IV-15   Cast of Characters

In exploring human relations through narratives life begins to mimic art for the evaluation of denotation (prose) and connotation (poetry). One may ask what are the limits of such endeavors?

In creating a hero a novel glorifies one over many. Rooted in feudal origins, the genera of novel celebrate Western individualism by creating a character that rises above the cast of characters. With the assumption that *beauty always takes place in particular,* epics portray larger than life individuals as *the god of individuation and just boundaries.*

A degree of homogenization of thought and values is needed before novels find deeper resonance in any culture. Much too often they become self-referential in the guise of consistency. Attempt to transcend cultures that may be at odds with each other may make for a good story, however one has to pass a judgment in order to conclude a novel. A novel at its best, and for that matter a song or movie, instills a sense of participatory yet guided journey with a gut level experience to elicit a reaction. Such writings thrive on ambiguities.

World views of many cultures are not amenable to this medium. The task of creating a viable literary tradition in the genera of novels, that address individual aspirations as well as the condition of the cast of characters, does have serious hurdles to overcome. Rarely does a novel resolve deeper contradictions. In creating a world around a character - a particular point of view - the device of novel is for a self-contained world. The force of persuasion comes from an apparent consistency and cohesiveness

of the argument. Be as it may, it is contrived continuity.

A personal-search-for-identity in novels is often meant to identify inner doubts and contradictions, and offer solutions in a particular context. It is all the more necessary as Empires become way of life. Developing a character does not provide an identity unless deeper contradictions are resolved. Such characters create an affinity for the readership that comes back for more of the same. The devise of novel becomes tremendously successful in creating heroes for a culture that identifies with characters against permanence and inevitability. Such socio-political themes have emerged as tools of Evangelism, Nationalism, Colonialisms, and other contemporary ideologies.

Besides their propaganda value, narratives of fiction are devices of passive escape with little affinity with the mind. Solutions are offered by raising consciousness as in role of the individual versus the aspirations of many, alienation versus loyalty, and empathy with oracles of anti-social malice as individuals. Accountability of the fictitious character is left open to the make-believe worlds where little is certain. In the personal journey of the reader attitudes are formed in the system that is not open for debate. Unlike tales and epics, novels loose relevance with changing time and place because the very source of the inputs for the creative processes from the public commons is not acknowledged, accessed, and reinvested.

With turn of wheels of fortune lions turn into poodles. But myths can be kept alive much longer - imagine the cast of characters created to perpetuate incarnations of imperialism. A mix of evangelized ideas in resonance with the prevailing political and social aesthetics is struck through the popular culture, media, and other marketing institutions. Such institutions build on the two culture syndrome to mint obsessions for breakthroughs. Ideas

are often passed on as anecdote, and those that catch on perpetuate by imitation as memes. Negative perceptions develop as curiosity runs a mock: Analogy to the life-cycle of a common cold virus may be apt here in terms of the stages for transfer, infection, mutation, variation and distortion.

Just as a topic sentence can be fatal, a punch line for a conclusion also short-circuits the experience and undermines emotional and sensual. Like a game it undermines reader's imagination to engage in the unfolding of the plot. The creative process for novels is fundamentally different than that of mimicry and play: Children take it all - before they learn selection through their peers. With a distortion it also works in the favor of the genera of romantic pulp, mystery, and gothic that derive from the public commons. They do not even try to communicate or encourage reader to interact, let alone comprehend and interpret the broader context of the metaphors for flow of ideas. Individuation of characters and their creator relies exclusively on the passivity of the reader guided by the words of authority of the author or the critics. In contrast, epics evolve with time where playful inputs as the images and metaphors from the public commons are interpreted over and over again.

Writer Behind Shakespeare. Literary works attributed to Shakespeare (1564-1616) have impressive ways with words with wide ranging content and context. Contrary to popular belief, in all likelihood creator of this work was not the bard for the Royalty who produced and acted in 2 or 3 shows per week. He had little educational background (possibly Grammar school), time and resources to have had access to the variety of international and cross-cultural experiences represented in the writings. It is not clear if he ever traveled outside England.

There are no known manuscripts of any of this works. In the contemporary publications there is no mention of such a writer, or his death. Moreover, there was no such contemporary literary tradition of individual writers in England from which the work could have sprouted. Only decades after his death, literary works attributed to Shakespeare were first published as an edited collection.

It has been suggested that the real writer could be Christopher Marlowe (b.1564-?). He was recruited as a student at Cambridge, and around 1590 sent clandestinely by Elizabeth I to spy on the activities of the Catholic Church in Italy. Another possibility is that the work was compiled. Recall that in 1611 the King James Bible was published as the *Word of God* edited by some 40 scholars at Oxford and Cambridge. It was based on a version published 50 years earlier based on the more ancient Greek and Hebrew books. Recall that this was the period when the European Universities were involved in the metabolism, and reformulation for their own purposes, of the material captured from other parts of the world. Could it be that following this tradition the works ascribed to Shakespeare came out of a *committee*?

Room for Doubt