



CHAPTER – V
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In this final chapter we shall wind up our comparative discussion of the two novels viz. *Kosla* by Bhalchandra Nemade and *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger.

We undertook the comparison of these two novels in terms of Theme, Structure and Style. We began our discussion by creating the necessary background for our comparison in the first chapter entitled 'Introduction'. We noted, at the outset, the two main reasons that called for such a comparative study. First, quite a few Marathi literary critics seem to have often made passing statements regarding the similarities in *Kosla* and 'The Catcher in the Rye'. However, they have never been validated or gainsaid by way of a detailed study. The present researcher, therefore, undertook this task. Second, there was another reason also. Both the novels have proved to be extremely popular with their respective readers. At the same time, they have provoked searching literary scholars to write more and more in various forms ranging from seminal articles to doctoral theses. Notwithstanding, their wide appeal, an attempt at balancing these two literary heavyweights was never so far been made. So, this researcher thought it worthwhile to undertake an extensive comparative study of these two novels. While noting Bhalchandra Nemade's place in the history Marathi fiction, we noted how his very first novel viz. *Kosla* (1963) made an unparalleled impact on the minds of Marathi readers. It not only broke with the Marathi fictional tradition but also changed the literary taste of readers by

presenting for the first time the bizarre life and world of an alienated anti-hero, Pandurang Sangavikar.

We also tried to place J. D. Salinger, Bhalchandra Nemade's counterpart in the American literary tradition. We reviewed how Salinger published his first novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) after a prolonged gestation of ten years and several early sketches of his protagonist, Holden Caulfield in the form of stories which is in sharp contrast with barely a fortnight-period in which Nemade, a frustrated college student then, produced his *Kosla*. We also noted how 'The Catcher' aroused mixed responses from the American readers. It retained its position on the New York Times' list of best sellers for considerable period. It was acclaimed as a 'minor classic' and as 'an unusually brilliant first novel'. On the other hand, it was dubbed as 'perverse' and 'immoral' and was dropped from the reading list of school boards. Despite such confused responses, we justly recognised Salinger's pre-eminent position in the history of the post-World-War American novel.

Presuming alienation as the common theme in both the novels, we sketched a theoretical outline of the concept of alienation. Noting the ambiguity of the concept, we recorded its most 'common variants' as 'powerlessness', 'meaninglessness', 'normlessness', 'cultural estrangement', 'social isolation' and 'self-alienation'. We also took in to account a few definitions of the term. Then took a cursory look at the history of the term going back to Hegel, who conceptualised the alienation for the first time. We saw how the Hegelian concept of alienation as 'existential duality' was transformed in to a secular and

materialist idea by Karl Marx, who located the causes of estrangement in the prevalent economic system viz. capitalism. Coming down to the existentialist like Jean Paul Sartre, we find how alienation is inevitable in a world, which is fundamentally devoid any meaning. We also noted how alienation is caused from within rather than from without from the point of view of psychologists like Sigmund Freud, who attributes the feeling alienation to the conscious and unconscious forces within the personality.

Staying away from a detailed discussion of the theory of 'Comparative Literature', we just mentioned its emergence as an important discipline in the West and its adoption in India and its greater applicability due to multi-lingual and multi-cultural ethos of this country.

Towards the close of the introduction we outlined the limited scope of the present undertaking, its main purpose being the comparative analysis of *Kosla* and *The Catcher in the Rye* and accounting for the similarities and differences in them.

In the second chapter entitled 'Theme', we explored the frustrating life-experiences of both the protagonists, Pandurang Sangavikar and Holden Caulfield. We found that while Pandurang's fear-stricken and de-normalized childhood in a family dominated by a 'wicked' and 'cruel' father led to the provocation of a feeling of dis-affiliation in his mind, Holden's lousy childhood as his parents hardly ever nourished his emotional self with adequate affection and care led to the similar sense of dis-affiliation. Here we found the reason why Mani and Phoebe, the younger sisters of Pandurang and Holden

respectively are presented as the centres of emotional gravitation in the life of dis-affiliated heroes.

Mani and Phoebe occupy the central position in the life of two because they symbolize unsoiled innate innocence. Both Pandurang and Holden hold innocence as something, which should form the very core of life. Consequently, despite their being in the adolescent stage, a sensuous and romantic stage of life, they seem to hate sex and girls. Both of them regard sex as something frustrating and alienating. We noted that, underneath the apparent sexual immaturity of both the adolescents, lies a two-fold search for childlike tenderness and spiritual cleanliness. But the two heroes seek sexual gratification in a strikingly different way. Pandurang seeks it by kissing his friend Suresh for he has admittedly failed in getting a girl who could really 'please' him whereas Holden- who would hardly tolerate Pandurang's homosexual gesture- seeks it by 'chastely' kissing Jane Gallagher. Pandurang prefers homosexual mode perhaps because it will not reproduce a new life for he thinks sex as the root-cause of life. Here we may remind ourselves that expected such a female life partner who would not be able to bear children!

Further we noted that Pandurang's ambition in life undergoes a sea-change. In the beginning he cherishes fanciful aspirations like fighting battles like Bheema and later making inventions like Thomas Alva Edison, creating witty jokes like Gadkari and becoming a 'Sir' at a high school. All these aspirations fade away in course of time and he struggles to uproot the sense of inferiority complex by way of 'shining' at college. However, when he slips in

to the abyss of financial crisis due to his mess-mess and over-expenditure at the college gathering, he moves to the other extreme choosing not to achieve anything at all. One may blame him for his impractical bent of mind; but Pandurang's self-chosen withdrawal in to inaction is, as we pointed out, a mode not of living, rather it is that of pulling on his existence as an alienated being. Unlike Pandurang, Holden does not want 'acquire personality' nor 'shine' in his school. He holds an unrealisable- however magnanimous- aspiration of saving children from falling over the crazy cliff that symbolizes the goddam adulthood. Again, there are other rivalling ideas in his mind: the idea of 'hitch-hiking' his way somewhere out West and doing a job of at a filling station (how strange!) pretending to be a deaf-mute. Further, he wishes he may get a self-same wife and in case they had any children (how inconsistent if we do not overlook Holden's strong aversion for sex!) he proposes to hide them somewhere and teach them himself. The inherent contradiction in this particular aspiration of Holden apart, he seems to negate the very need of institutionalized education. There is yet another idea that passes his mind. It is the idea of becoming a monk. However, it is the weakest of Holden's aspirations. A common denominator to the aspirations of Pandurang and Holden is that Pandurang's final preference for passivity and non-achievement and Holden's day-dreaming are both resultant of their shared distaste for multifarious phoniness rampant society, whether Indian or American.

The sense alienation is deepened by the untimely death of Mani in Pandurang's case and the death of Allie in Holden's. Unable to come to come

other hand, the theme of alienation in *The Catcher in the Rye* is limited to its conceptual variants like powerlessness, normlessness and self-alienation.

What is worth-noting is that both the novels, despite rather intolerant and hypercritical attitude of the protagonists in them, end on a positive note. Holden- who had assured at the outset his over-anxious teacher, Mr. Spencer about his fate that he was just going through a phase- misses everybody including old Stradlater, Ackley and even goddam Maurice. It indicates that he has accepted them as they are and all! As for Pandurang, one may get the impression that he has succumbed to the 'set code' only out of his lack of courage etc. But considered his ambivalent conclusion of the novel we may infer that Pandurang has accepted the unsuitable until at least for time being.

At the end this chapter we also addressed the question whether alienation is simply an artificial transplant of a literary idea from west. While answering this question we noted the peculiarly local factors like the loss of competitive spirit, the predominance of material values like careerism, social status and prestige, in the post-Independent Maharashtra and for that matter India that triggered the sense of alienation in the young generation.

In the third chapter, 'Structure', we discerned the aspects of structure, both similar and dissimilar, that go in to the making of *Kosla* and *The Catcher in the Rye*. We noted that certain personal factors-like his unmethodical but comprehensive reading of Marathi and English literature, the consequent unsatisfactory performance of his in the examination and unemployment, the unsympathetic and inconsiderate attitude of his father, the influence of like-

minded friends on his way of thinking and the displeasure in his mind created by the prevalent Marathi literature- led to the upsurge of rebellious feeling in his mind which found its outlet in a 'novel' (in a double sense) form that metamorphosed the Marathi fiction. We then mentioned the mixed reactions from the Marathi literary scholars. For instance, the publication of *Kosla* was a 'miracle' for Mr. L. G. Jog; for Mr. M.S. Patil, it was the first 'anti-novel', for others it was an 'experiment' and for yet others it was too 'formless' to be called a 'novel'. For Dr. C.J. Jahagirdar, however it was a 'literary sanskar'. We then analysed the structure of *Kosla* with reference to the factors viz. 'notion of time', 'notion of time', 'world of dreams', 'supernatural experience', 'prose-style', 'notion of literature' taken in to consideration by Prof. Prakash Deshpande. We also noted his opinion that a subtle contradiction in these varied aspects is the remarkable feature of the Structure of *Kosla*. In the contexts of these factors we analysed the structure of *The Catcher in the Rye* and how *Kosla* presents its theme in a much wider perspective. We discussed how effectively Nemade uses certain techniques like the imaginary historical account of the bygone twentieth century and the diary form. We pointed out the often-neglected aspect of the structure of *Kosla*: 'the story-within-story form as we termed it.

We also noted the diverse critical opinions regarding the structure of *The Catcher in the Rye*. For instance, Arthur Heiserman and James Miller Jr. placed the novel in the ancient and honourable tradition of 'Quest'. Carl Strauch discerned the interlocking metaphorical structure. We also took in to

account Brian Way's view which that discerned a three movement structure. But we found his opinion about the close of the novel unjustifiable. We instead subscribed to Carl Strauch's view that defended Salinger for ending the novel with ethical questions rather than psychological ones.

In passing also mentioned that both *Kosla* and *The Catcher in the Rye* can not be called picaresque novels in the strict sense of the term, though they may share some of its feature like the formlessness of the structure. We came to the conclusion that barring characterization there are few structural aspects and techniques that can be easily compared.

After comparing the two novels in terms of theme and structure we continued the comparison in terms of language and style in the fourth chapter entitled 'Style'. At the outset of this chapter we made clear that our purpose was that of literary stylistics rather than that of sophisticated stylometry.

We began our discussion in this chapter with the outstanding idiosyncrasies of both Pandurang and Holden. We found that Pandurang uses of certain expressions like 'for instance', 'etc' 'great' 'thor', 'I mean' and Holden use of similar phrases like 'and all', 'sort of', 'and something', 'and anything' have a common anti-climactic effect. They reveal the atypical attitude of these protagonists to life and its numerous manifestations.

Further, we observed that both Pandurang Holden repeat certain sentences for special effect. Pandurang repeats sentences like the following while giving his introduction.

"Or may be not even like that"

“Or perhaps not even like this”

“Or not like this either”

“Or not even like this”

“Or not even like that”

Holden repeats the sentences like the following but he does not always use them consistently as we discussed in detail:

“It killed me’

“It really is / was/does/ did.

“If you want to know the truth.”

“I’m not kidding’

As for Holden’s violation of grammatical rules of the English language, we pointed out that it would not suffice to attribute it to recklessness typical of all adolescents for Holden’s sister speaks arguably better language despite her being quite younger than him. So we attributed Holden’s misuse of language to his badly affected ability to ‘concentrate’ and lack of restraint resulting from a difficult-to-express psychological crisis of his. We also took in to account Salinger’s deliberate attempt to project the life-experience of Holden in an adolescent slang, which is obviously less grammatical.

If through Holden’s faulty sentence structure Salinger implies his attempt at reproducing typical ‘vocal expression, Nemade reflects his endeavour to repudiate the so-called standard Marathi that reigned supreme in the literary world through Pandurang’s deliberate grammatical deviation, as it were. Nevertheless, we should not lose sight of the fact that the

language of *Kosla*, unlike that of *The Catcher in the Rye*, is not limited to the adolescent slang; it presents such a wide variety of language that it has hardly any precedent in the history of Marathi fiction. The language of *Kosla* ranges, on one hand from Pandurang's deliberate idiosyncrasies to Jagan Buwa's blabbing. From College-boys' slang to professorial jargon. From sophisticated language of Pune to effectively simple dialect of Sangavi. On the other hand, it is poetic as in the Vahis presented by Lahanu and Dhulakya as in Pandurang's philosophical thinking about life and death.

On the contrary, the language of *The Catcher in the Rye* is limited only to the American adolescent slang. It lacks the wide range of variety that the language of *Kosla* has. Holden can hardly follow Pandurang in reaching the high poetic altitude. Even he can not correctly remember a few lines written by other poets. While Pandurang reproduces the songs by Lahanu and Dhulakya, Holden fails to recall correctly a single line by Robert Burn's poem. However we found that the language of the *Catcher in the Rye* functions on two levels: on the superficial level, it appears trite, unimaginative and un-poetical but at the deeper level, it is highly symbolic. In comparison, the language of *Kosla* is obviously less symbolic. We also discussed how both Nemade and Saliner use humour for a serious purpose, to present moral commentary on the vices of society which alienate innocent human beings like Pandurang and Holden. We noted how linguistic diversity is the strength of style of *Kosla* linguistic duality or ambivalence is that of *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Thus we undertook the comparative study of these two novels in terms of theme, structure and style. We focused only on these two works by Bhalchandra Nemade and J. D. Salinger respectively. It would have been more useful had we considered the other works by the same authors but it was not within the limited scope this dissertation. It would also have been more illuminating had we considered novels dealing with the parallel theme, structure and style but that too was beyond the confines of this undertaking. Yet, the present researcher believes that this comparative study solely devoted to the study of the two novels viz. *Kosla* and *The Catcher in the Rye* will substantiate the passing statements made by many literary critics about the comparable aspects of them.