani stage. He adapted Molière's *Le Médecin malgré lui* and emerged with *Mogachem Lagn* (1937, 1938). Since the language as well as costumes were fully Konkani nobody would believe it was originally in French. He also adapted the original 'Lover' of Molière to *Povanachem Tapalem*. It depicts how an extremely wealthy man tortures his family and children because of his extreme love for money and finally becomes a butt of everyone's jokes. The play was written in 1926 and first produced in 1930 in Wilson college in Bombay. 'Zilba Ranno' is an adaptation from Arabian nights. Instead of the king Harun Al Rasid, Shenoy Goembab introduces the Kadamba king. The comedy reveals Goembab's love for Konkani and hatred for injustice. Acharya Ramchandra Shankar Naik established the tradition of the one-act play. *Chavathicho Chandra* (1935) is his independent comedy. The play not only brings out the characters of a variety of Goans, but also the variety of dialects in Konkani e.g. The language of Brahmins, the language of goldsmiths the language of Christians and the Mangalorian language. There is utter confusion on the stage due to the inability to understand one another's language but the spectator understands and enjoys the show.

Then came 'Raibaryali Vaddik', 'Damu Kurado', 'Ek Hajar Ani Teis', 'Mhajo Sargar Gello Gharkar' which were all adaptations. Acharya Naik's play *Maharaja* has

been adapted from Molière's 'Le Tartuffe'. It was produced in 1961. The play which became extremely successful on the Konkani stage was 'Tachi Karamat' by Pundalik Dande. It shows how the lazy family misled by its own phobia for etiquette goes to dogs and how a virtuous and determined man succeeds in bringing about a change in them. Minute and touching characterization, accurate dialogue, fast movement and the clear picture of life philosophy gives an important place to the play in the world of drama. Pundalik Dande also wrote *Nimittak Karan*. These were the outcomes of the one-act play competitions in Bombay. Raghuvir Nevrekar emerged with his *Kadunimb*. But the dramatist who brought about a new vitality in 1970's is Naik. With the arrival of Naik, the theatre went near people. Thus began a new era in the Konkani drama. A corpus of literature known as Dalit Literature has emerged in Maharashtra. This trait of contemporary dalit drama is seen in the Goan theatre. Though there is some activity in the field of theatre in different parts of the country, it is highly inadequate in Goan theatre. The efforts are being made to achieve around progress in the theatrical art by the Government of Goa through Kala Academy, Konkani Akademi and some NGOs like Mustard Seed Theatre to develop theatrical arts in Goa.

Though theatre in Goa is yet to develop, the panorama of Indian theatre is very rich. Various kinds of theatres from folk and traditional, to modern urban theatre co-exist influencing each other creatively and effectively.

### **Life and Works of James Reaney**

Born on 1st September, 1926 James Reaney the stalwart of Canadian Literature has an established reputation as a poet, professor, librettist, literary critic and a major playwright of Canada. He was born in South Easthope, near Stratford, Ontario. Reaney



has been engaged in an energetic program of “rousing the faculties” by holding up the shaping mirror of literary forms to life in Canada, particularly in South Western Ontario.

Reaney’s mother Elizabeth Crerar Reaney, a school teacher was of Scottish-German origin, who directed plays with the local young people and used children’s games in what really were dramatic workshops. She was sacked off from a school by the school trustees for putting on too many plays. His father James Nesbitt Reaney who owned the Stratford farm was an Irishman. He had won a prize for mime (milking a cow) while he was a scholar at the local one-room Irish school. It was a presbyterian family following traditionally Calvinistic doctrines. His religious background had a tremendous influence upon all his literary work. He speaks about Christ and anti-Christ in *The Masks of Childhood*. There are the religious implications in his poetry *The Red Heart*, *A suit of Nettles*; in the plays such as *The Donnellys*, *The Easter Egg*, *One Man Mask*, *Names and Nicknames* and *Colours in the Dark*.

Whilst graduating in the University of Toronto he met a co-student and a poetess Colleen Thibaudeau and married her in 1951. They have a son James Stuart, a journalist and critic and a daughter Susan Alice Elizabeth. It has been a highly successful and long lasting union of marriage. Reaney and Colleen, both in their seventies live a peaceful life in their bungalow 276, Huron street in the beautiful, quiet town of London. Ontario, supporting each other at the fag end of their lives, as always and especially now, while the limbs go cool and shaky day by day.

From 1949 to 1956 Reaney taught English at the University of Manitoba. He returned to Toronto in the latter year for doctoral study under Northrop Frye and two years later received the doctorate for his thesis entitled *The Influence of Spenser on Yeats*. Reaney returned to his teaching position in University of Manitoba, but in 1960 moved to

the University of Western Ontario as the Professor of English where he offered his services.

Until his retirement in 1989, he was teaching, conducting seminars, writing, editing, work-shopping theatre, staging plays etc. As editor he published his own hand-set magazine, *Alphabet : A Semi - annual Devoted to the Iconography of the Imagination* (1960-71), in which he related documentary and myth and in which writers, critics and visual artists could find an outlet. His first book of poetry *The Red Heart* (1949), won the first of his three Governor General's Awards, the other two going to his second book of poetry *A suit of Nettles* (1958), and a joint award to *Twelve Letters to a small town* (1962) and *The Killdeer and other plays* (1962). Reaney's poetry collected in *Poems* (1972), has earned him reputation as an erudite poet at once deriving structures from metaphor, mythology and a cosmopolitan literary tradition while deeply rooted in a regional sense of place. His latest book of poetry was *Imprecations : The Art of Swearing* (1984).

After having received the second Governor General's Award for his book of poetry *A suit of Nettles* (1959), Reaney wrote his first play, *The Sun and the Moon*, which was not to be performed until 1965.

His success with *The killdeer* (1960) influenced the style of playwriting and the growth of professional theatre in Canada. It bagged five of the most coveted top honours at the Dominion Drama festival in 1960. *Night - blooming Cereus* (1959) is a one act chamber opera and in both the plays Reaney uses symbolic props and music stretching the boundaries of dramatic form along with this traditional linear narrative. *One-man Masque* (1960) is an epic poem about life and man's archetypal journey through various stages of evolution. This was performed at the festival with Reaney playing the main role.

In a shift to emphasis from poetry to the public and communal form of drama, he followed the Killdeer with the Easter Egg (1962) *Colours in the Dark* (1969), *Listen to the Wind* (1972), *Masks of Childhood* (1972) and plays for children such as *Applebutter* (1973), *Ignoramus* (1978) and *Geography Match* and *Names and Nicknames* (1978). These enhanced his reputation through delightful inventive and instructive contributions to young audiences. The much celebrated play *Colours in the Dark* is a play box a coming together of many images, colours, objects (toys) and myths in the existent poem of life.

In the mid 1960's family plays like *The Easter Egg* (1962) and *The Sun and the Moon* (1965) and a play on internal politics of academic institutions, *The Three Desks* (1967) were published. He has also introduced the theme of homosexuality and has dwelt with male-male relationships and allegorical naming of characters. *Listen to the Wind* or *The Saga of Caresfoot Court* is his symbolic and melodramatic play.

Reaney himself directed *Listen to the Wind* in 1966. This play reveals a new shaping of dramatic form that was to become characteristic of Reaney's plays. It had a clear influence on *Colours in the Dark* which was directed by John Hirsch at Stratford in 1967. Around this time Reaney rented several floors of a building in downtown London for Alphacentre, a sort of community centre of the arts. Here Reaney held Saturday sessions for his Listeners' Workshop in which children and adults took part in acting out sections of the Bible.

In his sabbatical year 1968-69 in Victoria, B.C., Reaney worked on a play based on the murder of the Donnellys in Lucan, Ontario a story that had fascinated him since his childhood. On his return to London he devoted himself to research in the archives at the University of Western Ontario where he taught and emerged with Part I of his Donnelly tragedy *Sticks and Stones* (1973), Part II, *The St. Nicholas Hotel* (1974) which won for

him the Chalmers Award in 1975, and Part III entitled *Handcuffs* (1975). In association with his director Keith Turnbull and others Reaney established the NDWT company of Drama and took *The Donnellys* on a national tour in 1975, an account of which is given by Reaney in *14 Barrels from Sea to Sea* (1977). He emerged with *Balloon* (1976) and toured Ontario with it too.

He wrote *The Dismissal* (1977) which is a rollicking, ribald potpourri of satire, pathos, humour and documentary history. The theme of strike from *The Dismissal* is carried over in *King Whistle* (1979) and *Antler River* (1980). *Traps* (1980) was a great success. *Cloud Shadows* (1981) is a return to the dramatic design of the early plays. *Gyroscope* (1983) is an *Adam and Eve* story about temptation and trust in a fallen world. *I, The Parade* (1982) was performed at Waterloo. *The Shivaree* (1982) is a two-act opera. It was a critical and popular triumph and was convincing reaffirmation of Reaney's talents as a leading contributor to the performing arts in Canada.

*The Boy with An R in His Hand* (1966) is a historical novel about the Type Riot at W.L. Mackenzie's print shop in 1826, while *Take the Big Picture* (1986) is a juvenile fiction. *The Box Social and Other Stories* (1947) is his contribution to the genre of short stories. In such plays as *Wacousta* (1978), *the Canadian Brothers* (1983) and his landmark trilogy *The Donnellys* in early 1970's Reaney has combined archival research, poetry, elements of romance and melodrama, mime and myth to tell the central stories and legends of Ontario.

### **Influences on James Reaney**

Northrop Frye's critical theories had a major impact on James Reaney. His 'Fearful Symmetry', a study of William Blake's prophetic vision galvanized his writing.

Reaney has been influenced by the Italian Opera. The influence of modern folk drama of Gabriel Garcia Lorca, George Buchner and John Millington Synge with a beautiful fusion of naivety and literary sophistication highlighting land as a powerful force that shapes human destiny unmistakably makes its presence felt in Reaney's world. Reaney's folkloric imagination and repertory also reflects something of the spirit of André Obey, Thornton Wilder and J.M. Barrie. As far as his celebratory, playful and ironic approaches to the deceptive ordinary realm are concerned he had been influenced by modern painters such as Marc Chagall, Paul Klee and Joan Miro. One influence on 1963 to 1973 theatre that added to the spatial and auditory vocabulary namely, the prodigious array of theatrical languages with image plays of W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Thornton Wilder, Jean Cocteau, Joan Littlewood and Joseph Chaikin is impossible to be overlooked. The Peking National Opera, *Medicine and Minstrel* shows inspired by early Italian Opera, Elizabethan and Jacobean drama with its extraordinary "verbal invention" demanding of the audience "quick ears" have influenced Reaney's shadow plays in *Handcuffs*, *the Donnelly*, Part III. In the *Donnelly* trilogy, *Colours in the dark and Baldoon* we have mime and puppetry, magic lantern shows and circus which together give his work the *multiple focus effect*, are inspired by Guillaume Apollinaire.<sup>20</sup>

Reaney's plays also embody some of the features of what Northrop Frye called *Archetypal Masque*. Gerald Parker quotes Frye :

The action of such drama takes place in a world of human types, which at its most concentrated becomes the interior of the human mind.<sup>21</sup>

Thus Reaney assimilates in varying degrees a generous profusion of modern experiments in directions in theatre. Celebrating the dramatic art Reaney says :

My own life is living proof that words are more powerful than swords or guns. Every time one of my plays works on an audience successfully you can see how it is possible to change the world, how you can with strong poetry and theatricality bring children and grown-ups closer to the Paradise we should never have left.<sup>22</sup>

## Life and Works of Pundalik Naik

Born on 21st April, 1952 Pundalik Naik, the crowning glory of Konkani literature is an extremely popular poet, short story - writer, novelist, playwright and director apart from being the man who led the Konkani rebellion in Goa, a librettist and a philanthropist. He was born in the enchanting village of Volvoi in Ponda Taluka of Goa in a humble family of peasants. He is the major playwright who has given expression to the mute suffering and pain of the unprivileged; his concerns have been the social flux in Goan life, depiction of Goan culture and the original vocabulary of Konkani. He is the son of the soil, whose writing smells of the honest representation of all his inheritance of which he is the conscious guard.

Naik is the winner of Konkani Bhasha Mandal Award for 1975, 1978 and 1979, the State Awards of Kala Akademy for 'Raansundari' a children's play in dramatic verse in 1975 and for *Achchev* a novel in 1978, all India Radio Broadcasting Award for *Marmkatto* a one act play, Sahitya Akademi Award for *Chowrang* a collection of one-act plays in 1984, the Best Allround Personality Award of the all India Jcs in 1986. Paters Australian Award of Broadcasting for *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* in 1988 among several others. All this contribution to literature has given him the status of a multifarious artist.

Born in a peasant family helping his naive and conventional minded parents at field - work and rearing cattle, Naik was educated in Marathi medium up to his matriculation. After doing his intermediate Arts in English medium, he accepted the job as a school teacher between 1972-78. He successfully directed plays between 1977-83. He joined All India Radio, Panaji as an Assistant director in 1979 and resigned the job in 1984 to devote himself totally to writing. He became the member of Konkani, the State language

Advisory Committee in 1991 and was honoured with the Vice-Presidentship of Goa Konkani Akademi between 1993-96. He was the President of 'Konkani Prajecho Avaz' the organization established to achieve recognition as a State language for Konkani, statehood for Goa and for the purpose of inclusion of Konkani in the VIIIth schedule of the Indian Constitution to get its rights. He offered an active support in the rebellion against the establishment of Nylon Industries in 1995 at Kerim, Ponda, Goa.

He married Hema Sardessai a poetess, novelist, feminist, banker and publisher and an able support to him in all his endeavours to flourish Konkani into a rich and prosperous language. Recently, she has sacrificed her banker's job for the full time dedication to Konkani. They have been blessed with a Son 'Yugaank, who is an alrounder at his middle school. The trio lives in the farm house shared by Naik's mother and the amicable family of Naik's brother who also extend all their support to him in his dramatic productions.

### **Influences on Pundalik Naik**

Pundalik Naik's father Shri Narayan Naik played an active role in the freedom struggle of Goa. Although a peasant he was a lover of art at heart. He would sing 'bhajans', songs of praise sung in a state of spiritual ecstasy by a devotee. Through the temple of Shantadurga he had also arranged to appoint a dramatist who would teach theatre to the farmers, young and old. They would stage three plays every year at Shigmo, the spring festival alone. But prior to that the rehearsals would go on for three months. As a 12 year young boy Naik, just out of childhood would at times help at prompting and he would also help the illiterate actors to learn the dialogue at the other times.

He says he volunteered to do so that he would get a chance to lay his hands on the text of the play and snatch the opportunity to read it fully, Naik says Goans are the lovers

of music and drama. There are and were at least 50 plays performed in and around Volvo every year and about 2500 plays are being performed in the small region known as the 'dimple' on the face of Mother India by name 'Goa'. The Marathi stage was the dominant stage in Goa up to 70's. Naik didn't have a chance to witness any Konkani play that might have been put up in metropolitan town of Panaji, Margao and Vasco-da-Gama. His favourite Marathi dramatists are Ram Ganesh Gadkari and Vijay Tendulkar. To begin with, as a young adolescent Naik wrote and presented two Marathi plays namely : *Haraplelam Ratna* (The Lost Jewel) and *Yam Jaga Ahe* (Yam, The God of Death Is Awake). These he calls, the mere compilations of the acts, scenes and songs from the whole galaxy of plays that he had seen. Later on, an elderly villager tried to convince him that the new play has to be totally original in all its aspects. Naik accepted the advice through and through and beyond .... he felt.... "well.... if it has to be totally original..... my very own.... then the language too has to be my own Konkani, and the environment, the themes, the conventions, the music have to be fully Konkani ..... and this conviction was my first step towards creative writing in Konkani".<sup>23</sup>

Naik's contribution to poetry is *Ga Ami Rakhane* (1976). The poem created a certain kind of awakening among the underprivileged sections, raising their self-esteem despite all the exploitation they endured. It incited them to over throw the oppressive establishment through the poem 'Mhajo Bangar Beil'. He published the collection of short stories such as *Pishantar* (1977), *Muthay* (1977) and *Arduk* (1989). His novel *Achchev* (1977) won for Naik The State Award for Literature in 1978. *Bambar* (1977), *Vasantotsava and Dayaj* (1985) and *Gunaji* (1998) are also popular novels. Naik has child - fiction to his credit. His children's novels are : *Mamu* (1988), *Gauri Ani Kalparukh*



(1999) and *Bekar Bhovandekar* (1999). *Goemcho Pavas* (1996) is the example of children's literature.

To come to Naik's favourite genre of drama, we have *Raansundari* (The Jungle beauty, 1974), *Aalshank Vaag Khatlo* (The Tiger Shall Eat The Lazy, 1984) and *Shinvacho Bali* (The Lion's Prey, 1998).

He emerged with his first full-fledged play *Khann Khann Mati* (Go on Digging, 1977). This was followed by *Raktakhev* (The Bloodbath, 1979) and *Rakhann* (The Protection, 1979). *Suring* (Dynamite, 1982), was a full-length play on the plight of Goan miners. Naik emerged with *Suryasamvat* (The Solar Eclipse, 1984) a play followed by the galaxy of plays, one more effective than the other : *Demande* (The Court Case, 1986), *Muktatay* (The Freedom, 1986), *Shabay, Shaby Bhaujansamaj* (The Three Cheers to the Masses, 1986), *Pipall Petla* (The Pipal tree on Fire, 1986), *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* (The fair of Lord Vichitra, 1986) were all published in the same year. *Dayaj* (The Heritage, 1991), *Chaitanyak Math Na* (No Edifice for Vigour, 1992) and *Aatmavanchana* (Repentance, 1995). These were followed by *Aakashmanch* (The Sky theatre, 1987), a unique collection of radio plays. He published *Chowrang* (The four colours, 1982), a collection of one-act plays, for which he received The Sahitya Akademy Award in 1984 for literature. He published *Gaonvdhani Gaonkar* (Villageheads, 1975) and *Digant* (The direction, 1990) both collections of one-act plays. *Chchapan Thigli Yeswant* (Yeswant's Dynamism, 1980) was a monologue appeared in 1990.

Naik also has several films and teleplays to his credit, wherein he has contributed to the theme, screen play, dialogue and song. The following films and teleplays were telecast on Doordarshan i.e. Goa Television : *Raansundari* (The Jungle Beauty, 1991) and *Marnkatto* (The Chiff of Death, 1992), *Jeit* (The Victory, 1991), *Suikruti* (The

Acceptance, 1993), *Sangati* (The Companion, 1996), *Vadhachakra* (The Murder cycle, 1993), *Dekhani Durai* (Beautiful estrangement, 1994) and *Moni Gavai* (Mute witness, 1999).

Konkani theatre lacks critical literature. Naik attempted to cater to this need by his valuable contribution of *Rangpaat* (The Stage Curtain, 1992), a book on dramatic criticism.

According to Naik, literature mirrors society. When questioned whether he believes in 'Art for Art Sake' Naik retorted :

NOT AT ALL ! .... Sardar Jaffrey, a renowned poet said once "..... Each one of us likes to be appreciated as well as children do. The only difference is the children give an overt expression to their happiness, while we conceal the same". Secondly, remember, literature is an inseparable aspect of social life... social concern is a must for an artist.<sup>24</sup>

Although one cannot justify the direct influences of any playwright on Pundalik Naik, it is crystal clear that by the virtue of being part of the Indian context he has been obviously influenced by the Vedic trends in the Indian Sanskrit drama. It should be remembered that before the arrival of Konkani drama of which Naik himself is one of the pioneers, he had definitely witnessed the whole lot of Marathi plays --- historical as well as social --- which used to be performed over several nights (normally 7) on every temple-stage, big and small on different festival days in all parts of Goa. Usually there is a sequence of Marathi plays. The great Marathi theatre we have today in Maharashtra is evolved out of the rich theatrical tradition of Vedic theatre. But one cannot ignore that it was also very much influenced by Western and folk models of theatre. The translations and adaptations of William Shakespeare's plays, of Samuel Beckett's plays were highly popular in Marathi theatre. Consequently, Naik's plays are a beautiful and natural potpourri of Sanskrit drama, Marathi drama and Western drama.

## Threads of Biographies

Surprisingly, there is a great deal of similarity between the way the two playwrights one eastern and the other western were brought up. Naik grew up amidst the high mountains, valleys the green fields and the sparkling flowing springs. He helped his parents rearing cattle, working in the fields and consumed his rice and fresh fish-curry with gusto, while Reaney was brought in the wilderness of Ontario. He grew up as a farm boy helping at threshing, straightening up cellar, holding bags for barley, cleaning out chicken house, pulling onion. He was also the chief baby-sitter for his younger siblings, and mother-helper, getting vegetables ready to sell, washing floors, peddling peas and balls of cottage cheese on the streets of Stratford, hoeing turnips, digging potatoes, picking raspberries. Both are blessed abundantly with creative faculties. They have testified this through their great contribution to their respective literatures through poetry, short story, novel, drama and criticism. And they are both regionalists at once local as well as universal.

Reaney hails from Ontario, Canada. The name *Ontario* comes from the Iroquois word *Kanadario* meaning 'sparkling water', for one sixth of its terrain is covered by rivers and lakes with 1068980 km<sup>2</sup> territory. The population of the province is 10 millions. It is the country's most heavily populated province.

Being a regionalist Reaney restricts himself to Stratford his home town, Toronto where he received his education and London where he spent the major part of his life. Thus the tales he tells are rather the tales of South-Western Ontario or Souwesto. There is an autobiographical strain in his writings. In *Three Desks* he mirrors his days of employment at the University of Manitoba. *Colours in the Dark* is a story of Reaney from the time of his birth near Stratford, Ontario upto the age of forty. It contains a whole lot

of documentary material related to the places, events, history and peoples of South Western Ontario. This material becomes as much vivid as its background. *Listen to the Wind* too reflects a few autobiographical details like references to Gothic farmhouse near Stratford.

Naik hails from Volvoi, Goa. He is like a tree with its roots firmly established in the Goan soil and its branches opening out to breathe the winds that blow from the Indian skies. Naik does not include factual details like real names of places in his drama, but indirectly suggests the environment which Goans would relate to "their familiar country." However, the material is local : the setting, the language, the customs and their way of life show that it relates to the region of Goa.

As is the case of Canada, Ontario too is a multicultural land inhabited by the immigrants from Italy, Germany, China, Holland, Japan, England and Portugal. Thus it is a melting pot where racial amalgamation and social and cultural assimilations are an ongoing process. Celebrated musicians like Greg Curnoe, Jack Chambers are Ontarians. Reaney is a pianist. I would like to place the drama of James Reaney from this melting pot of Canada vis-à-vis the drama of Pundalik Naik from another melting pot, Goa. Goa too, was ruled by the most prestigious dynasties all over India in the different periods of history. It was also invaded and reigned over by Islamic rulers, Dutch, and Portuguese. Today Goa is a land mainly of Hindus, Christians and Muslims. It is one of the most fascinating tourist centres in India. This verdant coastal strip which we know as Goa is 110 km long NS and 65km broad with its wooded hills, flowing rivers and sun-drenched beaches. It has been described by conquerors, travellers, poets and evangelists as :

Goa Dourada, Golden Goa, Perola do orient, Pearl of the East, Roma do Oriente, Rome of the East.<sup>25</sup>

Mario Cabral Esa quotes John Fryer, a British physician who visited Goa :

Goa presented a noble appearance on ten miles up the river. Standing upon seven hills..... a Rome in India both for absoluteness and fabric.<sup>26</sup>

At one time, every major dance band east of Suez and west of Singapore hired Goan musicians. And every major hotel and international luxury liner employed Goan chefs and butlers. This epicureanism was not confined to Western art forms or expression. Celebrated vocalists of classical Indian music like Kishori Amonkar, Moghubai Kurdikar, Kesarbai Kerkar, Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle are all Goans.

It should be noted that both Reaney and Naik arrived on the literary scene around 1960's. The literature of their respective regions was still in infancy ; especially the contributions to dramatic field were sketchy. It is against this backdrop that we should consider their contribution to their respective theatres.

Though born in different countries with different cultures they are endowed with the faculty of imagination. Reaney had a good academic career leading to the Doctorate ; whereas, Naik had to give up education at the undergraduate level. However, both are voracious readers, lovers of art, perpetually nurturing in their hearts a deep concern for society.

The anti-colonial movement and the dawn of independence in both nations brought the promise and hope of the resurgence and rebirth of their dramatic muses. But the euphoric people soon discovered that their dreams were far from realized. The masters of cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism threatened both their cultural and political identities In Wole Soyinka's words :

We have been blandly invited to submit ourselves to a second epoch of colonialism --- this time by a universal humanoid abstraction. It is time to respond to this new threat.<sup>27</sup>

Both Reaney and Naik have complete faith in the power of theatre. They believe it can be made part of the forces working for change. The existing style of theatre did not satisfy them. They were pained by the gulf between city and village theatres, fostered by colonialism. To put in the words of Badal Sircar :

India has been a colonial country for so long that its cities have acquired a colonial character having been created basically to serve colonial interests of a foreign power<sup>28</sup>

The same was true of its theatre. But in spite of the popularity of the traditional and folk theatres, the villages, the ideas and themes remain mostly stagnant, unconnected with their own problems.

Secondly, the theatres of both Reaney and Naik emphasize on audience participation. Their theatre means being within and experiencing, not viewing and hearing.

This goes with Badal Sircar's concept of theatre as :

A composite of four way flow of influences: actor to actor, audience to actor, actor to audience, audience to audience.<sup>29</sup>

Thus Sircar Reaney and Naik allow the audience and the actor to impinge on each other.

Thirdly, their theatre uses the human body to convey the meaning of the play. They also aim at self-development in their actors. Their approach is the group approach. Their plays have no rounded clear-cut characters.

Reaney's plays have a troubled fast pace. Scenes change, things happen at breakneck speed. The plays are like a panorama of events.

Pundalik Naik's theatre reveals concern and responsibility towards society. He wields his pen like a hand grenade to explode any exploitative system. He is all for human rights. His writing bubbles with a revolutionary fervour. He analyzes the society through his plays. He is a spokesman for the poor, fallen and the downtrodden in his society. His

plays throb with strong compassion for his fellowmen and a deep involvement with social and moral issues.

In fact, his are 'the plays of conscience'. He records the experiences of his society and is the voice of vision of his time. He functions as a watchdog of social conscience. He grapples directly with the social conditions and political events of modern India and even though his plays contain acute psychological explorations, his characters are always seen first as representation of particular social roles or tendencies.

There are no small roles ; there are no less or more important actors in his productions. Each actor is allowed to confront the text and interpret it himself. This is the workshopping theatre of Reaney. In this connection Sircar remarks :

The new theatre demands different languages of performance altogether the performer has to take off his mask.<sup>30</sup>

Like Reaney, Sircar and Naik subject their actors to physical training and breathing exercise. Like his American counterparts Reaney's writing does not arise from a luxury of over-abundance and superfluity, but from despair deprivation and degradation in the social milieu. The same is very much true of Naik. Naik is also influenced by the folk theatre forms such as Powada of Maharashtra, Dashawatar of Goa and Yakshagana of Karnataka. So his theatre is the synthesis of the East and the West.

Reaney along with his director Keith Turnbull established NDWT company in 1975 with the purpose of staging plays. Naik stages his plays through different theatre groups such as *Saanmachi*, *Kala Shuklendu* and *Sri Nagesh Natyasamaj*.

Reacting to a question on Canadian drama James Reaney once said :

Well, if you are going to ask question of a playwright, I think the best place to close is to get him talking about actual theatres he's been in. If they've had any power over him, it just might be that what he is trying to do is help build a society where this fact keeps repeating itself over and over again until our whole nation loses its stiffness and becomes itself a sort of theatre. Not the sort of theatre it is now where technology (descended from

experiments with organ pipes and mechanical clock and fountains, evidently creates ever more horrifying and sinister spectacles ; no but a place where we ourselves, with just our bodies and the simplest of props (albeit in abundance) available to everyone create a civilization where it finally seems true that to be wise is to know how to play. <sup>31</sup>

To the question “Why do you write ?” Naik answered to Mukesh Thaly :

I write because I want to present the experiences of my life. I don't claim that whatever I write is unique and unusual. It might have been penned down by someone else but I present my experience about that subject, as I view it. I am a part of my society and want to project the sorrows, miseries, problems of my people. If I don't write, I feel I may just explode... I touch the untouched arena, of social life around me. I endeavour to exhibit the problems and possible solutions to the masses at grass-root level through my writings. When the reader is stunned with an experience, the joy of that creativity is unparalleled. In a particular mood, when I boil myself in the chemicalcauldron of creativity, I love myself and my commitment as a writer is renewed afresh. Literature should make the reader move towards being fully humane. It should transform him. Moreover, the reader should be made to see his image in this beautiful mirror of literature so that he can correct himself. <sup>32</sup>

### **Scope of the Present Study**

Both the dramatists under study are prolific writers. It is a modest attempt at understanding and evaluating these two writers of different regions, and to gain an insight into the contemporary trends in Canadian Drama and Konkani Drama in India, with special reference to Reaney and Naik. Specially for the Konkani Drama much printed criticism material is not yet available. However, critical talks, discussions at seminars, commentaries have been made use of in this study. The criteria for selection of plays for analysis lie in their relevance to the present contemporary times. The selected plays of the two dramatists are :



### **James Reaney**

- *The Killdeer* (1960)
- *The Easter Egg* (1962)
- *The Three Desks* (1967)
- *Colours in the Dark* (1969)
- *Listen to the Wind* (1972)
- *The Donnellys* (1977)
- *The Di: missal* (1977)

### **Pundalik Naik**

- *Khann Khann Mati* (1977)
- *Raktakhev* (1979)
- *Rakhann* (1979)
- *Suring* (1982)
- *Shabay Shabay Bhoujansamaj* (1986)
- *Pipall Petla* (1986)
- *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* (1986)

### **The Plan**

This INTRODUCTORY Chapter mainly aims at an understanding of the concept of Comparative Literature. It makes an attempt to present a brief survey of Canadian and Indian theatre with special reference to Goan theatre. It introduces the two dramatists under study and their work. It points out common elements in their life and works. It presents the plan of the study.

Chapter II entitled **THE WORLDS OF JAMES REANEY AND PUNDALIK NAIK** is devoted to the detailed analysis of the representative plays of the two dramatists who are at the forefront of contemporary dramatists in their regional theatres in their respective countries.

Chapter III is entitled **THE VEHICLES OF VISION**. Both the dramatists present a vivid vision of reality. Only after gaining recognition as poets, they turned to drama. To depict the vision of life, they have made use of imagery and symbols drawn from "familiar country". Their use of imagery is functional and not decorative.

Both Reaney and Naik write a language that is alive, rich and suggestive. Since they both made their debut in the field of literature through poetry, the language they use in their theatre contains a very strong poetic imagery. They both nurture a passion for the theatrical use of traditional folk songs. Both have an ear for language with an intuitive sense of what will work on stage. They seem to be convinced that the theatre they write for, needs above all, a language of its own and they have been determined to evolve such a language.

Chapter IV entitled **TECHNIQUES** examines the dramatic techniques employed by the two playwrights. Reaney and Naik have brought a new vitality to drama by their technical forms as well as by their involvement in workshops and the production of their plays. At times Reaney invites audience participation, allows actors to improvise and experiment with impressionistic sets, symbolic costuming and choral speech. They both give extensive stage directions in all their plays. They associate themselves with their directors and actors and make use of props, songs, chorus, mime, chanting, stamping, clapping and so on for the best audio-visual stage effects. It is undeniably true that both

have succeeded in infusing a new life to their respective theatres by using the innovative dramatic devices.

Chapter V is CONCLUSION. It establishes that both James Reaney and Pundalik Naik have enriched the regional theatres in their respective countries. The character delineation of these two dramatists in the plays is very distinct. Reaney identifies the characters by their names and they are divided into bad or good characters. However, Naik gives a representative nature to his characters and calls them "he, she, they" and so on.

Neither Reaney, nor Naik is a propagandist. Social concern is quite obvious in both the dramatists. It is intense in the plays of Pundalik Naik, but implicit in the plays of James Reaney. Sex theme is very much prominent in the plays of both the dramatists. There are child protagonists only in the plays of Reaney. He, being an academician and researcher has written a documentary play entitled *The Donnelly's*. Naik's *Suring* and *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* revolutionized the Konkani stage with experimental techniques for the first time in the history of Goa.

The Chapter concludes with the strengths of Reaney and Naik. They have shown a consistent development and growth in their career in the last three decades since their emergence as playwrights. The characteristic feature of their achievements is their striving for clarity and discarding of more obvious devices, while they have maintained a searching examination of reality. This reestablishes them as regionalists, while at the same time plunging them or rather transcending into all encompassing universalism, which makes their plays meaningful to everyman.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE WORLDS OF JAMES REANEY AND PUNDALIK NAIK

The chapter proposes to argue that the created worlds of Reaney and Naik, though depict different environment and cultural milieu belonging to their region or familiar country, yet they share the common focus --- the increasing depravity of a society.

The first part of the chapter elaborates the concepts used. In the second part, the emerging patterns and issues from the selected plays of Reaney and Naik are examined in some detail. The third part gives an elaborate comparative analysis of their created world.

#### I

According to Diane Bessai :

In its positive sense regionalism means rooted, indigenous, shaped by a specific social, cultural and physical milieu. It reflects the past as well as the present and at its best absorbs innumerable influences from its borders, particularly as these have bearing on the informing regional perspective.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, regionalism shouldn't be mistaken to be narrow, limited, parochial, backward, out-dated or isolationist. In her essay Diane Bessai does accept that :

The term 'regional' creates bad vibrations in the collective aesthetic psyche - perhaps second only to the word 'provincial' - which suggests subjugation to some central cultural influence or control.<sup>2</sup>

Basically, the images portrayed in a literature distinguish one literature from another. The purpose of the images is to evoke or reflect a particular environment. They might also constitute regional folklore or idiom.

Regionalism is a nexus of place, time and culture. Geographical implications cannot be isolated from historical or cultural realities. Man's habitat is subject to history and cultural heritage. A sense of identity is largely, what is derived from the confluence of these things that add up to regionalism.

The salient features of regional drama at any given moment of time and space are :

- i) Specific Milieu - Regional drama establishes the validity of a specific milieu as the subject for dramatic interpretation.
- ii) Audience interest - It is nurtured and sustained by the audience interest it thereby generates.
- iii) Vision through experiment - It feels free to experiment in style and stagings in order to communicate its particular vision in our particular way.
- iv) Values - It is a powerful force against the lurement of the glossy world of commercialism, vanity and superficiality. It makes us look within ourselves and our culture, learn to appreciate what is ethereal, reorient ourselves in human values and emerge out as refined and cultured human beings. <sup>3</sup>

The very existence of a theatre depends on common ground, on the congruence of the universe of playwright and audience will credit. If his values and his problems and his attitudes differ from theirs, then his play does not move them. When a play purports to speak to them, to depict their culture and describe their values they will not willingly suspend theirs if it fails to do so.

In other words, to understand a world created by a dramatist we should know what is meant by "cultural milieu" or "cultural situation". The notion of "milieu" indicates the territory in which the dramatist works and whose qualities are absorbed in a play. As the territory is more a matter of attitude than of geographical location, so the immediate



cultural situation is a milieu - the ideas, attitudes and institutions that distinguish the Canadian mind from the Indian mind.

Images and programs for actions that go to make up a cultural situation depend ultimately on what we may call, for want of a more precise term, "cultural attitude". Attitudes are the internal constituents of situation and milieu, psychological orientations from which images and patterns of action proceed.

It goes without saying that the force, such cultural attitudes exert on society is directly proportionate to the credence which its members give them.

Three major categories of literary and sub-literary expression reflect and shape cultural attitudes : (1) The literary tradition (2) folk myth : tales and legends, capsulated in popular sub-literary forms (3) "Authoritative" analyses of institutions and behaviour patterns popularized from a scientific background.

Literary tradition is a carrier of those attitudes which the group shares at its origin and which still persists at least in vestigial form. It includes the great formulation of attitudes found in a literary heritage of culture of a particular region. Folk myth and its surrogates are products of those specific experiences that make a culture unique. Myth has been defined in various ways.

Warren and Wellek define myth as :

Myth is a narrative irrational... and comes to mean any anonymously composed story telling of origins and destinies, the explanation a society offers its young of why the world is and why we do as we do, its pedagogic images of the nature and destiny of man. <sup>4</sup>

According to Alan Watts :

Myth is to be defined as a complex of stories - some no doubt fact, and some fantasy - which for various reasons, human beings regard as demonstrations of the inner meaning of the universe of human life. <sup>5</sup>

Durkheim opines :

....the function of myths is to bind a society, create structures governed by rules and habits....<sup>6</sup>

Folk-tale and legend are specific interpretations of ethnic experiences that express primarily the ideals and aspirations of the group. Authoritative analyses attempt to define cultural attitudes by a sociological or psychological exploration of institutions, mores or behaviour patterns.

The dramatic milieu comprises the immediate cultural situation, dramatic conventions and traditions. The dramatic milieu is the atmosphere in which the playwright works. The dramatic milieu functions primarily as a matrix for the playwright and as stated earlier it provides a common ground between stage and audiences. The milieu appears not as a sociological or psychological treatise or as a series of rhetorical flourishes, but as it is dramatized in plot and personæ. In order to gain an insight into 'the world' of a writer one has to understand the sociology of modern drama.

According to George Lukács :

The drama has now taken on new social dimensions. This development became necessary, and necessary at this particular time, because of the specific social situation of the bourgeois. For bourgeois drama is the first to grow out of conscious class confrontation ; the first with the set intention of expressing the pattern of thought and emotion, as well as the relations with other classes, of a class struggling for power and freedom.....<sup>7</sup>

John Howard Lawson States :

The essential character of drama is social conflict---persons against other persons, or individuals against groups or groups against other groups or individuals or groups against social or natural forces - in which the conscious will, exerted for the accomplishment of specific and understandable aims, is sufficiently strong to bring the conflict to a point of crisis...<sup>8</sup>

The contemporary drama is very much based on social conflict. While discussing novelist's craft Joseph Conrad states :

In truth every novelist must begin by creating for himself a world, great or little, in which he can honestly believe. This world cannot be made otherwise than in his own image ; it is fated to remain individual and a little mysterious, and yet it must resemble something already familiar to the experience ; the thoughts and sensations of his readers. <sup>9</sup>

This quotation could be applied to the dramatist's craft too. The artist, while creating his own world must be cautious, lest he force his own sensations into some too - convenient pattern. That is, he might not project mere reality.

Eugene Ionesco writes :

..... I am not opposed to make - believe. On the contrary, I have always considered imaginative truth to be more profound, more loaded with significance, than everyday reality. Realism, socialist or not, never looks beyond reality. It narrows it down, diminishes it, falsifies it, and leaves out of account the obsessive truths that are most fundamental to us : love, death, and wonder. It presents man in a perspective that is narrow and alien : truth lies in our dreams in our imagination : every moment of our lives confirms this statement. <sup>10</sup>

While commenting on the nature of realism in a play Ionesco states :

Everything we dream is "realizable". Reality does not have to be: it is simply what it is. It is the dreamer, the thinker or the scientist who is revolutionary; it is he who tries to change the world. <sup>11</sup>

ii

## A] The plays of James Reaney

*The Killdeer* (1972) like *The Sun and the Moon* (1962) and *Listen to the Wind* (1972) owes an enormous debt to the melodramatic vision which he first encountered in the evangelical world. The earlier version of *The killdeer* was published in 1960 and Reaney presented the revised version in 1972. The revised version which I have used for this study, has been compressed into two acts. However, the basic vision remains the same.

The play displays Reaney's fondness for melodrama. According to Ross Woodman:

The characters are extremely simplified and at times merely personified in a childlike vision of good and evil.<sup>12</sup>

*The Killdeer* revolves around the bird of the title Killdeer. It is the bird that cries over town just before a storm. Its presence and sound are enthralling. Reaney says in the author's note :

it is the very spirit of long walks in the fall or early spring over empty fields and deserted pastures.<sup>13</sup>

The killdeer sound, the killdeer cage, a pair of scissors and a few toy musical instruments are the crucial aspects of the setting. The killdeer feather, the silhouette figures of Clifford and Eli could be mimed, so says the author.<sup>14</sup>

The play, although set in the interior of Mrs. Gardner's house, has lots of bare stage around it so that Harry can ride his bicycle across the stage as if down a street and Becky can be seen for quite a space before she makes her entry into Mrs. Gardner's cottage and Madam Fay makes her exit in the last scene, both the acts are extremely meaningful.

The first act of *The Killdeer* sets the theme, the necessity of the young freeing themselves from slavery to their parents, if they are to mature, and the extreme reluctance of the parents to let this happen. The protagonist is Harry Gardner an acne'd unprepossessing young man dominated by his fussy, pious, bossy mother. Her refrain is, "I feel I don't know my boy's heart any longer" or when addressing Harry himself she says, "I wish you'd open your heart to me", to which he replies :

When I'm asleep  
Why don't you take off the top of my head  
And put your hand in ? What could I show you  
Mother, except yourself ? (*The Killdeer*, Act I, sc. ii)

He believes that if he could only get married, he'd be all right, and the girl who is obviously the one for him, the egg-girl Rebecca from near the Huckleberry Marsh, is already known to him. But certain complex matters make this union unlikely, at least for the present.

Harry's situation is bad but it is ideal compared with Rebecca's. It is Madam Fay who briefs Mrs. Gardner and the audience on Rebecca's background and on her own, in a thoroughly arresting expository scene. This background is so rich in grotesque detail that Mrs. Gardner, who has never used cosmetics in her life, buys several just to keep the painted lady in the cottage to feed her hunger for sagaciousness. We learn that Madam Fay, vital, pagan, and dressed in an elegant blouse with a dark skirt stylishly gored in front, (*The Killdeer*, Act I, sc. i) has a son Eli who is nineteen and hates her ; she has left his upbringing to the hired man Clifford who, we learn later, has exercised a sinister hold over the boy, ever since his childhood. Years later, Madam Fay married Eli's father and having tried to "virgin up a bit before her marriage" (*The Killdeer* Act II, sc.iii) ran away to Buffalo for a weekend with her husband Lorimer. As a result her husband shot Lorimer's wife and two little sons and then shot himself in the brain. As a child, Madam Fay once killed the killdeer of her foster sister, Rebecca's mother in an attempt to evoke hatred for herself since she felt unloved. Although extremely hurt, her sister didn't react ; she kept the decaying bird full of worms in her dress pocket for several days ; hence the attempt at revenge by stealing her sister's husband. The act of killing the bird had been creating a lot of guilt and psychic complexes in the mind of Madam Fay. One of Lorimer's children, Rebecca was saved, who since then has run the farm alone. Rebecca's father is in the mental hospital at London, taking his bed apart and putting it together again, a suitable fate for the man who unwittingly eloped with the whore of Babylon. Madam Fay now

travels the country roads in a pink Baby Austin with silver curlicues and purple plush inside, selling “beauty”, with the story of her past for bait when sales are poor. Seizing up Mrs. Gardner as a church-going biddy, she tells her :

You'd buy  
The rouge pot Jezebel used the day she was tossed  
Off her balcony to the dogs just to see  
The woman that causes four deaths and one of the splatteriest nervous  
breakdowns I ever saw. (*Killdeer*, Act I, sc. i)

And Mrs. Gardner buys a pot of vanishing cream, a pair of toenail scissors and a card of fancy hairpins. Then arrives Mrs. Budge, a poor friend of Mrs. Gardner. With the help of elderblossom wine they try to piece together the whole macabre tale read years ago in the newspaper. They dart about the stage - shrieking, cawing vultures, circling over bits of carrion.

When Rebecca arrives later in Act I to deliver Mrs. Gardner's eggs, she announces that she is to be married the next day to Eli Fay, this having been arranged by Clifford. For Rebecca her marriage to Eli is “love's solution to the puzzle of hatred.” (*The Killdeer*, Act I, sc. i)

When Rebecca goes away she leaves behind her two brown paper silhouettes of the best man and the groom ; she has taken these to town as measurements for the wedding suits. Almost struck dumb by Rebecca's disclosure that she is marrying the son of the man who killed her mother and two brothers, the son of the woman who committed adultery with her father. Mrs. Gardner and Mrs. Budge drain their glasses of wine, seize the papermen, cry out that their partners are stark naked, and in one of the play's most theatrically effective scenes, dance.

By now Harry who is a clerk in the local branch of the Royal Bank of Canada has been needed to fill an empty chair at the banker's dinner party. While there he has got

rather drunk, never before having been “tempted by alcohol” (*The Killdeer*, Act I, sc. v), as his mother puts it, and in the rather confused events which follow, has been proposed to the banker’s daughter Vernelle. On returning home, he hears of Rebecca’s plans and realizes that he has lost her, still having only learned about her that her favourite bird is the killdeer. Under his mother’s prodding, and although he’d “like to be a tramp or work on a farm or may be both and read difficult books on easy haystacks,” (*The Killdeer*, Act I, sc. v), he returns to tell Vernelle that he will marry her. Thus Act I ends with both Harry and Rebecca going to marry someone else.

The Act II begins with Mrs. Budge and Mrs. Delta singing, “Oh, the river of time .....” (*The Killdeer*, Act II, sc.i), whilst cleaning Mrs. Gardner’s cottage as instructed by Harry who is supposed to return to his home town from Osgoode Hall. Much water has flown in Reaney’s ‘Antler River’<sup>15</sup> by then. We learn from the conversation among Mrs. Budge, Mrs. Delta and Madam Fay that Harry has already been divorced from Vernelle who sent him to Osgoode Hall Law School. After having admitted to the bar, he immediately sought divorce from his prosperous, yet haughty wife, the vulture Vernelle. That broke his mother’s heart and she is no more.

Madam Fay has come in search of Rebecca who has been accused of stabbing with scissors the hired man Clifford Hopkins, on the ground that he pointed at her before dying. Madam Fay has always had an affair with the hired man before her marriage to Mr. Fay and during the years after Mr. Fay shot himself. He had told Eli, “I am through with your mother” (*The Killdeer*, Act II, sc. v) and had been now aspiring to own Rebecca and her well-kept farm with lots of grain and beasts.

Rebecca on sensing the trouble runs away for her life. She is lonely and afraid. She finds an injured killdeer with a broken wing and she makes a cage for it with the desire of

treating it until it is alright. She meets Harry at his place and on learning that she is being chased by Madam Fay as well as the cops, Harry proposes to run away somewhere together on his bicycle. They spend the summer hiding in the most retired spots of the countryside, hiding in swamp, back field, gravel pit and deserted loghouse assisted and assisted by friends.

A month later they both organize the birthday party for Eli in Harry's cottage. The celebrations are interrupted by Madam Fay's arrival who has it in her nature itself. Harry hides Rebecca before Madam Fay comes in. In the encounter with his mother Madam Fay Eli reveals that he knows the real killer of Clifford Hopkins and points at Madam Fay herself and she haughtily accepts her crime with a sense of gratification. She feels that Clifford deserved to be stabbed for giving herself up for someone younger.

Yet, Clifford points at innocent Rebecca before dying. Eli thinks that perhaps he loved her so much and wanted to take her along in the other world. Wicked Madam Fay suggests to Eli that he should help in getting Rebecca hanged so that he will have Harry as his friend forever and she herself will never be suspected of her crime.

Madam Fay is a living haunting ghost. She threatens Eli saying that if at all he reveals the truth about her murder, she will be hanged and then she'll return from the other world whilst Eli is sleeping all alone, and scare him to death.

Clifford called Eli 'Bunny' and Eli hated it. Perhaps, Eli desired to grow into a mature adult. But Clifford wouldn't allow it. He wanted Eli forever to be dependent upon him. The hired man Clifford aspires to be the owner of the farmhouse. He seized this opportunity when Madam Fay eloped with her sister's husband Mr. Lorimer. Clifford convinced Mr. Fay that Mr. Lorimer didn't actually love Madam Fay and that he loved his own wife and children, thus instigating him to kill Mr. Lorimer's family which Clifford



knew would end in shooting himself dead. Clifford purposefully sent twelve year old Eli to see what his father had done, only to find four corpses in pools of blood. On his way back when Clifford met him in the fields, he knew, he says :

I knew by the look on your face that I  
Owned you and your father's farm now as long as  
I liked and for as long as they lasted. (*The Killdeer*, Act II, sc.v)

Thus the gothic circumstances made Eli revert to his childhood. Since then he hated his mother and blamed her for the tragic happenings. He felt totally insecure. Consequently, he sought refuge into Clifford. He would be scared of darkness and would forever need his company especially in the night. Madam Fay too, doesn't want her son to grow into an adult. She wants him to cling to herself. If he tells the truth to the cops, she is sure to be hanged and she threatens to haunt him wherever he goes.

Madam Fay wants to take Eli back home lest he tell her secret. However, Eli refuses to go with her. At this time, Rebecca imitates her mother's footsteps. Madam Fay is all flustered. She feels the house going round in a spinning top. Then Rebecca appears, pretends to limp and circles round the room. She tells Madam Fay to catch herself. Madam Fay accepts the bait and chases Rebecca, who disappears dodging the former among the willows.

Madam Fay returns unsuccessful and is determined to take Eli away. Eli is almost ready to go for she has instilled all sorts of fears in him. Just then Rebecca reappears. Madam Fay doesn't try to catch her any more for she knows she can't. She consoles herself saying that the police will do the job. Rebecca thanks Eli for helping her to hide from the cops and hands over to him the encaged bird they had been taking care of. As Eli proceeds to Madam Fay with the cage, the latter, on realizing that it's a killdeer is terribly horrified. She orders him to stay back and to keep the killdeer away. For the first time she

is scared of Eli who reminds her that before she had run away with Mr. Lorimer, he had shown her a dead killdeer he found in the pasture. She had backed away then too. He demands of her to tell them who Clifford should have pointed at while he was dying.

Madam Fay refuses to do so with all her might. In that case, Eli orders her to start the car and drive away somewhere very very far into the never ending expanse. It seems to be her turn now to run, keep hiding from place to place, for Eli promises her not to tell anybody who Clifford should have pointed at until morning.

The play ends with Eli making the first step towards adulthood after many years of infantile regression by handing over his toys to Rebecca who will establish her family with Harry.

The atmosphere of macabre prevails all through the play. Reaney is extremely sensitive to our psychic complexes and the way he depicts the change in the biological response of Madam Fay due to the sudden recall of the wicked past by the recurring insertion of a little bird like the killdeer or its feather in the play, is really amazing.

The tangle of perverted sexual and familiar patterns, oedipal attachments, adultery, murder, homosexuality, mutilation and others all jumble up together in the world of *The Killdeer*. In the context of the fertility theme, all these perversions are death, annihilation, the refusal to do battle against the evil which haunt the world like a destroying monster.

The thematic pattern of *The Easter Egg* (1962) is related to mother-son relationship as in the *The Sun and the Moon* and *The Killdeer*. In *The Sun and the Moon* there is the conflict between enlightenment, symbolized by the sun, and tyranny and ignorance symbolized by the shadows. Bethel who would like to forever possess her victim Kenneth is the counterpart of Mrs. Shade and Madam Fay. Kenneth's escape from being "an attic child" is associated with an entry into a green pastoral world of innocence

where God is revealed. In most of Reaney's writing there is a clock which ticks towards inevitable death. It is defeated by Kenneth's new awareness of himself and the world. When through the help of loving substitute parents, through the sound of piano and music and through skillful language Kenneth is able to shake off his traumatized childhood and its games, he leaves forever the home of his captivity.

In *The Killdeer* as well as *The Easter egg*, the human figures moving towards the new order of reality at the end succeed in doing so, through a technique of finding images appropriate to their condition. This involves exploration of a mental world below the surface of consciousness and the breaking free of the trauma caused by some horrifying childhood experience.

There is the notorious instance of the batkilling. As an index of human cruelty, the batkilling is comparable to animal deaths in other Reaney plays such as *The Killdeer* in which Madam Fay kills her forster sister's killdeer ; *Three Desks* in which Niles kills Waterman's bird and within *The Easter Egg* itself George kills Kenneth's cat, Cocoanut. Such cruelty is the expression of a hidden evil. The batkilling has perverse sexual overtones and completes the seduction of George Sloan by Bethel which attains psychological absurdity which in turn compels George to marry Bethel because he has killed a bat.

The relationships of five characters are caught in a neurotic and repressed web. Bethel Henry is the stepmother of both Polly Henry and Kenneth Ralph. She has dominated their lives since the deaths of their fathers : Bishop Henry by lightning and Ralph Ralph by his own hand. Polly has managed to escape. Kenneth is still imprisoned as an attic child by the shock of his father's suicide, and Bethel's cunning since that time.

Even the two characters outside the house George Sloan and Dr. Ira Hill, that Bethel has conquered are drawn into the web. Polly's fiancé is George Sloan, a divinity student who is also a secret childhood enemy of Kenneth, and it was at Bethel's suggestion that he killed Cocanut, some fourteen years before.

When that Kitten disappeared Kenneth really went crazy. It most made for his breakdown (Act II, sc. ix)

Ira Hill, the local doctor, has been a lover of Bethel's and a friend of Polly and Kenneth. He sides with Polly and against George and Bethel, over the chance of recovery for Kenneth. Here, as in the style of *The Killdeer* is an interior design which allows the story of Kenneth's recovery to be read several ways. To Bethel, Kenneth and his enclosed childhood is a minor chapter in the novel Ira calls :

..... The Bethel story !

One : comes down from the mountain  
Two : scrubs the professor's kitchen  
Three : scrubs the professor in his tub  
Four : Kenneth's father blows his head off  
Five : comes into Kenneth and also money  
And house and estate and status and --- (Act I, sc.ii)

Thus it is the slam-bang rise of this heroic tyrant from the kitchen-hearth to the head of the household. Bethel is planning to give a dinner party for the university élite, an event that will mark her acceptance by the most exclusive circles of the town. At such a moment, Bethel shows no inclination to resign her position to the weaklings around her. When Polly invokes *Cinderella* as the story of her own life, Bethel's calculated reaction of self-pity is revealing. To her mind, the essential reality behind *Cinderella* is not the rise from the kitchen hearth to the kingdom, but rather the raw competition between the stepmother's family and Cinderella. Polly obviously believes in *Cinderella*, hoping that someday a glass slipper will make escape a possibility for both Kenneth and herself.

Unfortunately, George Sloan (no Prince charming) proves himself all too susceptible to the sterile power of Bethel.

George and Bethel together, parody the loving educational scenes with Polly and Kenneth. The inversion is completed when George loses his identity in succumbing to Bethel's proposal of marriage, while Kenneth establishes his conscious identity in proposing marriage to Polly, a proposal that is refused. Quite in keeping with the dark side of Reaney's humour is the devastating speed with which Bethel is able to force George's submerged self-hatred into open :

George : I detested my father, he begat me after a stirring book on old Gothic verb tenses in a cold library .... He killed all the love in me and paralyzed all the will --- like a glowworm and a snail.

Bethel : .... (and --- mother ?).....

George : She'd never wait till I could start my meal. She'd pitch in and feed it to me like a baby till I was twelve. She just shovelled it into my mouth. (Act II, sc. ix)

Bethel also skillfully exploits George's childhood hatred of Kenneth, finally pummeling him over sexual role - playing. In a perversion of the entire idea of sexuality and fertility, she runs him down in the weird chicken-and-egg argument over "who has the baby first ?" Men or women ? As Bethel snares George in her arms of good and evil, she parallels the success of Charlotte Shade in crushing Stephen's brief revolt in *The Sun and the Moon*.

Conflicting impulses in the artistic personality of the author balance these manic qualities in *The Easter Egg*. So, the human face of "The Bethel Story" is met and reversed by the events centred upon her stepson. Bethel is female, aggressive, lowborn, witty, greedy, versus Kenneth, who is male, passive, apparently catatonic ("pretty knives, forks and spoons"), born to wealth and dreamily contemplative.

The dinner party day has been charged with omens for Kenneth's future. It is the day his godmother Mrs. Fuller has died, who gave Kenneth the Easter egg shortly after the death of his father as a talisman of innocence and hope. Wicked Bethel buries the gift secretly which is found after long years of burial exactly on the day the grandmother is dead. Just like the burned egg, enclosed in a box, Kenneth is the young prince kept ignorant and a serving boy in his own castle. Now that it has been found, Kenneth has found himself too. The grandmother's wish for Kenneth has been fulfilled. This is the underlying fairytale beneath the absurd surface of *The Easter Egg*.

The scene in which Polly continues her lessons with Kenneth is quite the opposite of "neat and tidy" writing. Tension grows with the impatience of Kenneth at his slowness and inability, in contrast with the healing generous nature of Polly, who is a little nervous about the late arrival of George.

The serious quality of the scene apparent in the long lists of civilized objects is undercut by ironies. Long lists of words are vital in Reaney's later works. The reams of words indicate first the tragicomic disparity between the words Kenneth has "learned" and the lack of meaning that many hold for him. Etiquette is an awkward ordeal, the threshold a struggle, and his recovery seems impossibly far away. Even Polly realizes that something more extreme is needed to bring Kenneth up (as the imagery of the play suggests), out of the water :

Most of those words you've no idea of their meaning, but we're saving them in your mind anyhow ..... (Act I, sc. iv)

Her efforts to give Kenneth control of his environment through language also have an anxiously self-preoccupied air that verges on the short sighted. As Polly tartly criticizes the posture and grace of others, she fails to notice that Kenneth has said something fascinating to the clock :

Little clock, I'll tell the clock - doctor to come and put all your wheels to sleep. (Act I, sc. iv)

Kenneth is repeating the opening lines of *The Easter egg*, containing Bethel's threat of euthanasia to the clock. We realize that Kenneth has made a crucial connection between the future of the clock and his own question. If a mere clock may be physically threatened, what would Bethel force on a human who attempted to thwart her ?

George Sloan is contested by the opposing forces of Polly and Bethel ; he is a diseased specimen of false maturity. George can be mischievous and weak, decent, sick and sadistic. Through George Reaney focuses the drift of *The Easter egg* into moral chaos. George is superficially much more adult than Kenneth, but as indicated in the lengthy courtship of Polly, the maturity masks a fundamental uncertainty.

George is unable to integrate his childhood anxieties into a stable personality. In an instructive contrast, Kenneth stops the toy train as it bears down on Anna Karenina, unlike the colossal toy train wrecks. George also provides a moral and psychological balance to Ira who changes sides during the play, becoming more poetic and loving as George dissolves into an aspect of Bethel. Ira offers to make love with Bethel if she will allow Kenneth to come to him, while Bethel uses Kenneth as a foil in her assault on George. There is a sharp contrast for Ira, self-sacrifice, forgery obsession and inertia. George is a failure as a child as well as an adult.

If *The Easter egg* were only "The Bethel story", George Sloan might almost be the anti-hero : self disgusted, repressed and a cynical opportunist. Instead, he plays the role of depraved child pathological villain. Twice there are curious scenes demonstrating the strength and awareness of his opponents. On two occasions Kenneth and Ira the true heroes - exhibit a common force able to dispose quickly of the supposed 'normality' of George's realizations.

A second interpretation would hold that what is surely paramount in this act is that Kenneth does break out. The binding flash and magical sound when Kenneth again sees the egg announce the (re)birth of his character :

No, she's wrong, she's wrong. I had to have something if I was going to keep my head above water. No father, there was the kitten, no kitten, there was this. No this ; there was immediately a kin over everything. Bethel's skin. When Polly gave me back this, this (He walks about holding the egg above his head) it was like being circumcised of a tight fold of skin that held you back from ever quite touching anything or being a father or seeing ... it hurt like a rablast with a sharp bright silver knife it cut away Bethel's skin over my eyes and I saw. (Act III, sc. xii)

Kenneth becomes secure enough in his renewed identity to be anything he wishes even macabre. The last words spoken by his father "abyssal nothingness" become part of the parlour game Kenneth plays with the others, part of his new control over his universe.

George lacks similar force and weight as a character because his preoccupations with decorum are at base irrelevant to the true movement of *The Easter Egg*. Ira who prophecies Bethel's eventual downfall identifies this movement with the recovery of innocence imminent in Kenneth. Once she had seen him stark naked in the wood at the age of five, and then he had vanished :

And that naked innocent who gave me God Is still lost in the forest and I shall bring him Back to powerful friends who love him (Act I, sc. ii)

The upheaval caused by Kenneth's metaphorical return resonates throughout the third act. Kenneth suddenly breaks through the window, abruptly rising from the pool where had been a young man asleep in a mirror, someone lost in the deluge, even a carp. At this moment two interpretations of the play's flow are possible. One holds that Bethel has repressed Kenneth, prevented him from maturing and marrying in order to maintain her position as head of the house under the terms of the will left by Kenneth's father.



The climax of *The Easter Egg* is reached at the moment Kenneth climbs out the parlor window, back into the evil past, able at last to free the little ghost girl. By this act of kindness, Kenneth asserts his beneficent power over the bounds of his kingdom, and cleanses his father's house of blood.

The final moments of the play are packed with enormous tension. These opposing impulses accelerate and pull Kenneth and the pattern of action back and forth. One way lies back into the world of real time, and the impending party which will symbolize the apogee of the Bethel story. The other tendency pits the love of Polly and Ira against the tenor of Bethel and the subservience of George.<sup>16</sup>

*Three Desks* (1967) is an academic satire. It is said that knowledge is emancipating. However, it is a real pity that the leaders of knowledge, the teachers at the University level indulge in 'meanness' that is so very unbecoming. There is so much of jealousy, fear, hatred, rivalry which is disillusioning. It can only result in annihilation of life and it does, for Maximillian Niles dies ultimately.

Asserting the autobiographical element in *Three Desks* James Stuart Reaney said :

What confirms this academic satire as Reaney's most personal work, however is not structure or ambiance. It is the intensity of autobiography when Edward Durelle, arriving in the basement of the department offices eight minutes before his first lecture, enters an environment that James Reaney entered under similar conditions (of age, era).<sup>17</sup>

J. Stuart Reaney explains that *Three Desks* is not a direct statement about Reaney's employment at the University of Manitoba, yet the strange, jarring mood of the play does echo his ten years in Manitoba.

From time to time there are great off-stage bustlings and crowd murmur sounds, clouds of foot shufflings, cumulus clouds of student muttering - they grow, expand and suddenly die out as the bell that started them rings again to stop them.

We see students pass by. We see Sandy in his kilt and Mia with her Greek reader. High above there stretches a cloth banner saying RUPERTSLAND ! And we hear the glee club singing the college song.

In the office besides the three desks, one of them a roll-top, we see a sink, an electric tea kettle, a window, a small pair of stairs leading up to the amphitheatre door ; the doorways mentioned a dusty white light globe that could be the attendant spirit of the place and two lockers.

The play has two acts. Act I, sc. i is entitled '65° Above.' It begins with the gay singing by the glee club singing the Rupertsland College Song ! Just then Dr. Waterman and Mr. Niles enter in streetclothes and sit down at their desks. While Mr. Niles opens his roll-top desk he sees Edward Durelle who makes his entry into the office by pushing open the imaginary door. Mr. Niles gives him a shocking welcome.

He goes further commenting that the temperature is 65° F. and above and that he has only eight minutes before his first lecture. They introduce one another and Niles speaks of their future relationships with ups and downs, peaks and deserts and plateaus and depressions with Waterman adding that they also have their abrupt cliffs.

There is the killer instinct in Niles. The act of killer Waterman's bird reciprocates later by killing Niles himself. Niles is young, powerful and mischievous. No one can control him. His energy is satanic, ultimately sadistic. Niles knows the secrets of others and this knowledge is the source of his power. McWhin and Waterman are both controlled by the threat of exposure. Those who are not unsuccessfully hiding their secret

are still vulnerable to direct this. Sorrin is overwhelmed by cynical charisma, and Mia is penetrated by dazzling psychoanalysis. In the final scene, as "The Principal Elect" Niles has apparently triumphed so completely that he has written his own ending to the play..... Max to the Principal's office ! Jacob, appropriately humiliated by one last glimpse of the desks as they were before Niles ; into enforced retirement ! Edward Durelle dismissed ! Mia to ..... the side of Max. McWhin to the residence ! Then, just as ..... Checkmate ! Niles (or as the stage directions suggest 'Hitler at Compiègne' is murdered by the true hero of *Three Desks*, Dr. Jacob Waterman).

Waterman is a Noah, a hero in addition to his generous, decent qualities. He is connected with fertility for he has a large family order (kings and queens of England) ; knowledge preserved through the great Darkness (his last lecture is to be on the venerable Bede ; and personal strength and self-sacrifice (king Arthur, Beowulf).

Mia Dubronic is the nominal heroine and is placed deliberately in the play's water imagery :

(putting her hand under the tap) This water is icy cold. It comes all the way from Raven Lake (she bathes her forehead) (Act I, sc. iii)

In her case, water signifies her own cool, brilliant reserve ; she is the provincial chess champion, and her charismatic ability to sweep the students into Homer. Water imagery is healing, contemplative as an aspect of Waterman, while it makes of Niles a "Shark". Mia's underlying vulnerability, her collapse after the fight with Edward is foreshadowed by her loveless, necessary affair with McWhin :

I don't see very much in him, but whatever it is, it's enough. It might be called. The hangnail relationship or the tooth that's very nearly out. But he keeps touching some string in me that I can't seem to keep him from touching (Act I, sc. iii)

Durelle is capable of nervous charm when he is counting Mia in topsy-turvy fashion. He is stunted by his adolescence, his upside down position, and is fortunate that Waterman and Mia are able to save him from Niles.

*Three Desks* carries the ominous background of violent death. In *Three Desks*, the suicide of the English department's previous junior lecturer compares with the deaths of the Lorimers in *The Killdeer* or Ralph Ralph in *The Easter Egg* as a warning to the characters who have survived.

Niles keeps on victimizing Waterman. Waterman is a senior man in the office. His desk has always been near the window. Suddenly, rather as a childish prank, Niles in Waterman's absence pushes it away from the window, justifying that Waterman has enjoyed enough of sunshine. Waterman reciprocates by pushing it back to the proper place. The invisible tug of war goes on. Waterman cannot report the matter to the authority for Niles has threatened him with revelation of the former's million dollar secret of over marking his son's examination paper.

Mischievous desk-pushing is actually an assertion of territorial imperative ; finally murder. The characters explore the terrors of the ordinary and then discover their own capacity for childish "little evils." Kits, chess pieces, examinations, lexicons, paperknives are all ordinary weapons in this comedy of office guerilla warfare.

Within this harsh, difficult environment are a group of characters all in some way stunted, and almost all qualifying as minor heroes. Sandy McWhin, the Canadian for namesake is most obviously caricature, but still achieves a certain insane nobility by his mad Scottish ancestor worship. His status is reduced by his subservience to Niles and his cruelty to Mia. Edward Durelle, the nominal hero, is a mixture of Harry Gardner in the *Killdeer* and George Sloan in *The Easter Egg* is to Mia also, and weak enough to allow

the "happy ending" of a relationship by accepting his love for Mia, yet at the same time reminding her of the loss of his fellowship at Toronto.

The realism of the university milieu squash student caricatures, the foolish, great courses, paternalistic administration, the absurd desk pushing is framed by the fierce horizon of an Arctic desert. The barren landscape, dominated by the heating plant, the icy river that offers no life or escape and the wild extremes of heat and cold are all aspects of a mental universe forming the background interior of the characters. Tension is introduced through the chess game and the school song which has a male chorus and a female chorus bringing out sexual polarity under the baleful influence of distant northern star.

As the movement of the play proceeds to forty below, the heart of winter, the mood of the song may be increasingly seen as the mood of the play. Behind the jaunty earnest lyrics.....

Resolved that I should be a man and learn to drink some beer. Resolved  
that I should learn to cook and also read a book (Act I, sc.i)

lurks the despair of *Three Desks*. The structural metaphor is fraught with concealed despair, hinted right through the Rupertsland song. The arctic interior is depicted through the innocuous college surface.

To preserve his son's future, Waterman had once overmarked an examination that his son ought to have failed. Niles has the paper locked in his desk and torments Waterman with oblique references to this dark secret. Waterman retrieved the paper for a moment, only to see Niles smugly whisk it back into his prison like desk. Still, this is not exactly what 'causes' Waterman to murder. Instead, when Niles tampers with the vanished past by rearranging the office, he unexpectedly rouses Waterman to cold fury. An idyllic memory (his desk in the sunlight) has been transformed into a hideous parody of its original state. Such illusions are deeply necessary and give back humanity to a hellish

earth. Waterman sees his tiny golden universe mocked and strikes out. So the play ends with both triumph – death of Niles, rescue of the examination paper and futility, as the last lines are also the opening lines of a court room trial. Even after wrestling with a demon, not an angel, Jacob is still too strong to collapse and thus fall out of his story. His very strength constricts him. Ironically, Jacob can't quite die a hero's death.

Education is a privileged, even magical process in other Reaney's plays. Waterman is its besieged guardian. Waterman embodies the hope for future, and presently nourishes and protects the good, the true, the just, combined with the autobiographical intensity already mentioned. This personification of the ideal makes *Three Desks* a violent, contradictory work. Nowhere else does Reaney place his characters and themes in so barren yet essential an arena.

Close to the modern day surface of *Three Desks* is a heroic myth, narrating the epic conflict between a civilization in decline and a rising force of superstitious, evil ignorance. As mythic figures, Waterman is king Arthur and Niles, the 'panther' with the 'harem' is the chief aim of the Saxon hordes. Yet, the final confrontation offstage in a dusty abandoned office is hardly epic. Waterman kills Niles, more as one might kill a snake than a dragon, without mercy and the play ends moments later.

James Stewart Reaney commented :

*Three Desks* is the bittersweet paradox of James Reaney's comedies : at once the funniest most bitter, most personal. <sup>18</sup>

As the funniest comedy, the play throws away more jokes than any of the Perth County cycle. In the bitterest sense it is terrifying and unresolved.

*Colours in the Dark* (1967) was a centennial gift to Canada by James Reaney. Like *Three Desks*, this play contains an autobiographical element. Literally speaking

*Colours in the Dark* is the story of James Reaney from the time of his birth near Stratford, Ontario upto the age of forty, when he returned to his home town to celebrate the Stratford Dramatic Festival and the centennial year. In this free-flowing impressionistic play of 42 scenes, Reaney curbs his penchant for the melodramatic as he dramatizes his archetypal theme of a fall and possible Redemption through the experiences of a Canadian child. Presented at the Stratford festival, *Colours in the Dark* is the first play verbally and scenically to assimilate and represent a whole lot of documentary material related to the places, events, history and people of Southwestern Ontario. This material, in the course of the play, becomes as much actor as it is background.

*Colours in the Dark* is in two acts, the first being the account of the infancy and childhood of the protagonist ; the second act is the story of his adolescence and arrival at maturity.

*Colours in the Dark* is always associated by means of verbal and scenic positioning, with other, generally larger, more readily recognized signs of our times. Reaney does not neglect the less personal, universally significant communicative platforms of education, politics, religion, art, history, advertising and geography to which the small history is intricately related.

*Colours in the Dark* is a play box full of toys, school relics, albums, feedboxes, ancestral coffin plates. In other words a whole life. It's a mosaic of *all things happening- at-the-same-time-galaxy-higgledy-piggledy feeling* rummaging through a play box. Reaney says that underneath the juxtaposition of coffin plate with baby rattle with Royal Family scrapbook with Big Little Book with pictures of king Billy and Hitler, there is the backbone of a person growing up, leaving home, going to big cities, getting rather mixed

up and then not coming home again, but making home and identity come to him wherever he is. (*Colours in the Dark* 7)

It has an autobiographical vein for it has been picked up scene by scene from the author's playbox. As a consequence, *Colours in the Dark* is as deeply personal as is the playbox allowing each private treasure to resonate with personal association.

The introductory theme of non-being in Act I, proceeds through physical birth, christening ancestral background, childhood experiences of expressively cruel adults and the first movements out from the natal farm into the country town of Stratford in the thirties. But the same time, the biblical story moves from chaos through creation, the fall, the law, and the prophets.

Although all of the characters in *The Colours in the Dark*, even the appalling 'The Hitler Boy', 'The Death king 'the no arms, no legs monstrosity' are played by the members of one family, a whole is made of these disparate parts fully only after the protagonist perceives them fully. There are many interconnections between these four ages (infancy, childhood, adolescence and arrival at maturity).

The tone of the story is what the protagonist has been in the past, in what he will be in future. The central character with his imaginative fantasies on Stratford, Toronto, Winnipeg and London, Ontario is not a mere individual. Reaney constantly pushes further and further the metaphorical identifications of his hero. Through James Reaney, the play reflects the awakening of Canadian imagination as it comes to know its powers and to realize the work that waits for it to do. This is symbolized by the head of the boy with measles, who is shut blindfolded in a darkened room and not permitted to see, physically, lest he become blind.



Act I is set in the innocent world of Perth country with grizzly bear as a deadly enemy. The bear symbolizes all the childhood fears of the great impersonal universe, including dark womb. The sun dogs which chase the bear away are replaced by the actual mother and father who give the child life and then give the child a large portion of its identity as it grows outward into the world and away from the bear of fears and self-centredness of the child.

Act II is full of the mysteries of men and women, problems of identity and confusion of experience. *Colours in the Dark* narrates the stories of the bible and of Canada. It is rather an autobiography. It deals with archetypes of innocence, growth and experience. These stories complement one another forming one whole story.

The play is organized to illustrate the multiplicity of life. Each of the actors play numerous roles. For instance, PA plays the Father, the Hero, the Schoolmaster, the executive etc. MA plays the mother, the lawyer, the Announcer, the Windlady, the Girl at the boarding house, the Rich young lady etc. GRAMP plays the Grandfather, the Bear, James McIntyre, the Ingersoll cheese poet Mr. Winemeyer, Professor Button, the Angel of Death etc. GRAM plays the grandmother, a Sundog, the lady who initiates the Hero into a knowledge of himself, Granny crack, the music teacher, the old woman who ladles out horse song, the mistress of the Winnipeg boarding house etc. SON plays the son, the Boy, the Judge, the grocery clerk etc. NIECE plays the Daughter, the Girl, Bible Sal, the Bride etc.

There is the constant recurrence of material. As in the Tarot cards game the same cards arise over and over again in amazingly different circumstances. The organization is divided according to days of the week. According to colours : from the presence of all (white) ; through the rainbow ; to the absence of all (black) it is further divided according

to the Alphabet ; according to the elements of our solar system visible to the naked eye, according to various plants, both domestic and wild ; the way we choose to order time, society, space, gardens. Some songs are invoked by the colors from the hobo's hymn "the big Rock Candy Mountain" and "the Japanese Sandman" etc.<sup>19</sup>

The number seven becomes a source of mystery and power as it operates throughout *Colours in the Dark* Granny crack has seven petticoats. Snow white is helped by seven dwarfs. Fragments of the existence poem appear on seven different occasions. Death carries seven people into his kingdom, only to be defeated in a battle that takes seven turns of fortune.

Act II is the passage through the world of experience. The hero wonders in search of love and imagination carrying the piece of the star given to him by Mr. Winemeyer the primitive artist and hermit. There are three key sequences in Act II narrating the progress of the hero through the flux of the city into marriage ; these are the units with Winemeyer and the piano teacher, the confrontation with Professor Button, and the Fable of the Baby sitter and the Baby'.

In the Winemeyer sequences Reaney is able to blend and mix several local sources to great effect. Winemeyer is the eccentric old hermit who puzzled south Easthope farmers with his wizardry aura ; some typical jokes the oblique parable of the peacock and the jealous pig and the infant Riel being sucked by the buffalo of Manitoba. A piano lesson connects the drawing room in town with the magic and wonder of Winemeyer's farm as the hero finds the piece' of the star again after performing the cloud.

Act II is the account of hero's adolescence and early manhood, in terms of the myth of Christ and Antichrist and of a movement from the "faithful and hopeful" phrase repeated earlier to the "first green leaf of love". The climax of the birth – of – love theme

is the statement, evoked by a pathetic thalidomide victim, that “love and patience do quite change the scene”. In harmony with the theme of the triumph of love and of the awakened human intelligence, there is in Act II a succession of benevolent, Christ – like adults Tecumseh, the scripture Mr. Winemeyer the piano teacher – who help the hero towards the object of his desire that is the elusive vine moth which symbolizes the birth of the artist’s soul.

There is a comic character by name Bible Sal growing hand in hand with the protagonist. Bible Sal spends her time writing out their bible. She also periodically informs the protagonist about the progress of her work. The story she slavishly tells is the story of the protagonist and our own. The forty-year old man receives his blindfold, and as the character Gram tells him that his sin is simply not having been born yet, the audience is supposed to imagine themselves as mythically interior to human life and creation itself ; they are asked to identify with the mind of the protagonist and to accept that the emerging play as their own creation.

Reaney is rooted in his soil. The way he discovers meaning in his existence proves him an existentialist.

In *Colours in the Dark* the hero’s sensibility is traced by a recurrent “existence” poem, spread throughout the play in five stages. Children, like ancestors are very important to a regionalist. Reaney’s plays are written for kids or filled with childlike antics. His poems take children as subjects or feign childish innocence in their tone. Reaney in performance never does anything without the awareness of fun. Of Reaney’s plays, *Colours in the Dark*, and especially of the “generational to pole” starting with “1024 great great great great great great great great great great grandparents, “Atwood wrote that “it provides *unity* with the past, and through that *unity* the child’s identity both as a

human being and as an inhabitant of a particular place.”<sup>20</sup> The whole pole, intuiting both universality and one-ness, makes for continuity, produces thickness and texture, or depth of human habitation.

R.B. Parker, in his afterward to Reaney’s *Mask of Childhood* says that Reaney’s plays and poetry have this central idea : “the interplay of man and child.”<sup>21</sup> At the archetypal “world” level we have Jung’s four characters “the crone, the wise old man, the young man questing, and the girl who is at once his protector and goal”. These characters are divided among three generations to become the play’s six principals ; Gramp and Gram, Pa and Ma, and son and Niece. The multiple roles that each plays thus have always several levels of meaning. “Granny Crack” for instance, played by Gram, is an old beggar woman who terrorized the Stratford inclines during Reaney’s childhood ; she also represents the inevitability of personal aging and death, as realized by the growing boy ; and at a further level she is Jung’s crone the threat of external nature as mirrored in our own minds. And reinforcing this sense of universality, the play moves through the seasons of the year from spring through summer, autumn, winter and back to spring again, but with a curious hiatus just before the return to spring, when there is a brief reversion to Halloween, the festival of spirits on October the thirty first, the eve of all souls day. But the childlike vision returns and love and patience resolve everything.

This kind of symbolism raises the sequence from mere autobiography to a more universal level : Specific Canadian history is mythologized into an Indian vision of storm-bearing sundogs chasing away the bear of winter ; of maple trees driving out the firs ; of the settler’s ships coming up the Saint Lawrence ; of the Indian chief Tecumseh dying and crawling through a log to become his totem animal, the tortoise ; of king George V whizzing past the children’s Union Jacks in the heyday of the empire ; and of the

depersonalization that has come with industrialism and the growth of cities. This last element is really more of a general condemnation of cities, typical of the 1960s, than a specifically Canadian comment in spite of its local place names. The reference is universal while the intermittent Canadian historical reference drops out totally by the end of the play.<sup>22</sup>

It is difficult to describe *Colours in the Dark*. Its essence lies in the suggestiveness of its particularity and no summary can do justice to the charm, humour and emotion of its individual scenes. The material is extremely local, even personal in some respects, but its significance and the organizing principles of the whole are profoundly and consciously universal.

Brain Parker asserts :

In fact, *Colours in the Dark* was too universal for some of the Canadian theatre critics, but speaking as a non-Canadian I found the play luminously clear in production and utterly delightful a genuine life – enhancing experience.<sup>23</sup>

Reaney's subject in *Colours in the Dark* is the backbone of the person growing up. According to Ross Woodman :

Reaney juxtaposes two worlds one almost entirely fictional and the other autobiographical. The autobiographical world describes, under a slight disguise, his life from early childhood on a farm outside Stratford to his decision to enter the University of Toronto.<sup>24</sup>

*Colours in the Dark* is a sequence of scenes to describe personal, national, universal and moral history all at once. Presented at the Stratford Festival in 1967, the play represented the end of a phase in Reaney's career.

*Listen to the Wind* (1972) displays Reaney's probing into the minds and emotions of imaginative children and his life long fascination with the macabre. It brings out

Reaney's workmanship with perennial pattern of romance. The vital connection between *Listen to the Wind* and the whims, fancies and aspirations nurtured in the 1930's in the Gothic farmhouse near Stratford render the play autobiographical.

Two plots proceed simultaneously hand in hand. In the outer play, the setting is a Perth County, Ontario farmhouse in thirties. Here four children, a boy Owen and his three cousins, Harriet, Jenny and Ann gather for a summer and entertain themselves by acting out plays, with the help of several adults and other neighbourhood children. This action is both light-hearted and pathetic for underneath the playing lies the fact of Owen's lingering sickness, which seems certain to end in his death and also the desertion of his father by his mother ; without maternal love, Owen's situation is desperate and his play acting is an attempt to draw his mother back from her lover on the neighbouring farm. Owen's father, Mr. Taylor is weak and ineffective, more enraged that his wife has taken a prized horse than that she has abandoned her family.

Owen reminds us <sup>of death</sup> and although we cannot tell for sure whether he is to die or not, <sup>? 6<sup>th</sup></sup> it is clear that his mother has finally gone. His father is still ineffectual and no substitute parents have been found to nourish him towards maturity, as in the case of Eli in *The Killdeer* or Kenneth in *The Easter Egg*.

The inner play "The saga of Carefoot Court" is a victorian melodramatic novel based on H. Ryder Haggard's early novel *Dawn*. In this story, a beautiful heroine threads "her way through a world of evil manorhouses and sinister lady Eldreds" in an action analogous to Owen's struggle. The novel was Owen's father's gift to Mrs. Taylor just before they married. Owen thinks that the performance of this play might bring his parents together by breaking the hardest ice of estranged relationship between them.

The story in the inner play centers round Angela. The beautiful, yet despised daughter of Piers Caresfoot who has been disinherited for marrying someone else against his wishes. As a result the adopted and repulsive son Douglas has attained all rights whilst not deserving it. Angela whose mother died giving birth to her, is unwillingly made her father's chief instrument in his attempt to regain his former possessions by a forceful marriage to Douglas. Not until late in the story does he realize his full malignity. Although she loves Arthur, she is persuaded that he is dead and so, filled with loathing accedes to her father's wish to marry Douglas.

Geraldine has risen from gipsydom to malevolent but beautiful lady Eldred by an opportune marriage, after killing her baby fathered by Douglas. This witch lady is the inner play's counterpart to the cruel mother of Owen.

Owen and his three cousins Jenny, Harriet and Ann are isolated and deprived of adequate parental love. They listen to the wind with the help of four adults, a doctor, a housekeeper, a father and a sexton.

There are love and war relationships of reconciliation and of tearing the families apart. The Almeidas wage a war of revenge upon the Caresfoot as Geraldine punishes the heirs of Devil Caresfoot for the death of her father. The tortuous love affair between Douglas and Geraldine results in the murder of their child. The property and title of Caresfoot Court allow Devil Caresfoot to be authoritarian. He desires to wed Pierre to Maria and her meadows for the greedy combination of title and property. The impetuous decision by Piers to marry Claudia von Yorick causes an ironic separation of property and title. Pierre is stripped of everything but the title of Squire Caresfoot and it is the cuckoo bird Douglas who inherits the family lands. Yet, he aspires for the title of Squire Caresfoot. This is a parallel to the ambition of Geraldine to enter into the society of

Caresfoots and the Lawrys. The driving ambition is the core cause of the horrors of the world. In the blind materialistic pursuit, Geraldine murders her child, Piers sacrifices his daughter and Devil disinherits his son. This bitter materialism has been juxtaposed with the spiritual good fortune of Von Yorick family. Piers' and Claudia's daughter possesses the wholesome power capable of transforming a world disfigured by the sorcery of the Almeidas and the brutish greed of the Caresfoots. Angela is despised by her own father Piers for had she been a boy his father's will would give him the right over all the family estates. Although he betrays her and through a conspiracy with Geraldine gets her married to Douglas to regain the lost lands, Angela survives his cruelty. Divine retribution does fall upon the conspirators. Piers is devoured by his dogs, Douglas is killed by Geraldine and the suicidal attempt paralyses Geraldine.

In an effort to rid herself of the ghost child haunting her, Geraldine has given Angela a doll with the child's wishbone sewn into its body. Angela refuses to love the doll and Geraldine is tormented by guilt towards the ghost child who says :

You've been a wolf in the forest twice times seven years and now you will be freed. (Act III, sc. x)

For Angela is finally capable of loving the doll, and thus liberating Geraldine's soul. Arthur is the son of Maria Lawry, the fiancée of Piers, until his impulsive decision to marry Claudia. The marriage of Angela and Arthur resolves the quarrel between their estates. Owen's choice of "The Saga of Caresfoot Court" as a suitable subject for the summer play, is made in the knowledge that besides the expression to his own despair, he is determined to help his parents recall the gift before marriage, given by his father to the mother which he hopes might bring them close. He has already cast his mother Mrs. Taylor as Geraldine, Although one is touched by the child's effort for reconciliation between the parents, The idea is foredoomed considering the roles taken by the parents. ?



Mr. Taylor plays Edward Eldred, the country attorney thrust into prominence by Geraldine (Mrs. Taylor) in her efforts to make Douglas the master of Caresfoot Court.

The Taylors are able to squabble over their horses, instead of putting their differences to one side for the night and trying to save Owen. He is almost dying while they choose to part with assertions of suspicion and ego : "That horse obeys my whistle" (Act III, sc. x) declares Owen's mother.

The reconciliation of Arthur and Angela is attached to a deep fatalism. Owen, the deepest dreamer sails to the eternity of his creation. He also dies a tragic needless death. The dramatic reconciliation that he makes possible in the world below is not possible in the *real* world of Perth County, given the jeopardized unemotional life together his parents are ending.

Reaney's reputation rests upon his trilogy *The Donnellys* (1977) which is a documentary drama. The book that revived widespread interest in the Donnellys was *The Black Donnellys* published in 1954 by Thomas P. Kelley who paints the Donnellys as black as possible. Reaney condemns it in an aside in his play as 'a viciously biased melodrama'.

The so called 'Old Song' which is in fact composed by Kelley himself introduces each chapter of his own book : The first stanza of *The Black Donnellys* which has also been used ironically by Reaney, runs as :

So hurry to your homes, good folks  
Lock doors and windows tight  
And pray for dawn, the Black Donnellys  
Will be abroad tonight. (Act I)

The first part of Reaney's Donnelly Trilogy has been entitled *Sticks and Stones*, the second, *The St. Nicholas Hotel* and the third *Handcuffs*. Reaney mercilessly quotes from Kelley's 'Old song' several times, in *Sticks and Stones* producing satiric humour :

Oh all young folks take warning  
Never live a life of hate,  
Or wickedness or violence lest  
You share the Donnellys fate.  
Their murdered bodies lie today.  
A mile from Lucan town  
But the memories of the awful feud,  
Time will never live down. (Act II)

Kelley's next book *Vengeance of the Black Donnellys* in 1962 is even more fictionalised with the objective of giving an account of the terrible retribution meted out by the ghosts of the Donnellys on those involved in their massacre.

With the stated intention of contradicting Kelley's view of the Donnellys Orlo Miller emerged too in 1962 with his book. *The Donnellys Must Die*. Miller presents a historical interpretation of the family feud that attempts to trace its origin to secret societies in Ireland. When rebuked by the whitefeet for having anything to do with the protestants and when asked to kneel with candles on either side and swear an allegiance to the secret society of the whitefeet, James Donnelly firmly declares :

But you see I won't kneel and I won't,  
I will not swear that. (Stick and stones, Act I)

It was here and then that the Donnellys decided to be the Donnellys and carved out their own ultimate destruction. However, the Donnellys of Reaney are far, far ahead. They are no longer a family that was simply much less black-hearted than previously thought ; they are treated as rather noble, somewhat better than their neighbours, high principled and violent only after provocation. The portrait of the Donnellys as proud, strong, great creates certain ambiguity about their characters. Reaney abandons this ambiguity and seems to be writing his own wild, energetic, clichéd popular thriller which could rather be called the "white" Donnellys. Some Canadians say, "The Donnellys were mad dogs who had to be destroyed". The others felt that "The Donnellys were decent

people who were persecuted". Of these dual perspectives the latter was very much appealing to James Reaney. Although he has taken a decidedly anti-kelley position in his portrayal of the Donnellys, his attitude to them is nevertheless greatly indebted to Kelley's efforts to paint the family as the worst of cutthroats and savages. He brings home to the audience that Kelley's Donnellys were too stupidly evil and destructive to be believed.

During the flashback to his defiance of the Whitefeet in Ireland, there is a subliminal equation of Donnellys and wheat. The Whitefeet summon Donnelly to face them outside the door. It goes as :

Male Voice : Jim Donnelly !

Chorus : Then the binder came with her neat thumb; she bound me all around.

Male Voice : Jim Donnelly !

Chorus : And then they hired a handyman to stand me to the ground.

Male Voice : Jim Donnelly ! Did you not know Jim Donnelly, that no Whitefeet is to have any dealings with the Protestant and the heretic Johnson ? (Act I)

When Mr. Donnelly refuses to swear allegiance to the Whitefeet and their mythical leader, Mathew midnight, he also declines membership in the secret church. This church of the night is complete with vestments indicated by the women's clothing ; rituals, indicated by the liquor barrels ; invocations, indicated by the threats to visit Donnelly at some hour of day or night ; and sacraments, meaning the burning of farms and houses of their enemies. Donnelly does not kneel in confirmation of this black mass ; and yet, the Donnelly, relations with the true priests are never as free and holy as they should be.

Ultimately and factually it is the parish priest who organizes the vigilante committee that eventually murders Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly, their two sons and a niece. They may attend Mass with their fellow Irish settlers ; but the Donnellys are never securely confirmed into the community or the church. The Bishop is seen testing the other parishioners to find out if the name of the Donnelly may be added to the soldiers of Christ

or respected citizens of Biddulph, while Donnellys nervously wait to hear the judgement. At the end of *Sticks and Stones* the Donnellys have been rejected, but they resolve to stay on in the Township for the Donnellys don't kneel.

The problems of the Donnellys are not simply related to the usual jostling in a new community. The struggle of the Donnellys is a concerted effort by their enemies to keep the sticks and stones of the title from building up a secure farmhouse. In the theatre of James Reaney, words are so frequently more damaging than deeds. A man called Blackfoot is a blackfoot, an alien to be treated as cruelly as any monster. In a dialogue Mrs. Donnelly says :

Mr. Donnelly, there's a proverb that sticks and stones may hurt my bones, but words will never harm them.

Mr. Donnelly : Not true, Mrs. Donnelly. Not true at all. If only he'd hit us with a stone or a stick, but ever since that day you told me they'd been calling our son that in the churchyard it's as if a thousand little tinkly pebbles keep batting up against the windows in my mind just when it's a house that's about to sleep. (Act I)

Mrs. Johannah alias Judith Donnelly, the mother, the wife and leader of the clan has been condemned by the enemies of the Donnellys as a coarse giantess in *The St. Nicholas Hotel* ; but in *Sticks and Stones* she is the complete heroic contrast to false Mrs. Donnelly in the medicine show who brawls at her son John :

Then you're no son of mine. Until you've killed your man the way your darling father did, you're no son of mine. (*Sticks and Stones*, Act I, sc.i)

However, the true Mrs. Donnelly hides her husband for almost two years from the constables. She petitions for the commutation of his sentence, teaches Will his catechism and initiates him into the Donnelly sense of self-worth. As a mother she is loving and fair. Her humility helps her to milk her cows herself. She is a lady of tall stature physically as well as spiritually. She begs forgiveness from Sarah Farl for the killing of her husband by

James Donnelly in the provocative fight ; and proceeds to confront Cassleigh's mob demanding the release of Sarah Farl's brother Donnegan, they wanted to cut ears of :

Give Mr. Donnegan back his clothes..... raise him up out of that mud,  
Dung ! there's fields of grain to garner with bread for you all and you'd  
rather be thorns to each other. Get back to work, you fools you tribe !  
(*Sticks and Stones*, Act II)

Reaney explains that the reasons of the murder of the Donnellys are social, historical and psychological. The first two - the Donnellys' friendship with the protestants and their refusal to join the whitefeet are derived from *The Donnellys must Die* of Orlo Miller. The historical aspect of the feud is a consequence of Mr. Donnelly's escape from the death sentence in Farl killing. There's a tragic implication in the heroic and proud request for the commutation of her husband's sentence by Mrs. Donnelly even as she walks to Goderich adding signatures to add to her petition, she sows the seeds of her own destruction. This fearless quality of the Donnellys gives them not only great reserves of pride and dignity, but also makes them psychologically unique. It is the source of their strength and the cause of their isolation. In a country dominated by fear and half-hidden violence, the ability of the Donnellys to stand alone frightens and enrages their enemies and they are maddened by an obsession to get rid of them.

*The St. Nicholas Hotel* chronologically deals with the events of the 1870s, the period following the burning of the Donnelly's barn, and their determination to stand their ground amid growing hostility in the community.

With the assistance of their father, the proprietor of the *St. Nicholas Hotel*, and various of their five other brothers, Will and Mike set up the Opposition Line - a stagecoach company designed to compete against the established Finnegan line. In the course of *The St. Nicholas Hotel*, the Donnellys lose two of their sons - one to consumption and the other to murder. They also lose a great deal of ground in the

community and this is the most fascinating aspect of the play. Slowly and relentlessly a community becomes a mob, evilly encircling its quarry, picking up stones, and taking aim.

The question how bad the Donnellys were is left to the posterity. Carol Hogg says:

feeling turned against them to such an extent that they-much like the butler in English murder mysteries - were automatically thought to have done it, no matter what the deed.<sup>25</sup>

Whether the Donnellys got what they deserved or much more or much less, is the great question that forms the tension in this play.

*Handcuffs* opens with :

When you and I were young, Maggie ..... Grandfather's clock. (Act I)

Then one of the children asks what is in the tiny box on the buffet and is told it is a piece of bone from the arm of Joanna Donnelly - one of the fragments left after, along with other members of their family, she had been battered and burned to death by her neighbours.

With Reaney's persuasive black-and-white approach to the Donnellys and their foes, it's hard not to believe that they were indeed unjustly persecuted by a rotten bunch of neighbours. In *Handcuffs* we are certainly told how the Catholic church joined in that persecution - how a bishop used his influence to get Robert Donnelly out of jail in the hope of getting seven Donnelly votes for the conservatives and how the local priest listened to and acted upon vicious hearsay against the family. It is incredible to know that so much injustice could have been done to one seemingly harmless family.

One benefit of Reaney's eight year long research is that, through the twisting complicated and convoluted narrative, we get a detailed picture of what life was like for those 19th century settlers in rural Ontario - their language, their customs, their way of life.

We see how a town can marshal its forces against a presumed or even self-created enemy ; how the evil ones can poison the rest of the people ; how the priests can be swayed by politics and lies; how politics can influence the law and the law work to create evil rather than seek out and punish wrongdoers.

In *Handcuffs*, Reaney shows us that as some of the family was handcuffed before being burned to death and then burned on a February night in 1880, so they were handcuffed as a family in spiritual and psychological sense long before they were murdered.

No one was ever found guilty of the murders. Trials were recessed, juries were dismissed ; witnesses were threatened ; time passed. Probable murderers were acquitted and the township succeeded in ridding itself of the Black Donnellys. However, months after their deaths people who were strongly implicated in the murders died and now the Donnellys in the form of Reaney's trilogy of historical plays have come forth to haunt the area that spawned the legend and the deeds.

*The Dismissal* (1977) was written for the 150th anniversary of the University of Toronto where Reaney had studied between 1944-48.

Gerald Parker writes :

Insofar as it is a reflection of the necessary relationship between a "very locally coloured tree trunk" and "Universality", the relationship between one's home country and the University of Toronto (and, by implication, any university) is of central importance in *The Dismissal*.<sup>26</sup>

Gerald Parker quotes Reaney's Professor William Dale appearing before the university's Executive Council :

We still invite our young people to be culturally raped by teachers who couldn't get a job in Britain or the States.<sup>27</sup>

However, Dale is dismissed. He returns home to his father's farm to his boyhood vision of independence regained, rediscovered and reinforced in every sense. He is not scared to work with his hands. His headlong dive into liberation and self-assertion lies into raising the crowbar and smashing the ice into cold and clear water for the lowing cattle. He survives the dismissal in every way. The following summer at Queen's University he meets a student, his future wife and lives a complacent life with his wife and children on the farm raising cattle and writing history of Rome, as a true academician all complete in the fullness of life he lives.

Act II features a Lacrosse sequence in which teams of students and professors are pitted against each other. The tossing of the lacrosse ball alternates with the tossing back and forth of words. This is followed by a hockey sequence with the faculty scoring 'zero' and the students 'three' at the end of the first innings.

Act III echoes and reinforces the confrontational configurations which include the students behind the locked gates and the trial of Tucker. The latter episode is the most sinister and menacing version of the confrontational sequences in the play.

The conflict between Professor Dale and the faculty of the University of Toronto over unfair hiring practices is mirrored in the tension between two students, Jim Tucker and Mackenzie King ; King is Reaney's most complex and successful protagonist simply because he is never evil, just weak and his behaviour has definite reasons he cannot forego. He is torn between self-interest and unjust nature of the world. He suffers from a dilemma : if he sides with the students who protest against Prof. Dale's dismissal, he will be estranged from the faculty and risk his scholarship he badly needs for the continuation of his academic career ; if he sides with the faculty he will be estranged from his University pals. Mackenzie king sides with both and as a consequence loses the esteem of



his friends as well as the faculty, who use yet, despise the informer. Jim Tucker too does not stand high in our esteem. Despite his good intentions and moral earnestness, he is not capable of facing up to the faculty because he is not a wordly man. He doesn't possess any of King's shrewdness for success. The ideal figure standing high above our esteem is Prof. Dale but neither student can attain his stature. Although Prof. Dale sustains the injustice and takes to a harmonious life working amidst nature and over his history of Rome, Reaney's presentation of all characters as somewhat thwarted is fraught with tragic power.

Gerald Parker speaks of the undeniable "magnanimous milieu" of a confident and vital modernism which promotes and sustains in Reaney's plays. He calls this the "integral" which has been explained as the harmony between the self and the world, spirit and geography, words and things, "the locally - coloured trunk"<sup>28</sup> as described by Gerald Parker and universality, the home-country and the university. Reaney cites Dale's interest in the "integral versus fractional life" an expression from Dale's journal used as a focal point for much of Dale's character in the play. The "integral" implies the sense of harmony between one's convictions and one's life.<sup>29</sup>

In the Dismissal, one of his best plays, Reaney<sup>has</sup> told the tale of a compromised student uprising at the University of Toronto. He<sup>has</sup> contrasted the tragic story of an idealist Prof. Dale ruined for his moral courage and the student Mackenzie King, whose moral capitulation set the pattern for the most successful political career Canada has seen. Gore  
house

Reaney's heroes often meet apparent defeat at the hands of privilege and power, but as a writer, he is concerned with articulating the moral courage, the willingness to face personal sacrifice which stems from a kind of fierce innocence that frees, rather than inhibits intelligence. Reaney creates genuine heroes from these qualities ; on the other

hand, his villains are intentionally banal and predictable because they are slaves to their own interests. Reaney doesn't share the romantic fascination with evil.

## **B] The Plays of Pundalik Naik**

*Khann Khann Mati* (Go On Digging, 1977) was the first play by Pundalik Naik to be published. *Khann Khann Mati* is set on the rural backdrop of Goa's mainly agrarian economy. As such a brief discussion of this background would be useful, before the relevant themes in this play are analysed.

Goa presently, has a large mining area stretching from North to South. Mines were developed by the Portuguese in the 20th century due to the tremendous demand for ore in the industrialised countries including Japan and other nations overseas. As a result of this, there was a tremendous change in the socio-economic life of Goans. Several peasants gave up farming in order to join the bandwagon of mining which brought about easy and fast money. The prosperity of mines was a big blow to the age-old rural agronomy as it was to the formidable *Bhatkarshai* controlling it. The landlords could no more exploit the tenants who now could demand more wages due to the alternative and high-paying employment opportunity now available to them.

The Goan community had been mainly a farming and fishing community. Traditionally, a major chunk of the farmland was owned by the landlords either exclusively or collectively through village communes known as *comunidades*. Much of this land was cultivated by tenants who were exploited by the landlords, who were their sole employers in this rural economical set-up. Besides, there was also the petty farmer who was dependent on the powerful landlord for fetching a proper rate for his produce. As a result, the tiller was in the clutches of the landlords who continued to exploit him,

often inhumanly. Little wonder then that the tenants were psychologically conditioned to believe that the landlord was the sole bread giver and the custodian of his existence.

Ironically, despite this subjugation the farmer or the tenant was happy due to the fact that his life was simple and uncomplicated. His daily routine was rigorous but his value system was simple. His wife was faithful to him. His children obeyed him. He had a definite code of morals which he passed on to the posterity. His life was free of vices although he was influenced to a large extent by superstition and blindfaith. He was god-fearing and with little expectations from life was content to subsist on his meagre resources.

Industrialization was to change all this within a decade or so. The establishment of mining business invaded the tiller's life. He was attracted to fast money coming in through daily wages. He was taken away from his land to labour in the mines. His age-old farming occupation suffered greatly as the land was neglected and often lay fallow. Although, he worked in the mines, was comparatively well-paid, he was totally alienated from his context. He missed the family love and concern. He took to alcoholism, whoring, gambling with all the excess of money he received. Isolated from his dear ones, his code of values was lost and he was condemned to a degenerated life.

Yet, it cannot be denied that one good thing was happening and that was material prosperity coming the tenant's way. His thatched cottage was replaced by Mangalorian tiles. After the liberation of Goa, primary education was freely available. High school was affordable to him. He educated his children, sent his sons to the middle east for jobs. There was an incoming flow of money from abroad. The erstwhile poverty - stricken villagers of Goa switched over to a much higher standard of living. They were no longer under the inhuman yoke of the landlord. Some of them well-afforded to purchase the land

on which they were earlier hired to work. The others got their legal right to the land they had been tilling and inhabiting on for generations by the virtue of new legislation in their favour. Thus the changing times did away with the yoke of tenancy and subverted authority of the landlord once and for all. It was against this background that *Khann Khann Mati* has been written by Nayak.

Yet, all this did not necessarily spell a positive change in the life of the working man. Lured by fast buck, the farmer did not retain the patience to plough the land and await three months for the harvest. The fast money due to daily wages was very attractive. As a result even women got attracted to the mines and enlisted as daily labourers. Consequently, all sorts of people worked together in the mines in their individual capacity as supervisors, drivers, cleaners, labourers, dynamite experts etc. However, something devastating was happening at the same time. The farmer had all but lost his love for land. From simplicity of rural life and nobility of thought he opted for material showiness in all its deteriorating manifestations that snowballed into a debased life. The hard work, materialistic inclination and urged to free themselves from traditional moral constraints pushed them towards alcoholism, gambling and prostitution. There was thus the perversion of traditional life and its essential values. This is exactly what Naik is trying to depict through *Khann Khann Mati*.

*Khann Khann Mati* begins with the scene of an office on a mining field. There are some large books of accounts and files on the table, a few chairs, mining implements and a truck tyre that throw the mining context into focus. An eye-catching statement in bold letters on the wall : HYPOTHECATED TO STATE BANK OF INDIA, is another device used to underscore irony behind the prospective prosperity of the mining business and the hollowness of its basis.

Act I, opens with Gopi, the driver and cleaner talking to each other in a lustful language apparently about a certain female. Dharma the supervisor, a rather saintly person gets upset and takes them to task only to learn that the suggestive talk was referring not to any female in particular, but only to the mining truck. The illegitimate relationship that easily develops between Gopi and Kastur, the maid-servant in this act is symbolic of the similar kinds of purely physical alliances that occur among several other men and women at the mines. Kastur has a drunkard husband Khushali, the night-watchman who wastes his earnings on drink and leaves Kastur at liberty to prostitute herself during the night for the little extra money that buys the few luxuries she covets. Disturbed and depressed by Kastur's scorn for him, Khushali keeps drinking more and more which leads to the debasement of his personality and renders him totally helpless.

However, he musters up courage in Act III to catch his cacolding wife and the driver red-handed and blaming the mining job as well as himself for the situations, leaves for his native place along with his wife to return to farming.

A parallel aspect of the plot dwells on *Rocksaib*, the miner who has undertaken the mining business and his wife Bai. Rocksaib is very kind, generous, understanding and very humane towards his employees, while Bai like a typically, high class patroness who believes in exploiting them to the maximum. The basically mild husband, Rocksaib is incapable of satisfying her rather materialistic expectations of a man. He can neither hunt animals, nor make money in business. Despite his subjugation to her domineering personality, she is frustrated and leaves for Quwait to live with her uncle. In the meanwhile, the ore weighing 25000 tons that has been sent to Japan by a steamer has been rejected for its inferior quality and the company's export license has been cancelled.

Therefore, RocksaiB decides to wind up his business by selling the machines and paying his bank loan of Rs. 500000/- after having paid all the employees.

The play ends with RocksaiB holding Dharma's hands and emotionally exclaiming, "No Dharma, we are not lost at all. We are at no loss. Although we may not know to earn profits, yet we have won peoples' hearts, we never left the poor miners to their own fate... we prized them as pearls... real pearls." (*Khann Khann Mati*, Act III, sc.ii)

Pundalik Naik demonstrates his love and yearning for the native soil and his contempt for the ruthless materialism born of soul-less industrialization. We sense the vanity of miner's lives. These miners who were earlier the local farmers had enjoyed a harmonious co-existence with nature toiling in the soil along with their wives and children. The families then had been very strong and there was a strong bond of emotion to their relationship with one another. As a result family love marital loyalty and an unconscious sincerity marked their life-styles.

With the coming of industrialization, the farmer left his home in order to work in the factories, mines etc. The jobs were a plenty. So women were also driven to work along with the men. The families were to receive the brunt of this eventually. Despite the daily wages the families began to starve because most of the menfolk spent all their money on alcohol and whores, neglecting their own homes. For women too, it was easy money to run homes and meet their own increasing needs. They did not hesitate to compromise on their virtue to bring in a little extra money.

Such degeneration of values led to suspicion, jealousy, hatred, revenge and self alienation. Naik focuses on the fact that unless one remains true to the soil there is no peace and love in our hearts and therefore no salvation. The degeneration of values leads to the degeneration of language. The language used in the play is deliberately perverse language with a lot of double meaning fraught with sexual implications. The miners give

vent to their hidden desires through such language. Thus Naik has very successfully struck to the point that the industrialization will rob us not only of the country side, but also of our culture, the institutions of marriage and family and even of one's genuine idiom which is the language of our hearts.

In the play the mining business has to be closed down due to corruption and low quality of product and the labourers who were originally farmers have to go back home in order to re-establish their family life with a more sharpened awareness of their debt to the native land.

*Raktakhev* (The Bloodbath, 1979) is a melodrama. The sword of the sin of incest keeps looming over the head of the two protagonists who unknowingly commit the sin, finally leading to the tragic end of their lives.

When Prakash was seven, his mother had left the house along with him. For a while, she enjoyed her status in society as a good mother. Whenever required, she ceased to be a mother and displayed her youth by concealing her son. She died a premature death, perhaps due to some disease. Then Rehman a Muslim beggar supported Prakash. Both of them would beg food from door to door and appeal for mercy. Whenever they got very little food Rehman would go hungry saying it was his Ramzaan fasting day, so that Prakash could have some food. We see in the play that Prakash responds with filial affection to the love shown by Rehman. He not only looked after him during the final stage of his life, but also performed the last rites with his 'own' money. Since then he never begged. He had learnt to stand on his own feet and support himself.

Experiences in life have shaped Prakash in strange ways. For example, Prakash has been taught to relate a good omen to an evil one. When Kushta tells Jayashree to prepare

a sweet dish to celebrate the arrival of Prakash, he remembers the twelfth day after his mother had left his father. She had then prepared a delicious sweet dish after bath. Interestingly, when little Prakash asked her the reason, she had said with crocodile tears that it was the twelfth day after the death of his father indicating thereby that it was a ritual preparation, not a token of celebrations. So Prakash has grown up under the impression that he had lost his father and so, now with the death of his mother, he was an orphan.

Identity crisis figures prominently in the play. The play underscores this ironically in that Prakash does not know his 'real' name, while his father and the toddy tapper remember it. Probably, addressed by his parents with all sorts of pet names, Prakash might not have mentally registered his real name. And later with a vague life and complicated identity he probably never felt the need for a name since the society doesn't consider him as important in any way. As he sees it, he has been a non-entity and nobody is bothered about his existence. When he speaks about this to Jayashree, she says that in school even her name was not considered significant. She just had a number. Prakash spontaneously retorts, "Twenty-seven". Jayashree is stunned at his accurate response ; but he explains that it was a mere coincidence. He rationalizes that perhaps a memory-graft or a past association could be the reason for his accuracy. As it turns out, the number twenty-seven was very familiar to him for his mother would charge her customer Rs 30/- for a night and keeping twenty-seven rupees for herself, would give away Rs 3/- to the agent who got the customer for her. This is another instance of how Prakash naturally associates something unpleasant with something pleasant or interesting.

Prakash is an atheist. However, he has realized the powerful force of nature. He experiences God through the boundless beauty and the vastness of nature. That evening



he sees God in the form of the setting sun on the river bank. He says, the hills embraced Him gradually with the love of finding a long lost son. He also experiences the sun in the flowing waters of the river. Some current seems to have run through his veins. He has an urge to drink in the inspiring beauty created by God to his heart's content. Therefore, he begs of Kushta to take him boating to experience God once again and Kushta promises to fulfil his desires.

Prakash's mother, a woman of easy virtue goes away from her husband living her baby-girl behind. She takes Prakash with herself and takes to prostitution. Prakash is compelled to role-play the pimp entreating the departing customer to visit again. After his mother dies, Prakash just stumbles upon his family, not knowing who they are ! His father and a toddy-tapper recognize him and his younger sister Jayashree who had been a baby when he had been taken away by his mother is very much attracted to him. They even have intercourse and the two-some --- their father and the toddy-tapper --- are shocked to know of it. Terribly disturbed by the implications of this incestuous alignment, they attempt to disclose to Prakash that Jayashree is his sister, that Kushta himself is his father and further that he is the lost son himself. However, brought up as he is in an essentially carnal set-up, Prakash is not ready to accept such a fraternal relationship with Jayashree. He admits that he has never grown into the same and he is thus unable to understand what brotherhood is. For him the dominant relationship is one of youthful passion and the pull of sexuality. In his view, sex stands above all and that is the only true and natural relationship that can exist between humans. He nurtures a hatred for his mother who prostituted herself. But he hates his weak father all the more for not having attempted to fetch him away from the corrupting impact of the vicious woman. Prakash has experienced the bitter truth of life and he is not prepared to reconcile with anybody. He

is now young and strong and is fully prepared to go anywhere his fate leads him to. However, the father desires to save his daughter from the repetition of the sin of incest. Lalu, the good-for-nothing chap, in the neighbourhood aspires for her hand. The father decides to exploit this possibility.

On the pretext of taking Prakash deep into the sea, the father takes him boating and overturns the boat drowning his own son. On learning this Jayashree, in a mad frenzy drowns herself too. The end is able to create an atmosphere of horror rather than one of pathos, thereby creating an abhorrence for the incestuous relationship but for the fiendish remedy sought for it by the father of those involved.

*Rakhann* (Protection, 1980) is a comment over the licentious life of the landlords who have been exploiting the tenants economically, physically and sexually.

*Rakhann* has a strange kind of a theme. Due to the caste barriers the landlord's son, although in love, cannot get married to his own tenant's daughter who in turn is very well aware that she can never be accepted as a daughter-in-law in the landlord's house. They draw out a plan and arrive at a contract with a man called Monyappa who is supposed to be marrying the tenant's daughter. They warn him against any sexual contact with his wife ; instead, the landlord's son despite having a wife at home has an illegitimate relationship with the tenant's daughter who bears children for the landlord's son. They are brought up by Monyappa. In return, Monyappa is assured of his cottage, labour and grain. Interestingly, Monnyappa in accepting the strange offer also adopts an intentional dumbness. Right from the marriage day, he pretends to be dumb. Perhaps he was determined to guard himself against any likely queries regarding the landlord's frequent visits to his cottage. The problem arises when the young son of the tenant's daughter

wants to know in earnest why his mother succumbs herself to the landlord's desires locking her own husband and himself out. The moment Shankar questions the landlord's son, he is thrown out of the house. He later returns to the place as a strong adult to release his sister from the clutches of the landlord. Meanwhile, Monyappa's wife dies. Yet, the landlord provides the basic necessities to Monyappa and his own illegitimate daughter.

Shankar hates the slavery of the landlord. He is also afraid that Shaku, his sister might fall a prey to the lust of the landlord whom he equates with a beast. Shaku agrees to go with her brother but embarrasses him for she desires to take away her mother's gold ornaments which were the gift from the landlord.

Finally, convinced by her brother, she doesn't desire the ornaments any more and goes away with Shankar. But she returns in a few minutes since it is very difficult for her to detach herself from Monyappa, the cottage and her childhood environment which she has loved so much.

Then the landlord tries to explain to them that there was no exploitation of their mother who had willingly made a contract with Monyappa along with the landlord, for she was greedy about the landlord's gold. The children are told that Monyappa can speak.... they are themselves convinced about it. Shaku who has loved him like a real daughter pleads with him to call out her name. Monyappa does make an attempt..... smiles..... laughs.....sobs..... and finally breaks out crying which mingles with the sound of his drum.

*Surung* (The Dynamite, 1982) is written against the backdrop of the life of road - construction labourers. It depicts the plight of manual labourers exploited mercilessly by

the Mukadam, the supervisor. Sex and rape are the main themes of the play in which a tense drama keeps the spectator on his tenterhooks until the violent ending in which the young son of the labourers inspired by a team of social workers to assert his own identity and self respect, finally murders the sinful, rapacious Mukadam. The role of the social workers, to create awareness of human rights among the main characters is beautifully highlighted in the play with the help of a skillfully woven inner play within the main play. Humour and seriousness alternate with each other to heighten the sense of tragedy of the play.

Act I brings out the poverty and sorrowful plight of the labour class. The Mukadam has not paid them for a week for they have not been successful at blasting the dynamite to break the rocks and clear the way through a hill to the town. Jose, his wife Marian and son Leo have been toiling hard at building roads. The task hangs heavy upon them. Besides, there is a great deal of harassment and exploitation by the Mukadam. Poverty and hard work have made Marian lose her kids. Only Leo has survived and has just been old enough to learn installation of dynamite in the rocks, which is the dream of his father Jose. For a while Leo seems unsuccessful for the dynamites haven't been exploded yet. All this mounts the grief in the family and the couple blames each other for their plight. Marian who ends her hard day amidst the smoke of the chullah to prepare 'kanji' doesn't want Leo to be a dynamite installer ; Jose attempts to forget his grief with the glass of liquor while Leo has been totally obsessed by the unexploding dynamite.

Just then there is the arrival of a team of social workers. They entertain the family fully by a comedy but their remark that it was a 'false play' disturbs the labourers. The team then proposes to put up 'a real play' in which Jayant, Achala, Ajay and Aniket play the roles of Jose, Marian, Leo and Mukadam respectively. The family is shocked to see

that the team is depicting their life in all its details. The team harps on the sexual persecution of the make-believe Marian by the supervisor on the job. The real Marian gets very upset. She doesn't understand how the team knows about the problem which is corroding her heart. She fails to realize that her grief has already been conveyed to the team in their brief encounter with the family. Act I ends with 'real' Marian trying to attack the 'false' Mukadam in the inner play.

Act II begins with Marian blaming Leo for the loss of her self respect by the real Mukadam. She demands to know from the dramatists as to who has told them about it. Aniket, the false Mukadam explains that it is her own unbearable sorrow that was self-evident. On learning this, Marian gives vent to her pent up feelings.

Through a poignant flash-back, the play depicts in her own words, the story of the loss of her chastity. She wants to convey the message that it was the helplessness of her husband Jose, her son Leo and her own helplessness that made her lose her virtue. She condemns Jose and Leo for not being able to protect the same and keeps grieving about it.

The dramatists comment that her story was an obvious one. Whatever had to have happened, ought to have happened did happen. Then they try to justify their roles in the inner play. Ajay too justifies Leo's role that he played ; but everyone blames him and makes him a laughing stock. Ajay too, pretends to be extremely angry with the others. Later they mock at him, ridicule him calling him a lion of cotton, mewing miow, miow.

They encircle the real Leo and sing a number of songs - with different tunes adapted from Goan Mando. 'The real' Leo gets so excited that he loses his head. He wants to kill Aniket 'the false' Mukadam. Just then, 'the real' *Mukadam* arrives and on the pretext of unfinished work belittles Leo and his father Jose. He insults Marian sexually

too. Leo gets wild and overpowering him sits on his chest. Just then Jose and Marian hear the blasting of the rock and see for themselves that the rock with the dynamite has been shattered and the way to the town is absolutely clear. The team proposes to move away to other villages to realize the explosion of those unexploded. Marian and Jose bid good bye to the team for having exploded their dynamite. The team bids a fond good bye to Leo !

Thus the play conveys in a nutshell that the younger generation has learnt to assert its human rights. Leo and his family is forever free from the shackles of slavery. No more injustice undue exploitation and inhumanness will be tolerated. The way to future emancipation has been paved !

*Shabay, Shabay Bhaujansamaj* (Three Cheers to democracy, 1986) is a political satire. Goan culture is the delicious blend of the East and the West. We celebrate several festivals of Hindus and Christians. On one hand, we have carnival, the typical feature of Portuguese culture and we have Shigmo, the typical feature of Hindu culture on the other. The significance of both the colour festivals is the celebration of spring during which the Christians have the street plays called '*phell*' and the hindus have "*mell*". The theme of these plays is very much local. It is interesting to everyone for it concerns them. Its intention is to create social awareness. The artists use their traditional costumes. There is no much expenditure on setting for it is performed on the road. There is a lot of scope for spontaneous and creative dialogue, imagination and fun. Yet, it is loaded with a powerful significant message. The spectator just cannot miss the message because it is driven home with crisp dialogue, resounding chorus, catching music, song and dance.

In the present play the group called *Mell* is seen approaching the stage which is depicted as some open space outside a house. An old lady on seeing the approaching

group lights the traditional brass lamp and keeps it on the Tulsi stand along with 5 coconuts. She welcomes the *mell* which arrives on the stage. She gets into a spontaneous conversation with Keshav, the leader of the *mell*. Through their conversation we get to know that it is spring season and that they are going to perform in every village and in every courtyard. They also indicate that although there are no female members in the group, the women from the village are expected to participate spontaneously acting out their role on the spur of the moment in the way they think fit. There is no rehearsal. They are supposed to participate as per the context ; speak whatever they think is the best and sing and dance as well as they can. If they forget anything they are not supposed to reveal it. They have to pretend to be as natural as they can be. They announce the name as : *Shabay, Shabay, Bhoujansamaj*.

The hero, the uneducated Bholo, the minister elected from one of the rural constituencies of Goa. The name of the constituency which has been fictionalized and it is symbolically called 'Kuddegall', meaning a blind village.

Illiterate, naive, greedy, cunning, self-indulgent Bholo has been elected, not by the merit of his leadership or character but by the virtue of bribing people with money, clothes and sarees.

The President of Bholo's party has come up with a 27<sup>1/2</sup> proposition manifesto, which is as follows :

- 1) It is proposed to give statehood to this region.
- 2) Each and every person will be included in the scheduled caste category.
- 3) The mother tongue will be included not in the VIIIth schedule, but in the XVIth schedule.
- 4) The government will pay for the electricity in house to house.

- 5) There will be a road in between two houses.
- 6) The loan will be sanctioned to build temples ; however, there will be no need to return this loan.
- 7) The rights of thieves, burglars, crazy people, philanderers, good for nothing creatures will be especially protected.
- 8) There will be gutters on every road.
- 9) There will be a good provision for mosquitoes
- 10) We shall import rice, wheat, coconuts, onions, potatoes, intellectuals, thinkers, philosophers, ginger, corriander, nutmeg etc., etc.
- 11) We shall convert grampanchayats into municipalities.
- 12) We shall develop every village as a tourist centre.
- 13) We shall construct bridges in every village. If there is no river, we shall at first dig the river and then surely build the bridge.
- 14) After the buses of private bus owners whither out, our government will purchase them and then the nationalization of buses will follow.
- 15) Land to the tiller, house to the tenant, chair to the one who sits in, the bund to the one who shits, bank to the cheat and the wife to the one who sleeps with. Such rules will be strictly followed.
- 16) There will be 55% concession in the busfare to government servants, private servants, businessman, cartmen etc. and this will be made up by unemployed passengers.
- 17) We shall encourage co-operative movement by physical manipulation.
- 18) We shall establish a University in this region and enable poorest of the poor person to leak the question paper of any subject of his choice.
- 19) We shall write the History of Freedom struggle of this region in Chinese.



- 20) The admission to the Medical College will be unconditional.
- 21) There will be compulsory mechanization of all types of fishing.
- 22) There will be free education up to Std XII.
- 23) There will be no control on the price of note books.
- 24) Liquor and not pulses will be exchanged for work.
- 25) We shall create conditions for the need of hospitals in rural areas
- 26) We shall eliminate forests overnight for they lead to heavy rains and floods.
- 27) Our party will strive for the development of Bhoujansamaj by turning days into nights and bring about the Gokula of Nanda.
- 27<sup>1/2</sup>) The next half proposition resolves to change all the above propositions as per the requirement and the need of the times or might even nullify them altogether and realize Sumum Bonum.

Everybody, young and old seems to be in the spirit of elections. The school children bunk their classes for they are busy in attending the meetings and participating in the election propaganda. The women from the labour class innovate their folk songs by introducing the theme of elections, suggesting that they shall vote for the fellow who gives them sarees. The menfolk receive their bribe under the cover of darkness. They define democracy as the sovereign rule of money, for money and by money.

Finally, as expected Bholo wins the elections by the landslide majority. However, the people of his constituency are not happy for Bholo has not been offered any Ministry. With the help of the party workers he manages to pressurize the President and pockets the Labour Ministry. On taking charge of his Ministry he immediately donates Rs. 100/- to that committee which would felicitate him for his success in the elections.

Some members of the public approach to question him about his misdeeds and corruption. He is asked how only his brother-in-law managed to obtain the bus-permit while so many others had applied. They also complain to him that they have neither proper roads nor transport, nor well, nor school, nor hospital. Bholo silences them immediately by saying the deity of the village appeared in his dreams and asked him to renovate the temple. The gullible villagers unanimously agree that it is the temple and not the village that is to be renovated or developed first.

Thus Bholo continues to take his people for a ride using his position to line his own pockets and grow more prosperous. Finally, the public does rise against him. The leader of the protesting group demands his resignation. Everybody does so. Bholo asks, who is going to dethrone himself. At a moment of high irony, the leader answers emphatically, “these” who have offered you the power (Act I, sc. xiv) Bholo asks “who are those ? The leader answers turning, “These masses!” only to find that there’s nobody there. Everyone has dispersed after receiving some bribe or the other from Bholo’s secretary. The leader is utterly disillusioned. In a tremendous shock impact, he becomes insane and begins dancing in mad fury, running backstage as if he is under the last spasm of some mystique frenzy.

The play ends with Bholo and his secretary celebrating their own success in a jubilant mood.

*Pipall Petla* (The Pipall tree on fire, 1986) takes the concern for permissiveness and lust as the major theme. The power of the ancient pipall tree reflects through the unmistakable power of Freud’s “libido”. The burning of hidden sexual energy in each one of us has been compared to the fire in the large age-old tree. The irresistible sexual urge

takes the better of most of the characters despite their moral and family background. The suppressed instincts seize the opportunity to erupt with full pressure the moment it is sensed that the act of adultery could be concealed.

The theme is the pilgrimage of a middle class family - father, daughter, son and a faithful servant of humble birth. They undertake a journey in the family jeep to their family temple for Vasantotsava (celebration of the spring festival). They encounter a lot of problems on the way including the breakdown of their vehicle in the woods where there is a pipal tree which is on fire. The father Natha and the son are enchanted by the rustic beauty of the shepherdess and the daughter falls a prey to the sexual overtures of a young mad man. Noticing all these awful affairs, the old humble servant is alarmed remembering about protection of the virtue of his own beautiful daughter and escapes to his native village to save her from going astray. At the end of the story the shepherdess Gangi's husband kills her for losing her virtue due to the consummation of her lust for Natha while Natha pretends to ignore the fact that his own daughter has lost her virtue with a momentary carnal desire for a mad man. Perhaps his own weakness of character forbids him from questioning his daughter's frailty. After noticing the full moon, they realize suddenly that the spring festival is already over and having known that they have had enough of celebrations of their lust they give up the onward journey and return home that very night. In the original novel *Vasantotsava* by the playwright himself, Naik has picturised the family knocking at the door on their return while their apparently virtuous and orthodox mother is unwillingly compelled to extricate herself from the licentious arms of her lover in order to let her family into the so-called the respectable and decent high caste household.

The ending of the play is telling and effective. By the time any external censor controls us, we are doomed. On one hand the pipall tree is completely charred by the fire, by the time the fire Brigade is called and it is put off ; while on the other hand, in a parallel situation the major characters have already been consumed by the flames of adultery before the young son of the protagonist who is equally lascivious but wouldn't like his father and sister to be so, arrives on the scene to stop them.

The fire in the pipall tree is also reflected in the fire of possessiveness, jealousy and hate suffered by Gangi's husband. He kills Gangi's favourite white ram for no fault of the mute animal, a sign of sexual revenge and hate that ultimately kills Gangi too.

*Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* (The Fair of Lord Vichitra, 1986) is one of the fascinating plays of Naik. Organizing fairs around the local temple premises for a day or over a week is the typical feature of religious life in many States all over India. We have *Kumbha Mela* of Haridwar and Prayag, Ramnavami of Ayodhya, Krishnajalmashtami of Mathura, Rathayatra of Jagannathpuri, Aashadhi Ekadashi of Pandharpur, Naagmandala of Karnataka, Dashahara of Mysore, Kali festivals of South India and several others. In Goa too, we have a fair or jatra practically in every small village to commemorate the deity's annual day around the temple or church premises. There are hundreds of temples and churches in Goa. At times a village has two or more major temples besides a few more places of worship. Besides a church, a village might have several chapels. The Annual Fair practically in the name of every temple or church assumes a categorical importance. It is the part and parcel of Goan life. A number of folk songs are sung and dance competitions are held. They also present plays on such occasions either to raise funds for the temple for any good cause or may be just for fun and frolic in order to reinforce a community feeling.

Each fair ends with an auction of the things used for worship ; for instance, deity's clothes which people offer, coconuts, fruits, flowers, vegetables etc. People bid as high as their purses can afford and purchase them with the faith that the deity will bless them. The procession of the deity in a 'Palaquin or Ratha' is the main feature of these fairs. They have several sweetmeat stalls, garment stalls, stalls selling vessels, toys furniture, liquor and so on. Everyone is in festive mood on such occasions and does not mind spending extravagantly. It breeds a lot of business and all kind of affairs --- moral as well as immoral are in full swing. Devotees gather from the places far and wide ; and at the same time the evil forces exercise their own power.

An extremely interesting as also intriguing feature of Goan single day fairs is that all the devotees have to vacate the temple premises before sunset. If by chance any person remains overnight, it is believed that he will be taken over by evil spirits or possessed. For instance, Narva is an island in North Goa where there is an annual fair. The people get to the island by canoes on the fair day, with the determination to wind up their worship, purchase and sale to return home before sunset. The devotees ensure that they are back well before time. It is solemnly believed that the person who is left on the island for the night is lost forever, for he loses his wits. The second example could be the Three Rays feast on 6th January every year on the Cansaulim Hill on the chapel premises. Although Christianity might not encourage the blind faith in vacating the place the common folks make sure that they do it for they are not prepared to take any risk as far as their life is concerned.

Naik's *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* is also a play that portrays a day-long fair that is annually celebrated in the name of a deity. Interestingly the name Shri Naik gives his deity is Sri Vichitra - the Strange Divinity. The people from many villages around cross the

river and come to participate in the fair that is held on the island. The place is crowded, there is haste and confusion as would happen in the case of any fair. All the pilgrims are supposed to go back to their villages before the sun sets, for the fear of changing into stones, if they remain on the island after the sun-set.

There are a number of vicious people who take advantage of the chaos and confusion in the fair. There is a villain who robs the virtue of a young teenager dame by enticing her away in the thickets of the nearby hill. The lost pieces of her broken bangle suggest the loss of her character. The tyranny of a very dominating, possessive and sexually jealous husband is indicated through the lost tear of a lively woman who is not allowed even to speak to any man from her mother's place. She yearns to talk to somebody from her maiden village whom she meets in the fair. However, her jealous husband does not allow her to do so casting sexual accusations on her character and she cannot but shed tears. The tears forcefully bring out the male tyranny and humiliation of Indian women that has been going on down the ages at the hands of a highly male dominated, patriarchal society in which the woman is seen basically as a sex-symbol often ignoring the significance of her other roles as daughter, sister and mother. These roles are only kept handy for harping on the image of the archetypal woman so that an average woman can be tamed and controlled.

In a scene, reminiscent of a 'telling' folk-tale, a young lad has lost "the pea" from his hand which he desires to eat. He is beaten and forcefully led by his master to the place of work indicating the inhuman loss of childhood and the stark reality of child labour. There is also the young man who was lost on the island when he was five. Then, there is the old man who lost his five-year old son twenty years ago and is still searching for his lost child among the five-year olds in the fair. This failure to realize the flux of time

indicates the narrow outlook of the older generation, still harping on the ignorance and blind faith without making any effort to illuminate one's vision of life. There is also the tramp who appeals for money and begs for alms by beating the drum and singing the praises of an unexisting monkey, saying that it is lost and therefore he has lost his means of livelihood. The crowd gives in and throws coins at him. There is a lame beggar who collects lots of alms but when rebuked forgets which side he limped and begins to run limping on the other leg. There is an old man who has been left in the fair by his son hoping that he would be lost so that he doesn't have to take care of his father in his old age.

*Konntari* meaning 'someone', the central character who minutely watches everyone, is mistaken to be insane by everyone who encounters him. He succeeds in delaying the concluding ritual and finally throws the idol of the deity into the sea. At that moment the sun sets changing everyone on the island into statues, thus putting the final end to the strange fair and its peculiar participants.

### III

#### Voices from the Regions

George Woodcock has perceptively observed that :

the reality of Canadian experience is geography, variously shaped by history. That is why this vast country is inevitably regional in its cultural manifestations.<sup>30</sup>

This is true in the case of India. A regional literature while concentrating on a particular part depicts the life of that region in such a way that the reader is conscious of the unique characteristics of that region. The writers under study artistically portray the cultural milieu of their regions.

The society that Reaney depicts is a mass of immigrants from all over the world, viz : Irish, Scottish, English, Germans, French, Portuguese, Greek, Italians, Japanese, Chinese, Indians etc. They have hyphenated identities. Here people have a perpetual longing for home and they make their own efforts to preserve their own culture and language. Yet, there is bound to be a cultural exchange that subtly goes on resulting in the emergence of a new Canadian culture. Although the Canadian society that Reaney deals with, is about a couple of centuries old, it is a technologically developed and modernized society. However, the Indian society depicted by Naik has thousands of years of history behind it. It is indeed a developing society with its ancient culture fraught with superstition, myth, blind faith, male domination, ill-treatment of women etc. It is not yet a modernized society, but is just on the hinges of modernism.

The region of Goa Naik depicts is an ancient land which was reigned by the Guptas Shilahars, Mauryas, Kadambas and Vijaynagar kings before the 16th century and thereafter by the Portuguese up to 1961. Consequently, Naik depicts an assimilated culture which is reflected in costumes, festivals, language, food habits, social customs etc. He makes use of native idiom effectively. Since Portuguese ruled Goa over 450 years, a section of Goan society especially the Hindus converted into Roman Catholics were greatly influenced by the western culture. They adopted Portuguese delicacies in food, costumes, music, dance and language among all other things. Certain words essentially Portuguese were assimilated into Konkani language so much so that Goans still think that those are Konkani words. For instance, the words such as kadel (Chair), Janel (window) coffucao (confusion), saud (health), obrigado (thanks), demande (court case), demayaj (too much), vistid (dress) etc. Thus both Reaney and Naik deal with culturally assimilated contemporary societies, generally tolerant bringing out a unity despite all their diversities.



Reaneyland is a fine blending of a make-believe world and realism. This trait is evident in the early plays. It is a supernatural world. As we journey through Reaneyland we encounter ghosts apparitions, wishbones, rattling bones, personified bones and trees, restless wolves, grizzly bears, sun dogs, swans, beastly marine creatures like Mr. Manatee, witches like Madam Fay and Lady Eldred, benevolent creature like Rev. Kingbird and so on.

In *Handcuffs*, Act I, Part III of *The Donnellys* we have Mrs. Joana Donnelly's apparition high up in the background flinging her arms like wings ; in *Sticks and Stones* Act I of the trilogy we see Mrs. Donnelly encountering her own future ghost while she is awaiting her husband's return in the night after seven years of imprisonment. At the end of *Handcuffs*, we see the blindfolded ghosts of Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly, Tom, John and Bridget come out from behind the curtains and follow their own coffins as the chorus says, "*Five dead people are leaving this house*" (*Handcuffs*, Act I). The sewing machine of Peggy O'Connor rattles furiously as it makes the dress of Bridget, the dead niece of the Donnellys.

In *Listen to the wind*, the haunting of Geraldine by the murdered babe is resolved once Angela kisses the wishbone of the babe sewn into a rag doll. Geraldine then ceases to be a wolf in the forest and is liberated through her death, when the wishbone finds its loving mother in the person of Angela. Our ancestors come alive in the *Colours in the Dark*. The demonic powers of the *East Wind* attempt to destroy the existence of Owen. The mountain becomes a pebble in hand, the lake calms down to a dewdrop in a flower, the weary road turns into a string around one's wrist and the sign turns into a straw whistling "home" (*Colours in the Dark*, Sc. 21). Earlier, the same symbols are used in inverted imagery (*Colours in the Dark*, Sc. 12). In *Apple Butter*, the Tree Wuzzle,

Rawbone, Moo Cow save Apple Butter from the cruelties of Miss Pinch, Soloman Spoilrod and Victor Nipchopper. There are no limitations of time, space, shape, size or movement in Reaney's plays. We do not come across such mystique creatures in the world of Naik.

Unlike Reaney, Naik is very much concerned with the unity of time and space. For instance, all his plays like *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra*, *Raktakhev*, *Pipall Petla* are bound within the limits of time and space. Consequently, there are hardly any changes in the setting. He has a great faith in the powers of nature and music on the human mind. The leader Mukheli in *Shabay, Shabay, Bhoujansamaj* dances in a mad frenzy on the beat of folk music. The song of the toddy tapper brings the tidings of love to Jayashree and Prakash in *Raktakhev*. Further, in the same play, Prakash although refuses to go boating in the night at first, ultimately succumbs to the call of the winds and the waters and agrees to go. He willfully seems to have offered himself to the river. The darkness, the call of the wind and the death attract Jayashree too into the sea.

Naik makes use of superstition in a few plays like *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra*. In India, there is a superstition that prevails regarding certain hills, islands or deserted mansions that nobody should stay there after sunset. Naik skillfully exploits this taboo in *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra*. He gives a detailed picture of all the happenings in a fair on an island. The fair is to be wound up before sunset for the fear of taboo that whoever remains on the island after sun set shall be turned into a stone. The vendors and devotees make haste as they are heading towards sunset. But the character Konntari, the visionary man has witnessed everything wrong that has happened in this fair ; he has witnessed a real chaos and confusion and purposefully delays the ending of the fair with the intention of finishing it once for all and everyone including himself turns into a statue at the point of sunset.

Thus Naik uses this taboo to indicate that such mass gatherings which reinforce our base instincts and nurture negative values should be shunned down once for all.

Thus, Reaney and Naik wage a war against the taboos in society. In fact they are artistic enough to exploit the taboos to drive home their own message. Reaney viciously uses Kelley's version about "the Black Donnellys" in the medicine show in order to mock at it :

So hurry to your home, good folks  
Lock doors and windows tight  
And pray for dawn, the Black Donnellys  
Will be abroad tonight. (Sticks and stones, Act I)

The so called "Whitefeet" wiped their names for all times so when Canadian kids are naughty their mothers say, "Be quiet or the Black Donnellys will get you." (*St. Nicholas Hotel*, Act II)

They both love animals, birds and trees. In his poetry *A Suit of Nettles*, Reaney deals with swans. Then he goes on to the killdeer in *The killdeer* ; to Cocoonut, the pet cat of Kenneth and the bat in *The Easter Egg*. He speaks of a wolf in the forest, horses, colts, cowbirds in *Listen to the Wind*. He deals with the grizzly bear and the sun dogs in *The Colours in the Dark*. As far as Naik is concerned, love and worship of animals is a part and parcel of Indian culture. Indians dedicate a special day to cattle during the Diwali season. On this day the cattles are given a thorough bath. Their horns are painted, their bodies are decorated with sandalpaste, garlands and bells. They are worshipped and then offered specially cooked nutritious food. This is an expression of gratitude to the cows and bulls by the farmers for all the help they offer at farming and other activities.

Naik brings out his appreciation of the young, majestic, powerful bull through his poem "Bangar Beil". Just as the swan in *A Suit of Nettles* has human characteristics, the "Bangar Beil" of Naik is the representative of his own exploited class. He says for

generations together the cattle has borne the exploitation mutely without any resentment. But now the young bull would like to run loose and overthrow the authority. He wouldn't wait upon anybody any more ; but would make others wait for his worship and get himself worshipped at the threat of his horns and bellowing that echoes in all directions. Naik has an unexisting monkey in *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra*. The hero Kontari saves the tramp who pretends to have lost his monkey from the angry crowd by entertaining them with the imitation of a real monkey. In *Shabay Shabay Bhaujansamaj*, the symbols of the political parties are "the fox" and "the stag" speaking of the true ideology of each. Naik's Leo from *Suring* has been inspired to be a lion by giving up his timid rabbitlike nature and he does become one by asserting his own identity to safeguard the respect of himself and his parents in future.

Reaney and Naik grew up on farms. They can vividly portray the minute details of farm activities as well as the agrarian society. The threat of provincialism reflects Reaney's reaction against the limitations of the Ontario farming community, where he was raised and *Three Desks* is the honest account of the years when he taught in Manitoba after World War II. The poet has to master such an environment by mythologizing it, as Reaney explains in his early essay "The Canadian Imagination" and it is for their power to do just this, in a comparable society, that he so admires the Brontë sisters, particularly *Wuthering Heights*, his favourite novel and the reason that he chose to study English literature.

The stuffiness of provincialism is condensed in the room in Mrs. Gardner's cottage where the action of *The Killdeer* takes place :

These brown velvet combines trimmed with  
One thousand balls of fur ! Fifteen kewpie dolls !  
Five little glossy China dogs on a Welsh dresser !  
Six glossy Irish bdeek cats and seven glass  
Green pigs and eight blue glass top hats and

Five crystal balls filled with snow falling down  
On RCMP constables. Two little boys on chamber  
Pots : Billy Can and Tommy Can't | (*Killdeer*, Act I, sc. ii)

The clock in *The Easter Egg* and the school bells in *Three Desks* are indicative of society dominated by time. There is also the grotesque, interfering solicitude of parents who refuse to let their children grow up. Harry Gardner's mother bathes him till he is sixteen. Obviously Harry complains to her :

You read my letters and my diaries and my bank book  
And my dirty linen. When I'm asleep  
Why don't you take off the top of my head  
And put your hand in ? (*Killdeer* Act I, sc.ii)

Provincial society is also shown as puritanical, with a prurient interest in sex and a religious zeal that has become censorious and destructive :

..... Mrs. Bromlay's boy. He  
Made such a good death for Jesus Impaled by Indians !  
(*Killdeer* Act I, sc. iii)

This reflects the evangelical religion in which Reaney was raised, which seems to have had a complex, major influence on his work. Reaney's was a Protestant family belonging to the wing of fundamentalist Plymouth Brethren. Their narrowness and the distrust of sex is part of the provincialism Reaney doesn't acknowledge of. Nevertheless, they left an indelible mark on his imagination. The distinctive 'Gothic' effects in Reaney's work seem to derive from a sensibility which is essentially evangelical. Reaney polarizes between extremes of good and evil, emerges with simple allegorical characters and brings out the guilt motive in them. He is characterized by violence and melodramatic last minute reversals. Reaney has transmuted this inheritance into a sophisticated, highly self-conscious art :

The prophetic stance which [Reaney] assumes in his major work resides largely in the Blakean manner in which he weilds the elements of a primitive evangelical vision into a more sophisticated literary shape.<sup>31</sup>

This literary shape is the pattern of denial-and-rebirth, which Reaney became conscious of as an imaginative 'mythic' structure through the influence of Northrop Frye.

There is destructive, demonic and pervert provincialism in *The Killdeer*, *The Easter Egg* and *Three Desks* in each of which there is the killing of a pet animal. There is a sense of inversion, for instance, the 'upside down churches' in the Antichrist-child's dream. Kenneth claims that Bethel has literally turned the house around in *The Easter Egg*. Before fainting in *The Killdeer* Eli tells his mother that her house is going round and that summer won't ever come back in their lives. In *Three Desks* it is emphasized that Niles' true home is Australia, 'down under'. This perversion retards the emotional growth of the protagonists. Thus Eli Fay and Kenneth refuse to grow up and Harry who desires to be an adult finds it difficult due to his overbearing mother. This is the difference between Mrs. Gardner and Madam Fay. The smothering tendencies which are only half-conscious and comic in Mrs. Gardner are wholly and consciously destructive - demonic in Madam Fay. This can be clearly seen in Bethel's treatment of Kenneth, the 'attic child' in *The Easter Egg* whom she is determined to reduce to idiocy. In *Three Desks* it takes the form of Niles cynicism and anti-intellectualism as a teacher, and the childish, pointless desk-pushing which he inflicts on Jacob Waterman. Similarly, the prurience of provincialism becomes more overt sexual nastiness. Bethel is a coldly sexual predator, teasing Ira, forcing George to propose to her when he wants to marry Polly, and lying that Kenneth has assaulted her. Madam Fay has been Clifford Hopkins' mistress since she was twelve and though she differs from the village women, we are told, because she is 'vital and pagan' her vitality is completely perverse. She peddles a false, cosmetic beauty, with lipsticks called Jezebel, Rage, and *Midnight Black* and her

..... hair remover here would take  
The beard off Santa Claus in a second  
And make him a fat, beardless youth of sixteen. (Act I, sc.i)

The male equivalents of these 'witch ladies' are Clifford Hopkins in *The Killdeer*, whose appearance is that of a fake Christ or D. H. Lawrence, and Maximilian Niles in *Three Desks*, who is compared to Hitler dancing at the fall of France and the Anglo-Saxon 'shadow goer' meaning Mrs. Shade in *The Sun and the Moon*.

Yet, there is a sense that these demonic villains are victims also, Heathcliff figures whose evil is a result of ruined childhoods. They are invariably orphans and usually bastards and their viciousness is based on self-contempt. So Madam Fay hated Becky's mother for loving her when she couldn't love herself and Clifford tried to drag everyone down to what he felt was his own privilege.

Several provincial images that are the part of our identity could be traced in the regional literatures of India. Naik's writing too is characterized by nativism in its broadest sense. Like all great literalists such as the Goan poet Manoharrai Sardessai, Englishmen William Wordsworth and Charles Dickens, Naik believes that "the more regional we are, the more universal we are bound to be." Literature "is nothing but the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," according to Wordsworth. "This makes it human and whatever is human is universal" says Naik.

Certain provincial images which have been ingrained in the Indian psyche attain a prominent place in all writings of Naik : the river, the coconut tree, the pipal tree, the banana plant, the mango leaves, the sun, the moon, the Tulsi stand in the house compound, the brass lamp, the sindur the flowers, the black beads, the jari blouse piece and so on. The brass lamp is lit as a sign of welcome ; it also signifies life. So it is lit up on a birthday, rather than the candles being blown off. A crow signifies a dead soul and therefore it is fed in the name of ancestors. The earth is revered as the mother for she nurtures us, while a special day is dedicated to cattle by peasants who are still dependent

up them. Naik uses coconut trees for his stage-setting in *Rakhann*, *Raktakhev* and *Eka Junvear Jun* and wherever possible for they seem to breathe life into his art. The pipall tree also reserves a prominent place in Indian psyche. Men as well as women worship pipall tree on certain days every week. Besides there are specific festival days on which the pipall tree is worshipped. People move around the tree at dawn chanting Mantras. No vehicle driver, public or private crosses past a pipall tree without paying his obeisance, lest he meet with an accident. This is evident in Naik's *Pipall Petla*. Naik's writing is fraught with regional images.

Naik's pastoral world is very enchanting. Its woes are forgotten amidst religious and marriage festivities. He indulges in the delineation of the specific dialect and idiom of his characters very successfully. He can give the real flavour of the language of the shepherds, the tramps, the beggars, miners, fisherfolk, labourers, farmers, rustics as well as the middleclass elite. This makes him inescapably a regionalist.

Unlike Reaney, Naik is not concerned about the threat of provincialism. His are regional images which could hold true for any regional unit in India. His predicament is individual as well universal. He deals with social conflict, whereas Reaney as discussed above deals with the psychological conflict rendering a certain subtlety to the depiction of the human mind.

## **Women**

Both Reaney and Naik successfully indulge in the detailed characterisation of several women -- good as well as bad. Similar to the Indian English poet Nissim Ezekiel Naik does not endorse the Great Motherhood image of the Indian woman. Several of them are depicted as pagan seductresses thwarting the Motherhood image.



The female characters in Reaney's plays would make a potpourri of all kinds of women. A few of them are gentle, kind and refined. But most could be termed as exotic, bad and vicious. Very few of them like Mrs. Donnelly are extremely powerful. Angela from *Listen to the Wind* is a highly refined woman and so was her mother Claudia. Her maid too is an extremely faithful person. Maggie Donovan from *St. Nicholas Hotel* or *Donnellys Part II* is a virtuous person, maddened by the love for William Donnelly. She dies trapped in a convent with Will's name on her lips. Jennie Donnelly has a very good memory.... all her experiences in Biddulph are imprinted on her soul and she can interpret them sensibly and logically. She is the spokesman for the Donnellys. She advocates the Donnelly case for them and obtains for them a great love and respect in our hearts. Norah, Will's wife is also a refined person very much dedicated to her family. Bridget, the Donnelly niece seems to be a misfortunate lass who has arrived at the Donnellys just to be killed in a short while. There is another girl Katie Johnson who has been seriously in love with a young doctor O'Halloran but since she was the daughter of the Grand Master of the Orange Lodge of Protestants and he, the son of the most pious Catholic family in the settlement, they could not be united in marriage and therefore drink poison and walk hand in hand to the borders of Biddulph thus uniting in death forever.

In *Listen to the Wind* we have Mrs. Taylor who has a frail virtue and prefers her extramarital affair to the life of her own son Owen even whilst he repeatedly expresses that he wants her by or he will slip away. Eli, Harry and Kenneth's mothers are very possessive mothers who wouldn't allow their sons to grow into adulthood. In *The Killdeer*, Madam Fay would want Eli to play with his toys forever and so does Mrs. Gardner who would like to give bath to her son till he is sixteen and read his linen : she would like to know his mind so much so. that he says :

When I am asleep  
Why don't you take off the top of my head  
And put your hand in ? What could I show you  
Mother, I except yourself ? (*The Killdeer*, Act I, sc. ii)

In *The Easter Egg* Kenneth's stepmother Bethel wants to hold him in bondage and obstruct his development. Madam Fay who sells her lipsticks Jezebel, Rage and Midnight Black, is a whore of Babylon. She has had a relationship with Clifford Hopkins since she was twelve. After virginising herself for a while she gets married to Mr. Fay only to elope with her sister's husband Mr. Lorimer. Mr. Fay kills his wife, two kids and shoots himself. Mr. Lorimer spends the rest of his life in a mental asylum dismantling his bed apart and putting it together a deserving doom of a man who eloped with the whore of Babylon despite possessing a lovely wife and three beautiful kids.

Madam Fay, popular among the critics as the whore of Babylon goes about in her Baby Austin with purple plush inside selling *beauty*, the cosmetics. She is an authentic creation of Reaneyland. In her attempt to sell her *Jezebel* lipstick to the reluctant and inhibited Mrs. Gardner she questions :

Doesn't the maple leaf  
turn red in the fall ? (*The Killdeer*, Act I, sc.i)

Madam Fay is another of Reaney's wise innocents, apparently retarded and helpless in the adult world but in fact possessing secret reserves of power. As Rebecca in *The Killdeer* we are presented with a wholly benevolent and beautiful girl, Pollex Henry in *The Easter Egg* who undertakes to protect Kenneth, the figure of Innocence and introduce him as gently as possible to the realities of the fallen world. Two other characters complete the cast : Ira Hill, a doctor, and George Sloan, a clergyman. Their courtships of Bethel and Pollex respectively provide a tenuous addition.

Mrs. Donnelly is the lady of tall stature physically as well as spiritually. She begs forgiveness from Sarah Farl for the killing of her husband by Jim Donnelly in the provocative fight and proceeds to confront Cassleigh's mob demanding the release of Sarah Farl's brother Donegan, they wanted to cut ears of. She commands :

Give Mr. Donegan back his clothes..... raise him up out of that mud  
Dung ! There's fields of grain to garner with bread for you all and you'd  
rather be thorns to each other. Get back to work, you fools. You tribe !  
(*Sticks and Stones*, Act II)

Mrs. Donnelly, the most loving and daring wife who has succeeded in reducing the sentence of her husband waits for him by the gate to come home from the prison. She says to her sons :

Bring sheaves with you when you've finished with the field. Your father will want to see what his farm's been doing, right away. I'll stand out here with my lamp. You will come tonight. I'll hold this lamp until either its oil runs dry or you're home. (*Sticks and Stones*, Act II)

In the eerie half light, Mrs. Donnelly is joined by her ghost, who "wandering through, crossing times and places" relates the future "You'll die unconfessed, Judith Donnelly. And wander these roads for a certain while. Deaf leaf. Float light". Mrs. Donnelly sees herself both acting in the present, waiting, with the lamp by the road for her husband's return, and also transfixed in a story that cannot be altered. She thinks :

I'll stand over here years after tonight a seal in the air - long after my house and my gate and my curtilage have become dust. A lamp hanging in air, held by a ghost lady. (*Sticks and Stones*, Act II).

Thus the choices are already made ; things already spoken and ladders with certain rungs demand her violent death.

There is a cultural gap between the Canadian and Indian women. The former are more modernised. One cannot think of an Indian woman in the nineteenth century driving a car like Madam Fay. Divorce was and is still a social stigma. However, there are women who would compromise their virtue due to materialistic pleasures. Naik's women are

innocent, simple and ignorant at times. Physically they are not so strong and although a few of them have a good character, there are some who have a loose character and they are looked down upon by society. However, there are some who would go to any extent in the protection of their virtue. There are those who are initially weak but ultimately mustering courage shed away their weaknesses asserting their own identities. The young innocent girl in *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* is lured away into the forest by the opportunist is an ignorant weakling. The beautiful woman in the same play who suffers from the possessiveness and jealousy by her husband and who has no other alternative but shed tears, is another case of a weak woman. In *Dayaj*, the young girl is raped by the landlord's son and she commits suicide by drowning herself in a well. Marian from *Suring* is raped by her master. She pities herself and condemns her husband and son for being incapable of protecting her virtue. In *Khann Khann Mati* there is a maid 'Kesar' who has been sexually used by all the drivers for she sells herself for money. In *Raktakhev*, Prakash's mother leaves her husband's house along with Prakash leaving behind her baby daughter. She prostitutes herself making a great impact on her little son's mind who suffers from self--alienation as he grows into adulthood. In *Rakhann* the mother of Shankar and Shaku has made a contract with her husband that she shall have the sexual relationship not with himself, but with the landlord's son. The husband is expected to give the name to her children and raise them. In return he gets a home, a job and grain. In *Pipall Petla* the young daughter of landlord loses her virtue in a moment of temptation at the hands of a man with perverse tendencies. Her mother who is supposed to be from a respectable orthodox Brahmin family also does the same in the absence of her family from home. In *Demande* the landlord lets his daughters grow overage. They are about to fade out of youth when the youngest daughter musters courage, finds her own partner and

helps the older sisters also to follow her example. It is only in *Dayaj* that we have a brave woman Mrudula who kills her lustful brother-in-law to save her own virtue and that of the other women. She is prepared to go to the jail and is accompanied by her lawyer friend Neela to fight her case successfully. In *Suryasamvat*, one of Naik's plays there is Urmila a very refined lady who is shocked at the blind love of her upright husband for his own sister Miraka and her good-for-nothing husband. Urmila's husband Suryakant who supports everybody by working overtime, is determined not to have a baby until his sister gets one. As a result he estranges his wife, never treating her as his own. Suddenly Urmila declares that she is pregnant and her husband asserts the impossibility and begins hurling dung at her character only to know that this was just a pretension to serve as an eye-opener for himself.

In *Pipall Petla* the shepherdess is innocent. Yet, she is a temptress and tries to lure away Natha persuading him to use her. It is also possible that she doesn't have an issue from her husband and at the same time she is taken up by the youthfulness of Natha's son. Perhaps she is herself tempted by her motherhood instinct for a baby and hoping against hopes that she might succeed in getting a son like that of Natha, lures Natha into a sexual affair with herself. She invokes his blessings for a similar son and as she is kneeling with her hands folded, she is slaughtered by Kondi, her husband.

An examination of the women characters of Reaney and Naik shows that oversimplified classifications are inadequate. They dramatized the theme that a woman must avoid illusions about both herself and others so as to acquire the capacity to be loving.

Sexuality is not a necessary prerequisite to a loving relationship. Mrs. Donnelly is totally selfless and responsive to the needs of others. Madam Fay's sexuality makes her self-centred. Reaney depicts the independence of human compassion from human

sexuality and interdependence of love and understanding. The women who idealize reality retreat into an illusiory world. Madam Fay from Reaney's *The Killdeer and Kastur* from Naik's *Khann Khann Mati* are such women. They use bizarre behaviour because they cannot accept themselves or others. Women who face reality are the well adjusted women, committed to the here and now, and vital. They desire to live ; they may eventually be selfish or loving. The women who sympathize with others and their problems are the truly compassionate women like Mai, Mrudula and Advocate Neela Kamat from Naik's *Dayaj*. Naik does not portray a woman of as tall as a stature as Mrs. Donnelly and of as low a stature as of Madam Fay. But his plays contain affectionate women like Jayashri, Shaku, Mrudula, Urmila, Marian who could be rightly compared with the women in Reaney's plays such as Norah Donnelly, Maggie Donovan, Kate Johnson, Rebecca Lorimer and Pollex Henry.

### **Mothers**

Most of the mothers in Reaney's plays are selfish, wicked, dominant and overbearing mothers like Geraldine, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Gardner, Mrs. Budge, Madam Fay and Bethel. There is also Mrs. Donnelly who is the epitome of powerful motherhood who is fertile at mind, heart and body. However, there are also examples of genuine femininity such as Polly, Becky and Angela who play real mothers to Kenneth, Eli and the ghost baby respectively, who are the victims of overbearing mothers.

In *Listen to the Wind* Geraldine aborts Douglas' child so as to marry a rich middle class man Sir Eldred. Pierre is disinherited by his father for marrying Claudia, a woman of humble birth without any estate, while miserable Claudia dies in child-birth leaving her daughter Angela alone to confront all the conspiracies against herself.

In the main play, we see that Owen's mother does come to participate in the children's summer plays in order to humour her son Owen whose only desire is to bring together his parents. The separation of the parents is the main cause of his sickness. He pleads :

Mother and father. It is time that you are together again. I felt you both touching me - like rain. I'm not very old yet, you know. I still want to be held. If you keep letting go of me - I'll slip away. (*Listen to the Wind*, Act II, sc.xii)

But the mother vehemently goes back to her lover leaving Owen to his own predicament and destiny. There are no fewer than three *terrible mothers* in *The Killdeer* who by their hostility, over protectiveness and the deviousness of tainted love refuse to allow their sons to grow into mature adults. Mrs. Gardner is overprotective about Harry, giving him bath, checking his linen and curious about what is going on in his mind all the time. Madame Fay is the extremely hostile giantess to Eli while Mrs. Budge forcefully sends her son to the Amazon mission station where the aborigines throw him into the river where he is devoured by cannibals. The step-mother Bethel from *The Easter Egg* reduces Kenneth to an attic boy denying him a mature growth so that he is incapable of asserting his property rights he is entitled to through paternity.

Harry's mother Mrs. Gardner, Eli's mother Madam Fay and Kenneth's mother Bethel are the cases of bad mothers. They are so possessive that they desire to have their sons clung to them forever. They are so mean as not to give any chance to them to adjust themselves in their married lives or to love. The dominating mothers tear the sons between themselves and their spouse or the lover. Bethel even manages to steal her stepdaughter Polly's lover George for herself.

Throughout his work Reaney contrasts true maturity which fulfills the promise of childhood with false maturity which stifles it or else perverts its energy. The world is seen

as a battlefield between holy and demonic powers, struggling for control of a child who is at the same time the imagination and the soul of man. So Polly fights with Bethel for control of Kenneth in *Easter Egg*, Becky with Madam Fay for Eli in *The Killdeer*. Angela renders the ghost baby peaceful by kissing the doll made out of her wishbone. It is the overwhelming motherly love that heals Kenneth, Eli and the restless ghost baby.

According to Ross Woodman :

Reaney like Wordsworth views the child essentially as the inhabitant of a divine world whose play actively expresses the radical freedom which characterizes the divine life. The loss of that life is what Reaney means by death, and the imaginative recovery of it through the arts is what he means by eternal life.<sup>32</sup>

In Naik's *Raktakhev*, the mother abandons her baby-daughter and husband in order to live a luxurious life by prostituting herself. She does take her son along to use him not as her son but rather a pimp who would fetch her more customers. In *Rakhann* the mother wants to use her husband just for prestige, while she has illegitimate relationships with the landlord Dhana for material gains. These poverty-stricken mothers represent Indian women who compromise their virtue for a few coins.

While there is the lustful mother of adolescent children in *Pipall Petla* who seizes the opportunity to indulge into a sexual affair when her husband and children are away, there is 'Mai' the mother of Ranjeet and the wife of a revolutionary who hands over a dagger to her daughter-in-law suggesting the murder of her lustful son Ranjeet to protect her own virtue and that of several other women. She says her own husband Muktida had given it to herself for the protection of her virtue. Although she didn't feel the need for it during the days of foreign reign, Mrudula might need it now during the days of freedom to protect herself from her own people. Mrudula understands the horrifying suggestion from the brave mother. Handing over the dagger to Mrudula she says :



Mai : Take this, a gift to you from me. I have seen the days of oppression, experienced slavery but never did I feel the need to use this dagger. Yet, you may feel the need for it nowadays in the days of independence (Mrudula receives the dagger). Let me rest here for a while. (Act III, sc.i)

At the right opportunity Mrudula stabs Ranjeet. Only on sensing the murder Mai sleeps her eternal sleep.

While there is permanently burning fire on the Pipall tree of Naik, there is permanently blowing powerful wind in Reaney. Reaney and Naik are convinced that our sexual urges, our yearnings, the hidden energies, our psychic phenomena blind us towards our values, our culture to what is logical and we are driven headlong into sin. Reaney and Naik display a lifelong fascination with the macabre and with the perennial patterns of romance coupled with violence.

As far as sexual themes are concerned Naik is very much akin to the most eminent Marathi dramatist Vijay Tendulkar in whose plays sexuality plays a dominant role. Just as sexuality pervades in all the plays of Tennessee Williams it is the prominent theme in Reaney's plays too. I would like to assert that though in all of Naik's and Reaney's plays sexuality has been present, yet it is not necessarily the primary ingredient in any relationship.

### **Child Protagonists**

In Reaneyland, we come across several child protagonist like Harry, Eli, Kenneth, Apple Butter, Farmer Dell's children and so on. In Naik's plays we do have children, but he doesn't portray their predicament fully. Naik sets them aside for a while only to see them emerging as strong personalities to avenge their childhood predicament. The plots of Reaney's plays usually involve a situation in which a sensitive child, or childlike man, has his maturity threatened on the one hand by a stifling provincialism, and on the other by

perversions of his own creativity, both sexual and imaginative. After near extinction by these forces, he is rescued by a rebirth into love and play.

The theme of *The Killdeer*, *The Easter Egg* and *The Sun and the Moon* is the necessity of the young freeing themselves from the slavery to their parents, if they are to mature and the extreme reluctance of the parents to let this happen. The protagonist in *The Killdeer* is Harry, an acne'd unpossessing young man dominated by his fussy, pious, bossy mother. Her refrain is *I feel I don't know my boy's heart any longer* (*The Killdeer* Act I, sc.i) or when addressing Harry himself, she says, *I wish you'd open your heart to me* (*The Killdeer* Act I, sc.ii). Eli finds her very disgusting. He believes that if he could only get married, he'd be alright and he is interested in Rebecca, the egg girl from the village, while his mother desires that he marries into money, making the best of every opportunity that comes his way.

Kenneth from *The Easter Egg* has witnessed his father committing suicide which has made him withdraw into the shell of childhood. Bethel his stepmother makes the best of his insecurity ; she is determined to prove him insane and send him to some charity home so as to usurp all the wealth and property of his father inherited by him. She asks George to kill Kenneth's pet cat Cocoanut, his only friend. She buries his favourite easter egg, a loving gift from his grandmother in the garden, engages him in slavish household jobs like polishing her cutlery, digging in the garden. He is not given any chance to learn language and finally she succeeds in reducing him to an attic child. It is only with his stepsister Polly's help that he barely manages to come to himself.

In *Rakhann* child Shankar does not understand how his mother is shut in the cottage with the landlord. He bangs the bongo against Monyappa's head until the latter starts bleeding profusely. Monyappa is forced to pretend that nothing is wrong. But he

releases all his violent energy against the landlord and his own wife by playing the drums fastly and loudly till he is totally fatigued. Little Shankar wants to beat the landlord but he is too young for everything. So he escapes from his house and returns after many years as a strong man to liberate his sister Shaku from the yoke of slavery of the landlord.

In *Raktakhev*, Prakash's mother abandons his baby-sister Jayashri and goes away to prostitute herself. Prakash is forced to entreat her customer to come again. If he doesn't, he gets a hard pinch and a burn on his back. Later she dies of some disease. Prakash is forced to earn his livelihood by begging. Fortunately, he meets another old beggar, very kind at heart to help him. Prakash remembers the old Muslim Rehman going hungry on the pretext of Ramzan or some other fast, on the days they get very little alms by giving whatever little food they get to Prakash. Finally, when old Rehman dies, Prakash performs his last rites and decides never to surrender his self-respect. He is ashamed of his mother and father too, for his father never attempted to get him back. The experience of life has made him very, very bitter and self-alienated. Later on, even when he accidentally meets his father and sister, he refuses to accept them for he doesn't feel the need for them anymore being deprived of them while he needed them the most. He can see his sister as merely a female. He claims that it is the natural law of youthfulness. He is not prepared to make amends. Finally his father drowns him by taking him boating in the middle of the night. Jayashri, his sister has been reared by her father and the toddy-tapper. But she has always missed her mother. She has great ideas of the love of a mother. She is not prepared to accept abuses against anybody's mother. Jayashri has been deprived of her mother for no fault of hers..... thirsting for love she falls a prey to the love and youthfulness of Prakash and drowns herself too leaving her predicament unsolved..... "Why was Jayashri deprived of her mother's love?" There is no answer.

Several of Reaney's plays deal with a sensitive child protagonist or child like man whose maturity is stunted partly by a predominant mother figure and partly by sexual and imaginative perversions of his own creativity. The predicament is resolved after the extinction of these evil forces and the hero takes a rebirth into a liberated life fraught with love and concern.

J. Stewart Reaney explains with reference to parent / child relationships that :

The child's struggle with innocence and experience narrates the search for spiritually *true* parents. The end of this odyssey is the key to Reaney's theatre.<sup>33</sup>

J. Stewart Reaney further explains that the denouement of *these* plays is a scene uniting the adult and the child ; this is how the search and a prophesy of the future is resolved. There is reconciliation and recognition as the children and the "true parent" accept their new lives. Despite their differences *The Killdeer, The Easter Egg, The Sun and the Moon, Night-blooming Cereus, Names and Nicknames, One-man Masque, Geography Match, Applebutter, Colours in the Dark* all conclude in parent-child reconciliation. *Applebutter* initiates the reconciliation in the play entitled *Applebutter*. Sometimes the love and the patience of adults do it in *The Killdeer* and *The Sun and the Moon* and sometimes it is the combined effort of both as in *Geography Match* or *Names and Nicknames* that realizes this objective. Reaney looks for optimism, new societies and healthiness.

*Sticks and Stones*, Part I of *The Donnelly's* trilogy ends with Jennie unable to convince her mother and father to leave Biddulph even in dream. *The St. Nicholas Hotel*, Part II presents Mrs. Donnelly soliloquizing by the coffin of her son Michael, the first Donnelly victim of the whitefeet. In *Listen to the Wind* Owen fails to find his "true parents". His parents do not make any attempt to prevent him from slipping away ; but

the inner play ends optimistically, the ghost-child (doll) finds her “true mother” in Angela and the play ends with the betrothal dance of Angela and Arthur.

Reaney does not isolate the child. He matures in the context of his family, his relationship with his parents. In Reaney’s theatre the child is the source of the divine innocence that allows the return to Eden in the fallen world, the family is also vital in the protection of the child. As the child moves from innocence to experience, wisdom of parents has to ensure that the child is safe from the dangers of false innocence (the inverted child) or too sudden an entry into the world of experience as in the case of Reaney’s villains. The return to Eden might be experienced in the ideal families of Harry and Rebecca, the Kingbirds or the Donnellys by both the children as well as the adults.

Playfulness is also extended to characterization and emphasizes the childish roots of much adult behaviour. The rhetoric is deliberately childish using expletives such as ‘Golly’, ‘Gee’, ‘Oh Shucks’ - or conveying immaturity more subtly in a speech like George’s :

There was just that funny old glass *Easter Egg* all wrapped up in a yellow old piece of paper (*The Easter Egg*, Act II, sc. viii).

where the placing of the ‘old’ is non-adult. Similarly, there is childish behaviour : Bethel jumping on a table to proclaim herself ‘king of the castle’, for example, or the snatching of objects from each other’s hands, which is almost as much a Reaney trademark as the killing of pet animals. More basically, a deliberate implausibility of motive seems sometimes to be suggested. One can sympathize with the spectator who objected to Reaney after *The Easter Egg*. But no one ever feels he has to get married just because he has killed a bat ! Yet, clearly Reaney is trying for something quite different from realistic motivation here, something more than even symbolic significance. The motives seems to be a child’s explanation of adult behaviour. So beyond the effect of adults being childish

lies the further effect of children playing adults - an effect made clearer in *Listen to the Wind* where the 'adult' characters of the melodramatic *Saga of Caresfoot Court* are actually played by four children, working out their own anxieties and wishes in a sophisticated form of psychodrama.

### Family

Both Reaney and Naik handle their themes in the perspective of the family. The conflict and doubt are placed in the confines of a farmhouse, a village, always tearing away at the family at its centre. Almost all of Naik's works such as *Pipall Petla*, *Suring*, *Dayaj*, *Demande Suryasamvat*, *Khann Khann Mati*, *Raktakhev* and *Rakhann* have a family theme. Strains of family conflicts occur even in *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* and *Chaitanyak Math Na*. In all these plays, the family is thwarted due to egotism, selfishness or jealousy of some evil character. No amends can be made in the plays such as *Raktakhev* and *Rakhann*. But in the other plays like *Suring*, *Suryasamvat*, *Khann Khann Mati*, *Demande*, *Dayaj* the conflicting situations are resolved re-establishing the family in a definite reconciliation. This is so because the Indian family is a very strong unit. Although it is losing its joint-family status, nuclear families are respected and highly appraised. Men and women are taught to sacrifice their personal pleasures for the sake of the family. Divorce is a social stigma ; remarriage rate and the consequent percentage of step-children is applaudably low. Self-alienation among youth has not attained its extremities, for there is always a strong, healthy, protective family to fall back upon in the case of any kind of conflict.

The theme of broken family is very much conspicuous in James Reaney's play *Listen to the Wind*. The hero Owen makes a desperate effort to bring his parents together

by putting up a play along with his cousins based on Haggard's melodrama *Dawn* presented by his father to his mother. The mother does come to watch the play but parts with her sick, dying son in the pursuit of her own love and sensual pleasures. She doesn't seem to have even a bit of yearning to save the life of her son though she loves him. It is this tendency of parents, the tendency to refuse to do any sort of sacrifice to keep the family together which has led to shattered families in the west. Consequently, the kids suffer from a sense of alienation. They could therefore react through bitterness, anger and violence against their parents and society. Geraldine is not worried about her unborn baby and aborts her. The ghost of the baby becomes restless and keeps haunting her. Pierre is absolutely not worried about his daughter just to regain the disinherited property of Caresfoot Court. He tries to convince Angela that her fiancé Alexander Brenzaida is dead and gets her married to the wretched man Douglas.

Naik has been impressed by the Marathi dramatists like Ram Ganesh Gadkari and P. K. Atre. The social and family issues are important to these dramatists as they are to Naik. What struck Reaney about "Novels of Ivy Compton-Burnett" :

is the indestructibility of the families she writes about in the face of the most destructive plots..... so many novelists describe wickedness in a sphere that does not really matter ; Compton - Burnett is careful to place her evil and tyranny in a very vital arena, - *The Family*...<sup>34</sup>

Reaney locates his conflict and his good and bad characters in a family context. Besides the ironic affection of his Souwesto folk plays, Reaney also needed a strong family situation at the core of his plays to present fully his concerns and feelings and this he got through *The Donnellys*.

### Violence, horror and terror

Violence and the atmosphere of horror and terror is all pervasive in their plays. The creation of the gothic situation is the typical characteristic of the drama of Reaney and Naik. Naik's early plays like *Khann Khann Mati*, *Raktakhev*, *Rakhann* and *Suring* are more violent than his later plays. In *Khann Khann Mati* Kastur's husband Khushali catches Gopi, the driver redhanded while he makes approaches to his wife and beats him badly, asserting his own identity.

There is horror in *Listen to the Wind* while the ghost of the aborted baby haunts her mother. The horror is also created when the trapped and hungry dogs of Pierre are let lose and tear him into pieces. In *The Easter Egg* Pollex instructs Kenneth's mind and heart by a vocabulary lesson and by telling him the story of Anna Karenina whose death has been introduced by a toy train. (*The Easter Egg*, Act I, sc. iv) In another strong scene, George Sloan, tries to ask Bethel for the hand of her stepdaughter ; but intimidated by Bethel's calculated misunderstanding and her sinister power, eventually proposes to her instead (*The Easter Egg*, Act II, sc.x) The scene generates the mood of macabre farce which is typical of Reaney's drama.

The gothic atmosphere of horror and terror recurringly echoes in *The Donnellys*. At first, Pat Farl is killed at a logging bee by Mr. Donnelly in a fit of drunkenness whilst all men around are drunk. Later, during the competition of the stage coaches Finnegan's man Edward Brooks from Exeter stage is killed in an accident. Mike Donnelly is stabbed by a conspiracy. Maggie Donovan dies in a nunnery fretting for Will Donnelly. A young couple in love for many years commits suicide hand in hand for the marriage is impossible between the members of rival groups of Christians and Protestants. Mr. Donnelly is rebuked for the Protestant Jonson's Stallion had an affair with his mare. Mrs. Donnelly is



accused of cutting cow's tails, Donnelly boys are accused of running the horses in the night until they drop and of cutting the horses' tongues. Barns are burnt, pins are inserted in the threshing machines, properties are usurped, the Donnelly field is harvested by the enemy just by a piece of paper without giving any benefit to the family who slogged so hard to produce the grain.

As Mrs. Donnelly waits for her husband's return from the jail with a lamp holding high, she is joined by her own ghost, who *Wandering through, crossing times and places* recollects the past :

Mrs. Shea held her child in the rain barrel while a mob of 400 set fire to their house. She held and held until past the borders of life. (*Sticks and stones*, Act II)

This gives a fair idea of the kind of violence going on in Biddulph in the nineteenth century. Finally, the church priest himself conspires against the Donnelly family with the intention of eradicating them totally. The masked men arrive in the night and mercilessly kill Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly, their son Thomas and the niece Bridget and burn their farm and house over them. Then they go to Will's house and happen to kill John who opens the door. Thus sacrificing the household on the alter of hatred.

In the Donnellys there is death, horror and terror. Right from the beginning the audience waits for the impending death of the Donnellys. Yet, there is horror and terror as the scenes unfold. There is horror in Mike's death, Maggie Donovan's death and in the horrifying stage - coach competitions wherein Finnegan's man loses life. There is horror again whilst Johanna Donnelly's ghost speaks to her referring to a lamp held high in the air by a ghost lady. There is the worst sense of terror as the hooligans who are determined to wipe of the Donnelly family approach their home and slaughter them burning their house above them finally completing the death toll through the shooting of John at Will's

house. The killers are so terrifying that the jury give the verdict in their favour “not guilty” despite themselves for they have been threatened : “We’ll visit you at all hours of the night when you least expect it.” (Handcuffs, Act III)

Reaney’s plays deal with violence against animals and birds too. In *The Killdeer* Madam Fay kills her sister’s killdeer bird for she is extremely jealous. Ultimately she kills her indirectly for she feels unloved. This gives rise to a certain psychological mania in her which makes her shiver at the very sight or mention of even a killdeer feather. When her son Eli shows her the dead bird he finds in the meadow she becomes extremely repulsive and strikes and knocks him down. When she sees a killdeer feather in Delta’s hand in Mrs. Gardner’s house she commands that she should put it down for it must be weighing tons and when finally while she is determined to take Eli away with herself, Eli happens to approach her with the killdeer cage and she orders him “to get back” (*Killdeer*, Act II). In *The Easter Egg* Bethel makes George Sloan kill Kenneth’s pet cat Cocomanut. George although almost decided upon marrying Polly, happens to kill the bat going like a whirligig in Bethel’s parlour and feels compelled to give up Polly for the old hag Bethel.

In the early plays like *The Killdeer*, *The Easter Egg*, *Three Desks* and *Colours in the Dark* Reaney deals with animal and bird violence. In the later plays, like *Listen to the Wind*, *The Donnelly’s* and *The Dismissal* the violence against human beings greatly exceeds that against animals and the feeling of horror and terror shakes the audience to the core.

Naik too shows violence against animals. In *Khann Khann Mati*, the chicken hearted Rocksai, the rock-master shoots dead a pigling in his own backyard as it is being fed and pretends to have gone hunting for a stag. He is fully dressed as a hunter and he is prepared even to kill a tiger if it comes on the way. He says he has arranged to kill a wild

boar and orders the preparation of the massala for the delicacy. The maid follows the order only to learn at the end that it is a dirty pigling which is aversive to all the employees of the mining office that he boasts to have hunted. The violent expression is a reaction to the physical weakness the rockmaster feels in the company of his dominating wife who finally forsakes him, for she thinks he is no good.

In *Pipall Petla* Gangi the beautiful shepherdess makes sexual advances to Natha. Burning in jealousy her husband slaughters her favourite and well-groomed white ram whom she loves immensely. His action is a prelude to the impending slaughter of Gangi which is to follow.

In *Raktakhev*, Lalu, the aspirant of Jayashri's hand gets live crabs for Jayashri. Jayashri loves to break the fangs of the crabs and throw away until the crabs are totally lifeless. Prakash rightly remarks that if at all she is married to the undeserving Lalu, she would render him as lifeless as crabs.

The Dynamite in *Suring* refers to the dynamite in each one of us. We have our set of grievances against what the life might have offered to us - certain injustice, exploitation by others, innocent suffering and so on. Due to certain external pressures we bottle up our feelings which might explode unpredictably at any time. The young man in *Suring* is awaiting the explosion of the dynamite he has installed in the rocks. What is more important is the explosion of the dynamite in Leo himself, in his mother, his father and all of us without which we cannot be full-fledged human beings. We have to exchange our submissive nature for self-assertion. The team of social workers help Leo to reach the point of the blast and therefore he kills the Mukadam, the inhuman supervisor. Harry and Rebecca help Eli to reach this point and blast against his mother and Clifford in *The Killdeer*. Polly helps Kenneth to explode against his stepmother in *The Easter Egg*. We

have Mrudula in Naik's *Dayaj* who explodes her anger against her beastly and licentious brother-in-law. Ashok is the son of the landlord who is involved in a court-case in *Demande* for about two decades neglecting the marriage of his three grown-up daughters. Ashok helps his sisters to break the hard shell of submissiveness around them and explode to assert their own individualities.

As against this background the Donnellys are blasting by nature. They do not need any external agency to teach them self-assertion. The vigilante committee fears they might explode upon them any time. Therefore, in a cowardly act they attack them in sleep and attempt to annihilate them. Thus the self-assertion which leads to the explosion of the dynamite in us could be extremely taxing.

Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly have to pay the price for self-assertion at every step, at every moment. Will and his brothers are constantly victimized. It is ironical that exploding does not only mean destroying the evil forces around oneself. It also means self-explosion. The dynamite in the process of annihilation of the other, annihilates itself. That is the tremendous cost one pays for self-assertion. On being rebuked by the ghost as to why she had to talk back to Orangeman Stub Mrs. Donnelly asks whether she should have let him call her son a thieving cripple and the ghost retorts, "Oh yes, and lived". Mrs. Donnelly further asks what she should have done when she was asked to save Sarah Farl's brother.

The reply goes as :

Ghost : You should have said, save your brother yourself, and you should have let Donegan then be cut to ribbons by Cassleigh.

Mrs. Donnelly : Will Cassleigh never forget that then ?

Ghost : During the day, but not at night (*Sticks and Stones*, Act II)

Mike Donnelly is later stabbed to death in a barroom. The murderer gets the sentence of only two years imprisonment. Mrs. Donnelly states :

In this forest there is now a proclamation that the hunting season on my sons is now open. (*St. Nicholas Hotel*, Act III)

The Donnellys are branded "blackfeet" as a result of self-assertion. Their farm is burnt, the land snatched away; besides Mr. Donnelly suffers 7 years of imprisonment and Mike is stabbed due to self-assertion. It is this assertive nature that makes undue demands on the personality of Mrs. Donnelly. She has to be engaged in war against the enemies all her life whilst bringing up her 7 sons, 1 daughter, maintaining the farm, horses and cattle finally ending in almost the total destruction of all these in the darkness of night.

The child Shankar from Naik's *Rakhann* pays the price of his self-assertiveness. In a fit of anger he hurts his foster father and explodes against the landlord who has an illegitimate relationship with his mother. Being a 10 year old child he is helpless ; he is asked to quit the house and he does it never to return, until he is strong enough to face the landlord and that is the price he pays for his behaviour. He has to struggle to grow up on his own, out of the protective abode of his mother.

In *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* Konntari undergoes stampede during the deity's procession. The young girl desiring colourful bangles is raped by the opportunist. People grow violent against the cheating tramp who is crying for the loss of his unborn monkey. But Konntari saves him by performing the dance of the monkey. There is considerable violence against the little child who is busy eating grams bringing out the viciousness of child labour. There is harassment of the young woman who aspires to meet the people from her mother's place in the fair. The young innocent girl is lured away to the hill by the opportunist and raped. At last Kontari attempts to throw the statue of the deity into the sea while everyone on the island turns into a statue for it is sunset already.

Jayashri unknowingly has sexual intercourse with 'he', her own brother Prakash. On learning this from the toddy tapper, their father Kushta is horrified at the sin of incest.

He drowns Prakash in the river in the darkness of night. Jayashri too offers her life to the waters.

Naik too depicts violence in *Suring*. The most cruel exploiter Mukadam who has gone to the extent of sexual exploitation of the miner's wife is finally killed by Leo, the miner's son shattering away the shackles of slavery. There is horror in *Dayaj* with the reference to the killing of Muktida's youngest brother who was dumb. There is horror again in the reaction of the farmer on meeting Mrudula the sister-in-law of Ranjeet who raped his only daughter resulting in her consequent suicide. He gives a vent to his anger and hatred for the family by destroying his own vegetables.

There is terror when Mrudula from *Dayaj* pretends to be in league with her brother-in-law shuts herself with him in the presence of her husband who is unable to protect her virtue from his lustful brother, who has taken to bait Mrudula's virtue on the street as a challenge to his own friends. Mrudula receives a dagger from her mother-in-law and kills her lascivious brother-in-law thus putting a final end to his lustful tricks. She does this all at the cost of the impending jurisdiction.

Permissiveness and lust are the major concerns in Naik's *Pipall Petla* (Pipall Tree on Fire). The reference is in fact to the hidden, yet burning sexual urge predominant in the human race as per Freud's *libido* in his theory of psychoanalysis. Everybody, the father, the daughter, the shepherdess, the madman including the mother in her orthodox home commits adultery. The son too is adulterous and the sexual jealousy as well as the culture of the shepherd arouse hatred in him and he is compelled to kill the pet ram of his wife as well as herself.

Such melodramatic actions and a sense of burlesque are very much the part of Reaney's plays. Madam Fay elopes with her sister's husband Lorimer to Buffalo. Mr. Fay

loses his head. To add to the fuel Clifford Hopkins tells Mr. Fay that Mr. Lorimer loves his own wife very much. He suggests that he should go to their farm with a gun and give them a scare. Mr. Fay goes and directly kills Lorimer's wife and two sons to teach him a lesson. Finally he shoots himself. Mr. Lorimer is since then in the mental asylum tearing his bed apart and putting it together again a suitable fate for a man who eloped with the prostitute who roams about selling beauty. Thus the sexual jealousy has taken four lives, rendered one crazy and made young Eli Fay to withdraw into the shell of childishness afraid to grow up.

Violence against women is pervasive in both the regions of Canada and India. Reaney and Naik depict different aspects of the domestic violence, rape, prostitution and sexual abuse. Thus they reveal the greater sensibility to human suffering and a keener sense of the demands of justice.

There is another aspect of violence denying people of the rights to life, liberty and security. They are deprived of health, education and even the wages for their labour. It has been resulting from alcoholism, jealousy or the true financial and other personal problem of the perpetrator. It is seen sometimes as a way of maintaining control. Neither any place is safe, nor the home, nor the campus, nor the work place, nor the street.

In Naik's world violence against the weaker section of society on the basis of class is very much evident. The disharmony among women is common in the writings of both the playwrights. However, there are no solutions in the plays to combat violence.

### **Exploitation**

Canadian farmers might not have suffered exploitation at the hands of landlords for they owned their own land. They might have had bickerings with the neighbouring farmers ; but that inhuman exploitation of the powerless classes by the privileged class

which is common in India, is absent in Reaney. The landlord would draw the maximum advantage from his tenant providing him the minimum to keep his skin and bones in tact so as to make him labour more and more. He would make the ignorant and innocent tenant feel inferior so as to enslave him more and more. He would treat him almost as an untouchable but wouldn't mind having sexual affairs with his mother, wife or sister. In *Rakhann*, Dhana, the landlord has the extramarital affair with his tenant's wife. In fact, he has made a contract with his tenant that the latter will not consider his legal wife as his wife, but would allow the former to use his wife. In return, the landlord would ensure him food, clothing and shelter. The low caste of the tenant lady did not matter to him while he had his own wife at home to prove that he was a high class respectable man. The tenant lady too retained this illegitimate relationship partly due to prestige in the society and partly due to the golden ornaments the landlord had gifted her with.

Bethel from the *Easter Egg* arranges a party to display her own prosperity in a hunt for prestige among the intellectual. Bethel and Madam Fay want to keep their sons under their custody. Lady Eldred Cherishes the title *Lady* when she is a gypsy by blood, as well as by her deeds. Thus Reaney as well as Naik aim at the exposure of hypocrisy.

The revival of drama which came in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, with Ibsen and Shaw, Maeterlinck and Yeats provides the background for the intellectual content of Reaney's play.

Louis Dudek remarks :

In most of the plays of Reaney Canada has at last come in for sharp social satire.<sup>35</sup>

However Dudek further says that the satirical strain is the lesser part of his purpose. This satirical part is dramatically most reliable and it is theatrically more successful.



The first act of several of his plays as in *The Killdeer*, *The Sun and the Moon* and *Three Desks* is closest to social satire. In both the dramatists the element of satire is very much evident. Their plays are ironical. They contain a biting, scathing satiric intent to reform the society that they depict. But the second and third acts of a Reaney's plays take a radical turn into strange territory. With Act II the play turns into an allegory. It transcends the romantic tradition of magic and religion. This brings Reaney close to the vision of W.B. Yeats, the vision of the "eternal return".

The satire itself springs from a very close personal response to provincial life. All life is ultimately conceived in terms of the uncomfortable sense of misplacement. In the production notes of *Listen to the Wind* there is a reference to "the abyss we live in" and in the production notes of *Colours in the Dark* Reaney remarks "I curse this street where it's increasingly difficult to find a green leaf". The last thing that Kenneth's father had said before he killed himself was "abyssal nothingness". (*The Easter Egg*, Act III, sc. xii)

Micheal Tait has noted :

Since these plays tend to deny the reality of the evil acts they dramatize, the characters who suffer from such acts or attempt to combat them fail to command our interest or sympathy.<sup>36</sup>

In *The Dismissal* the struggle between polarities appears in a bitterly muted form. The conflict between Professor Dale and the faculty of the University of Toronto over unfair hiring practices is mirrored in the tension between two students, Jim Tucker and Mackenzie King. King is Reaney's most complex and successful protagonist largely because he is never evil, just weak and his actions spring from recognizable sources. Torn between self-interest and a knowledge of the moral structure of the world, he is in every way a human figure. If he sides with the students who rebel against Dale's dismissal, he will alienate himself from the faculty and risk the scholarship he requires to remain at

University, if he sides with the faculty he will alienate his peers. King tries to do a bit of both, in the end losing the esteem of his peers and the faculty, who use but dislike the informer. Yet, Tucker is not automatically ideal : while possessing good intentions and morally earnest, he is not capable of facing upto the faculty, because he is not enough a man of their world and to be successful he needs some of King's shrewdness. The ideal is Dale, but neither student is able to rise to his level. Thus Reaney's presentation of everyone as somehow thwarted has tragic power. Academic life is totally absent in Naik. Prof. William Dale from *The Dismissal* suffers likewise. He just writes a letter to *The Globe and Mail* pertaining the appointment of foreign professors in the University. He brings out just the genuine problems relating to University and his true opinion. A serious blow is dealt upon him by his dismissal. Prof. Dale is strong enough to sustain the blow. He returns to his father's farm and begins working with his hands and raising cattle. He also writes the history of Rome.

In *Three Desks* - comic and farcical elements dominate as the play opens with the arrival of a young professor at Rupertsland College, "a liberal arts college in a prairie town, eight minutes before his first lecture is to begin. The comedy is created primarily through juxtaposing Edward Durelle's expectations with the fact of his situation. Durelle's desire for challenge is granted by the two professors with whom he shares an office, Jacob Waterman and Max Niles, eccentrics of opposite temperaments. Niles tries his very best to fool him, whereas Waterman tries to help him in all possible ways throughout the play. The professors are characterised through their attitudes to their profession. Waterman is sincere about his duties, but his junior colleague Niles' flippancy is awful. His high spirit only masking his lack of talent. Waterman too can be equally

flippant ; but he emerges as a true teacher while both the professors spy on Durelle's first lecture, which is a failure, only Waterman gives constructive criticism.

Reaney justifies his comedy right in the first scene by indicating that something darker is going on in the college and especially in the opposing temperaments of the two men. A game is played wherein Waterman and Niles share one another's desks around ostensibly to be the closest to the window. In fact, they are giving a vent to their aggressions as a sign of mutual dislike - childish but harmless behaviour. Operating beneath this psychological game, however, is a contest of power. Waterman has seniority and thus deserves the privileged position but Niles claims that he has usurped that position.

Waterman's malice towards Niles' desk is the result of what is in it - his son's examination paper, which Waterman marked too generously and which Niles uses to blackmail him. Since that time Waterman's prestige has fallen as Niles has risen to a realization that is slowly destroying Waterman. Niles' impishness stands in contrast to Waterman's increasingly desperate runs at the desk which parallel the decay in his life.

The senior professors represent for Durelle the intellectual possibilities open to him as a teacher. He is further challenged by the emotional ties in his falling in love with Mia Dubronvic, a classic professor. Since Durelle is accustomed to a masculine milieu, the presence of an unpredictable and intellectually superior woman is specially challenging for him. In his love, Durelle wants to idealize her, but she will not let him, for she admits of having had an affair with another professor, Sandy McWhin, out of loneliness.

*Three Desks* moves from an examination of the relationship between *innocence and experience* on a relatively straightforward level to an investigation of the more paradoxical components of its moral apex. As a result, the play asks more questions than

it answers and, considering the depth of the questions this seems appropriate. *Listen to the Wind* and *Three Desks* represent Reaney's movement for an amateur dramatist unsure of how to communicate through the theatre, to a man of the theatre whose ideas are tempered and fortified through his medium.

Reaney's *King Whistle* brings out the Stratford strikes of 1933, an interesting example of working class militancy born of the depression, the operation of the workers Unity League and the reaction of employers and governments. The furniture industry was the second most important sector of the economy of Stratford. Madam Fay from *The Killdeer* is compared to the whore of Babylon, responsible for four deaths, one imbecility, and one splatteriest nervous breakdown one could have ever seen. She keeps driving about selling beauty with the story of her dirty, wicked life for bait when the sales are low. The so-called respectable family members of Natha including his orthodox wife and he himself fall a prey to *sensual pleasures* at the slightest opportunity, while their deeds are unknown and unseen by society. The clergy in *The Donnellys* conspire against the family ; the family doesn't receive the confirmation in the religion and finally the members of the vigilante committee, calling themselves *whitefeet* as against the brand *blackfeet* given to the Donnellys kill the family indulging in the worst crimes Canada has ever recorded in her history.

Naik has been influenced by the Marathi theatre. In 1960's and 70's one of the dominating themes in the play was social issues. There is a story element of satire in his plays to expose social injustice and hypocrisy. *Shabay, Shabay, Bhoujansamaj* (Three cheers to masses) is a political satire which could be associated with Reaney's *King Whistle* and *Antler River*. They are real community creations which are enormously satisfying artistically and imaginatively, for both the performers as well as the audience.

*Shabay, Shabay Bhaujansamaj* is a kind of a street play called "Mell". The actors are supposed to move in a group from one centre place in the town to the other performing out the play. In *Shabay, Shabay, Bhaujansamaj* Naik shows how in an illiterate democracy the people are enticed into electing an illiterate, ignorant and a corrupt leader who keeps on bullying them, reducing them to paupers. In fact, he served himself and all his relatives by depriving the public of their rightful. On realising this, a large number of people go to question him about his deeds. Unfortunately, as their headman is arguing with the leader, challenging his existence, the secretary of the latter bribes each one of the rebels and they leave their headman who suddenly realizes that his followers have deserted him and all his effort is in vain. He starts dancing in a mad frenzy mourning over the contemptible democracy indicating that democracy is not the appropriate form of Government for an overpopulated, uneducated country, corroded upto the heart by sheer poverty. Naik is also trying to create an awareness among his fellowman that if they do not elect their leader prudently they are destined to be journeying in a perpetual abyss of doom. Naik wages war against exploitation and yearns for love and understanding. Apart from penetrating the myth of all forms of benevolent governments, *Shabay, Shabay Bhaujansamaj* is a perceptive case study of the degenerating effects of power on people.

In order to give the regional flavour both the dramatists use myth and folklore. The portrayal of the Donnellys as a minority destroyed by a callous majority moves the play out of a simple regional context and gives it universal overtones. This movement is associated with the presence of demonic imagery in the play.

To state in Frye's terms : "The Donnellys are pharmakos figures."<sup>37</sup>

Frye explains :

The pharmakos is neither innocent nor guilty. He is innocent in the sense that what happens to him is far greater than anything he has done provokes..

He is guilty in the sense that he is a member of a guilty society, or living in a world when such injustices are an inescapable part of existence.<sup>38</sup>

The Donnellys opposed Cassleigh and Stub. Although they should not have been destroyed, one is aware that they lived in an archetypal demonic human world, and were killed for having refused to give in to the power figures of the area.

It is this universal fact of *Sticks and Stones* which allows the play to develop as a Canadian myth. Myth refers to a national embodiment of a universal archetype. Reaney's archetype refers to Canadian culture.

It is obvious that *Sticks and Stones* employs a universal symbol which coincides with Canadian culture and therefore, Reaney's play can be seen as developing a Canadian myth.<sup>39</sup>

Reaney moves royally ahead portraying "ghosts". At a certain stage Jim Donnelly comments : I'm not in Hell for I'm in a play, (*Sticks and Stones*, Act I, sc.i)

James Noonan says that :

By placing Jim Donnelly in a play James Reaney has given the character immortality.<sup>40</sup>

Reaney's play ensures that the ghosts of the Donnellys perpetually hang over the Canadian society.

There is a comic character by name Bible Sal growing hand in hand with the protagonist. Bible Sal spends her time writing out the Bible. She also periodically informs the protagonist about the progress of her work. The story she slavishly tells is the story of the protagonist and our own. The forty-year old man receives his blindfold, and as the character Gram tells him that his sin is simply not having been born yet, the audience is supposed to imagine themselves as mythically anterior to human life and Creation itself ; they are asked to identify with the mind of the protagonist ; and to accept that the emerging play is their own creation.

Naik uses folk-beliefs in his plays. *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* revolves around the myth that if anybody dares to remain on the island till sunset, he is bound to be turning into a stone. Such practices are still strictly followed in many parts of India. Yet, none of our credulous persons ever makes an attempt to assess the myth.

In *Rakhann* Naik uses myth. It is believed that demonic powers and evil spirits are awakened at dusk. They draw the people under their charm by long calls in a shrill voice from the mysterious world of darkness. If anybody responds to this call he disappears and joins hands with the devil forever. Ten year old Shankar protests against the affair between the landlord and his own mother in the presence of his supposed to be father. The landlord orders him to quit the house. At that moment they hear the devil's call. The landlord asks him to respond to the call. Shankar hesitates for the love of his mother and baby sister. There is the call for the second time. The landlord commands him to respond. Shankar does it at the top of his voice and begins running in dark never to come again.

Shankar does return as a well-groomed powerful youth after 15 years. Naik does retain the mystery about his whereabouts during this time and Shankar claims to be taking his sister into a respectful world of his own away from the evil clutches of the landlord.

While working at All India Radio in Goa Naik had an exposure to the plays in regional languages translated for the national broadcast. Plays written in regional language in India are rich in the use of folklore. Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, Girish Kanard in Kannada are well-known for their fascination for folklore.

Indian writers make use of fables from *Panchatantra* for the didactic purpose. Naik uses the symbols like a fox, a stag for satiric purpose in *Shabay, Shabay*

*Bhoujansamaj* to picturize the dirty game of politics. The political party with a stag symbol gets entangled in problems by its own horns. Bhollo's party sports the emblem "Kollo" i.e. the fox which is supposed to be an extremely cunning animal. Bhollo is a "Kollo".

He uses conventional ballads. For instance, in *Sticks and Stones* he made use of the barley-corn ballad. Since the time of harvesting of the grain to the threshing, to bottling the liquor, to pissing it against the wall.

Naik too adds colour and rhythm to his writing by folk lore. In almost all plays we find this element. In *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* Naik comes up with his concept of "Kontari" who dances for the unexisting monkey who is yet to be born. *Shabay, Shabay Bhoujansamaj* is fraught with folk lore. The debased values of people, their greed, their corruption have been uncovered by folk - lore, which is conveniently manipulated to relate it to the present. He also suggests the original old tune to the songs which gives contemporary plays a touch of class through the native idiom. He makes use of folk rhythm and songs which play an important role. All the actors actively participate in the whole scene with vigorous gesticulations. The team of social workers dance around Leo in *Suring* in an attempt to arouse his manliness :

Ajay : (Sings a comic folk song on Leo)

Once there lived a lamb  
It attacked people with a bang

Jayant : (Continues)

Once there lived a fox  
His intellect was a crux

Achala : Once there lived a tiger  
He boomed with anger

Aniket : But once there lived a lion  
Who had lost his fur

He meowed meo, meo

[Everyone on stage laughs](*Suring*, Act II)



## Good and Evil

The universe in Reaney as well as Naik is pitched in fundamental opposition of good and evil characters. On one side we have the good, the true, the just and the benevolent characters such as Rebecca Lorimer, Pollex Henry, Angela Caresfoot, Hilda History, Ira Hill, Dr. Ballard, Francis Kingbird, Mr. Orchard, Harry Gardner, Jacob Waterman, Rev. Hackaberry, Rev. Gleneden, Applebutter, Treewuzzle, Bible Sal, Mrs. Soper, Farmer Dell and the Great Donnellys. On the other side in the tug of war we have the evil forces fraught with malevolence towards all such as Max Niles, Mr. Wolfwind, the Schoolmaster, Mr. Manatee, Clifford Hopkins, Thorntree, Douglas Caresfoot, Bethel Henry, Charlotte Shade, Linda Axmouth, Madam Fay, Grizzly Bear and the enemies of the Donnellys. These characters are *White* and *Black* characters. There are also the greytones in the characters such as Edward Durelle, George Sloan, Eli, Andrew Kingbird, Kenneth who have every chance to choose the positive path.

Naik does not depict the theme of oedipus complex as Reaney does in the case of Harry and his mother Mrs. Gardner in *The Killdeer*. But he has a few equally bad mothers like Prakash's mother in *Raktakhev* who uses him as a pimp in order to get more customers. Despite abandoning her husband and baby daughter she has taken him along with herself not to help him, but to help herself. In *Rakhann* the mother of Shankar and Shaku has made a contract with her real husband not to treat herself as his wife, but only to give herself and her children born out of the relationship with the landlord, his name. She is insensitive to the predicament of her children as well as of her husband who has purposefully turned himself dumb due to this awful relationship.

The morally upright characters of Naik are Dharma, Khushali, Rocksai, Jayashri, Shankar, Shaku, Monyappa, Marian, Jose, Leo, Ajay, Jayant, Achala, Aniket, Mukheli,

Mrudula, Haridad and Kontari. The evil characters with sadistic or undesirable tendencies are Bai, Gopi, Dhana, Mukadam, Bholo, Natha, Gangi, Sandhisadu, the owner of the sugarcane machine, Mhajan and the tramp. Here too, in Naik's plays there are the grey tones. Although Mrudula murders her brother-in-law, she has freed all young, beautiful women from his clutches ; Kondi is not evil by nature but his silly beautiful wife arouses so much of jealousy in him by her adultery that he is compelled to murder her. Kastur is not bad by nature but the hawks like Gopi take advantage of her innocence and she prostitutes herself ; Chali in *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* unknowingly falls a prey to the Sandhisadu. Kushta and Minguel are not evil, but they share the responsibility of killing Prakash and Jayashri for the sin of incest terrifies them.

Thus Reaney as well as Naik have the grey tones in characterization which are neither good nor evil. However the difference lies in the fact that such characters of Reaney are finally responsible to make their own choice of either good or evil camp. For example Eli refuses to go with his wicked mother, Kenneth liberates himself from Bethel, Edward Durelle sides Waterman, George Sloan prefers pushy Bethel to kind and modest Polly. But the characters with grey tones in Naik's plays have no choice. They are compelled by the circumstances to act as they do. Kondi and Kushta the killers have absolutely no choice; it is just that they have to do, what they have to. Mrudula has no other choice but to kill the rapist. 'Chali' and 'Bail' suffer for coming across wrong men. Neither black nor white characters merely fall a prey to the unavoidable circumstances.

Reaney gives the option to his character to choose between shining good and sinister, alluring evil. The tension in the drama mounts due to the doubts and confusions of the characters who are neither black, nor white, but those who have grey overtones. They too have to make a definite choice between the good and evil camps. For instance,

Eli Fay has to decide whether to go with Madam Fay and be nestled under her wicked wings or to continue his friendship with Harry and Rebecca ; and he chooses the latter. George Sloan has to choose between wicked Bethel and kind Polly and he chooses the former. Once the choice is made, there is no turning back. Secondly, the conflicts are often left unresolved. The solution doesn't come as if from a magic wand.

One learns that there is no conflict with the meaning of the name versus the nature of the character in Reaney's and Naik's plays. Reaneyland is a naive, childish land where the people are sorted out for us by the means of categorising them as forces of light versus forces of darkness. They go either with beautiful names or carry ugly, suspicious and aversive names.

In the words of J. Stewart Reaney :

Characters are labelled either good or bad, never to contradict this label. Thorntree is cursed with a hateful nature, and is able to find peace with himself only as a real thorn tree, and that is that. <sup>41</sup>

The Satan v/s Christ option in Reaney, his Manichean separation of characters into powers of light and darkness have been attributed to his religious upbringing, says J. Stewart Reaney. He further asserts that the minority evangelical Protestantism of the International Sunday School Reaney attended has undoubtedly influenced him profoundly.

Naik believes in God, but he doesn't make much ado about religion. He does believe in the powers of nature, the strong human psyche and the tyrannical powers of our base instincts. He follows the Indian culture and confirms with the traditional rites and rituals of the Hindus as a way of life, the religion he was born in. However, Naik would not like to accept blindly all the ideas in Hinduism, nor would he like to oppose certain cultural traditions in the name of Hinduism, generally accepted and followed in society. He does have the Ganesh Pooja in his house, he does visit the temples and pays his

respects. He says, he does not believe in the physical concept of heaven and hell, but he asserts that he wouldn't like to be branded an atheist. The concept of God remains as mysterious to humanity as it is to him. Therefore, the ideas of God, Bhagvatgita, Puranas and other Indian scriptures are almost absent in his plays. He believes that nature is the manifestation of divine spirit.

Naik voices his idea of God through 'he' i.e. Prakash in *Raktakhev* :

The one you call God has been named nature by me. But God cannot hear anybody. He does not have ears for that. What he has is a boundless vastness and beauty. Only humans have ears. They have eyes too. One has to experience God by open eyes and ears. I have seen God. I have really seen him on the river bank at dusk. He looked like the setting sun in the west. The hills extended their loving hands to him as a father would to the son who has been lost for several years. (Kushta is restless. Minguel comforts him.) I admired his beauty in this flowing river with my own eyes - I felt this river flowing through my veins. I would like to see the inspiring beauty of God once again to the full satisfaction of my vision. (To Jayashree) would you take me boating around the river ? (*Raktakhev*, Act I)

Reaney's play *The Killdeer* is of the view that the writer's vision of life is essentially Manichean. He regards evil as eternal --- a dark fecund force co-extensive with good, an indispensable part of the human condition. Like all great writers Reaney as well as Naik recognize the reality and mystery of evil, its power and its bestial imbecility. Yet, it remains the fact that they cannot deny the victory of good over evil.

The gloom as contained in Naik's plays is psychological, sociological, familial, egoistic rather than religious or spiritual genesis as contained in the plays of Reaney. For instance, in Naik's *Suring* Marian's guilt has the psychological base. In *Suryasamavat* Suryakant, the hero though extremely industrious, is yet egoistic and very much responsible for the unhappiness of his wife. His high self-esteem is only taken advantage of by his sister Miraka and her husband. However, Madam Fay and Clifford Hopkins from Reaney's *The Killdeer*, *The Grizzly Bear* from his *Colours in the Dark*, Bethel from *The*

*Easter Egg* are antichrist characters whereas Rebecca, Pollex and Dr. Waterman from *The Killdeer*, *The Easter Egg* and *Three Desks* respectively attain the spiritual height.

Naik is a foreseer. He is convinced that people could be taught things to a certain extent, that social awakening is possible ; but it has its own limitations ; that people cannot be made. Just as a rose has to bloom itself, a person has to realize his own spiritual and social progress. Declining the idea that the young revolutionary man from the one act play *Eka Junvear Juin* could bring out social change among slavish people who deserve none other treatment than being enslaved and exploited ; the dying master says that rebellion has to be born in themselves ; it cannot be externally thrust upon them. He says, their rebel leader will come :

He will come if not today, tomorrow, if not tomorrow the day after. He has to come. But remember one thing; the one who will come will not come from across the sea like you and me. He will come from the womb of this very soil. He will dance vigorously on this island with the flag of liberation. And all the yokes of slavery will be shed off like faded petals. (*Eka Junvear Juin*, 16)

Reaney as well as Naik create worlds which contain common man and his predicament. The themes they handle are the same, such as : family, women, children, violence, gothic and macabre, mystic happenings, protest, victory of good over evil etc. Naik's world is realistic, for his drama is the product of his direct experiences of life. The same thing is true of Reaney, but sometimes he goes further beyond changing it into an abstract or artistic form of vision which makes art very challenging.

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## CHAPTER III

### THE VEHICLES OF VISION

The quintessence of the art of Reaney and Naik is that it is imagistic. This chapter examines the use of imagery and symbolism and language by Reaney and Naik.

What does an 'image' mean? According to C. Day Lewis it means "A picture made out of words."<sup>1</sup> It is usually expressed through a phrase, an epithet, a metaphor, and a simile. It is more vivid than any statement for we use concrete imagery to express abstract ideas and emotions. C. Day Lewis further observes :

An epithet, a metaphor, a simile may create an image, or an image may be presented to us in a phrase or a passage on the face of it purely descriptive, but conveying to our imagination something more than the accurate reflection of an extreme reality.<sup>2</sup>

Of all these constituents of imagery, Aristotle gives priority to metaphor. Generally, imagery tends to be graphic, visual or expressive in effects, and is used for conveying some similarity, analogy or congruity. It is very useful toward 'concretization of emotions' and 'obliquity of expression'. Vividness, compactness and concretization constitute its hallmarks. It is very effective in avoiding direct statements in poetry.<sup>3</sup>

A symbol is something that stands for something else. The Maple leaf is a symbol for Canada. The Tricolour Flag is a symbol for India. The Killdeer is a symbol for Reaney's play with the same title. It is a bird which attracts an enemy to itself in order to lead it away from its nest. Rebecca is the killdeer. Her refined motives and sacrificial nature combine, to make her the killdeer. In Naik's poem "Bangar Beil" the "bull" is the symbol of power. It is the representative of the protesting downtroddens, all set to overthrow authority.

As Katherine Ann Porter states :

Symbolism happens of its ownself and it comes out of something so deep in your own consciousness and your own experience that I do not think that most writers are at all conscious of their use of symbols. I never am until I see them..... And I suppose you do not invent symbolism ; you do not say, "I am going to have the Flowering Judas tree stand for betrayal but of course, it does".<sup>4</sup>

However, a symbol also may be something which has the power of arousing deep, but, largely inexplicable feelings. Symbols are organic units of consciousness with a life of their own. A symbolic effect springs through a creature or a thing as well as a whole dramatic scene.

Cedric H. Whitman defines an Image and a Symbol :

The poetic symbol is a word or phrase which carries a longer meaning other than that which it denotes, and this larger meaning is determined and limited by the contextual associations of the work in which it stands. Such association is clearly distinct from the "free association" of psychoanalytical method ; and similarly the poetic symbol, in being more fluid is distinct from the more or less fixed Freudian symbolism of dream, though it may make use of the latter. An image on the other hand, is primarily a word or phrase devised to evoke sense impression, visual, auditory, or any other. Images may and easily do, become symbols by association.<sup>5</sup>

Cedric H. Whitman further says :

The first function of image is a direct appeal to that part of the mind which recognizes sense - experience.<sup>6</sup>

Both symbols and images appeal directly to the mind - images appeal to the sense and symbols to the wider realms of association.

### **Imagery and Symbolism and their use in Drama**

Reaney and Naik are poets by nerve and bone. Both made their debut in literature through poetry and received great acclamation in their respective countries. Reaney was basically a researcher. The title of his Ph. D. thesis was "The influence of Spenser on

Yeats". Thus he has dealt with both the writers who are renowned for their extremely rich poetic imagery. Secondly, Reaney taught literature in the Universities of Manitoba and the University of Western Ontario. While at Western, he edited a magazine for ten years dedicated to the Iconography of Imagination. He spent a lot of time with theatre lovers, workshopping theatre which only added to the richness of his imagery. Rooted in western tradition Reaney's imagery is bound to be different from Naik's which has its deep roots in the Asian tradition and culture of India. A highly impressionistic and sensitive mind with gifted talents enables Naik to create imagery which though realistic, yet it is not mundane and prosaic. It has a tremendous sense appeal and it can relate itself to young and old, rich and poor..

The images that Reaney and Naik use in their plays are very much rustic and down to earth. They play a great role in the creation of regional cultural history and mythology.

J. M. Zezulka has said :

Images are not arbitrary or incidental elements in a region's cultural expression ; they are part of the archive, the imaginative counters with which artists think and about which communities think in the act of constituting themselves as communities. <sup>7</sup>

A child's memory is just like a blotting paper. He stores all the experiences in his mind, some of which are present around him in the form of physical objects such as the family photograph, his summer clothes, the fall of light and shadow in the front porch etc. He also remembers his make-believe games. Even if an adult thinks that he has forgotten all these, he doesn't really. In this connection Bowering asks :

Didn't Freud say that artists are children who have not forgotten how to dream and play ? If everyone grew up to be adults, the region would be only a body, aging like a brick schoolhouse. <sup>8</sup>

In Reaneyland children dominate. The need for childlike innocence is emphasized by Reaney in this degenerating society of today. Many objects seen during the childhood

by both the dramatists are recalled by the blotting paper of their memory. For example : country fairs, human and geographical legends, childhood homes, literary revivals, graveyards, religious demarcations , haunted houses etc. This gives a peculiar tradition to the region. Despite tradition the regional genius tends to reveal itself in its individual uniqueness. In her short essay on Reaney's poems Margaret Atwood counters :

“The individual's inner vision” to the “external social order” and says that the former is the only source of redemption and transformation. ’

That is, the outside is the fact, and the inside makes of it metaphor and signification. As the saying goes : “Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder”.

Several provincial images that are the part of our identity could be traced in the regional literatures of India, we come across Reaney's and Naik's plays too. We have the river Ganges ; there is a myth that a dip in the river Ganges absolves one of all his sins. The recurrent image of the river is in *Eka Junvear Juin*, *Raktakhev* and *Demande*. Sindur, a colour mark on the forehead is a part of the Indian Hindu identity. It signifies good omen. Naik's women characters as well as the bull parade it on their foreheads. The Indian society is mainly an agricultural society. The earth is unmistakably revered as “The mother earth” in all the plays such as *Eka Junvear Juin*, *Khann Khann Mati*, *Raktakhev*, *Rakhann* and so on. The coconut tree is revered in coastal regions where people mainly depend upon the sea and coconut tree for fish-curry, their main subsistence. Tulsi stand in front of every house is a vivid provincial image in some states. It appears in *Shabay*, *Shabay Bhoujansamaj*. Mangalsutra, glass bangles, flower strings in the hair are the signs of marriage. Gangi in *Pipall Petla*, Miraka in *Suryasamvat* and other women gracefully use them unconsciously depicting their Indianness. The coconut tree is another very conspicuous image in the regional writing of coastal India. It signifies prosperity. It is used in the religious worship. People offer coconuts to their deities. Any ritual starts and

ends with a coconut. We felicitate people on their achievements mainly with coconut among other things. The coconut tree appears in Naik's *Raktakhev and Eka Junvear Juin*. The players in *Shabay, Shabay Bhoujansamaj* are offered coconuts for their play, the offering being called "Talli". Naik uses coconut trees for his stage-setting in *Rakham, Raktakhev and Eka Junvear Juin*. The pipal tree also reserves a prominent place in the Indian psyche. Men as well as women worship the pipal tree on certain days every week. Besides there are specific festival days on which the pipal tree is worshipped. People move around the tree at dawn chanting Mantras. No vehicle driver, public or private crosses past a pipal tree without paying his obeisance, lest he meet with an accident. This is evident in Naik's *Pipall Petla*.

Reaney as well as Naik are rustics who grew up as farmboys. They assisted their parents at the farm activities. Reaney worked at the threshing machine and digging potatoes, while Naik played the cowherd grazing the cattle. It was nature that instilled the instinct of creativity in them. The rustic vision is essentially embedded in their world. No wonder images are drawn from the nature in their plays.

According to K. D. Verma, the nature images are the archetypal life symbols. He observes:

They project a pastoral vision of a fully refulgent and harmonious life, a pattern in which man enters into sacred communion with his cosmos, including objects of nature, as metaphorical condition of his integrated humanity and his desire to foster a community of being.<sup>10</sup>

Nature is another recurrent image standing for purity and tranquility as well as violence in the drama of Reaney and Naik. The soothing effect of nature pervades through all the writing of both the dramatists. The blowing of the West wind brings warmth and life to Owen.

Naik uses imagery sparingly and judiciously. As a result, his images tend to be functional rather than decorative. *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* offers us a delicious feast of functional imagery at appropriate places. Naik makes profuse use of the imagery from nature. For Naik, nature is a manifestation of the glory and greatness of the Almighty, and it is through her that a man can understand the essential truth and in the words of Wordsworth 'see into the life of things'. The suicidal youth in Marnakatto says :

The river winding through the valley inspired me to win over the hurdles of life. The waves whispered in my ears the secrets of life. The green trees changed my vision. The birds challenged me. The nature bestowed life upon me. (Chowrang 69)

When the toddy-tapper meets Prakash after fifteen long years, he finds him familiar. Yet, he is not able to identify him fully. Staring at him, he says :

On seeing him I have a feeling that I am watching a fully grown coconut tree which I had surely seen while it was very young. (*Raktakhev*, Act I)

In *Rakhann* Shaku loves 'the shankar tree' and its 'shankaram', the beautiful orange flowers with thin long green stalks. She identifies the tree with her brother whose name was Shankar and thinks that the flowers are the reminiscences of his love. She has a vague memory of her brother collecting flowers and throwing them before her while she was a toddler. She thinks that the tree yields flowers only for her sake. Nature was to Naik what it was to Tagore --- a background for the depiction of human emotions.

Time and again Reaney and Naik draw the fresh and vital images of hills, river, wind, skies, sun, moon and rain in their plays. Both the playwrights also depict the aggressiveness of nature. Nature stands not only for peace, calm and composure but also for death, decay and violence ; for instance, the chill East wind in Reaney's *Listen to the Wind*, the grizzly bear of winter in *Colours in the Dark* and the night storm in Naik's

*Raktakhev*. However, such death imagery is comparatively much less than the life imagery which is prominent in most of their plays.

At M. A., Reaney read *Fearful Symmetry*, Frye's study of William Blake's prophetic vision. It had a great impact on Reaney's imaginative vision. It provided him with an archetypal vision of the Bible in which the logos is equated with the imagination, thus transforming in a comprehensive and systematic way Reaney's earlier evangelical world into a literary one.

Reaney shows provincial society as puritanical with a prurient interest in sex and a religious zeal that has become censorious and destructive :

... Mrs. Bromlay's boy. He made such a good death for Jesus Impaled by Indians ! (*The Killdeer*, Act I, sc.iii)

This reflects the evangelical religion in which Reaney was raised, which seems to have had a complex, major influence on his work. Reaney's was a Protestant family belonging to the wing of fundamentalist Plymouth Brethren. Their narrowness and the distrust of sex is part of the provincialism Reaney doesn't acknowledge of. Nevertheless, they left an indelible mark on his imagination. The distinctive 'gothic' effects in Reaney's work seem to derive from a sensibility which is essentially evangelical.

Throughout the plays, Reaney alludes to *biblical events*, and places these universal images in the small confining area of Biddulph. As Dennis Kucherawy quotes Margaret Atwood :

As in the most Reaney plays, the extremely universal and the extremely local --- Jehovah and the Orange Day Parade in Stratford, cosmology and Winnipeg street names --- are juxtaposed, producing in this case an incredible assemblage of objects and ideas.<sup>11</sup>

In the play's examination scene, where one of the questions is about the symbolism in *Three Desks* itself, Flossy Sorin, the dumbest of the students is allowed to answer :

Well, I think there are too many Freudian symbols in this play. The three desks are very erotic : they could be the Trinity too --- Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The chess game isn't really a chess game obviously. (*Three Desks*, Act II, sc.vii)

This wry attitude to his own work is perhaps the dramatic core of Reaney's work, the quality that makes all his poetry, even the non-dramatic, essentially a performance by the poet before an audience which includes himself. Such religious imagery is absent in Naik who does not brand himself an atheist, but considers himself one.

Both the dramatists are deeply involved in religion as a way of life and a record of values. Naik is committed to Indian 'tradition', intellectually as well as intuitively. For him Indian civilization, its culture and moral values play a dominant role in his work. In *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra*, the hero 'Konntari' has been presented as an intellectual pilgrim in the quest for reality, the quest for truth, the search for the eternal verities implicit in India's great national heritage. Reaney recreates and restructures the myths of Christianity in modern English speaking people in Canada and Ireland. Mr. James and Mrs. Johanna Donnelly build up a home for themselves and their children in Biddulph and accept all the challenges of life, its joys and sorrows, frustrations, fulfillments. Despite their principled life, they are eradicated from the soil, for they wouldn't go against their convictions and surrender to the hypocritical Whitefeet. They prove themselves martyrs to truth in a Christlike sacrifice.

Reaney's plays contain the inverted imagery of the fairytale world in the plays such as *The Killdeer*, *Colours in the Dark* and *The Easter Egg* and the humdrum images of the mundane life as in the *The Donnellys*. The childhood images are : Kenneth's Easter



egg, a concrete symbol of love from his grandmother, his tender friend Cocoanut, the pet cat, the kildeers of Rebecca and her mother, Eli's angora rabbits are the images conveying innocence, simplicity and lovability. By trivial games and sophistry these defenseless symbols are subverted to nefarious purposes by the witchlike Bethel by killing the animal like Cocoanut or by hiding the Easter egg, thereby annihilating the associations of its sensual image such as love, communication, tenderness, warmth, creature comfort and human aspirations, thus reverting the being who owned these objects back into childhood. Although benevolent by themselves, the inversion of the fallen world endows them with imbecility or evil capacity. The innocent, deprived of his objectivization, lands into a pre-adamic existence.

Thus the witch Bethel uses objects to further her control over Kenneth. She becomes the mistress of his house and fortune and wants to send him to an asylum branding him "insane". The salvation of the child can come through the trust and sharing of image associations with those who love and believe him. Polly is instrumental in doing the same. She tells him the story of Anna Karenina and at the climax when Anna attempts to commit suicide, Kenneth comes out of his private world identifying his emotions with the fantasy. In this scene Polly uses a doll and toy railroad to relate the story to Anna's adulterous love for the soldier Vronsky ; at the end, when Polly lays the doll on the rail calling it Anna, waiting for the toytrain to crush her, Kenneth responds : "No ! No !" (*The Easter Egg*, Act I, sc. iv) thus coming to his senses, making the first step into adulthood.

This is the sort of response to a shared emotional reenactment that Owen, the dying boy in *Listen to the Wind* seeks to elicit from his mother through his play, though without success. The fallen woman refuses to respond to the appeals of her own son leading to the family doom.

The effect of provincialism is to pervert vitality into something, consciously destructive and demonic. Reaney's recurrent symbols for this state of mind are the killing of a pet animal which occurs in all three of the plays in the collection *Masks of Childhood* and the inverted imagery like the 'upside down churches' in the antichrist - child's dream. Kenneth, for example, claims that Bethel whose name is Hebrew for 'House of the Lord' has literally turned the house around in *Easter Egg*; Eli tells Harry before he faints in *The Killdeer* : 'Your house is going round. It (the summer) won't ever come back' (*The Killdeer*, Act II, sc.v), and in *Three Desks* it is emphasized that Niles true home is Australia 'down under'. In the action this perversion takes the form of a deliberate retarding of maturity. The child may defend himself by refusing to grow up, as happens in part with Eli Fay, or more sinisterly, this may be forced upon him quite deliberately by a wicked guardian. This is exactly what Mrs. Gardner, Madam Fay and Bethel Henry are. The smothering tendencies which are only half conscious and comic in the former are wholly and consciously wicked in the other two.

There is inverted imagery in Naik's plays too. His "Bangar Beil" or the majestic Bull is indicative of irresistible power. But in *Eka Junvear Jun*, he employs the imagery of a human couple, husband and wife ploughing the field like bullocks with the yoke on their shoulders. This is suggestive of the perverse authority of the Master of the island on one hand, and the slavish, timid and cowardly attitude of the inhabitants of the island on the other.

There is inverted imagery in the very title of Naik's plays, such as *Rakhann*, *Khann Khann Mati* and *Marmakatto*.

The title of the play *Rakhann* means Protection, which is good in itself. But it has been ironically used, for although the landlord pretends to protect his tenants by giving

them food, clothing, shelter and employment, he abuses their self-respect and exploits them to the fullest extent so that his base instincts are royally satisfied at very little cost and they are enslaved forever.

*Khann Khann Mati* means 'go on digging'. It has a reference to the mining activity. The rhythm involved in the words *Khann Khann* also has a reference to the prosperity that mining has brought to Goan farmers. However, the irony is that the farmer has lost his values; he has taken to drinking gambling and other vices. The material prosperity is a curse in disguise to the farmer. The family life has been affected, the land has been left uncultivated. Despite earning more, his family has been impoverished for he has been entrapped by vices. He feels alienated and lost and he blindly pursues his journey in a kind of "abyssal nothingness" as referred to by Kenneth's father. (*The Easter Egg*) Luckily, in this particular play the mine owner suffers losses and closes down his business. In the meanwhile, his employees have realized the awful abyss they have got into and instead of working in some other mine, they decide to go back to their native village and cultivate their fields as the easiest solution for survival.

*Marmakatto* means 'the cliff of death'. A number of suicidal youths approach the master of the cliff in order to commit suicide and pay him his fees. But the terrible sound of the great plunge of the first suicider deters them and they run away for life. The one who has already jumped has been reawakened by the magical nature and reconfirmed into life. Thus the cliff of death is proved to be the cliff of life for everyone.

The title of the play *Pipall Petla* is rather shocking. A pipall tree has the significance of an age-old sage in the Indian psyche. It is highly revered, adored and worshipped. The fire in Naik's pipall tree is really awful. He chose the pipall tree instead of any other tree to bring home the point that however great, decent and refined we might

be, however cool we appear externally, the hidden instincts destroy us, corrode us from within and ultimately we lose all our values. The entire family loses its values due to the base instincts and the shepherdess loses her very life suggesting the impending death of the pipall tree as well as the death of our human and cultural values.

The play *The Killdeer* is held together by a carefully worked out pattern of interlocking images. As in *Night Blooming Cereus*, *The Sun and the Moon*, the title *The Killdeer* is the central unifying symbol. Rebecca is the Killdeer, the bird which cries over towns just before a storm, the bird which will attract the enemy to itself to lead it away from the young ones in the nest. Eli is several times described as a bird who has not yet learned to fly. Through Harry's years of marriage to the vulture Vernelle, among the vultures of Osgoode Hall, he carries in his wallet a killdeer feather. As a child Madam Fay once killed the killdeer of her foster sister, Rebecca's mother. This was a purposeful attempt to evoke hatred for she felt unloved. The act of stealing her sister's husband was a revenge, a reaction to the feeling of unwantedness. While he was a child Eli too found a dead killdeer in the pasture and was knocked down, kicked and cursed by his mother Madam Fay when he showed it to her. She cannot tolerate the sight of a killdeer feather in Harry's house during the encounter with Mrs. Budge and Mrs. Delta. Finally, she confesses her crime of murder of Clifford Hopkins when Eli approaches her with a killdeer cage in hand.

The Donnellys are the inhabitants of the seasonal world of nature and fertility. The family is constantly seen harvesting, planting, clearing the land, bringing up their eight children. They are identified through the ballad of "John Barleycorn". The ballad has its pattern of ploughing, first shoots, growth, harvest, threshing, distilling and finally the drunkard pissing it against the wall.

Gerald Parker comments :

The "God of squares and geometric forms", implicit in the image of land surveying, leads one to another major feature of melodrama, which informs the structure and the vision of the Donnelly cycle - the confrontational pattern which is true of almost all of Reaney's plays.<sup>12</sup>

The Donnellys' own story is something like this. It parallels with the story of the crucified dying god at the height of his powers. A rich natural force is smashed down by the weight of society and pissed away. Excremental imagery of this sort dominates the verbal pattern of *the St. Nicholas Hotel*. The identification of the Donnellys with the barley is made explicit in several sections of the work. Mr. Donnelly often compares his sons to the seeds of young shoots that will rise up after he's gone.

Similarly, the central unifying symbol in Naik's *Pipall Petla* is the burning pipall tree indicative of the burning libido in each one of us. The pilgrims decide to put off the fire in the pipall tree, but it is beyond their capacity ; so they decide to get the fire brigade. Bhushan, the son goes to get the fire brigade ; he desires to take the shepherdess Gangi with himself for company on the bad road, while his father Natha who has already cast his eyes upon Gangi does not let him, for he desires to have her for himself. The shepherd burns with jealousy against his attractive wife. He is even jealous of her well-groomed white ram she loves so much. For a while, when Gangi disappears with Natha, the shepherd Kondi loses his temper and slaughters her ram. In the meanwhile, Natha's daughter Charu who has been attracted towards the so called mad man has sexual intercourse with him down amidst the bushes. This reminds the old servant Haridad of his young daughter who might lose her virtue due to her father's absence and therefore he makes an escape home. Kondi massacres Gangi due to her licentious character. In the original novel *Vasantotsava*, the mother of the respectable family is seen freeing herself

from the arms of her lover as the family knocks at the door on return. The whole play revolves among the interlocking sexual imagery.

In *The Donnellys*, Part II, *The St. Nicholas Hotel* is primarily a reminiscence by Will Donnelly about the years before the slaughter of the family when he and his brother started a stage coach line which rivalled the Finnegan Line. Aptly named the Opposition Line, it concretizes the rivalry between the Donnellys and their neighbours, the church and the political world.

The presentation of bare facts could be done through shaped and patterned events and situations which give to the spectator as Frye says, a "release from routine", and the artistic process itself as an irreducible art act. Reaney startles us with a scenic image so dense in meaning and so theatrically disciplined ; for instance, in the depiction of the seven sons of Mrs. Donnelly by the "two lines hung with shirts ; one for now -the other for when they are grown up" or the use of the cats cradle image for the surveying of Biddulph or the bird-shadow image in *Handcuffs* with its extraordinary evocative range on both the scenic and verbal levels that we feel entirely free from the cacophonous echoes at the centre of the act of creation. If the Donnellys are like a bird pecked to death because of its differences with others, they are also like the furious bird that hisses up as the circle of reapers cut in upon the last knot of uncut grain --- the bird that is always there in the last sheaf mysteriously outwitting death's scythe.

In *The Donnellys* there is a complexity of imagery and the allusion. Through a flexible juxtaposition of opposites, broadly the simultaneous forces of life and death, war and peace, love and hate -- a strong theme is asserted. Good is inevitably crushed by evil, health and hope and love are betrayed by pestilence, disillusion and coldness.

The main concern of Naik's drama is 'Human Situation.' He describes it in all his plays in a realistic manner. While probing into the reality and the innermost of man's psyche he explores the evil forces in society in all walks of life. He lays emphasis on the fact that the seat of evil is the human heart or the human psyche. *Shri Vichitrachi Jatra* shows the insidious and malignant nature of evil which can violate the very sanctuary of innocence.

Reaney and Naik compare their characters to animals and birds for in the heart of their hearts is based the greedy malicious animosity that establishes their characteristics of a cowbird, a hawk, fowls on the dung-hill, dogs, foxes, serpents etc. They have developed the caricaturist's vision of the beast in man to perfection.

According to Joh Spence :

Reaney like other artists reflects through his use of animal imagery his medieval hierarchical view of world order in which man's fall from grace manifests itself in his exhibiting qualities of lower forms of life.<sup>13</sup>

Reaney writes in a satirical vein. He brings out the lower traits of human beings, by comparing them with birds or animals :

Mrs. Budge : We're like a pair of old hens in the barnyard  
Chasing a bit of thrown - away dirty meat.  
A delicious titbit thrown out in the butchering Run around ! Run around !  
Heeh! There it is! No! Heeh! There it was ! Sh ! (*The Killdeer Act I, sc.iii*)

The vicious old gossips Mrs. Budge and Mrs. Gardner are restless through thirsty animal curiosity about their son's love affairs :

Mrs. Budge : Do you know what we're like ? Two old crows  
Gliding over the spring fields trying to pry out  
Where the delicious decaying smell is from  
Is it a dead horse ? My dear ! By the willows !

Mrs. Gardner : No, my dear, we picked that over last winter.  
Is it a still - born calf down there by the ditch ?

Mrs. Budge : No my dear, we had that last Sunday, nor is it...  
Would to heaven it were to end this thirsty

Curiosity --- but it isn't. And still  
The delicious unsavoury rotting stink  
Drives me on with my old black wings  
Yes, her picture was in the paper. Was it because  
She had done something ? Something rather ---- to her ?  
But talk of something else and it'll come  
Your Harry doesn't seem to be seeing  
Quite as much of my Frank as he use to  
What do you think has happened that.....

Mrs. Gardner : I don't know, but I'm just as glad, aren't you ?  
It's unhealthy for young men to like each other  
Too much, if you know what I mean. (*The Killdeer*, Act I, sc. iii)

Reaney was influenced by Northrop Frye. Frye's *Universal Symbolism* seemed to have turned Reaney's plays into morality plays such as *The killdeer*, *Colours in the Dark* and *Listen to the wind*. At the centre of each of these plays is a youthful poet figure, marked out from the rest of society by his artistic temperament, torn between symbolic worlds of Innocence and Experience. The paradise of Innocence is represented by such recurring archetypal figures as the redemptive woman, the benign father and the wise counsellor. The hell of experience includes more menacing creatures --- the evil enchantress, the unfaithful mother, the wicked priest. The child poet of these plays can feel the effects of the two worlds of conflict only as symbolic alternatives, not as a dramatic conflict.<sup>14</sup>

Some images in Reaney's plays are repeatedly used, and they acquired symbolic overtones. For instance, *The West Wind*, *The Grizzly Bear*, *The Killdeer*, *The Ghosts* etc. Such images in Naik's plays are *The Bull*, *The Pipall Tree*, *The Sun*, *The Water* etc. Reaney's characters are definite. At times they are clothed in religious symbolism, flowery phrases and glowing similies. In his world a human being does stand out as a loving person boldly confronting his problem in the world around and sharing the joys and



sorrows of his fellow-beings. For instance, Mrs. Donnelly. She has been delineated with nobility and feminine mystery as against the witchlike creature Madam Fay.

*Colours in the Dark* is a dream of vision beginning, like the medieval dream-vision in the world of the number seven. The number seven becomes a source of mystery and power. The organization of the play is divided into seven days of the week, there are seven colours of the rainbow and seven stars. Granny crack has seven petticoats, snow white is helped by seven dwarfs ; fragments of existence poem appear on seven different occasions. Death carries seven people into His Kingdom, only to be defeated by a battle that takes seven turns of fortune. These numbers are chanted by the entire chorus forcefully as in the existence poem of evolution. All these numbers create the world of just one child.

The figure of Reaney's protagonist is biblical man or Adam – Christ. <sup>15</sup>

The individual, the Canadian – historical and the archetypal strands of the play are interlocked with each other in a very intricate pattern of images. Although there are archetypal symbols of Northrop Frye and Carl Jung the play relies on basic patterns. The “Existence poem” repeated at intervals concerns a pebble a dew drop a piece of string and a straw, all given to the boy by existence.

Alvin Lee commented :

These images metaphorically become a mountain to be climbed, a stormy lake to be crossed, a weary road to be travelled, and a mysterious sign to be understood. When the quest is finished, they revert to their original simple forms and the world of the eight year old moves from the completed darkness of “a cold late winter March Day” to the radiant joy of spring-time, green grass, leaf-covered branches, and a happy child. <sup>16</sup>

Although Naik might not have read the theory of universal symbolism, he employs it competently in his plays. *In Eka Junvar Jun*, there is the youthful figure with an artistic temperament. He asserts his argument of suicide. He is torn between symbolic worlds of

Innocence and Experience. There are redemptive women like Urmila in *Suryasamvat*, Mrudula in *Dayaj* ; the benign fathers like the Rocksaiib, and Dharma in *Khann Khann Mati* and the wise coucellors like Kontari in *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* and 'Chaitanya' in *Chaitanyak Math Na*. There is also the existence of menancing creatures like unfaithful mothers, seductresses and wicked landlords. As in the case of Reaney the symbolic alternatives go a long way in creating the two conflicting worlds turning his plays into morality plays.

The title of *The Donnellys, Part I, Sticks and stones* speaks of the play's content. It is taken from the nursery rhyme "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me" and it creates an immediate irony. In her attempt to console the restlessness of her husband Mrs. Donnelly reminds him of the nursery rhyme to which he responds :

Mrs. Donnelly : Mr. Donnelly, there's a proverb that sticks and stones may hurt my bones, but words will never harm them.

Mr. Donnelly : Not true, Mrs. Donnelly. Not true at all. If only he'd hit us with a stone or a stick, but ever since that day you told me they'd been calling our son that in the churchyard it's as if a thousand little tinkly pebbles keep batting up against the windows in my mind just when it's a house that's about to sleep. (*Sticks and Stones, Act I*)

Thus in the theatre of James Reaney words are so frequently more damaging than deeds. A man called Blackfoot is a blackfoot, an alien to be treated as cruelly as any monster. Words like 'traitor', 'murderer', 'troublemaker' and 'barn' burner' hurt the Donnellys and will in fact destroy them. It is the noble Mrs. Donnelly who recognizes early in the play the danger of the power of words. When Will tells her that a new boy in the churchyard called him 'Blackfoot !' she gets agitated and asks, "Did they call us that then ?" (*Sticks and Stones, Act I*)

In *Listen to the Wind*, however, a whole range of sign systems are used freely and co-operatively to create the worlds of 1936, Perth County and 1870, Caresfoot court. *Listen to the Wind* is the play's image for openness to imagination : the willingness to listen is that willed passiveness in which the spirit can move. Easily in Act I, we are alerted to the central meaning : "Once there were four children who listened to the wind".

The North Wind announces the malign influences of lady Eldred and Douglas. The south wind announces the thaw. It symbolizes the happy but brief and precarious spring and summer in which the love of Piers and Claudia blossoms and bears fruit. The Night Wind cleans clouds away from the moon's face. It is linked with the long-lived affection of Owen and Harriet for each other and since they play these parts in the Caresfoot story with that of Arthur and Angela as well. Harriet says of the wind : The wind we listen to blows white sails to... eternity. (*Listen to the Wind*, sc. xxxii) The East wind shares certain meaning with the North wind. It is bitterly cold and malevolent and is identified with the malice and the concerted will of Lady Eldred, Douglas and Piers ; it sweeps Angela like a dead leaf towards a repugnant marriage, which culminates in her madness. When Douglas comes to Caresfoot court to claim his victim-bride, it is the East wind that blows down the ancestral staff. The West wind is a messenger of hope and liberty invoked by Angela to free her from the winter of her imprisonment to lady Eldred's sorcery. She goes to Arthur Brenzaida for a ball on a horse called 'The West Wind', riding through a snow-covered moonlit forest, where wild stags flit past. The wind symbolism of the play indicates that at its structural base, *Listen to the Wind* symbolizes victory of spring over winter.

Integrated with the symbolism of the winds in a pattern of demonic versus benevolent forces, there is a wealth of imagery. In Naik's Marnkatto (The Cliff of

Death) there is the wind singing in the ears of the suicidal youth who is inspired with new hope in life. In *Raktakhev* (Bloodbath) too, there are references to the call of the wind. Jayashree and the stranger respond to the call of nature ; the tidings of love are brought to them by the toddy-tappers song from the coconut trees. It is the fact that the wind creates love in the hearts of the youngsters and makes them one. (*Raktakhev*, Act II, sc. i)

Towards the end of the story, Jayashree's father Kushta on receiving the call of the wind wakes up the stranger alias his long lost son and offers to take him for boating in the sea. The stranger declines the offer with all his might but gradually on receiving the call of the wind coming from sea-side offers to go with the former. Later, Jayashree's father is heard to have been saying :

What has happened is true. He offered himself to the sea on his own.  
I couldn't stop him. How could I ? He was as powerful as the sea.  
(*Raktakhev*, Act II sc. iii).

The play ends with Jayashree too offering herself to the sea in order to meet her lover. It is the call of the sea wind which bids her to do so. Thus the myth of both Reaney and Naik is contained in man's relation to nature while Reaney's central myth is contained in man's development in relation to childhood. Reaney asserts :

Babe and child represent perfectly sound objective symbols for a part of man's existence that does not, since he can be reborn, always coexist with the actual state of babyhood and childhood.<sup>17</sup>

*Colours in the Dark* is a symbolic poem almost wholly translated into stage emblems. Its essence lies in the suggestiveness of its particularity and no summary can account for the charm, humour and emotion of its individual scenes. In *Colours in the Dark* the kaleidoscope of primary colours is arranged prismatically between white, for birth and Creation, and purple darkening into black, for death and Doomsday. The action passes from the present beyond the black of Doomsday back into white, signifying the

emerging of new life with the opening of the child's blindfold. The movement through the colours of the spectrum is simultaneously paralleled by the sequential patterns of the days of the week, the seasonal flowers of Ontario, the letters of the alphabet, and the heavenly bodies --- the sun, moon and planets, the shades of meaning of which are unobtrusively established amidst a constant change in the patterns. Many of Reaney's visions are called translations or transformations, but they often depend on implied similes, houses as vegetables, geese and people, rainbows as shoelaces.

Naik as a philosophically inclined dramatist attempts to explore the meaning and nature of reality and also of illusion as two castrated worlds of ideas and beliefs. The title of one of his major works *Suring* is symbolic of this search for the fundamental truth of life, the Reality embedded in the complex fabric of existence. Through the spiritual journey of the actors involved in the make-believe play-within-the-play the social exploitation, the human weaknesses, feminine submissiveness and woes are subtly explored as a way of life to be done away with. The initial predicament is a search of his own self-exploration and self-awareness as in the case of the character 'Leo'. This forms the prelude, the setting to a discovery of illusion versus reality. In the bargain Leo realizes his self-power and attacks the selfish and lustful 'Mukadam' and plunges into the world of freedom.

In *The Easter Egg* as in *The Killdeer* the various levels of action, naturalistic, fantastic and symbolic fail to coincide. The symbols could be interpreted at various levels. There is the portentous significance of the objects such as the body of a killdeer and glass egg. When these objects are finally exhibited, a central character in each case undergoes a profound and violent transformation. The recalcitrant Madame Fay suddenly confesses all and the simple Kenneth collapses on the floor only to be resurrected after a few moments

full of adult understanding. Although these sudden reversals clearly serve exigencies of plot and theme, from the standpoint of realistic motivation they are incredible. Reaney sacrifices recognizable human psychology to a preconceived and somewhat facile pattern of symbolic gesture.

Reaney demonstrates what great role the nature and the elements of local colour have to play in moulding an individual's soul.

At the end of Act I, *Colours in the Dark* the cast forms the family tree pyramid rich with imagery which contains the essence of our very being.

All :

It takes  
 The Remembering  
 of four seasons  
 Eight Stars  
 Sixteen sun-sets  
 Thirty-two Wind whistles  
 Sixty-four Dewdrops in the sunrise  
 One hundred and twenty-eight trembling leaves  
 Two hundred and fifty -six pebbles  
 Five hundred and twelve snowflakes  
 One thousand and twenty-four cloud shadows  
 To make one soul  
 (*Colours in the Dark*, Act I, sc.21)

The hero's developing sensibility is traced by a recurrent "existence" poem, spread throughout the play in five stages. At first the child has a pure sense of everything's uniqueness. He answers to the father's question :

PA : Existence gives to me

What does he give to me

KID : He gives to me a pebble  
 He gives to me a dewdrop  
 He gives to me a piece of string  
 He gives to me a straw

ALL : Pebble dewdrop piece of string straw  
 (*Colours in the Dark*, Act II sc. )

Experience then darkens this vision, existence becomes a problem.

ALL : The pebble is a huge dark hill that I must climb  
the dewdrop is a great storm lake that we must cross  
the string is a road I cannot find  
the straw is a sign whose meaning I forget  
(*Colours in the Dark*, Act II sc.7)

Further experience seems utterly to obliterate the vision by encounters with the mysterious Tiger, Balloon, Prostitute of snow and gorgeous salesman. But tiger turns out to be Christ, Balloon is Buddha, the Prostitute of snow is Emily Bronte and Gorgeous Salesman the emperor Solomon, "who sang of the foot in the doorway so the childlike vision returns :

ALL : Hill Lake Road Sign

But love and patience do quite change the scene.

Now the mountain becomes a pebble in my hand  
The lake calms down to a dewdrop in a flower  
The weary road to a string around your waist  
The mysterious sign is a straw that whistles "home".

Pebble dewdrop piece of string straw  
(*Colours in the Dark*, sc. 21)

Thus this symbolism is a journey from autobiographical level to a universal one. We subtly realize that we are going through our own lineage and stories through that of the hero's. In fact, we are going through the story of Canada, glacier and forest and also that of the world.

Naik too uses symbols profusely. His 'Bangar Beil' (Majestic Bull) succeeds in disturbing the sleep of the exploiting landlord class. His *Suring* (the dynamite) indicates the pent-up emotions which will explode one day toppling down all authority. The burning Pipall tree is suggestive of the ceaseless craving for sensual pleasures that goes on burning in us until we turn out to be a mere hallow without any worth at all. The

Mornkatto (The Cliff of Death) indicates how we combat life and may gain ultimate victory over it. The Monastery in *Chaitanyak Math Na* indicates enclosure and limit of vision as against free flow Inspiration or Chaitnaya which is all pervading.

Reaney's dramas are more artistic than the dramas of Naik. This is very much clear in the first phase of their career. However, all the plays of Naik are realistic. They depict vision of life in more realistic manner than that of Reaney's plays. The use of language in the plays of these dramatists is in keeping with their vision of life.

Naik's language is the real, original and the genuine Konkani language. To quote Balkrishna Kanoldkar, "Although it is as gentle as wax, it is as stern as diamond".<sup>18</sup> Naik's dialogues are always befitting the nature of the characters, their background and the particular situation they are placed in. In the play *Khann Khann Mati* the writer uses the language of the mining-world. In *Shabay Shabay Bhoujansamaj* it is the language of masses. His dialogues are explosive, at times they enjoy a certain fluidity, at times curt, at times playful and bullying at the other times. They win the theatre lovers, they anger them, they create romantic emotion, they make spectators to turn inward for introspection.

At times Naik presents a lengthy dialogue just as Reaney does. Minguel, the toddy tapper asks Prakash to beg forgiveness of God for the sin of incest that the latter has committed and to entreat him to show the right path. But to the dismay of everyone he says :

He : My path has always been straight. I have no reason whatsoever for any kind of grief. Let the father who considered me his son grieve over it, let the sister who believes me to be her brother grieve. Nobody is either a father to me or a sister. Why should I be destined to grieve ? I never considered Jayashree to be my sister. Despite knowing that she is my sister, I would not have treated her as one. Because I am not habituated to a sister's love. I have never had any chance to experience it before. Had we been together it would hold true. Suddenly how can one attach the relation of a sister. How can it hold this way ? (Raktakhev, Act II, sc.ii).



Naik's language is suggestive, live and beautiful. He manipulates it as per his own whims and fancy to give it the correct shade of meaning he aims at. To give a few dimensions of his language one could see that *Khann Khann Mati* speaks the language of the mining world ; *Shabay Shabay Bhoujansamaj* speaks the language of the masses, *Chaitanyak Math Na* is a language of a certain cult, *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* has an ironical tone. *Pipall Petla* nurtures an idiomatic language and *Demande* creates a language befitting the rival situations in Hindu middleclass families as well as the male dominant situations within a family. *Suring* speaks the language of exploited Goan labourers.

Naik's dialogues are always befitting the nature of the characters, their background and the particular situation they are placed in. The language of the cleaner and the truck-driver in *Khann Khann Mati* is slang, colloquial, with a double meaning in it. In *Pipall Petla* the shepherdess stands unique with her beautiful idiom. The philosophical broodings of Prakash in *Raktakhev*, the Young Man and The Master in *Eka Junvear Jun* help them to explore their own soul.

His drama has an intricate pattern of words, dance and music which has been directly lifted from the local milieu. In other words, his drama is nothing but a bare slice of life. This potpourri of the local idiom, 'dhalo, fugadeo' (the local dance forms) and the rustic music combined with Portuguese 'kantaram' meaning songs, created a revolution on the Konkani stage.

It is said that a dialect changes every ten kilometres. Naik uses the dialects of Konkani to suit the kind of people he depicts as stated above. That Naik is rooted into his region is evident from the local idiom and colour from all his plays. The title of the play *Shabay, Shabay Bhoujansamaj* brings out the importance of the word "Shabay" meaning 'cheers' in our culture. The party emblem "Kollo" meaning 'fox' shows that several of

our notions relate to Kollo, meaning cunning fox. Jose in *Suring* uses the proverb “Khallo Panar Holshik Kori Nay” --- “don’t dirty the plate you have eaten in” has deep roots in the culture. Several proverbs used by the toddy tapper indicate the craze for the use of proverbs among Christian Konkani speakers. The words like Mell (a team of players), Talli (the players’ gift), Pej (canji), Janguileo (crabs), Shankaram (typical Goan flowers with orange petals and a long green stalk) and Kui (call of the Devil) have a delicious local fragrance as well as stink.

In *Suring*, Nayak uses typical Salcette Christian Konkani. The team of social workers who visit them belong to the Hindu elite. They try to imitate the miners language in the play-within-the-play. But when they are in the main play they are themselves. For instance:

Jayant : आमचें नवें नाटक तुमी पळयलें. आतां तुमचें बदलतें जिवीत सगळ्या संवसारक पळोंव दी.  
Aniket: चल्ले जुजेबाब आयज खऱ्यानिशीं फुदूंक जाय आशिल्लो तो सुरींग, फुदूंक जाय आशिल्लें तें खडप फुटलें आनी जावंक जाय आसलो तो नवो मार्ग तयार जालो.  
(Suring, Act II)

While the Mukadam’s language is the typical model of Christian Konkani :

Mukadam: आयज तुगे फोण भतां लिओ, सुरींग भता सुरींगू ? फेस्ता खोजने पेटयता ? एक आतां-एक वरान ? कितु तेंप जालो सुरींग भत् तू ? आजून शिकोना ? मुनीस काय धुकर रे तू ? म्हणें रखायन सैताव केंसो मातोला मात बरो. जुजे खंय ? आज् तुमगे कोंत कोतां आनी भोंकार फोंट मारून तुमकां धांवडायन दितां. मागीर खंय वचून माती खाताय ती खायाय. ( नाटक्यांचेर लक्षवता. ) हे कोण लोक ? आनी तुगे मांय खूंय ? मारयान ?.(Suring, Act II)

Reaney and Naik write dialogues that are short, precise to the point and fraught with meaning but at times Reaney’s dialogues are very lengthy :

Mrs. Donnelly : Well sirs, you’re wasting your time because he shall not, will not, hang. (Donnelly kids bring to centre stage a roll of paper which they unroll until it extends to the edges of the stage.) He will not be hanged either, do you hear that, inhabitants of Biddulph. There children, if we can fill that much paper with names and get it to the Governor General in time he will not be.....

private -- you've taken half our farm from us, but you shall not take half our family from us which is my husband. Now we've got -- four hundred names. (There are still a few obstinate kneelers who will only disappear in the going-to-Goderich sequence ; the paper is rolled up and given to Mrs. Donnelly.) And now I'll walk with these names to Goderich. (*Sticks and Stones*, Act II)

Reaney's language too, is filled with local colour. Like Naik it is the typical feature of his language. The local idiom manifests itself in the local colour, the local stink and the local texture. It makes one feel it is his own. Reaney says : "The simpler art is --- the richer it is"<sup>19</sup> Reaney doesn't level his art to reach the simple minded but expects the elite audience to radiate to his "complexity in simplicity."<sup>20</sup> Stan Dragland, Reaney's colleague at the University of Western Ontario, London says :

I found him a fabulous teacher who gave his imagination free rein. His language was almost totally free of critical jargon ; he was learned without any parade of learning.<sup>21</sup>

Reaney uses various plants, both wild and domestic, the provincial flower of Ontario called the trillium, the orange lily, a fungus called Indian pipes ; the purple unit in the prism makes reference to Hallowéen - the day of the mysterious dead souls ; there are seals, plagues and Kings of the Book of Revelations --- to add local colour to *Colours in the Dark*.

Characters whether major or minor are sharply realized by Reaney to an amazing detail through their language especially through the tricks of Irish Canadian speech which are caught and contrasted on one hand with more 'poetic' English and burlesque on the other. The language reveals their wit, verve, openness, determination, humour and their staunch refusal to kneel. "But you see I won't kneel and I won't, I will not swear that." (*Sticks and Stones*, Act I).

"We won't be druv...!" (*Sticks and Stones*, Act I)

It was this language that ultimately carved their destiny, their doom. It made them different from others. It made them "The Donnellys".

The language used by Reaney and Naik is simple and accessible, though sometimes poetic. They achieve intensity through the imagery and symbolism. It is language with the *vision of life* that is depicted their plays.

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## CHAPTER IV

### TECHNIQUES

As playwrights James Reaney and Pundalik Naik are indefatigable experimenters with form and voice and their work draws upon and reflects many of the competing and complementary forms and voices to which the modern theatre has become habituated.

Apart from the different genre of literature like poetry, novel, short - story Reaney has tried his hand at different forms of theatre. To his credit, he has the radio plays, musical operas, children's plays, marionette and puppet plays, a documentary and other full-length plays. Reaney, a dramatist firmly rooted in his soil is a regionalist to the core. Initially moulded by his hometown Stratford and the theatre activities there, Reaney spent the major part of his life in London, Ontario and the fertility of his creativity lies in the 'red heart of London,'<sup>1</sup> as revealed in his poetry entitled *The Red Heart*.

When Naik is placed vis-à-vis James Reaney, we see that he too is a multifaceted artist trying his hand at all the genre of literature. His plays could be classified into a variety of categories, viz. : monologues, one-act-plays, radio plays, musical plays, children's plays and full - length plays, experimental plays with a happy ending, farce, tragedy etc. He has several teleplays to his credit, besides two Konkani films entitled *Dekhani Durai* (A Beautiful Separation) and *Moni Gavai* (A Dumb Witness).

The plays of the dramatists under study are full-length plays. They are performance oriented plays. One striking feature of both the playwrights is their interest in the actual rehearsing, staging and production of their plays. There is enough evidence to

show that they actively participated in the production of these plays. Naik involved his family members in his theatre activity. His major directors are Shridhar Kamat Bamboikar, Digambar Shingbal and Prakash Thali. Reaney was involved in workshopping theatre and fully controlled the style of presentation hand in hand with the directors like Keith Turnbull and John Hirsch. All these facts point out to their keen interest in the stagecraft.

Reaney explains his opinion about the direction of a play :

I want a society where directing a play is not equated with the stage managing, where the important rehearsal is not the technical rehearsal, where the lighting, costumes, all that money can buy disappear and what we have instead is so much group skill and sense of fun in imagining out things that richness reappears all over the place for nothing.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, Naik opines that :

A good script cannot be effective if it is not presented with an equal capability. Since Goans have indepth knowledge of the drama as a form, at times we notice that their direction is even more superior to the original script.<sup>3</sup>

To the question whether the script should be placed entirely at the disposal of the directors and actors, Reaney says :

NEVER ! It is the playwright alone who knows exactly what message he wants to send across. The idea of leaving the script to the directors and actors is baffling to me... in that case it is open to misinterpretation and fallacies. The playwright has to be in full control of the script and no one has the right to meddle with it.<sup>4</sup>

The dramatist occupies a definite status in a play. Whenever an attempt is made to treat the written play as raw material resulting in the consequent manipulation of the script, the play turns out to be poor in quality. In that case, it is not drama, but merely a factory of entertainment wherein the playwright is not responsible for whatever the audience receives. It is the writer who has to decide what is to be given to the audience

and the director and the cast have to convey the same by confining themselves to their own limitations.<sup>5</sup>

To the question as to “What is a good script ?,” Naik explains :

A good script is the one which could be presented by different directors in different ways. If its message appeals to the intellect, it is bound to be the best ; if it appeals to the heart it’s fine ; but if it has a sensuous appeal then it turns out to be substandard.<sup>6</sup>

Northrop Frye’s critical theories had a major impact on James Reaney. His *Fearful Symmetry*, a study of William Blake’ prophetic vision galvanized his writing. It developed his imaginative vision by providing him an archetypal vision of the Bible, systematically transforming his evangelical world into a literary one. In *Fearful Symmetry* Reaney discovered everyman in a self that he had formally experienced as alienated from society. The reading of prophetic works of William Blake along with *Fearful Symmetry* brought about a “conversion” in Reaney and like Blake he became a “literalist of the imagination”.<sup>7</sup>

Richard Stingle quotes Margaret Atwood saying :

I have long entertained a persistent vision of Frye reading through Reaney while muttering ‘What have I wrought ?’ or ‘This is not what I meant at all.’<sup>8</sup>

Richard Stingle further says :

The way Reaney uses Frye is every bit as important as *what* he uses. Indeed he used Frye for content and McLuhan for technique, if McLuhan is allowed to stand for all that is exploratory, unfinished, darting in Reaney’s work.<sup>9</sup>

The recurring archetypal patterns that structures *Colours in the Dark* is the story of “the backbone of a person growing up, leaving home, going to big cities, getting rather mixed up and then not coming home again but making home and identity come to him



wherever he is (*Colours in the Dark* 7). This story is the one that Frye describes as the basis of all literature.

In the author's note to *Colours in the Dark* Reaney remarks :

The theatrical experience in front of you is designed to give you that mosaic-all-things-happening-at once-galaxy-higgledy-piggledy, feeling that rummaging through a playbox can give you. (*Colours in the Dark* 7)

This is similar to Marshal McLuhan's technique called "mosaic or field approach"

to "a mosaic of perpetually interacting forms that have undergone kaleidoscopic transformation particularly in our time" (*Colours in the Dark* 7).

Reaney always sought to challenge the faculties of the spectator and to involve him. McLuhan too inspired his revelations to make their own synthesis of the mosaic of materials he presented. *Colours in the Dark* is Reaney's most elaborate version of free form, very difficult to analyze with a fractured structure. It has forty-two discrete scenes each highly metaphorical, with an almost continuous and musical and sound accompaniment. In fact, these scenes which form a collage of selections from the playwright's own poetry of the previous twenty-five years, is in a mosaic form. The patchwork effect is represented on stage by a criss-cross of independent movie screens on which different series of images are projected, while the cast of six actors, four singers, and a versatile chorus of children act out the episodes on the bare stage with simple props and much doubling. In his introduction, Reaney calls the work a *Playbox* or *Christmas Concert* in which there is a new play every two minutes because he says, "life could be an endless procession of stories, an endless coloured comic strip, things to listen to and look at a bottomless play box" (*Colours in the Dark* 7).

Reaney's *Colours in the Dark* could be juxtaposed with Naik's *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* which elucidates how mental deformity is effected and how it is perpetuated. The

play has got neither a plot nor any characters in the conventional sense. It is rather a collage of various episodes taken from the flux of human life. The underlying unity behind this heterogeneous collection is the theme of 'being lost' in civilization. The characters are not types but representative and symbolic. They are : 'Konntari' (someone), 'He', 'She', 'The Opportunist', 'The Woman', 'The Man', 'The Tramp', 'The Begger', 'The Social Worker', 'The Son', 'The Old Man', 'The Priest', 'The Temple Member' and so on.

Naik exposes the evil effects of moral degradation at cultural, social and psychological levels. There is in fact the multiplicity of themes. The scenes depicted are mere happenings, the happening "higgledy, piggledy in Reaney's words", which could take place at any crowded place, especially of fun and festivity, unlike *Colours in the Dark* which is the backbone of a person growing up" (*Colours in the Dark* 7).

*Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* is situational. The situations unfold themselves as naturally as unfolding of blooming rose petals, which though not fragrant, are very real. Naik desires to show that in the crowd and confusion and hurry of any fair we fall prey to our instincts and our resulting actions are devoid of our cultural and human values. Naik wishes to put an end to such fairs. He does it by depicting the myth that after sunset the fair turns into a static lifelessness. Yet, he is hopeful of the arrival of 'Konntari' who might judge the situations sensibly and go on extending his helping hand and advice to anybody who needs it.

*Alphabet*, Reaney's magazine is an exercise in the use of imagination because the form it has taken is a mosaic of myth and documentary of which, the reader is invited to make his own patterns. The agility of early Italian opera has influenced. Reaney's medicine ad Minstrel shows. He uses shadow plays to a particular effect in *Handcuffs*. He

uses mime and puppetry, the magic lantern show, the circus which he acknowledges as the source of "the multiple focus effect" reminiscent of Guillaume Apollinaire's tribute to:

The full unfolding of our modern art often connecting in unseen ways as in life sounds, gestures, colours, cries, tumults, music, dancing, acrobatics, poetry, printing, choruses, actions and multiple sets.<sup>10</sup>

At another level, we are reminded of Brecht's collaborative theatre, grim irony and firmly etched grotesqueries as well as of the numerous montage and narrative techniques of *documentary theatre*.

Reaney's classic literacy compels us to appreciate the formal and substantive coherence of diverse dramatic, theatrical and literary reference.

Stan Dragland opines :

Without sacrificing clarity, he challenges the reader or viewer with a three-ring circus in which many things happen at once. *His art is cinematic in its range, flexibility and speed*. He expects his audience to complete his work for him, but there is nothing elitist about that work.<sup>11</sup>

Reaney's dramatic technique is incredibly superb ! The evolution of his art has been metamorphic. His experiments with form have seldom been dead ends. One thing turns into another. Forms combine and recombine in different units. There is a flowing formal continuity.<sup>12</sup>

Naik too is unconventional. He has evolved his own form and technique for his drama based on whatever little exposure he had to the Indian drama and the translated western drama on the Marathi and Konkani stages. The Marathi plays of Ram Ganesh Gadkari, Vijay Tendulkar, Khanolkar and Alfekar might have had an effect on his plays. The Aanganmanch of Badal Sarcar from Bengali stage, Shankar Ghosh, Dharmavir Bharati and Mohan Rakesh from the Hindi stage and Girish Karnad from Kannada stage do have bearing upon Naik's theatre. In fact, Naik had a great opportunity of a close

study of the theatre from all over India between 1979 and 1984 while he worked as an Assistant Director of All India Radio, Panaji. Here, he was exposed to the translation and broadcast of plays from different regions of India. Above all, it is the Goan culture which has an inescapable influence upon his work. He too uses a free form in *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra*, *Shabay Shabay Bhoujansamaj* and *Chaitanyak Math Na* and in other plays like *Reaney*. The best example of Naik's mosaic play is *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* which though has a broken structure, yet makes a cohesive whole in simultaneous and systematic patterns arriving at a meaningful collage. Naik uses blank verse in *Suring*, *Shabay Shabay Bhoujansamaj* and *Aatmavanchana*. *Raansundari* is his musical play --- a much enchanting experience to children.

As in Sanskrit drama Naik follows the Greek theory of the unity of time, place and action in the modified form. The protagonists Prakash and Shankar in *Raktakhev* and *Rakhann* return after 18 years and 15 years respectively. The action moves from present to the past and to the present again with the help of flashback technique. In the recently performed, but yet unpublished play, at the Ganesh Festival in Margao in 1999, entitled *Shiri Re Shiri* the action moves from earth to heaven and back to earth and then in the world in between harping on the self-alienation of the modern man and his dilemma.

The Sanskrit drama follows the rule as laid by Bharatmuni that it has to end happily. Secondly, it doesn't present death or murder on the stage. In keeping with the tradition, Naik is not inclined towards tragedy. However, he does have the tragedy *Raktakhev* wherein the dreaming takes place outside the stage.

In *Dayaj* there is bloodshed, but it is an event narrated from memory. However, there is horror and terror in *Suring*, *Pipall Petla* wherein Naik creates the atmosphere of macabre and gothic nature by presenting death directly on the stage.

*The Donnelly trilogy*, is Reaney's first major dramatic work. It shows a significant advance in technical finish. The play combines elements of folk-lore, ritual, fantasy and historical fact into a celebration of courage and unyielding human spirit. In form it might be described as a kind of latter day miracle play with protagonists not from the scriptures but from the nineteenth century Biddulph, Ontario.

Reaney's craftsmanship is breath taking, particularly in the way he interlocks events - the number of marriages and courtships both mocking and melancholic, the two unhappy haunted sons, Tom Ryan whom the Donnellys take in and James Carroll who organizes their destruction. There are some memorable incidents like the one in which Carroll and Will Donnelly dance out their signatures, or the beautiful simplicity of Maggie Donovan's death, or the chilly planning of Mike's murder. There is also a final moment involving a spinning top which is as hair raising as the incomparable final seconds of *Sticks and Stones*.

Reaney puts his story across by the use of mime, flashbacks and choral reminiscence. His use of one-stage-setting of early Canadian furniture and nail kegs throughout the entire performance, lends an authentic atmosphere and sets the mood for what is to come.

The play begins in a light vein with a fiddler and fellow musicians playing while the rest of the cast sing along to Buffalo Gals and other songs popular in the 19th century. Tops are sent spinning across the floor as the group waits for the arrival of the various stage coaches.

Headquartered in the hotel, Will chronicles the happy years of competition between himself and Finnegan for customers, routes and women. Unlike parts one and three, the text of *The St. Nicholas Hotel* radiates an unparalleled sense of pleasure and

joy. In the romance dancing and music of part II the actors make visual and audible their memories through the re-enactment of stage-coach races and twirling, reeling jigs and dances.

Miming comes in as a handy technique in *Colours in the Dark* Act I, sc. 3 and 16, Act II, sc.3, 4 and 20 as well as in *The St. Nicholas Hotel* where the cast become drivers and passengers and by bending and swaying they create the impression of descending into gullies and whipping back up along with road. They describe the race in chorus, calling out landmarks as they are passed on the way. This technique of director Keith Turnbull gives the impression of movement and speed.

Features of popular melodrama in the Donnelly trilogy are evident in the characterization, themes, language, use of scenic tableaux and in the variety of briskly-placed external theatrical excitements, mob scenes, coach races, bar-room brawls, chases and the like. In all instances, Reaney utilizes the physical, verbal and scenic exaggerations common to melodramatic technique partly to “excite”, as he claims Halloween excites in its fundamental guise as “direct, sentimental, sensational primitive theatre”<sup>13</sup>

The melodramatic technique renders the characters “less allegorical” and more dynamic and human. To some extent, Reaney’s dramaturgical technique in the presentation of such situations reminds one of Rudolf Arnheim’s observations regarding “visual thinking”, wherein we find “instinct assuming a plastic consciousness.” The scenic arrangement of two groups pressing such “force fields” at one another is evident again and again throughout the Donnelly trilogy and it greatly embodies the either / or confrontational patterning which is basic to a melodramatic reading of political, religious and social experience. The configuration of one row of actors faces another row. They are divided as whitefeet and blackfeet, Protestants and Catholics, liberals and conservatives

contending stage-coaches, Donnellys and “other”, sides of the Roman line, or participants in a reel.<sup>14</sup>

“One of the most important design images of the story,” Reaney writes, “is of a man caught between the lines of his neighbours, caught in a ladder and the big dance at the end of the play will emphasize this quality of the Donnellys being planted in rows of people they can’t get away from.”<sup>15</sup>

Like slowly closing handcuffs, priests bishops, constables, farmers, tavern keepers, traitors, threshers openly and secretly, legally and illegally fasten the disturbing Donnelly family still so that it can murder them.<sup>16</sup>

Reaney’s melodramatic technique and vision reminds us of the “strong patterns” and the theatrical conventions of the nineteenth century melodrama.

The Donnelly is an extremely complicated machine, the working parts of which could be openly seen. What Jay Macpherson says of *Listen to the Wind* is very much true of *The Donnellys* and other plays of Reaney. It is “creation before one’s eyes”.<sup>17</sup> There is nothing hidden by a backstage. The actors sit on the stage and move into their parts when required. They make sound effects using everyday objects that are also visible. All this contributes to the audiences’ co-creation of the trilogy and is worth a great many Reaney exhortations to go out and make our own plays and rouse our slumbering imaginations.

Reaney admits that writing plays demands a different talent than writing poetry.

He said to Ronald Huebert in Winter 1977 :

I remember reading something by Jean Cocteau where he says that most of the images you regard as interesting for the lyric poet don’t show up on stage, just as fine lace doesn’t. In other words, you’ve got to go for a broader structures which is the myth, the story line.<sup>18</sup>

Reaney still uses Frye's language to describe his own writing. While Reaney the poet might have defined myth as "a symbolic pattern", Reaney the playwright now places emphasis on "the story line".

Reaney and Naik are explicitly conscious of their mythmaking techniques. Richard Stingle writes :

The fundamental assumption of the myth making consciousness is the ascendancy of the creative human forms over the non-human ones, of form over chaos, of life over death. Human creativity does not project an illusion, as Marx would have it, but gives the power to see in nature a human shape.<sup>19</sup>

*Sticks and Stones* abhorred Kelly's book, *The Black Donnellys* and scorned the author. The Donnellys, according to Reaney were a good, strong people with spirit and determination. Their killers were evil, greedy, power mongers. Reaney develops sympathy and respect for the Donnellys in the spectator's mind. Reaney states that "in drama you have to use different structure from - images - you need a myth or story - line".<sup>20</sup>

Reaney is at times a historical dramatist. In his documentary *The Donnelly Trilogy* Reaney emphasizes the fragility of historical "truth", by introducing into his play a travelling medicine show version of the story which presents a "viciously biased melodrama", showing the Donnellys a lurid, Grand Guignol stereotypes of popular folklore. In this way, the poet can bring together two images of the same character. During a performance of the medicine show, Mr. Donnelly turns on the showman to correct one of his errors and we get a chance to compare the "False Donnelly" with the "Real Donnelly":

Mr. Donnelly : Show me the scene where I kill Farl ; the living must obey the dead. Look Mr. Showman Murphy, you've printed up my blood --- was I like him or she like her or my sons like --- them ? One thing to start with - I didn't murder him. Kill not slay, killed him with a - you ignoramus - not with an iron bar, but with a wooden handspike.

Showman : Ladies and gents. By special request we also show you : Donnelly's fight with Farrell at the logging bee 29th of June, 1857.



Mr. Donnelly : 25th day of June, 1857

Showman : 25th day of June, 1857 - merrily Donnelly kills Farrell in a fight at the Loggin Bee. (*Sticks and Stones*, Act I)

Similarly, in *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* Naik, the artist addresses the audience to inform that they are to witness a legend. He says although it cannot be evaluated on the basis of realism, yet the basic attitudes and tendencies in all kinds of fairs all over India are exactly the same, despite the varieties of people, their languages, traditions and cultures. Naik is not interested in assessing either the truth or falsity of the myth that people turn into stones if they don't vacate the particular island or place before sunset on the day of the fair, as is true of certain fairs in India. But he is disturbed by the need of "someone" the prophet a benevolent person who might put an end to kinds of fairs or crowded gatherings which only beget crime and grief.

In *Listen to the Wind* dying Claudia shields Angela with comb and ring, heirlooms of some ancient white magic. The comb with the star radiant upon it is especially a force of protective good, found by Arthur in the forest and then taken away from Angela again by Douglas on their wedding night. Angela is also protected by the lunar dominion of her mother. As Arthur and Angela sail their small boats of candle and bark down the forest stream, Angela's boat disappears into water :

Oh, Arthur-my candle's drowned. But the moon shall be my candle and she is brighter now than the day. (*Listen to the Wind*, Act II, sc. xxxii)

Although Angela and Geraldine are even more in opposition than Claudia and Geraldine, as they are the motherless babe and the child murderer, there is nevertheless, a powerful connection between their two lives :

Lady Eldred (Geraldine) : I might have given this talisman of my power to Angela if she could have sworn never to continue her love for that wretched weakling. Arthur Brenzaida. But I know how loving and weak her heart is..... (*Listen to the Wind*, Act III, sc. xlv, xlvi and xlvii)

In *Chaitanyak Math Na* (No Edifice for Inspiration) Naik exploits the myth and respect the Indian society carries for the heads of cults. The lethargic people of a village are informed about the blessed forthcoming visit by a monk (the head of a cult). The villagers who don't even have a well in the village are expected to keep their own water, flowers and fruits ready to be offered to the monk; they have to dig a big lake and grow gardens and orchards. They are even asked to keep stones ready to build a monastery. Later they are asked to be prepared to offer their wives and sisters to the monk whose blessings they covet and whose curse they dread. On hearing this, the villagers are awakened and they are prepared to kill the monk only to know that he doesn't exist in reality; but the imaginary monk named as 'Chaitanya' meaning inspiration has imbibed in them, the discipline of an industrious life and they are liberated. Thus Naik deploys myth to reform the society with the finesse of a skilled craftsman.

Reaney and Naik reveal the best of expertise in any dramatic technique they bank upon to present their themes. Reaney's play-within-the-play technique is highly successful in *Listen to the Wind* (1972) which opens with the three girls advancing through the audience tossing a ball back and forth. Once they arrive at Owen's place, they leave the ball-tossing behind and immediately begin to discuss the estrangement of their parents. The children have witnessed their families collapsing except Jenny who replies to Owen's question about the parents "together as can be" (*Listen to the Wind*, Act I, sc.i)

Harriet, Ann and Owen have the most intense feelings about the separation of their parents. Owen is ailing, physically and spiritually, but he could be saved only by the reconciliation between his parents. As a desperate attempt to reconcile them, the creative children with all the fertility of their minds decide to put up a summer play which would not only be witnessed by Owen's estranged mother but also be participated in. This play-

within-the play, thoughtfully selected, is based upon Rider Haggard's novel *Dawn* which was a gift from Owen's father to his mother before marriage. The witches and devils in the play resemble their fathers and mothers. The fragmentation of their families is set in opposition to the relations of the four families in "The Saga of Caresfoot Court."

The play within offers an opportunity to rebuild the fragmentary disorder of their actual lives into an imaginary cohesion. The reconciliation does take place in the world below with the rejoicing engagement ball of Arthur and Angela. However, Owen's parents, the Taylors instead of setting their differences aside for the night squabble over their horses and choose to part with assertions of suspicion and ego. "That horse obeys my whistle and not yours." (*Listen to the Wind*, Act III, sc.xlvii) claims Owen's mother. The Taylors do have the reservoirs of love and affection, but these are misplaced and thoughtless. For Reaney, the competition over the horses symbolizes the dead end of realism. Thus the dramatic reconciliation that Owen dreams of is impossible in the "real" world.

In *Suring Naik* skillfully uses the technique of a play-within-the-play. The main play focuses on the plight of an exploited miner's family which is at the mercy of the Mukadam, the supervisor. The play-within-the-play begins when a team of four young social workers arrive and entertain the family with a romance which is a kind of "Tiatro", a folkdrama form with the Konkani dialect spoken by the Christians from Salcette, Goa. The family in the main play appreciates the romance ; but to their disappointment they are told that it was a mock play. The team members who are addressed to as 'Tiatrists' meaning dramatists by the family propose to put up a realistic play. The family is stunned to realize that the characters in this new play are themselves with the theme fully focusing upon their own lives. They are incapable to stand to the truth portrayed by the team..

They order them to stop the play for the truth seems to be unbearable unendurable, indigestible bitter truth, they think the team is only trying to mock at their grief.

The miner's wife Marian seems to be the most disturbed. She demands the answer to her question from the team about the culprit who told them all the secrets. One of the team members says that the moon and the stones witnessed her secret and they passed it on to the whole world. Marian is touched and she narrates the tale of her woes emphasizing the inability of her husband Jose as well as son Leo to protect her virtue from the beastly instincts of the 'Mukadam'.

The team members resume their play each trying to justify his own role in the play. They arrive at the conclusion that the sole cause of the family-grief is the member playing the role of Leo, the son and they pretend to be attempting to kill him. Seeing this, the real Leo who has been dormant like an unexploded dynamite is greatly disturbed. He is so much aroused that he wants to kill the team members who are harassing the team member who plays the role of Leo. The team has made the first successful step at creating the awakening in the real Leo.

The team now proceeds to mock at the real Leo. They dance around him clapping and singing, hurling dung at his cowardice and timidity all the time. They enrage him with their sarcastic statements full of pun and irony. They call him a rabbit, a lion of wet cotton pissed over by the 'Mukadam'. They ironically assert that he has done the right thing by allowing his mother to be a prey to the Mukadam's desires. They entreat him to keep doing it forever.... At this time the real 'Mukadam' arrives on the scene abusing the miners for the unexploded dynamites. He refuses to pay them for the work done while they have been absolutely impoverished and famished. He goes on casting sexual

aspersions on Leo's mother and the latter explodes overpowering the 'Mukadam' and asserting his self-respect and that of the family.

Thus through the-play-within-the play the social workers have fully succeeded in creating an awakening in the exploited class, in arousing their sense of identity and self-respect, helping them to assert their human rights and affecting the realization of their hidden potential power.

In the first two parts of *The Donnellys* Reaney gives the glimpses of the final tragedy and hints at it throughout the two parts. The technique is called foreshadowing. In *Handcuffs* we see the substance of all the tortured nightmares of the Donnellys which have pervaded in the first two instalments.

Reaney mixes humour with tragedy without skipping a beat in the smooth production. At one point, we are swept along at a frantic race between Finnegan's stage and the Donnelly's opposition stage as they thunder along through tall gates over the roads around Lucan, Ontario.

Of course the stages collide and Finnegan's driver is killed. He hints at what is to come by shouting accusingly before he dies, "Bill Donnelly, you did this to me!" Referring to Mike Donnelly, the other driver, he cries, "They'll never finish scrubbing up your blood". (*St. Nicholas Hotel*, Act I).

The Donnellys are blamed for everything bad that happens. They are accused of stealing Mary Donovan's cow, riding horses at night until they're ready to drop, burning barns and cutting the tongues out of horses. It gets to the point where, "If a stone fell from heaven, they'd say Donnelly done it." (*St. Nicholas Hotel*, Act III)

*Handcuffs* draws together all the loose strings of the first two plays. Phrases are repeated and songs and incidents recalled with astounding clarity, and horrible immediacy.

What was hinted at all, now becomes stark reality ; the fragments now lock together to complete the substance of the tale.

*Handcuffs* is the final phase in the cycle of tragedy. It is powerful and innovative. The symbolism becomes even stronger and more pronounced as the events of the play slowly close around the Donnellys like handcuffs. Thus *Handcuffs* is an exciting theatre.

Naik uses the foreshadowing technique in *Shabay, Shabay Bhoujansamaj*. It is clear right from the beginning that the political fate of the uneducated people with the uneducated leader is bound to be unchanged. It is in fact bound to worsen. Naik illustrates this throughout the play with a lot of circumstantial evidence coupled with folksongs, that ultimately there won't be progress no development, no eradication of poverty, no fights for rights, but it will be the reign of corruption, exploitation, nepotism and total autocracy.

Like Reaney Naik also shows tremendous skill at flashbacks as in *Suring* when Marian remembers how she was raped by 'Mukadam', in *Rakhann* when Shanker remembers her lost brother and when *Shankar* recollects the situation in which he abandoned his name.

Reaney and Naik combine elements of folk-lore, ritual and fantasy to create a world which can cast a spell of wonder on the audience. To add to this, in *The Donnellys* Reaney uses the historical fact into a celebration of courage and unyielding human spirit. In form, it might be described as a kind of latter day miracle play. In *The Donnellys* Reaney uses the Barleycorn Ballad, the song of Buffalo Gals, Hector O'Hara's Jubilee Song and the Song of St. Patrick. In *Three Desks* he uses the Rupertsland College song. Reaney and his director Keith Turnbull have done an excellent job in turning a regional play into what may well become a focus of national folk-lore.

In Indian theatre too we find the use of folk-lore. Eminent dramatists like Dharmavir Bharati in his *Andha Yug*, Girish Karnad in his *Nagmandal*, Vijay Tendulkar in *Sari Ga Sari*, *Ghasiram Kotwal* use folk-lore. Badal Sircar in his experimental theatre called 'Aaganmanch' exploits folk-lore to the maximum. All over India in Punjab, Assam, Bengal, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka down to Kerala and Kanyakumari we have instances of a very live folklorist theatre. The impact of folk-lore is seen in the matter of theme, style and rhythm. Naik makes the vivid use of folk-lore in *Suring*, *Shabay*, *Shabay Bhoujansamaj* and *Rakhann*. He uses various forms of folklorist techniques such as *Aarati*, *Owi*, *Fugadi* in his plays. He uses 'Aarati' for satirical purposes to expose the blind faith of the people:

देवा चित्रविचित्रा,  
महाभूतांच्या पुत्रा  
मानून घेवंची धनयां  
एका दिसाची जात्रा--देवा एका दिसाची जात्रा ॥ ध्रु. ॥  
वसांक अेकदां न्हाता  
नितळ कसो रे जाता ?  
सदांच न्हावपी हांगा,  
बुशें बुशें उर्ता--देवा बुशें बुशें उर्ता ॥१॥  
मान तुजी रे घुंवल्या  
फाट करुनशी रावल्या  
मुखार पळोकं धजना  
देखून मांडणी काडल्या--देवा देखून मांडणी काडल्या ॥२॥  
दर्याक सुकती भर्ती  
मन्शाकूय ती लागती  
कुंडयार शिजता तुजे

देवा तुका ती कशी बादती--देवा तुका ती कशी बादती ॥३॥

काळ कोणाकूच थांबना

मुखार वचपाचो रावना

तुजी अरुफाटयाची जात्रा

कशी जैताक पावतली कळना--देवा कशी जैताक पावतली कळना ॥४॥

(Sri Vichitrachi Jatra 8)

\* \* \*

In *Shabay Shabay Bhoujan Samaj* which is a political satire on Democracy, Naik is extremely sarcastic about insignificance of Democracy in a Nation where economic corruption is the order of the day, where the majority of people are poor, illiterate and uneducated, who don't understand the value of their 'Vote.' Naik uses 'Owi' to underscore the irony involved in a Democratic State.:

कोणा एका राज्यां रे लोकशाय चाले

लोकशाय-म्हारगाय गळयांत गळो बा

कोण एक अस्तूरी सात कापडां बदली

तशी लोकशाय आमची सत्ता ही बदली

लोकशाय येयली रे घरांघरां पावली

दारां दारां तिची पडली सावली बा

लोकशाय राणी रे कितें कितें दिणी

कंठ दिले, हात दिले सुखाच्यो खणी

लोकशायेंत दिलें रे व्हडलें एक सत

हांगा धेव खंय धेव नांव तेचें मत



लखपती धनपती तेका अक मत  
सांजेक नाशिल्ल्याक तेकाय मत

मतांच्या राज्यांत सगळे अक  
मतां मेजपाचें अकूच माप

\* \* \*

मतां रे मतां आयचे जिणे सतां  
कोण खाता शितां आनी कोण भोंवता वतां

मतां म्हळ्यार शस्त्रां जणा अकल्या हातां  
अस्त्रांचो शस्त्रांचो खेळ हो आतां

शस्त्रांकूय जाती काळयो धव्यो काती  
जातींच्या म्हालवजार भोंवत्यो भागिरथी

कोणांअके भागीरथी दुवाळे जाले  
जातींच्या म्हालवजार हात करचे ओले  
असे शबै शबै शबै शबै शबै शबय S S S

( *Shabay Shabay Bhaujan Samaj, ActI,sc.i* )

The members of a political party dream about the bumper crop of buck they can reap once their candidate is elected. They give the expression to their desires through 'Fugadi' a kind of dance:

मतां रे मतां दियात  
आमच्या भोल्याक रे  
शिवको मारुंक विसरुं नाका  
आमच्या कोल्याक रे ,

आमचो कोलो झिलीत बसून

शेंपडी हालयता.

मागीलदारा कोंबयेक पळोवन

लाळ ग लल्यता.

माडावयलो कीररे

शेंपडी हालयता

मोलो आमचो वेचून यतलो

म्हणून दाखयता.

मतां रे मतां दियात

आमच्या भोल्याक रे

शिक्रो मारुंक विसरुं नाका

आमच्या कोल्याक रे .

(*Shabay Shabay Bhaujan Samaj, ActI,sc.vi*)

Naik gives the expression to the echoes of romance in youthful hearts through

'Mando' and 'Dhulpod' which are reminiscents of our Portuguese legacy:

दर्याच्या ल्हारारी

चंद्रिमाच्या अुजवाडारी

हे तुजे माथ्यांतले फांतयेरी

ज्युरार जातां, देवा मुखारी.

\*\*\*

यो रे मोगा,

चोय रे म्हाका

मोगाचे दोये

लाय रे म्हाका.

आगा, म्हज्या रेंदेर मामा,  
चड गा माडारी  
आनी दाबणें फुटल्यार सोल भिनाकाय  
दुदकें सांबायी  
आगा म्हज्या रेंदेरमामा,  
पाज तुजी काती  
(निरशेवन) तें शेवणें सुरू पियेवन गेलें  
मद्याने राती  
(*Raktakhev Act II, sc.1*)

Naik uses 'Fugadi' to bring out the pathos created by the fretting of a sister for her brother who has been separated since childhood :

वाटे वयल्या वागा गा  
म्हाका खाता जाल्यार खा गा  
म्हाज्या बंधवा राखण दि  
मळबीच्या काजुल्या रे  
काजळवंती राती रे  
भाअुराया वाट दाखय  
अटंग्या या रानां रे  
कोणां पाऊल जाग येता रे  
भयण भावा माग घेता

\*\*\*

बंधवानी बंधवा रे, हे फुलांचे मळे  
काय हें दूकांचें तळें रे।

रुखांच्या तळांशीं ही सांडिल्ल्या सावुली  
काय मायेची पावुली  
रुखाचे भोंवतणि हे भोंवराचे गाणे  
काय हे तुजेच जीणे रे ?  
रुखांच्या पानांशीं हो झणझणाटा वावू  
काय हो भयणीचो भावू रे  
आनी तेसरशी दोळयांतलीं दुकां, टपटप करून कन्याफुलां  
झडूंक लागलीं. भावूच वडयनाशिल्लो तीं ?  
(Rakhann Act I)

Naik uses 'Kantar', a kind of Goan folk song. The folklore is expression of joys as well as sorrows. Poor Jose describes his hard livelihood through the following 'Kantar' full of rhythm. Naik suggests that it should be sung on the tune of ' Va Re Va Bomay':

वारे वा जिवीत वारे वा जिवीत  
कितें सांगू या जिवीता खोबोर  
हांगा भल्ल्यात रे साबार फांतोर  
पायाक जाता घाय  
आनी खिणां खिणां काळीज जाता हाय !  
कावळो रडचे आदीं सायबा फांत्या पारारी  
सगळें सामान मारून खांदार वेतां कामारी  
कमर मोडून दोळे तोडून येता आमोरी  
खोडोप सगळें फोडोप बाबा पेज्जे निसारी  
हाय देवा, तूं सांबाळ म्हाकां  
पुनरजल्म दिशीं जाल्यार  
पोट दिवं नाकाय ॥ वारे वा ॥  
घडली कोस्ली खोबोर सांगतां फाटल्या सुंक्रारा

हातांत घण पोटांत फोण वोरं जाल्लीं बारा  
उबाल्लेलो घण सायबा बसलो कपलाचेर  
रगताचे व्हाळ सगळे उक्त्या आंगाचेर  
हाय देवा, कित् करचें पडलें  
उदक नासून आपलें रगत  
घोटचें पडलें ॥ वारे वा ॥

*(Suring Act I)*

Naik also depicts the scenario during an election campaign while every attempt is hypocritically made to please the credulous fool, the great voter. The folk song 'Owi' which normally makes a reference to God or King and which was normally sung while the women sat around the grinding stone to grind corn, is used:

कुड्डेगाळीचें भाग्य उजळलें  
आनी भोलेबाब कोलेबाब उमेदवार जाले  
आयच्या गे नी काळां, संवसारां इपरीता  
संवसारां इपरीतां हरी नारायेणा.  
इपरीत घडलां, चिखलांतल्या केलदयांशी  
चिखलांतल्या केलदयाशी हरी नारायेणा  
इपरीत घडलां भोळ्या बाबड्या मनशांशी  
भोळ्या बाबड्या मनशांक बाये मोल येयलां

कोणां गांवचे भाडेली भायरसे सरले  
भायरसे सरले हरी नारायेणां  
हांगां भोंवता थंय भोंवता  
कोणाचो सोद घेता हरी नारायेणा

*(Shabay Shabay Bhaujan Samaj, ActI,sc.i)*

The tradition of a narrator or 'Sutradhar' was very much there in Greek as well as Sanskrit drama. The narrator must have been very accomplished and versatile, for the rules say that among other things he must know music, technical treatises, dialects, the art of managing, works on poetry, rhetoric, acting, industrial arts, metre, astronomy, geography, history and the genealogies of royal families. He was to have a good memory and to be honest, intelligent, dignified and noble. The narrator had to be a well read man who would know the play as well as the kind of audience the play was exposed to, based on this data he would fill in those information gaps, helping the audience to grasp the play immediately as it unfolded before them scene by scene. <sup>21</sup>

Reaney doesn't make direct use of "a narrator" but subtly he is very much there. He uses the protagonist or some other character to inform the audience which part of the country of their respective countries they are exposed to. In *Listen to the wind* the protagonist informs the players from within that they are in Mediterranean region. In *The Donnelly's*, the chorus itself does the work of a narrator by announcing the names of places, roads, families etc.

In Naik's plays such as *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra*, *Eka Junvear Juin* and *Marnkatto* there is a narrator. In *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* he is called 'Rachanakar' ; in *Eka Junvear Juin* 'Kalpurush', and 'Kattyacho Dhani', the master of the cliff in *Marnkatto*. In *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* the narrator begins saying that the theme is based on a legend and myth that nobody should remain on island after sunset. He does not intend to prove the validity of this myth. But he calls the fair the last one of its kind on the island. He appeals to the audience to make use of their imagination to understand the play. He says, just as we project our ideas on the clouds and see whatever shape we can, we have to develop the inner sight to make sense of the external reality. The narrator appears again at the end of

the play, saying the basic tendencies or the base instincts of human beings everywhere are the same. The one that is of utmost importance is the selfless person who would be a friend, philosopher and guide to all the characters. In *Marnkatto* it is Naik the narrator who is the master of the cliff. He argues with the youth who believes that this life is meaningless. He convinces him that life is meaningful and the youth gives up the idea of suicide.

In Reaney's plays, time and place frequently dissolve so that the spectator finds himself in 1884 at one moment and 1974 at another, in Tipperary, London, Lucan or Goderich ; in a farmhouse, a barnyard, a church, or coconut, or a country road, a wagon, or a train. All these changes are evoked with the help of the simplest of props : ladders, sticks, stones, clotheslines, shirts, wheels, hayforks, barrels, chairs, noise-makers, maps, candles, lanterns. The structural approach Reaney follows is to juxtapose many, many sequences of different times, settings and moods. The technique has gained perfection in *Sticks and Stones* ; one sequence flows easily into another without the separation and numbering of scenes as in the earlier plays such as *Colours in the Dark* and *Listen to the Wind*. In the stage directions these sequences are named as 'the going-to-Goderich sequence', 'a mass menace sequence', or 'the Donnelly house sequence'. One sequence blends into the next ; he gives the stage direction : 'The Angelus should bridge between chases's ending and the vesper scene'.<sup>22</sup>

Reaney and Naik make a very effective use of chorus which breathes life into their plays. The chorus makes a great impact on the mind of the spectators. The music, the lyrics and the rhythm of the chorus go zooming in their mind, buzzing in there, involving them psychologically. The viewer ceases to be a mere viewer and identifies with the protagonist himself. The chorus has its origin in the Greek as well as Sanskrit Drama. In

Sanskrit drama, it was initially used as “Nandi” or benediction song, Akaashvanni. It could also have been used to represent the inner mind of the protagonist when he was caught in a dilemma and conflict. It was also used to present devotional songs, hymns and to chant mantras.

Reaney and Naik reveal an amazing skill at giving the psycho audio effect with chorus. Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz define chorus as :

The chorus from which the Greek drama developed, was originally a group of masked male dancers who sang or chanted as part of the ceremonies at religious festivals. As the Greek drama progressed, the role of the chorus altered and its importance diminished. The chorus was never made an integral part of English drama. It was reduced by Elizabethans to a single figure who gave the prologue and epilogue and sometimes introduced major sections of the play as in Shakespeare’s Henry V.<sup>23</sup>

Naik uses chorus and chants in *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra*, *Shabay Shabay Bhoujansamaj*, *Suring* and *Aatmavanchana*. Reaney deploys chorus as a main device for creating the situation and mood of his plays. *Sticks and Stones* Act I opens with the drunken and rowdy singing of a tavern song far away in the distance. It is the barleycorn ballad. There is the subdivisonal equation of Donnellys with the grain. Right at the beginning the chorus indirectly suggests the death of the Donnellys:

Oh, three men went to Deroughata  
to sell three loads of rye  
They shouted up and they shouted down  
The barley grain should die. (*Sticks and Stones*, Act I)

The ballad goes to describe the ploughing, sowing, growing, yielding, reaping, threshing, grinding, brewing, drinking and pissing it away. The parts of the ballad are used recurringly to imply how badly the freedom of the Donnellys was encroached upon and how badly they were treated. During the flashback to his defiance of “the whitefeet” in



Ireland James Donnelly recollects the whitefeet summon him to face them outside the door. It goes as:

Male voice : Jim Donnelly !

Chorus : Then the binder came with her neat thumb, she bound are all around

Male voice : Jim Donnelly

Chorus : And then they hired a handyman to stand me to the ground

Chorus : Did you not know Jim Donnelly that no whitefoot is to have any dealings with the Protestant and the heretic Johnson ?

Mr. Donnelly : Yes, but it was .....

Chorus : Kneel, Donnelly get down on your knees. Swear by the holy evangelists that you will always be joined to this society known as the whitefoot and that you will forever and forever obey---(*Sticks and Stones*, Act I)

Mr. Donnelly flatly refuses to kneel.

Half of the chorus : Hrump hrumpety bump brump brump Terry's in the barrel Hrump hrumpety bump brump brump Jim Donnelly's in it too We'll roll you right up Keeper's Hill it's true, it's true.....

Half of others : If you refuse, Jim Donnelly if you refuse, Donnelly, you won't know the day nor the hour nor the night nor the hour when we'll come to.

Mr. Donnelly : No, I'm not ! kneel ! No ! Swear ! No ! I will not kneel.

Mrs. Donnelly : So they cursed your father and called him a

Chorus : Blackfoot ! (*Sticks and Stones*, Act I)

Reaney draws the whole set in three files to say and illustrate the convictions made by her Majesty's Justices of the peace within the Township of Biddulph :

**STICKS**

**STONES**

**OTHERS**

**Name of Prosecutor**

**Name of Defendant**

**Nature of charge**

George Campbell

Thomas Cain

throwing stones at the premises

William Hogan

James Nugent

evading toll, stealing hoops

(Illustrate the crimes with noise and mime and props)

The Queen

Thomas Cassleigh

Murdering an Englishman

Gerald Quinn Timothy Egan Tearing down his house

**STICKS**

**OTHERS**

**STONE'**

**OTHERS**

Thomas Hogshaw accuses William Hardeton of milking a cow furtively

Dennis Devlin accuses Paul Quinlan of assault and battery

On the death of the Donnelly's the chorus declares :

Five dead people lying in a house

The last tollgate before harvest and heaven. (Handcuffs, Act I)

The blindfolded dead come out from behind the curtain and follow their coffins.

The line :

Five dead people are leaving this house.

is repeated thrice more interspersed by Jennie's emotive statements.

Handcuffs, Act III ends with the chorus :

Where there once was a house/home, four stones.

The Roman line and the Protestant line who are more aggressive than the former, are conveyed by names of the families along the road :

<b>Sticks</b>	<b>Stones</b>
Barry	Trehy
Feeney	O'Halloran
Cahill	Cassleigh
McCann	Flynn
Grace	Farl
Donnelly	Donovan ( <i>Sticks and Stones</i> , Act I)

Journeys are conveyed by chanting the names of the places passed through (*St. Nicholas Hotel*, Act I), a favourite Reaney device also used in *Colours in the Dark* where the chant is laid out as a pyramid on the page ; and on the stage it is chanted antiphonally. Most of all, Reaney tries to achieve the air of spontaneity, of creation right before the audience's eyes. In the family-tree chant the kids say that to make one child :

It takes  
 Two parents  
 Four grandparents  
 Eight great grandparents  
 Sixteen great great grandparents  
 Thirty-two great great great grandparents  
 Sixty-four great great great great grandparents  
 One hundred and twenty eight great great great great great grandparents  
 Two hundred and fifty-six great great great great great great grandparents  
 Five hundred and twelve great great great great great great great grandparents  
 One thousand and twenty-four great great great great great great great great grandparents  
 (*Colours in the Dark*, Act I, sc.8)

and so on. The play ends with a final recitation of the family tree, now inverted so that instead of the child widening out to his ancestors, the one thousand twenty-four great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandparents now funnel down to just one child.

The entire cast recites :

One thousand and twenty-four great great great great great great great great grandparents  
 It takes Five hundred and twelve great great great great great great great great grandparents  
 Two hundred and fifty-six great great great great great great great great grandparents  
 One hundred and twenty eight great great great great great great great great grandparents  
 Sixty-four great great great great great great great great grandparents  
 Thirty-two great great great great great great great great grandparents  
 Sixteen great great great great great great great great grandparents  
 Eight great great great great great great great great grandparents  
 Four great great great great great great great great grandparents  
 Two parents  
 ONE CHILD  
 (*Colours in the Dark*, Act II, sc.21)

The three major characteristics of Naik's literature are : It is realistic, expressionistic and rhetorical. Reaney too is an expressionist and rhetoricist, but he is more of an imagist than a rhetorical writer. The term "expressionism" is defined as :

Expressionism is a German movement in painting started after the World War I. The painter paints objects not as he sees them but as he feels them. Thus he consciously distorts reality in externalizing his feelings about it. Expressionism in literature includes any conscious disregard of reality.<sup>24</sup>

The hallmarks of expressionism are its use of symbolic characters : 'Konntari' meaning 'someone' is the vision of a symbolic character of a benevolent social worker, a prophet that Naik cherishes ; the one who might arrive in future to redeem our society :

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।  
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।  
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥

Bhagvad Gita, Chapter IV (Verse vii & viii)

Naik hopes that we should be as vigilant as 'Konntari' and using reason and with benevolent attitude towards mankind may save ourselves. In *Eka Junvear Juin* too Naik hopes that 'the liberator' shall come.

Naik's character 'Bholo' in *Shabay Shabay Bhoujansamaj* is a representative of the political class. 'Bholo' is 'Kolo' meaning 'a fox'. He uses his cunningness to cheat his nation by indulging in all sorts of corruption. Although he is an illiterate, elected like a lot many political leaders in India, he is smart enough to use his power for selfish reasons by robbing his community and in turn the nation. He manipulates everything for his ulterior motives and he learns to do this without any revelation. He has absolutely no morals. He is a man without conscience and he has absolutely no sense of shame. He makes promises only to break them and knows to make his way through by bribing people whenever there is confrontation. It is such kind of leaders who have led India today in the world of deterioration of values, poverty and a stinking corruption pervading through all of our institutions, government as well as private, in fact the entire system.

Reaney too has expressionistic characters. His pagan woman Madam Fay, the seductress from *The Killdeer*, his dominant mothers like Bethel from *The Easter Egg*, Mrs. Gardner, Mrs. Budge from *The Killdeer*, Mrs. Shade the abortionist from *The Sun and the Moon* are all representatives of their kind. Freud's Oedipus complex is very much dominant in Mrs. Gardner, Madam Fay, Mrs. Budge and they wouldn't like to let their

sons even grow into adults. Similarly Harry, Kenneth and Eli are the child protagonists who wish if only they could choose their parents.. They do not want to run the endless alleys of fear.... and be liberated once for all.

The antichrist in *Colours in the Dark* with his vision of upside down clutches could be found anywhere anytime. His Hitler approach is very scary. It could bring the entire humanity into destruction.

The work of Reaney and Naik is fraught with impressionistic ideas which touch the hearts and appeal to the minds of the spectators giving them the sheer joy of their fine creativity. The word impressionism is defined as :

The literary practice emphasizes not objective reality as it is but rather the impressions the author or character derives from it. Impressionists as they call themselves made the act of perception the key for the understanding of the structure of reality. The basic premise involved was that "truth" lay in the mental processes, not in the precise representation of external reality.<sup>25</sup>

In *Colours in the Dark* Reaney uses this technique very effectively. When touched upon by love and patience the hurdles in life represented by a huge dark hill change into a tiny pebble in the hands of the protagonist ; the stormy lake that is to be crossed turns into a soothing dewdrop in a flower ; the winding tiresome road is perceived as a string around one's waist and the straw seems whistle the word "home".

Likewise, in Naik's *Raktakhev* impressionism is very vivid. Prakash while crossing the river witnesses the beauty of the sun and the nature around. He thinks, like a loving father extending his arms to a long lost son, the hills extended their arms in embrace to their beloved "sun". In *Marmkatto* the singing torrents of water, the chirping birds, the greenery around witness the suicide attempt of the youth and give him a message to accept the challenges of life. Life is perceived not as divine retribution or manifestation of a destiny bound to suffer, but enlivening with its beauty and bounty and it is in the hands

of youth to make or mar it. Naik celebrates life through impressionism for it has its own intrinsic value which makes every being to covet life rather than discard it.

*The Killdeer, The Sun and the Moon* and *The Easter Egg* are written in a flexible and often haunting free verse possibly influenced by the revival of poetic drama in England. Reaney's imagery often dazzles like Christopher Fry's and at other times the poetry is so muted as to recall T.S Eliot's notorious method of writing dramatic verse that most of his audience would not recognize as such. Reaney's dramatic effects are poised on the razor's edge between imaginative charm and irritating silliness. He makes use of mime and a consequent expanding of the audience's imagination.

Reaney uses stage metaphor as a device to condense the plot action, clarify a theme, make an abstract idea concrete. He uses various types of stage metaphor : stage props image clusters in the dialogue, elaborate patterns of stage movement, lighting cues and sound collages. The stage metaphor is a structural principle to organise his trilogy. The ruling stage metaphor recurs as a motif and reminds the audience of previous scenes, characters and ideas giving coherence to his plays or to the entire trilogy as a whole. In *Sticks and Stones* it is a ladder, in *The St. Nicholas Hotel*, a top and in *Handcuffs* it is a curtain.

Naik too uses the stage metaphor with a considerable effect. The ruling stage metaphor in *Pipall Petla* is the burning pipal tree, in *Suring* it is the dynamite, in *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* it is the fair, while in *Marmkatto* it is the cliff of death. These metaphors loom over the entire play ultimately identifying themselves with the play.

Reaney's masterpiece and his greatest contribution to the Canadian theatre will remain *Listen to the Wind*. Reaney's consolidation of meaning, technique, chance, order, personality and universality renders it the status of an avant garde production. This is an

example of an intrinsically Canadian Play which transforms “the theatre into its our lives.”<sup>26</sup>

In *Listen to the Wind* (1966) and *Colours in the Dark* (1967) Reaney employs theatrical resources far more originally and imaginatively. In both a comparatively small cast plays a host of characters and the former is grounded in a play-within-a-play-situation. Both look back to the partly innocent, partly by no means innocent world of childhood.

Turnbull’s direction relies heavily on the use of symbolism, especially in *Sticks and stones*, where he uses cartwheels, marionettes, ladders and cat’s cradles (the African Cinema) to portray images of brilliant clarity, much in the manner of Joan Littlewood’s Stratford East company. To add to these, we have in all his plays as Reaney himself says :

words, gestures a few rhythm band instruments create a world that turns cinema around and makes you the movie projector.<sup>27</sup>

Turnbull enjoyed directing Reaney’s plays, because the language resonates “on seven different levels at the same time - it’s just richer and fuller. If the script is good, it supports even the wildest stage business. *The Donnellys* contains a marionette sequence, a stagecoach scene in which the company forms a threshing machine with all its moving parts. The collective nature of this theatrical forms clearly leaves no room for the star system and all of its affectations. The members of Reaney’s NDWT company succeed as a team and not as individual actors. Reaney and Keith Turnbull have succeeded in the trilogy, partly because they develop a rare sense of community and a deep loyalty to their cause. They succeed also because they never lose the feeling of playfulness which is so essential to Reaney’s work.

Naik made his debut into theatre with a great ambition to revolutionize the Konkani stage with the inborn fertility of imagination. He has been triumphant at evolving new forms and techniques which galvanized the Konkani stage and helped it to make its presence felt in the Indian theatre scenario.

Their equal concern with process and product, with form-making and form, is suggestive of a number of contemporary art movements which are often assumed to be incompatible. What Gerald Parker says about Reaney holds true for Naik too :

Reaney's drama is evocative of a wide and rich variety of poetic and theatricalist tradition and conventions, many of which claim separate and usually vociferous defendants in the shrill, ersatz battlefield of modern theatre criticism.<sup>28</sup>

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## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Drama has been slower to develop in Canada, the country of widely spaced small communities. In the mid twentieth century increased interest in drama was reflected in the establishment of theatres such as repertory in the Stratford, Ontario, the Shaw festival in Niagara, Ontario, and the Vancouver play house in British Columbia.

The Asian theatre is about two thousand years old. The Sanskrit Drama originated as far back as 400 A.D and before. The Canadian theatre which is not more than two centuries old is still in its evolving stage. However, it could be rightly juxtaposed with Goan Konkani theatre in India which is also very young and gained recognition in 1960's after Goa was liberated from Portuguese in 1961.

Naik paved the way for the experimental theatre in Goa as Reaney did in English Canadian theatre. Both emerged as the leading dramatists of 1970's. It is amazing to learn that these two playwrights, pioneers in the field of drama in their regions, belonging to opposite parts of the globe, unaware of the existence of each other nurtured in their hearts the same passion for region and a deep yearning to take their respective theatres to the heights of glory.

There are many common things in their early life. Reaney grew up on his Stratford farm helping his parents at threshing, holding bags for barley, pulling onions, hoeing turnips, digging potatoes, picking raspberries. He did the baby sitting for his younger siblings, washed floors, got vegetables ready to sell and peddled peas and balls of cottage

cheese on the streets of Stratford. The farm, which as an imaginative body had always evaded him, was destined to come vividly and completely to life as a verbal structure. In *Names and Nicknames* (1961), the life of the farm in all its seasons and in all its varied activities is miraculous. Naik too helped his parents at farm activities, closely witnessing the blossoming, yielding, maturing, ripening of cashew, mango and jack-fruit trees in the orchards around and of wild-berry trees in the jungles. While he grazed his cattle, the inspiring heights of the surrounding mountains, the mysterious depths of the valleys, the purity of life-giving waters, the strange figures in the cloudy skies stirred his sensations into creativity and echoed in his heart an irresistible yearning to translate his abstract experience into a verbal art which could be enjoyed by others as he enjoys his rice fish-curry with gusto.

Reaney's upbringing was very much religious. This is revealed through many of his plays. There is a spiritual development in Reaney from the comic element in *The Killdeer* to the tragic element in the later play *The Donnellys*. He seeks the victory of good over evil, of the divine over demonic, of Saint over Satan.

However, Naik doesn't possess a religious background. He wouldn't brand himself an atheist. But he would like to experience the presence of God in nature, in the sunrise or in the setting sun in the blowing winds, in the flowing waters, in the singing birds in the lowing cattle.

A glance at their dramatic careers shows a lot of similarities. Both of them received recognition in the literary world first as poets. Reaney won the first of his two Governor General awards for poetry *The Red Heart* (1948) and *A suit of Nettles* (1958). Naik too emerged at first with poetry which created a sensation all over Goa. Only then they both turned to drama which is fraught with poetic imagery, folk songs and dance.

Thus the quintessence of their drama is the poetic inclination making it extremely appealing and meaningful.

As a playwright Reaney attracted public attention much more slowly. Stratford acknowledged his growing stature as a dramatist in 1967 with a production of *Colours in the Dark*. In 1974, he won the Charmers Award with Tarragon theatre's production of *The St. Nicholas Hotel* (part II of *The Donnelly's* trilogy). However, Reaney does not see himself, as a poet first and a playwright later. He denies the suggestion of a transition from poetry to theatre. He said to Ronald Huebert at an interview in 1977 :

I think you've got a thesis set up where I'm supposed to be a lyric poet and I change into a theatre poet. Not so !<sup>1</sup>

Ronald Huebert further writes :

Reaney points out that he began experiments in amateur theatre long before he became a recognized playwright, and that many of his early poems are already quite dramatic. It is perhaps more accurate to note that Reaney's dramatic approach has shifted largely because of external courses and pressures.<sup>2</sup>

Naik too claims that his first pieces of art were Marathi plays, he wrote and produced for the temple theatre in his village Volvoi. Although they had many excerpts from the great store of plays in his memory, it was his amateur experimental art which laid the foundations of a genuine dramatist. Perhaps his dramatic approach too shifted to poetry for the same reasons that Reaney's did. It was much more difficult to pursue the performing art which is dependent upon the theatre machinery, finance and community support than to publish poetry and short stories and novels.

Both have written plays for children. Reaney's plays for children are *Names and Nicknames* (1963), *Apple Butter* (1965), *Ignoramus* (1966) and *Geography Match* (1967). The plays demonstrate an evolution in Reaney's drama from a simple fairy-tale

*Names and Nicknames* to an examination of the necessity of imagination to understand the nature of the world in *Geography Match*. The child's perspective which is clearly established in *Names and Nicknames*, *Listen to the Wind* and *Colours in the Dark* avoids many problems of his more realistic plays. *Geography Match* has a striking resemblance to *Colours in the Dark* which is Reaney's most radical experiment in form and technique with its presentation of metaphor as the device which allows man to see the harmony of all things.

The children's plays of Pundalik Naik are *Raansundari* (1974), *Aalshank Vag Khatlo* (1984) and *Shinvacho Bali* (1998). *Raansundari* is a fairy tale whereas the latter two are fables. All are aimed at teaching values of life such as honesty, unselfishness, industriousness and the disastrous effects of greed, falsehood etc.

The writing of Reaney and Naik springs out of a deep indebtedness and boundless love for their respective regions --- Souwesto i.e. South Western Ontario and Goa. Just as Ontario with its panorama of changing seasons is a multicultural land with multilingual people inhabited by Asian and European immigrants who respect one another, Goa too was reigned by several Indian, Islamic and European dynasties. Today Goa is inhabited by Hindus, Christians and Muslims who display an exemplary communal harmony. Goans are supposed to be peace loving people who like to do theatre, sing, dance and be merry. The green vegetation, sparkling rivers and sun-drenched beaches make it a golden Goa which steals everyone's heart.

Both Reaney and Naik believe that literature must be planted firmly in the soil. Even works of non-realism make use of spiritual landscapes which have been at least partially inherited by the writer. The chapter states the main argument of the thesis that

though both belong to the different religions --- different cultural milieu, their writing seems to belong to the human nature in its essence.

The common focus in their plays is the depiction of their familiar regions. It is the regional world that they depict in all its essence. To put in Reaney's words : "The feeling of place is the power within us."<sup>3</sup> Reaney's interest in regionalism could be deciphered from the importance he gives to "a very local grain of sand".<sup>4</sup>

Regional literature in its more precise sense is tied to the convention of realism because it attempts to distinguish accurately the features of a clearly definable region either rural or closely linked to the land. In its fullest achievement such regional literature as the work of Thomas Hardy and William Faulkner show, is not synonymous with surface detail and pedestrian style, but with profound exploration of the shaping influence of particular regions on individual lines.

Both Reaney and Naik reveal an absolute concern for their respective regions. They base themselves in their region and create theatre that is drenched in local colour, that is moulded by the local idiom and dialects, that is shaped by the local customs and conventions, that is fraught with fragrance of the simple city of the rustics and the one that gives a deep insight into the local environment as a whole. Thus the work becomes for the audience an environment as the region has been for its creator.

It is obvious that being a regionalist James Reaney is intent upon exploring deeply into the surface of the place where he lives. In the preface to *Masks of Childhood* (three major plays in the sixties), Reaney speaks of the frustrated but fruitful dive to get to the bottom of a story. Speaking about the origin of *The Easter Egg*. Reaney recollects how during his college days he went to curio shops in Toronto, adding to his collection of old hand-made eggs, brought there from diverse attics : he would speculate on their cultural

meanings, wondering who made them and in what town. Just as a poultry farmer knows just from where to gather the artifacts of his fowls, Reaney knew to get exactly at the source and origin of Canadian customs.

Reaney with his artistic imagination believes that art imitates life. The main motive of Naik's literature is the combat against injustice and established oppression. He is a great lover of nature. He sees his own reflection in nature which facilitates his regional vision.

Reaney's regionalism is not simply fenced in ground. Its place was equally inhabited by Canadian history. James Reaney, the best of the Canadian regional playwrights, has demonstrated in his Donnelly trilogy that regional historical detail can be animated by a gifted dramatic imagination. The universals of personality or individuality are surely best contained within the fabric of a specifically realized time and place. Speaking in this context Diane Bessai remarks :

The imagination must soar if that is its gift, but the best chance for its success lies in its continuing reinforcement of that rootedness which makes flight possible.<sup>5</sup>

In Reaney's plays the plot and the characters seem to "take off" from the springboard of philosophy and go zooming into the world of speculation, while in Naik's plays philosophy and art appear to coexist in a commonly shared world of art and values.

Both Reaney and Naik share an eclectic view of art as far as their work is concerned. To them, a play provides "a real vision". Their work embodies a shockingly dazzling vision of man. The context of countries and cultures has the greatest impact on the imagination and reflective inclination of both Reaney and Naik. Their worlds emanate from the fundamental essence of their respective nations and cultural ethos. While Reaney's quest for reality is concerned with the creative cosmos, the environment of vast



spaces and the Christian values, Naik's quest relates itself with the Indian Vedic background and is monitored by the subtleties of the perceptive individual's relation with Universe and God.

By presenting the traditional view of the Donnellys in caricature, the dramatist discredits earlier versions of the story and implies that what he presents is the truth. Neil Carson says :

In the theatre, the nature of truth is shadowy. It is less relevant to ask which of the two interpretations of the violent conflict between the Donnellys and their neighbours is accurate than to speculate about why Reaney thinks his own version of the story is more 'real' than the one he denigrates.<sup>6</sup>

Naik's truth is definitely not shadowy. He depicts stark reality. His protagonist directly looks into the eyes of the killing truth and proves himself greater than the greatest of falsehood. For instance, Prakash in *Raktakhev* outrightly and painfully accepts that his mother was a whore. Child Shankar in *Rakhann* rebels against the Landlord and abandons home in the late hours to return as a strong adult to relieve his young sister from the slavery of the landlord. The mother in *Dayaj* takes the decision of the murder of her own lascivious son Ranjeet and instills the same into the mind of her young daughter-in-law who rises to her expectation and kills Ranjeet for his seductive nature.

The playwright confronts reality against the value system he exposes and in the context of the horrid web of tensions woven by developments in modern life. He challenges the validity and relevance of tradition and old values. He exposes the ugliness of a system that dehumanizes and tramples on human dignity and he refrains from imposing a solution, as such an effort invariably tends to dilute the protest and its artistic appeal.

Does Reaney believe in realism ? Reaney has always insisted on the prominence of the imagination as a way of transforming the world and of revealing truth. As Michael Tait has noted :

Since these plays tend to deny the reality of the evil acts they dramatize, the characters who suffer from such acts or attempt to combat them fail to command our interest or sympathy.<sup>7</sup>

I would like to refute the above view of Michael Tait for Reaney says :

I write about the family with side glances at society and history. My favourite answer at hot seat session theatres in this country is that I'm interested in telling a story. I don't write about anything (dianoia) ; I just tell stories (mythoi).<sup>8</sup>

Reaney recognizes the reality beyond the mere phenomenal world ; a reality which the artist could imagine and capture by giving a consistent form to the shapeless facts of human existence.

The analysis of the plays of Reaney reveals that the difference between early plays and *Listen to the Wind*, *Colours in the Dark*, *The Donnellys*, and *The Dismissal* is remarkable : The conflict between good and evil, innocence and experience, imagination and phenomenology is not reduced by inevitability ; and evil does not conveniently weaken at the end.

Reaney has always insisted on the prominence of the imagination as a way of transforming the world and of revealing truth, but in the early plays imaginative truth seems a dramatic crutch Reaney resorted to, when mimesis failed.

In the next phase his plays emphasize nationalism and Canadian history. This is best seen in the Donnelly trilogy which deals with a nineteenth century Irish Catholic family which settled in Lucan, Biddulph in 1844 and five members of which were murdered in 1880.

In later plays, Reaney has written about 1930's Canadian strike, the history of London, Ontario and a 1930's Ontario murder. In 1960, Reaney founded the magazine *Alphabet* to focus on the iconography of the imagination. His dramatic work is largely focused on the regionalism of the imagination as it relates to Canada's colonial past. Some of the gaudier and vigorous features of Reaney's plots, characterization and language are originally derived from gothic romance and popular nineteenth century melodrama. Apart from their strictly technical and formal influences Gerald Parker says:

These features present a world generally commensurate with Reaney's own a world of lightened often hyperbolic action in which character and narrative are informed by an underlying moral Manicheism, and in which the surface of the ordinary world, as a verifiable and "documented" is shown to bear highly potent signs of a hidden, mythic world of the "moral occult."<sup>9</sup>

The intrinsic nature of Naik's creativity is its existentialism. His created world is nothing but a bare slice of life. Naik belongs to an exploited class. His reputed poem "Bangar Beil" (The Majestic Bull ) with all its aggression and triumphant overthrow of authority was the reaction of a rebel who had been suppressed by the higher classes from the times immemorial . Naik says :

You shouldn't be surprised at the aggression of my "Bangar Beil". I shouldn't be mistaken as uncultured at the reaction like that. One will surely have sympathies with me (the exploited class) if one considers the oppression that I have been suffering through ages. Just a spurtive reaction like that is not much... However we shall prove ourselves some day.<sup>10</sup>

Such themes of revolt are seen in his plays. Social protest is one of the dominating traits of Naik's plays. When an artist finds life miserably wanting in things that make it worth-living he is enraged and he protests with all his might which lies in his sense of justice as well as beauty. He seeks to demolish the system which breeds hellish state of affairs, going far beyond mere exposition of evil.

The agitation comprises of shock, anger, identity of purpose and an inner compulsion to strive for the realization of a vision propounded by the artist. Social protest in art has a utopian dimension. It focuses on the ugliness of 'what is' by juxtaposing it with the beauty of 'what should be'. His protest takes a variety of forms depending on his perception, intensity of feeling and intellectual awareness.

Naik has an ideal character in his social plays who conveys to the public the objective and purpose of his plays. For example, Shankar from *Rakhann* rebels against the landlord and his oppression. He strives hard to free his sister from the clutches of the landlord.

In *Demande*, Ashok frees himself and his family from the cruel and exploiting person of their father. In *Chaitanyak Math Na*, Another play of Naik, Ankush strives to bring the social change in his own village. In *Dayaj* Mrudula carries ahead the tradition of Muktida to fight against injustice. In *Muktatay* Kishore who is himself the Landlord's son fights against the authority, injustice and the landlordship of the landlord. Someone from *Shri Vichitrachi Jatra* brings to light the oppression against women, social jealousy, poverty, falsehood, dictatorship, conventionalism, authoritarianism, suspicion and commits himself to the destruction of all these evils.

All these ideal characters are rebels, revolutionaries, faithless, overenthusiastic and angry by nature. They normally break either their own tradition or of their father. Many a time they are successful. But sometimes they are a failure. For example, the headman in *Shabay*, *Shabay Bhoujansamaj*. At times these characters try to set right the social set-up despite all the insults. For example, Someone from *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra*. In order to expose injustice, exploitation, hypocrisy Naik makes use of satire effectively. Reaney also has satire in the early plays like *The Killdeer*, *The Easter Egg* and *The Sun and the Moon*.

He creates a strong world of fantasy and dark fairy-tail, inhabited by egg-girls, comic clergymen, abortionists and diabolical sinners. Their created worlds deal with the themes related to women, mothers, child protagonists, family, exploitation, violence, sex and good and evil. Only Reaney has portrayed the academic world. Both Reaney and Naik have stated their problems clearly and effectively. However, there are no readymade solutions.

They are constantly engaged in exploring the meaning of life. Their 'worlds' are characterized by frustration, disintegration and disillusionment. Naik doesn't include factual details like real place names in his plays ; but indirectly suggests the environment which Goans would relate to their familiar country. Reaney attempts to see the real world from odd angles or tries to see reality by dislocating it. Perhaps he found 'reprinting reality' rather boring in his early career, and would rather construct his own. However, later on he turned to docu-drama.

In their worlds, hope exists alongside the miseries. We hear of cowardice and courage, we experience greed and generosity, we witness exploitation and compassion. Both have exposed the world around us which is marked by depravity of man.

Despite the similarity in intent, the created worlds of Reaney and Naik defer in character because of the cultural milieu. They have in common something far more significant --- their concern for life which has shaped their vision of life. However, Naik's is a vision of reality.

They have used imagery and symbols drawn from "familiar country." However, the plays of Reaney are rich in poetic imagery. The inverted imagery of the fairy-tale world and the humdrum images of daily life are vivid in Reaney.

The symbols and images used by these dramatists are pregnant with cultural meanings. The values attached to the metonymic images enable them to perform their iconic function. It is through the icons and metonymies that space is transformed into place physically as well as literally. The train is an image with a distinct Canadian iconography at both regional and national levels. "Apart from being a symbol of the inevitability of progress, it has the benefits of, a kind of centrist hegemony," says J. M. Zezulka.<sup>11</sup> Similarly the horse and the house belong to a class of images that Philip Wheelwright calls "Steno-symbols". There are the images such as 'child', 'parent', 'tree' or 'home' which indicate a definite set of experiences that mean essentially the same to all those who use them.

Naik carries the image of '*Pipall tree*' and '*the river*' which have national as well as regional significance. Whereas the images of 'dynamite' for explosion, 'the fierce beating of pakhavaj for releasing pent up emotions, the sword from *Dayaj*, the boat from *Raktakhev* could be called 'steno symbols'. Indeed it is the kind of imagery and symbolism and their comprehensive contextual use that makes them the deep-rooted regionalists.

Reaney and Naik create symbolic atmosphere in their world. This enables them to pack a richness of content in their work into a limited space. There is depth and detail in their work. However, there is natural symbolism in Naik's writing. Naik depicts the old order with the man in the center of family. The family is the basis of the Indian society and Naik's plays are realistic for they revolve around the family.

Imagery strengthens the concreteness of language. Reaney as well as Naik give revelations into the characters, their inner relationships and the situations they are in

through animal imagery. The imagery renders a concretely real and suggestively symbolic texture to their language.

Luis Dudek strongly asserts :

I believe the best of Reaney's theatre pure symbolism in the romantic vein of Maeterlinck and Yeats is to be found in *Night Blooming Cereus*, *One - man Masque*, and the moving and impressive later plays *Listen to the Wind* and *Colours in the Dark*. It is here that he suggests vast meanings and haunting other wordly dimensions through the simplest verbal and theatrical techniques namely through the symbolic interplay of action and the incantation of poetry.<sup>12</sup>

Reaney's early plays take the form of elaborately symbolic, yet deliberately childish melodrama. Gradually he developed an increasingly plotless, mosaic structure in which the verbal imagery is replaced by "theatricalist" stage effects built around symbolic props. He explains how he arrived at this form :

My latest theatre has been working on the Book of Genesis with no script, simply a list of images and turning points nailed up on a post where both the actors and myself go occasionally to see what is coming next.... and a prop table filled with the things you need to put on genesis with.<sup>13</sup>

In a letter from Reaney to Richard Stingle he wrote that he was looking forward to the premiere of *The Killdeer* :

Lots of symbolism and poetry with an exciting story -- so it moves on all the old levels -- like Satan in chaos. But I really felt proud of it and am dying to hear some of the speeches..... My aim was to write a play that could represent the country anywhere .....<sup>14</sup>

Richard Stingle observes :

This concern with symbolic structures which operate on several levels simultaneously and with the means by which these structures make the local experience mythical had already become evident in *A suit of Nettles* (1958) and was to persist through all Reaney's subsequent work, achieving its most intricate and comprehensive expression.<sup>15</sup>

*Colours in the Dark*, which gave Reaney his first professional success when it was produced at the Stratford Festival during centennial year, offers a pattern of dramatic and poetic images rather than a conventional plot. Structured upon a complicated and somewhat artificial division into the days of the week with their balancing planets, colours, flowers, parts of the alphabet etc., the play absorbs some of Reaney's earlier published poems into a new imaginative context.

At the end of *Handcuffs* Robert Donnelly picks up a stone in the name of his father's heart, holds it lovingly in his hands and kisses it. James Donnelly's heart may be literally disembodied but it beats still at the centre of the Donnelly family, emblematic of a unity that is irreducible ; death does not diminish the Donnelly's ability to act together as one body, nor does it dissipate their spirit. Donnelly ghosts preside throughout the trilogy, occasionally stepping into view to remind us that their family has not disappeared ; rather it has reappeared most pervasively :

look we are everywhere... in the clouds, in the tree branches in the puddle  
there here in your fork. In your minds your lungs are filled with us, we are  
the air you breathe (*Handcuffs* 133)

As pervasive as the Donnellys is the subject of the family in the writings of James Reaney, for instance *Listen to the Wind*, *The Easter Egg* and *The Killáeer*.

To the question as to why acting in Reaney's plays is so special, one of Reaney's most prominent actors Jerry Franken who played the role of Mr. James Donnelly said :

It's the strong poetic imagery that makes his plays so very special.  
I thoroughly enjoy acting in his plays.<sup>16</sup>

That is the density of Reaney's creativity. One notices immediately the density, thickness, depth of Reaney's verse and drama, a density not only in the denominative, but in the symbol, irony, rime. Reaney has often spoken of his crammed play-box as a source - image for his method.



J. Middleton Murry remarks :

.... the greatest mastery of imagery does not lie in the use, however, beautiful and revealing of isolated images but in the harmonious total impression produced by a succession of subtly related images.<sup>17</sup>

Reaney and Naik are definitely successful in producing 'the harmonious total impression', the intended artistic effect, on the mind of the reader by means of their 'subtly related images'. Their images of nature, the pagan woman, the animal imagery are 'subtly related images'.

Ezra Pound once remarked that "it is better to present one image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works."<sup>18</sup>

Both Reaney and Naik have created more than one image of lasting worth which have made a lasting imprint on the contemporary Canadian and Indian drama.

Both the dramatists use traditional folk songs. Both have an ear for language with an intuitive sense of what will work on stage, since they believe that the plays are meant to be staged and not merely for reading. It appears that they have realized that the theatre which they write for, needs above all, a language of its own. Both of them rely on a rich associative use of traditional poetic language for its effect.

Reaney, an erudite playwright proceeds with his work to make it more refined as far as technical skill is concerned. He has dealt with puppets and marionettes and taught his students to manipulate them. One specialty of Reaney is, he believed in workshopping theatre which enabled him to elicit the best from his actors and relate in a better way to the spectators. Reaney a researcher by bone has tried his very best to raise the Canadian theatre to the heights it has today.

Naik might not have the complexity of Reaney's techniques and in-depth delineation of the characters, but a curiosity to learn and study of other theatres have had

a great impact on his mind. Being experimental minded, Naik does so. He tries out his performance before publishing, rewrites or revises its vital factors and finally publishes it.

Both Reaney and Naik give extensive stage directions. They associate themselves with directors and actors and make use of songs, chorus, props, mimes, chanting, stamping, clapping, play-within-a play and so on.

Naik revolutionized the Konkani theatre. He has been influenced by Marathi theatre. Like Reaney he too does not follow traditional form of writing plays. However, he has made use of folk-loric techniques. He is the trend-setter in Konkani theatre.

Both Reaney and Naik display an exceptional mastery over lingual idiom and dialogue. The dialect of the characters instantly and unmistakably reveals the region they come from and their roots. The dialogues are at times in the form of repartees and retortingly interrogative at the other times. They are purposefully ambiguous, scornful and intellectually very sharp. They rather tempt the reader to think than inducing them to think. Although they seem funny, they are extremely serious. For instance, the dialogue between Mrs. Donnelly and her own ghost. The dialogue between Mahajan and Kontari over the lost articles. This accelerates the pace of dialogue as well as the climax.

Reaney's complicated plots entail complicated expositions and at times Reaney fails to present the necessary information economically and dramatically. For instance, there are long relatively static expository passages at the beginning of each act, and even the last scene of the play, during which a number of new characters appear unannounced, is not entirely free of them.

Since the dramatist does not always calculate precisely enough what scenes from his sensational story will best hold the attention of an audience, one too often has the sense that the true centre of dramatic gravity is somewhere off stage.

Reaney himself would agree that he lacks some of the reflexes of the seasoned dramatist : a ruthless evaluation of dialogue for its stage effectiveness ; the nice calculation of the point at which the interest of a potential audience may begin to fly and what to do about it ; a sense of what actors may fairly be required to. Reaney is certainly capable of writing good acting parts but too often his demands are scandalous. For instance, in each of his three stage pieces some unfortunate performer is obliged to fall on his face and grovel on the boards, centre stage.

Let us take a look at their art of characterization. Reaney and Naik portray characters who are one-dimensional. They possess a prominent stature. They are drawn mostly from rustic environment. They represent a particular class ; they are fixed "types." They are either black or white. Very few of them display grey tones.

Both make use of native idiom full of colloquialism. Their use of language indicates their intention to lend their writing with exotic regional flavour. Naik doesn't give names to his characters. He calls them 'He' 'She', 'Husband', 'Wife', 'Girl', 'Boy', 'Old Man', 'Opportunist', 'Tramp', 'Beggar', 'Social Worker', 'The Owner of Sugarcane Machine', 'Priest', 'Mahajan', 'Someone' etc. His intention is that they should represent universal human nature. Reaney too gives the names like Rev. Kingbird to represent what is good and Mr. Manatee (the marine animal) to represent what is evil. R. B. Parker attributes the confrontational pattern between good and evil in the early plays to the "evangelical" sensibility, which accounts for his :

polarization of the action between extremes of good and evil, his simplified, almost allegorical characters, the importance of guilt as a motive in his work ; and his temperamental attraction to violence and melodramatic last minute reversals.<sup>19</sup>

However, Reaney's later plays give the evidence of a mature artist. As perceptively observed by Gerald Parker :

the characterization in the trilogy is somewhat more subtle and complex and isolation of the Donnellys from important segments of their society is accomplished by increasing *degrees* of personal, religious, economic and political pressures. This renders the character less “allegorical and more dynamic and human.”<sup>20</sup>

The characterization in *The Killdeer* betrays a capable uncertainty of purpose. The characters for the most part move on two levels. Having conceived them in the context of the bizarre fantasy which pervades the piece, Reaney attempts in a number of instances to demonstrate their truth to nature and invest them with the authority of humanity. This combination of fantasy and verisimilitude is precarious. It succeeds perhaps in the case of Mrs. Gardner and Harry ; it fails with Madame Fay. Both the dramatists have one flaw in the art of characterization. In their early plays the emphasis appears to be more on the melodrama in the lives of the characters than on any attempt to understand the nature of the forces which have made them what they are.

The analysis in the earlier chapters of this thesis points out that there are certain flaws in their art and craft. Both of them show fascination for melodrama. Their early work is filled with macabre violence. This is seen in Naik’s *Khann Khann Mati* and Reaney’s *The Killdeer*. Specially Reaney’s *The Killdeer* with its macabre violence and intermingled richness and confusion has an anarchic plot-line. Apparently Reaney has left unanswered in his mind such question as whom the play is really about and what story it is that he wants to tell.

The elements of melodrama are present in the finest works of Reaney and Naik. But they are agreeable when the ground of a play is distantly unrealistic. Reaney’s *Colours in the Dark* and Naik’s *Sri Vichitrachi Jatra* reveal that the plot is relinquished to go directly into the imaginative realm. This technique of these dramatists revolutionized theatre in their respective regions. Reaney’s *Listen to the Wind* and Naik’s *Suring* show

the smooth oscillation from the outer play to inner play and back again, which reveals the skill of the playwrights ultimately landing us in the most beautiful artistic realism.

Moreover, Reaney's plays are shot through with a kind of religious philosophical excitement which privately goes on in his mind. As observed by Louis Dudek :

Reaney is a solitary exile in an empty land, almost unique in being troubled deeply and seriously with questions. Therefore his plays have a peculiar dislocation and feeling of unreality in the context of Canadian society.<sup>21</sup>

But this is not true of all the plays of Reaney. In fact Reaney aimed at artistic realism in his early plays and he has succeeded in it. Social issues are explicit in all the plays of Naik. Whereas, they are implicit in the early plays and explicit in the later plays of Reaney.

Reaney ponders over the religious mystery of life and by temperament he tends to such strenuous gropings and searchings that render a great depth of thought to his work. Naik's upbringing and his intellectual development have, however, led him on the whole, to place greater emphasis on the need to revolt against the decayed aspects of the Indian tradition. At an impressionable age Naik had become aware of the hypocrisy and bigotry. Feudalism and economic exploitation of the have-nots by the haves. This awareness has made him a militant critic of the baser elements in the Indian tradition.

Dr. Tanaji Hallarnakar, a literary critic pointed out certain defects in Naik :

Naik emphasizes that mining has led to the moral degradation and spiritual deterioration of Goans. However, I do not accept this. Mining has surely led to the economic development of Goans. It is only due to mining that downtrodden in Goa have been able to do away with the age-old palm thatched roof and replace it by Mangalorian tiles. The shackles of poverty have been shed off and the tenant is no longer a slave of the landlord. Secondly, as far as moral degradation is concerned, the women were equally exploited by the landlord. At least now they are free to decide and choose the kind of life they wish to live. People can move out to be educated. In my opinion no progress would have been possible in Goa without the mining industry.<sup>22</sup>

It is true that Naik has reflected certain finer aspects of industrialisation in Goa. He is at his best when he is exposing the limitations of the decaying Indian tradition and championising the cause of downtroddens. While describing the human situation Naik does not condemn the human race, but its conditions, lust, greed, decay, malice, prejudice, and alienation. His work voices the universal motif of compassion for the human race. In fact both Reaney and Naik affirm the value of life in their plays.

Reaney and Naik advocate a self-imposed restraint equanimity, a perfect balance of head and heart, deep understanding of the nature of truth and life and a passion for harmony and vibrant human relationships. Their personæ possess conival spirits. Far from being frivolous or nihilistic they reveal seriousness of purpose and sincerity of disposition in positively and constructively grappling with social issues that demand from the spectator a similar ethical and conceptual framework. They advocate patterns of ethic and vision, the moral paradises which the spectator cannot ignore. Reaney and Naik transcend naiveté and get initiated into life and its deeper mysteries. This shows their genuine concern for human renewal, individual sanity and societal moral health.

Gerald Parker observes that James Reaney's achievements in the modern theatre are rooted in an ambitious and clear-headed sense of artistic purpose and integrity. In James Reaney's trilogy *The Donnellys*, one comes across a detailed and convincing theatrical realization of a particular world in which the multitudinous concerns and pressures of the "reality and luminous flow" of voice, gesture, movement and language direct our response to the second compelling reality --- that of the artistic process itself.

D. J. Baker sums up this process as "Not me in the world, but the world in me."<sup>23</sup>

While giving an estimate of Reaney, Louis Dudek observes :

James Reaney, our Canadian playwright is born in an evil time and in an ill country for dramatic productions or for the creation of a genuine dramatic literature.<sup>24</sup>

Further Louis Dudek sees Canada as :

an ill country for dramatic productions or for the creation of a genuine dramatic literature.<sup>25</sup>

However, he has certainly opened up existing new possibilities for Canadian drama.

Their contribution to drama is very vivid. They are highly experimental minded. The play-within-the-play technique has been successfully exploited in Naik's *Suring* as well as Reaney's *Listen to the Wind*. Colour manipulations and the stagecraft such as chorus songs, chants, claps are used by Naik in *Suring*, *Shri Vichitrachi Jatra*, *Shabay*, *Shabay Bhoujansamaj* and other plays. There is a lot of colloquialism, slogans, chorus response, folk images and catalogues. He has an unsurpassable ability to write effective dialogues, create extraordinary situations, develop genuine characters, draw superb plots with thought provoking dramatic endings.

In Konkani theatre the number of playwrights with sustained dramatic activity remains very small, though stray contributions are quite numerous. Naik is the only prolific dramatist in the Konkani theatre.

Estimating the vast span of Naik's writing Shripad Raghunath Desai observed :

Konkani language is fortunate in having a young writer of great potentiality who wields his pen in poetry and prose, in novels, short stories, essays and plays. He is a man with sparks of genius in his writing. He not only lifts his reader from his mundane surrounding into a literate world of realistic imagination, but gives him electric shocks ; shocks hitherto not experienced from any other Konkani writer. This writer is Pundalik Narayan Naik of Goa.<sup>26</sup>

In the words of Sri Aurobindo :

Drama must have an interpretative vision ; the vision must contain an explicit or implicit idea of life.....

.....  
the essential purpose of drama is the presentation of the poet's vision of some part of the world-act in the life of the human soul.<sup>27</sup>

This is true of Reaney and Naik. Their plays have an implicit idea of life. They are both dynamic and multifarious playwrights of the modern times, one western and the other eastern and although they are personally unaware of each other's drama, the basic values they attribute to life remain true for all ages.

Though Reaney and Naik reveal their concern of a very small minority in their regions, it is not necessarily a shortcoming of the act. But what is so attractive about their plays is the charm and authenticity of their familiar regions. What makes it immediately recognizable is that it seems to belong to a substantial human nature.

Naik is still in the middle of his career and has ahead of him many years of creative activity. One cannot therefore, make any final assessment of his dramaturgy, because one does not know what shape his creativity will take in the years to come.

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