

CHAPTER VI

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This study was undertaken in order to understand the role of natural science in modernizing society. The study of selected science-drama of last five hundred years, reveals various stages of this complex relationship.

We find that almost in all the historical stages, playwrights of science-drama responded to current scientific ideas. They were greatly concerned about developing suitable aesthetic mode for communicating these ideas. This resulted in wide variety of dramatic innovations, ranging from the allegorical method to the surreal method. Although the number of playwrights who dramatized scientific concerns, is limited to a handful, in each stage of scientific growth, but these playwrights have undertaken a task whose import has not been judged adequately. One senses an extraordinary - on hind sight, a crucial - sensibility at work in these plays : one would like to term it as an integrated sensibility. The ability to integrate scientific ideas with humanistic concern, points to this special trait of the varied playwrights that have been studied. Apollo's laurel bough symbolizes this integration of the arts and the sciences.

prophectic tone!

In a world, that seems to be on the brink of self-created annihilation, because of excessive over-use or misuse of various fruits of scientific knowledge - be it nuclear energy, excessive technologization disturbing the ecological balance or use of lethal weapons for warfare - this integrated approach becomes crucial for the 'developed' as well as 'developing' societies. Greater and greater number of people need to understand the issues of Survival that are at stake in the proper use of scientific knowledge. Every form of communication needs to be activated for this purpose. Liminoid forms - such as education, drama, cinema, television - face their biggest challenge today, in that they not only need to take scientific information to people but also to change their attitude to Nature and Self.

Science-drama of the last five hundred years is a testimony to the possibilities of drama in this act of transformation. The historical over-view of nature science-drama has already indicated the way man and Nature relationship has evolved. Nature has always been a great challenge for mankind. It is a tribute to human intelligence that man has slowly but persistently improved his understanding of Nature. Drama of science deals with the cultural conflicts that man faced in the process of refining his understanding of the myriad forms of Nature. This cultural conflict was intensified because the act of understanding Nature, in turn, included man's understanding

of his own self. What the science-plays show, in the ultimate analysis, is the way man's identity has evolved in relation to his understanding of Nature. Characters like Dr. Faustus, Galileo Galilei, Oppenheimer, Einstein cover the pantheon of identities that science-society interaction has produced. (Women characters, except as the allegorical characters Nature and Science, are conspicuous by their absence.) Faustus et al, indicate how, instead of remaining passive recipients of Nature's vagaries, mankind has learnt to manipulate Nature. This capacity has shown the destructive as well as the creative impulse of mankind.

In terms of the future role of science-drama, one expects drama to posit new possibilities of selfhood. Intermediary Indian drama points towards an egalitarian ecologically well-tuned identity. Experimental avant-garde of United States of America, pleads for an end to nuclear destructiveness; with great depth it tries to show the seeds of destructive tendencies in various levels of interpersonal and historical relationships. Although both the theatre movements haven't become widespread enough to achieve significant results. But they carry germs of a new, much needed transformation of human consciousness where selfishness at the individual, national or group level is not just unpalatable, it is dangerous. Intermediary drama and experimental avant-garde show the extraordinary growth of

science-drama over the last five hundred years. Instead of the struggles of individual scientists, or indictment of individual scientists, this drama recognizes the need for change of attitudes and institutions to be able to use science creatively.

This drama needs to be shared interculturally, because the change of consciousness will have to be global. This may sound ambitious at this point of time, but every effort must be made in the direction of creative use of science and technology. The patterns of cultural evolution are cloaked in mystery. Who knows what acts will lead to change! But science-drama, with its close resemblance to ancient, now almost defunct Nature rituals, can be a great catalyst. Mankind need not romanticize Nature, but where are we without harmonious coexistence with Nature?

secularizing.
pontification