

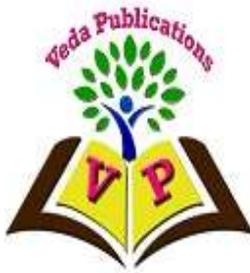
AMBITIOUS NATURE OF HUMAN PERSONALITY IN GIRISH KARNAD'S HAYAVADANA

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ABSTRACT



Girish Karnad is a renowned Indo – Anglican playwright of Post – Independence era. Besides, being a prolific playwright, his multidimensional role has rendered his versatile genius into other creative fields - as an eminent actor, Television artist, producer, scriptwriter and director. Countless awards including Padma Bhushan and Bharatiya Jnanpith are in his prize chart. Karnad has widely been accepted as a thought provoking playwright. He continues to write not only to satiate his own self, which may be described as 'Swanta – Sukhaya', but his artistic creation is meant to arouse the conscience of the 'demos' i.e. the common masses in terms of their social, political, economical, cultural and spiritual conditionings. He examines life as being governed by various socio – economic factors. Karnad's, experimenting with the indigenous cultural treasury of history, myths and folklore along with the western performance techniques that have given a new direction to Indian drama, always upholds the solutions towards the upliftment of the weaker and inferior sections of the society who are subjected to every kind of humiliations and torments inflicted upon them by the society itself. The article deals with Karnad *Hayavadana* and explains the ambiguous nature of human personality.

Keywords: Relationships, Identity, Body, Soul, Perfection, Human Personality.

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AMBITIOUS NATURE ON HUMAN PERSONALITY

Hayavadhana is one of the karnad's most noteworthy works. The plot of *Hayavadana* comes from kathasaritsagara, an ancient collections of stories in Sanskrit. The central event in the play is the story of devandatta and kapilla which is based on a tale from the *vetalapanchavimshika*; but he has he

has acquired it through Thomas Mann's retelling of the story in *The Transported Heads*. Karnad uses Mann's story to comment on the complex web of human relationships. He is a keen observer and understands the crisis of identity that human beings face in the modern civilization. In fact, the problem of



complexity of human relationships and identity crisis are interwoven.

Bhagavata, a stage player enters the stage and raises some emblematic questions on the faultlessness and defect in context to Gods and humans. Puja is done. He tells a tale of two best friends namely Devadatta (man of mind) and Kapila (man of the body). As the play is about to begin an actor (Actor-1), who was supposed to perform comes running towards Bhagavata and is quite apprehensive. Upon asking, he tells that while he was defecating, a horse taunt him by talking in a human voice. Bhagavata does not believe him. While they are arguing, the horse, comes namely Hayavadana enters the stage who has a head of the human and body of a horse. His look astonishes the audience. Bhagavata enquires Hayavadana about its condition, suspecting that some curse might have fallen on him. However, Hayavadana rejecting his opinion tells that his mother, a princess fell in love with a horse. After 15 years the horse attained the human shape.

Princess did not accept him in the human figure. Thus he cursed her and she became a horse and later on gave birth to Hayavadana. Bhagavata suggests him to visit the Kali temple as the Goddess Kali is believed to cure all such diseases. He also asks Actor-1 to accompany Hayavadana. They depart and Bhagavata begins the play. Devadatta is sitting on a chair.. When the play opens Kapila and Devadatta are not only best of friends they are "one mind, one heart." (Hayavadana, p. 74) Kapila, his best friend comes and finding him in quite a depressed condition asks about the cause Devadatta requests him to leave him alone. Kapila guesses that Devadatta might have fallen in love again as he had fallen 15 times before within two years and thus this condition of his is not extraordinary. However, when Devadatta shows his gravity towards his love, Kapila also becomes serious. Devadatta gives clues about the residence of the girl and Kapila sets out for her search. He succeeds in finding her (Padmini) at last and talks to her about Devadatta. Through the efforts of Kapila, Devadatta and Padmini get connubial. However, in a course of time, Padmini gets troubled towards the Kapila because of his strong body and Devadatta becomes aware of it. One

day the three make their mind up to visit some fair in Ujjain.

On the way, Devadatta asks Kapila and Padmini to visit some temple. They resist but Devadatta does not listen to them and both go away ultimately. Devadatta then goes to Mother Kali's temple and beheads himself as he cannot live without his wife as well as his friend. Kapila and Padmini come again and find Devadatta gone astray. Kapila sets out in his search and found him lying dead, he also beheads himself. Padmini after waiting for long also starts searching for them and finding them dead, she also decides to end her life, but she is stopped by Goddess Kali who in a contemptuous way insults both Devadatta and Kapila for killing themselves not in her name but for selfishness reasons (Devadatta kills himself in the name of Padmini and Kapila kills himself for his friend). Goddess Kali gives Padmini an occasion to bring both of them back to life. In swiftness, Padmini mixes up the head of both. As a result, Devadatta's head is fitted on the body of Kapila and vice-versa. Supernatural being Kali knows the objective of Padmini and says that humans can never give up egocentricity. They all laugh but soon a quarrel arises between the two friends over the matter whom does Padmini belong to. Having failed to find any explanation the three go to an old sage who declares that the man having Devadatta's head is the impartial husband of Padmini. Both Padmini and Devadatta return back happily. However, Kapila being deeply hurt decides to remain in the forest in space to himself.

After some months Padmini becomes expectant. After some months, Devadatta's body starts presumptuous its original shapes that weakens the love of Padmini for him. Their relationship loses affection and both quarrel often. One day she, along with her child, goes to the forest to meet Kapila who does not like her coming and asks her to go back. But she insists telling him that he is the rightful father of the child. She also asks him to complete the fragmentary love by sleeping with him. Kapila cannot resist and both start love-making

Meanwhile, Devadatta also comes to the forest with a sword. However, his wrath vanishes when he sees Kapila for the future for him. Both are



convinced that they cannot solve the matter of Padmini and thus come to a decision to end their life by fighting. A fierce fight starts between the two friends and both are killed. Padmini hands over the child to Bhagavata and requests him to handover him to some tribe and herself commits Sati along with the pyre of the two. Play ends Actor (Actor-2) comes management and tells Bhagavata that he has seen a horse reciting National Anthem of India. While Bhagavata is in mystification, Actor-1 arrives with a child who was handed over to him by the ethnic group in the forest (who cannot speak) while he had gone with Hayavadhana. He tells Bhagavata that on the way Hayavadhana left him alone and he returned back. That nationalistic horse also comes and Bhagavata at once recognize him as Hayavadana. Hayavadana tells Bhagavata that Goddess Kali as an alternative of giving him the shape of humans made him an inclusive horse. However, he still has the voice of humans and he wants to get rid of it.

He has heard that those who sing patriotic songs have the worst voice. This is why he was singing National Anthem of India. Hayavadana starts singing songs and suddenly starts laughing. Seeing him laughing, the child also starts pleased and consequently their voices are interchanged. The boy gets human voice and Hayavadana, the voice of horse. Finishing Puja is performed.

"Isn't that surprising? That the body should appear..."-GIRISH KARNAD

HUMAN PERSONALITY

Hayavadana has the horse head and the human body. He wants to become a complete human being. 'Haya' is a Sanskrit word which means 'horse'. 'Vedanta' is also a Sanskrit word which means 'face'. He is the son of the Princess of Karnataka. She fell in love with a white stallion. She was married off with it. But after five years she found it a gandharva. Who became a horse because of the curse of the God Kubera? After fifteen years of human love he had become his original self again. Released from his curse, he asked the Princess to go together with him to his delightful Abode. But she wanted him to become a horse again. So he cursed her to be a horse herself. She became a mare and galloped away without thinking in the least of Hayavadana, the product of her marriage with the white stallion. So

Hayavadana is in search of identity and completeness of his physical body. He wants to get rid of his horse-face. He visits many dutiful places and meets a number of sages. But he is not able to get rid of his horse face.

The Bhagavata asks him to go to the temple of Kali and request her to make him inclusive. Even before he could say make him inclusive man, the goddess says: 'So be it' and disappear. So now he becomes a complete horse. But he does not become a complete being because he still has human voice. At the end of the play, he gets his horse voice. But this is one-sided entirety. But for human being, who is an amalgamation of flesh and spirit, body and mind, completeness requires a harmonically relationship between body and mind but Cartesian splitting up seems to be a perennial irresolvable problem for man. The major reality of this world is self division. Both man and society are self-divided and disturbing antinomies struggle for supremacy. The problem of Hayavadana, estrangement, ludicrousness, incompleteness and search for identity are central of the plays of Karnad. Incompleteness is an inevitable and undefeatable reality. This helps to solve such riddles in Hayavadana as why Hayavadana's mother chooses for her husband a mount rather than a man and why Goddess Kali makes Hayavadana an inclusive horse instead of a complete man. Thus, Karnad has accessible the theme of incompleteness at three levels- celestial, human being and mammal. Baga'vatta regard vinayagar unfinished because he has the elephant head and the human body. But at the end of the play, he praise vinayagar:

"Profound without a doubt is the mercy of the Elephant-headed Ganesha. He fulfills the desire of all – a grandson to grandfather, a smile to a child, a neigh to a horse. How indeed can one describe his glory in our poor, disabled words?"

In the case of Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini, we see that they not succeed to accomplish comprehensiveness. They all die. But Hayavadana achieves completeness. He wanted to become a man. But he becomes a complete horse. So the theme of incompleteness has been satisfactorily presented in this play.

**CONCLUSION**

Girish karnad is a well known dramatist of fashionable Kannada stage. Karnads *Hayavadana* is a memorable treatment of the theme of search for distinctiveness. The main part of Hayavadana is based on the story of transposed heads. It also explains about the result of confusion of identities which reveals the ambiguous nature of human personality.

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