

# Identity Crises in Human Body in Girish Karnads Hayavadana

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**Abstract-** Girish Karnad, a versatile genius, is considered as one of the pillars of Indian English Drama. Even though Karnad wrote very few plays, he has earned a prestigious place in Indian writing in English. In his third play Hayavadana, Karnad uses conventions of folk theatre. This play is about the search of identity in the complex human relationships. It reveals friendship of two persons and their love towards a woman. This play presents how all the characters become victims in the hands of fate. It is also a search for completeness.

Karnad exemplifies incompleteness in three levels human, animal and celestial of creation in the world. Elephant headed Ganesha has human body, so even though he is divine he does not have single complete form. Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini don't possess completeness even though there is transplantation. Even Hayavadana cannot become complete man as he desires but becomes a complete horse. The present paper depicts how wonderfully the playwright dramatizes the events and incidents in the lives of the characters to explore the search for completeness.

**Index Terms-** Incompleteness, Search, Identity, Human relationship.

## INTRODUCTION

Hayavadana is an enigmatic play. It was first presented in English by the Madras players in December 1972. The story of Hayavadana is taken from Katha saritsagara and thosma mann's version of it in the transposed heads. In this play Karnad deals with the problem of human identity and human relationship. The horse man's search completeness form the subplot of the play. Hayavadana, the play originally written in Kannada in 1970, the beginning of the play lord Ganesh is prayed considering him as the "Single tusked destroyer of incompleteness". How can a single tusked elephant-headed god be the destroyer of incompleteness is introduced in the opening scene. An elephant head on human body, a broken tusk and a cracked belly. Whichever way be

look at him he seems the embodiment of imperfection of incompleteness. How indeed can one fathom the mystery that this very vakrathunda Mahakaya, with his crooked face and distorted body. The story of the play begins with Kapila and Devadatta who are dearest friends. They live in Dharampura. Devadatta, the only son of the reverend Brahmin Vidyasagara, is calm and quiet in appearance, fair in complexion and unequalled in cleverness. Kapila, the only son of an ironsmith, is dark in complexion. He possesses very good physical skills. "The world wonders at their friendship. The world sees these two young men wandering down the streets of Dharampura, hand in hand, and remembers Lava and Kusha, Rama and Lakshmana, Krishna and Balarama."

The Bhagavata labels them as 'one mind, one heart'. Kapila finds that his best friend Devadatta is in love with Padmini. He convinces Padmini to marry Devadatta and arranges Devadatta's marriage with her. He comprehends that Padmini is both clever and beautiful. In spite of Kapila's fascination with padmini, he prefers and respects Devadatta's feelings. Devadatta and Padmini are married. After marriage Padmini is attracted to the well-built physique of Kapila. One day they plan a short visit to Ujjain. While Kapila drives the cart Padmini admires Kapila's skills and physique.

Now Devadatta does not like this admiration of Padmini. He has a doubt that Padmini is attracted towards Kapila. When Kapila offers to go to the temple of Rudra, Padmini immediately agrees to go to the temple with him. Devadatta doesn't want to go there so when Kapila and Padmini go to the temple of Rudra he goes to the temple of Kali. He addresses Goddess Kali with high sounding words and begs her forgiveness for not fulfilling his promise made to her earlier. He decapitates himself with a sword available there.

When Kapila and Padmini return, they don't find Devadatta there. Kapila goes in search of him. He enters the temple of Kali and sees the dead body of Devadatta inside the temple. Now, he thinks that if he goes back with the news that Devadatta is dead, Padmini and other people will think that he has killed Devadatta. So he also cuts off his head with the sword. When Kapila doesn't return, Padmini goes to the temple and sees both Devadatta and Kapila dead. She decides to kill herself with the sword, but Goddess Kali's terrible voice is heard which freezes Padmini. Padmini requests Kali to give life to Devadatta and Kapila. Kali asks her to put the heads on their bodies and press the sword on their necks and they will be alive again.

Kali of mount Chitrakoot who is described as mother of all nature appears to be indifferent to the welfare of human beings. She is more concerned to the reverence and the sacrifices done to her by them than looking after their good. She certainly nurses an ego and tells Padmini as a matter of fact that Devadatta was deceitful to her. Her grievance was that he had promised his head to Rudra and his arms to her. She does not stop Devadatta and Kapila from cutting off their heads and offering them to her but when Padmini comes to put an end to herself she wakes up from her sleep and stops her.

Had she not disallowed Padmini also then crisis would have been settled. Nobody would have been alive to undergo any trauma or pain or identity crisis. But she does not will it so. She grants a wish to Padmini but is quite indifferent to the logical fulfillment of it. Padmini transposes the heads and she being a goddess and a powerful one is aware of everything yet when Padmini places a sword on their necks. She grants the wish saying 'so be it'. Hence she is the one to create identity crisis for Padmini, Kapila and Devadatta. Padmini's cries to save her again fall on deaf ears. There seems to be some divine apathy towards human beings.

Padmini, while following the instructions of Goddess Kali, makes a blunder in her excitement. She puts the heads on the wrong bodies and presses the sword. Both of them come to life but three are greatly surprised as they see the head of Kapila with the body of Devadatta and the head of Devadatta with the body of Kapila. Kapila with Devadatta's body claims Padmini. He argues that it is with the body that Padmini took the vows of marriage before the sacred

fire and the child which she is carrying in her womb is the seed of that body.

Then they seek help of a sage who declares that just as Kalpavriksha is supreme amongst all the trees, head is supreme of all human organs. He decides that the body who has the head of Devadatta is a real Devadatta and the body who has the head of Kapila is a real Kapila. In the case of Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini, we see that they fail to achieve completeness. They all die. But Hayavadana succeeds in achieving completeness. He wants to become a man but he becomes a complete horse.

### CONCLUSION

The present play Hayavadana Karnad created gods and goddesses to survive the play. It shows the clearly introducing with Ganesha the lord, Kali, mount Chitrakoot. Even though they did not give completeness for human being. We may see their blessings in a strange manner. In his plays Karnad did not leave any belief or practice unchallenged. He has questioned all kinds of superstitious and supernatural beliefs and practices, both secular and spiritual, directly as well as indirectly. A certain amount of skepticism, even bordering of cynicism runs through the tragic, pathetic, comic and ludicrous characters and situations. Consequently, Karnad has come to depend heavily on irony at the conceptual and technical level, achieving incredible dramatic scores. A truthful Indian dramatist, Karnad engages, in the existential sense of the term, the dominant and destructive notion of caste and religion in these plays.

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