

Mythical Elements in Girish Karnad's Hayavadana-A Study

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Abstract: Hayavadana (1971) is the third play of Girish Karnad was based on a subject drawn from *The Transposed Heads*, a 1940 story by Thomas Mann, which is originally establish in Kathasaritsagara is the base for the central chapter of the play Hayavadana in which there is the tale of Devadatta and Kapila. The story Kathasaritasagara deals by means of a washer man who marries a beautiful woman. Karnad describes the ethical trouble in the main plot and the philosophical problem in the sub-plot. He combines these two thoughts in the superior psychological as well as social fields of visible world for highlighting the basically confusing nature of human individuality.

Key Words: Mythology, Manifestation, Interchanged, Identity, Solution, Philosophical Idea, Dualism, Indian Folk Drama, Supernatural Elements, Marriage, Completeness, Etc

Girish Raghunath Karnad (born 19 May 1938) is a modern writer, dramatist, screen writer, actor and film director in Kannada Language. His rise as a dramatist in 1960s, noticeable the coming of age of contemporary Indian play writing in Kannada, now as Badal Sarkar did in Bengali, Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, and Mohan Rakesh in Hindi.

For four decades Karnad has been composing plays, frequently using history and myths to tackle modern subject. He has translated his plays into English along with has received acclamation. His plays have been translated into a few Indian languages and directed by directors similar to Ebrahim Alkazi, B. V. Karanth, Alyque Padamsee, Prasanna, Arvind Gaur, Satyadev Dubey, Vijaya Mehta, Shyamanand Jalan and Amal Allana. He is lively in the world of Indian movies working as an actor, director, and screenwriter, in Hindi and Kannada flicks, earning awards along the way.

He was conferred Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan by the Government of India and won four Film fare Awards where three are Film fare Award for Best Director-Kannada and one Film fare Best Screenplay

Award. Karnad is recognized as a playwright. His plays, written in Kannada, have been translated into English and a few Indian languages. Karnad's plays are written neither in English, in which he vainly dreamt of earning worldwide literary fame as a poet, nor in his mother tongue Konkani.

Instead they are composed in his take on language Kannada. At first, his command on Kannada was so deprived that he frequently unsuccessful to differentiate between short and long vowels (laghu and deergha). When Karnad started writing plays, Kannada literature was extremely influenced by the renaissance in Western literature. Writers would select a subject which looked completely unfamiliar to demonstration of native soil.

Hayavadana (1971) is the third play of Girish Karnad was based on a theme drawn from *The Transposed Heads*, a 1940 tale by Thomas Mann, which is initially found in *Kathasaritsagara* is the base for the central event of the play *Hayavadana* in which there is the tale of Devadatta and Kapila. The story *Kathasaritasagara* deals with a washer man who marries a beautiful woman. He goes with his wife and his brother-in-law to take part in a festival in a close by town. They arrive at the Kali temple. Before the goddess Kali, the washer man and his brother-in-law sacrifice their heads. At last the woman as well goes to sacrifice her head but the goddess Kali appears and stops her from sacrificing herself and assists her by giving a boon to fix-up the heads to their bodies. As well as the nervous woman entire fixing up the heads to their bodies. And the nervous woman while fixing up the heads to the bodies makes blunder. Their heads are interchanged. The identity of the husband and the brother gets mixed up. They go to the famous clever King Vikram. He gives the solution so as to it is not the body but the head that would decide the identity of the husband otherwise the brother. This solution given by the King Vikram could be acceptable to the Indians, other than Thomas Mann; a German does not

discover it simple to recognize. For that Mann weaves a long short story called the transposed Heads by means of a philosophical thought of dualism of mind and body. Thomas Mann glorifies the body and suggests that it can be “a fit instrument for the fulfillment of human destiny” (3)

The solution in the Indian account of the tale has the element of idealism in it while in *The Transposed Heads* of Thomas Mann, the German solution highlights the spirit of materialism meaningful the tremendous nature of these conflicting choice it seems so as to Karnad suggestion at the middle course of humanism in *Hayavadana*. Karnad describes the ethical problem in the main plot and the philosophical problem in the sub-plot. He merges these two ideas in the larger psychological and social fields of visible world for prominence the essentially ambiguous nature of human personality. This fascinating and complex and psycho-social dynamics of human identity is illustrates by Karnad as “a woman in love with two men” (5)

In addition to its thematic richness, *Hayavadana* is a bold experiment in theatrical method as well. The modernity of its theme is estimably matched by the vagueness of its dramatic model. The whole play is cast in the form of traditional Indian folk drama which took more than a few features of very old Sanskrit drama other than adopted them to its own special requirements as a popular form of art. The particular form of art is the ‘Yakshagana’ of Karnataka theatrical tradition. ‘Yakshagana’ means music of the heavenly ‘Yaksha’. Though it is well-liked in Kannada play this forms his much in general by means of traditional folk play in other Indian languages as well. The play stands for dissimilar genres and gives us and thought regarding dramatic excellence in India in the history. *Hayavadana* offers us insight into the desires, hopes, completion and aggravation it breeds in finding out the world of love, erotic man-woman, male bonding and parent-child. Many supernatural elements are used to give mythical forms to this play.

Karnad keeps at the centre the psychological theory of the contemporary man while writing the play. His protagonists forever suffer and the root cause of their suffering is the difficulty of human relations. His characters suffer from separation and they are separated from themselves and the people around them. *Hayavadana*-Haya means ‘horse’ and Vandana means ‘face’. It is the tale of a man who has a human

body and a horse’s head. Karnad observed the Yakshagana form while writing the play and presents the play in a semi-classical way. The play turns around three characters-Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila. The two stories are interwoven by Karnad in his play *Hayavadana*.

When the play commence a mask of Ganesha is brought on the phase and reserved on the chair, Pooja is complete and the Bhagavata sings verses in praise of Ganesh. After the incantation of the god, Bhagavata narrates the tale of Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila. Other than the actor interferes with the Bhagavata and narrates to him regarding the event in which he has seen a man with a horse’s head. The actor is followed by *Hayavadana* and when asked he tells his story.

Hayavadana: My mother was the Princess of Karnataka. She was a very beautiful girl. When she came of age, her father decided so as to she should select her husband. So princes of every Kingdom in the world were invited—and they all came. From China, Persia, from Africa. But she didn’t like any of them. The last one to come was the Prince of Arab. My mother took one seem at that good-looking Prince sitting on his great white stallion –and she fainted.... She said she would only marry that horse.... So finally she was wedded off to the white stallion. She lived with him for fifteen years. One morning she woke up-and no horse! In its place stood a good-looking celestial Being, a Gandharva. This celestial Being had been cursed by the god Kuvera to be born a horse for a few act of misbehavior. After fifteen years of human love, he had become his original self again.... Free from his curse, he asked my mother to accompany him to his Heavenly Abode. But she wouldn’t. She said she would come only if he became a horse again. So he cursed her... He cursed her to become a horse herself. As a result my mother became a horse and ran away joyfully. My father went back to his Heavenly Abode. Only I—the child of their marriage—was left behind.”

Bhagavata advises *Hayavadana* to go to a spiritual place and he will be recovered. He blesses him-Bhagavata: May you become victorious in your search for wholeness. And he turns to the main story, he starts singing. In the original Kannada play Karnad used songs other than in the English edition, he translates some songs and in others, he has given prose rendering. Karnad uses even a female choir in his play.

Kapila and Devadatta are citizens of Dharmapura and they are best friends. Devadatta is the only son of Brahmin Vidyasagar and Kapila is the only son of the iron-smith Lohita. Devadatta is very popular for his writing and he is identified as one of the most scholarly persons in the city. Their friendship is narrated by Bhagavata. Bhagavata:... The world wonders at their companionship. The world sees these two young men drifting down the streets of Dharmapura, hand in hand, and remembers Lava and Kusha, Rama and Lakshmana, Krishna, and Balarama.

Devadatta is fallen in love by means of the fifteenth girl and he tells his close friend Kapila regarding her. Devadatta narrates the beauty of the girl. Devadatta: How can I explain her, Kapila? Her forelocks rival the bees, and her face is..... Both are white lotus. Her beauty is like the magic lake. Her arms are the lotus creepers. Her breasts are golden urns and her waist Devadatta compares the beauty of the girl with Shakuntala of Kalidas.

Kapila searches for the beautiful lady, Padmini and the marriage takes place. But prior to marriage Devadatta tells Kapila, Kapila, with you as my witness I swear, if I ever get her as my wife, I'll sacrifice my two arms to the goddess Kali, I'll sacrifice my head to Lord Rudra. Kapila tells Padmini that Devadatta the only son of Brahmin Vidyasagar is in love with her and needs to marry her. Bhagavata comes on the stage and tells the audience so as to the wedding takes place. He says "The old friendship flourished as before. Devadatta- Padmini-Kapila! To the admiring citizens of Dharmapura, Rama-Sita-Lakshmana". After the wedding, six months have left and Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila go for a picnic. Kapila drives the cart and Devadatta and Padmini sit in it. Padmini is intellectually attracted towards Devadatta whereas Kapila's brawny body is liked by her. On their way, Padmini illustrates her attraction for the Fortunate Ladies' flowers. Putting off his shirt Kapila climbs in excess of the tree and fetches flowers for Padmini. As they are tired, they stop their journey. Kapila knows concerning the temple of Rudra and that of Kali.

Kapila changes the plan to go to the temple of Rudra. Though Devadatta is weary he needs to go to the temple of Kali. Kapila has no option other than to accompany Padmini. Devadatta agonized, walks to the temple of Kali. Then he prostrates himself before

the goddess and begs for her forgiveness. As he has forgotten his word to offer his arms to her. Carried out the assures he beheads himself. When Devadatta is missing, Kapila and Padmini start searching for him. Following his footprints, Kapila succeeds in locating Devadatta dead in the temple of Kali. Confused at the sight and scared by the social slander Kapila also picks up the sword and beheads himself.

After a long waiting Padmini goes in search of Devadatta and Kapila and finds both dead. She also picks the sword and when she is on the threshold of killing herself the goddess tells her to fix the heads of the dead to their relevant bodies and press the sword on their necks to bring them to life. She does so. Other than soon she finds that she has mixed up the heads and joined the head of Kapila on the body of Devadatta and vice versa. Seeing each other with a new amalgamation Kapila and Devadatta laugh but after it, both claim to be Devadatta. Kapila says that Padmini is carrying a baby on his body whereas Devadatta says that the head in Act second, Kapila has run away keen on the forest and Devadatta is staying with his wife Padmini. The new changed Devadatta is liked by Padmini too much. She says tremendous body-fabulous brain-fabulous Devadatta. But Padmini is missing the strong smell which Devadatta's body had when they come back from the temple of Kali.

Karnad uses two dolls to remark on the things taking place in Devadatta's house. The dolls also talk of the pregnancy of Padmini, then about her son and the family atmosphere in a serious and non-serious way. After some days Devadatta is totally changed to his original self. Padmini has given birth to her son. After Devadatta goes to the Ujjain fair to bring new dolls Padmini talks to her son and romantically refers to the place where Kapila has gone.

Bhagavata enters and his discussion with Kapila informs the audience regarding his residence and activities. With her son in her arms, Padmini succeeds in locating Kapila in the forest. In her judgment, she is a loser and Kapila and Devadatta win. She also blames Kapila of torturing himself unnecessarily. She also tells that she is accountable for the mixed up of their heads. After the request cum challenge, Kapila raises his head and looks at her. Caressing his face with her fingertips, she rests her head on his chest. Kapila lifts her and takes her "behind the trees". Holding a sword in one hand and the other two dolls, Devadatta enters. Bhagavata

informs him that Padmini has been there for the last 4-5 days. Devadatta asks Kapila if he loves Padmini and answering him in affirmative Kapila proposes that they should live like the Pandavas and Draupadi. But later he takes out it. Both agree on one point which is “we must both die.” And in a dual, both are killed. Padmini hands over her son to Bhagavata and asks him to give it to the hunters and tell them it was Kapila’s son. And after five years he should be handed over to the father of Devadatta as his grandson. By doing namaskar she gets ready for Sati.

The story of Devadatta, Padmini and Kapila has come to an end, but Hayavadana appears on the stage. Hayavadana appears as a whole horse, other than the human voice has not left him yet. When Hayavadana laughs, the son of Padmini who is of five years and looks gloomy as well starts laughing. When Hayavadana laughs with the child, he loses his human voice and turns by Hayavadana, Kapila, Devadatta, and Padmini. The theme of the play Hayavadana has two features, a socio-cultural feature and a metaphysical one. At both levels, it shows the clash between two divergences. U.R. Anantha Murthy in his note on *Hayavadana* states, “The play exposes the audience to a significant theme like ‘incompleteness’ in a comic mode the play tries to create an illusion in us that the hate determines the being of man.” Karnad’s *Hayavadana* is the interminable quest for excellence. The human relations in Hayavadana are as well difficult. The very concepts of the rational and the physical are mix together together in the play. The multiplicity of characters and their supernatural circles are accountable for a difficult pattern of human relations. A comprehensive portrait of human beings in search of excellence and completeness is presented by Karnad in his *Hayavadana*.

The friendship among Devadatta and Kapila is extremely close and they are ready to do anything for their friendship. Kapila: Don’t you know I would do anything for you? Jump into a well or walk into a fire. Even my parents aren’t as close to me as you are. I would leave them this minute if you asked me to”. Devadatta: How fortunate I am to have a friend like him. Pure gold. Devadatta: Kapila isn’t namely a friend—he’s like my brother. One has to gather advantage is seven lives to get a friend similar to him. Devadatta says that Kapila and Padmini are two pieces of his heart and Kapila has a heart of gold other than this friendship faces crisis when the heads of the friends are transposed. Both of them maintain to be Devadatta. At last, a person having Devadatta’s head

as well as Kapila’s body gets Padmini as his wife and he is recognized as Devadatta. There is a question that whether Padmini transposes heads by mistake or deliberately. For the reason that she likes Devadatta’s cleverness and Kapila’s body as Padmini becomes victorious in receiving celestial bodies Gandharva—fabulous body—fabulous brain—fabulous Devadatta. Other than this cannot remain for a long time for the reason that day-by-day Devadatta turns to his original form. On the divergent, Kapila (Kapila’s head and Devadatta’s body) who has run away into the forest, once more, becomes bodily influential as he was in the past. Padmini long for excellence and she likes Devadatta’s head on Kapila’s body. She gets it other than it consequences not in faultlessness other than in collapse.

Almost certainly what Karnad tries to make known through Padmini is the quandary of a contemporary, free and brave woman who is ragged between polarities, a woman who loves her husband as well as an important person else for two dissimilar aspects of their personalities. Padmini, subsequent to the exchange of heads, has felt that she has the best of both men, other than gradually actuality surfaces. She has the ability for a whole experience.

Devadatta being a Brahmin is extremely thinker whereas Kapila is the son of Lohita who is an iron smith. Padmini is a daughter of a businessman. In the play, these three characters are coming from three dissimilar families having different cultures. But the the majority common factorist he love relationship.

Devadatta loves Kapila and Padmini, Padmini loves Devadatta and Kapila and Kapila as well loves Devadatta and Padmini. It is Kapila who propose that they should live like Pandavas and Draupadi but later he castoffs the proposal. The names of the father of Devadatta and the father of Kapila are talk about other than they are not shown on the phase. While Kapila runs to the forest, by means of his transposed body, his mother as well as father die. Other than subsequent to the death of Devadatta, Devadatta’s father still lives because, at the conclusion of the play, Devadatta’s son is to be taken to Dharmapura where Brahmin Vidyasagar lives. Both Devadatta and Kapila love each other and this love is more truthful than their love for their family members.

In Karnad’s plays, sexual relationships are very different and in Hayavadana it is at the centre. Hayavadana narrates how his mother felt in love with a great white stallion, who was initially a Gandharva.

Hayavadana is the result of the wedding of a stallion and a human being. During the case of Padmini, she loves Devadatta, is married to Devadatta and is pregnant. But her pregnancy has not minimized/decreased her sexual attraction towards Kapila and afterward she gets the body of Kapila. At the end of the play, there is a union between transposed Kapila and Violence in Hayavadana in Karnad's plays though the themes are taken from myth violence is an integral part of his plays. In *Hayavadana* as well aggression is set up but this hostility is based more on sacrifice. In Indian mythology, violence is at the base because the civilizations must move violently for their existence. For overwhelming the other civilizations, the war took place. A lot of carnage takes place in myths similar to the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

In the play *Hayavadana*, Hayavadana needs to obtain not tied up from his horse's head. Many times, it is found that he and other characters attempt to put their head aside. Other than it brings ache to Hayavadana. In Karnataka, the people assure the god or the goddess to sacrifice their heads subsequent to the completion of their pledge. In *Hayavadana*, Devadatta promises Lord Rudra and Goddess Kali to sacrifice his head and hands correspondingly. But when he visits the temple of Kali, he sacrifices his head to Kali. Still Kapila sacrifices his head to Goddess Kali not because of promised other than for his friend who sacrifices his head.

At the end of Devadatta, Padmini, Kapila chapter, a double takes place among Devadatta and Kapila. Together of them know that they should die at the present. There is merely one solution to the dangerous trouble and that is the death of both, Devadatta and Kapila. So they kill each other. Later than their death, Padmini decides to perform Sati. Thus, violence in Hayavadana is more spiritual.

Karnad's play *Hayavadana* is generally concerned by means of the treatment of the theme in it. So he has not given main concern to characterization other than the characters of Hayavadana are no doubt interesting and practical. Devadatta is representative of intellectual people and is exceptional by God - Devadatta. Kapila stands for bodily force. Kapila-iron and Padmini- petals of Lotus which is the mark of beauty. She is the central character and is the most assertive and attractive. She represents the women who hanker for a ideal man who has the Devadatta symbolizes intelligence or head in the play. He is a

scholar as well as a poet. He introduced art and literature to his friend Kapila. But it is striking that nowhere in the play he indulges in poetry. Bhagavata and Kapila mention his intellectual authority but physically and expressively he is a weak person. He is in the habit of falling in love with girls and Padmini is the sixteenth girl. He is a fervent lover of beauty. Though he is clever he can see only the immaculate loveliness and fails to know the woman in her.

Though Kapila is his best friend he starts burning by means of enviously for the reason that he knows that there is a few concealed bonds among his wife Padmini and Kapila. Devadatta possesses a lively head and a passive body. And that is the major cause of his torment. After acquiring the body of Kapila, Devadatta leftovers a victim of suffering he cannot uphold the muscular body of Kapila. He loves Kapila and Padmini together but no one makes him happy. His peace of mind is troubled by Kapila whereas Padmini starts taking attention in the body of Kapila. Devadatta does not have any wickedness wish against Kapila. But at last, reluctantly he challenges Kapila for a dual because the ethical trouble can be solved with the death of the two.

Kapila if Devadatta is a man of intelligence; Kapila is a man of body. They belong to two polarities two tremendous ends. If Devadatta is a 'Pandit', Kapila is a dumbo. He is the bosom friend of Devadatta and looks dark. No one can rival him in deeds that necessitate physical strength and skills. He has a brawny body and rippling muscles. He is innocent like a child and he is the exact opposite of the scholar, Devadatta. In spite of their differences, there is an extremely close friendship among them. The people call them Lava and Kusha, Rama and Lakshmana, Krishna and Balarama.

It is Kapila who handle the wedding between Devadatta and Padmini. There is a secret link between Kapila and Padmini. Padmini becomes instrumental in varying the individuality of Kapila. The man of muscles gets enthralled by her beauty and he forever hops around her. His honesty towards Devadatta becomes his weakness. He fails to declare himself because he does not similar to to problem Devadatta. He loves Padmini other than at the same time he dies in the temple; he as well kills himself because he doubts opposite society.

When Padmini goes keen on the forest to meet Kapila, he advises her to go back to her husband. It

shows his deep understanding. Padmini is an attractive girl whom Devadatta compares with Shakuntala. She is like a lotus torn between two polarities. Padmini stand for a modern woman. Who is bold, free, quick and enthralling? In presence of Devadatta, she does not be uncertain to admire Kapila. What matters much in the play is Padmini's wish for excellence. She wants an intellectual, physically influential person. Her attraction for an ideal man makes her put the head of Devadatta on the body of Kapila. Though she gets fabulous Devadatta, she cannot be happy for a long time for the reason that Devadatta starts behind the tenor of his muscles. When her search for a total man is in excess of, she becomes joyful only for time being because Devadatta starts receiving his innovative shape which is not liked by Padmini. At last, Padmini is imperfection because the distorted Devadatta also can not give way to the necessities of Padmini. She returns to the forests in search of Kapila and becomes winning in persuasive Kapila for sexual relations. Even Kapila as well starts suggestive of to Devadatta so as to they determination stay similar to Pandavas. But it is surplus. Subsequent to the death of Devadatta and Kapila, Padmini performs 'Sati'. Karnad, through the character of Padmini, suggests that every human being craves happiness but no one is ideal.

Girish Karnad is a tremendously innovative dramatist. And his stay in London for three years made him take interest in Western theatre. He is intimately familiar by means of Indian culture and the English language. *Hayavadana* is a play of wish a drama as well as a game of the desire for recognition. *Kathasaritsahasagara* gives the solution for incompleteness by affirming the advantage of the "Head". If there happens the exchange of heads and bodies the body changes as per the necessities of the head. The similar view is personified in *The Transposed Heads* of Thomas Mann.

The "Head" is the representative of the entire body. Perhaps going on the similar way, in the sub-plot of the play, goddess Kali gives boon to Hayavadana for his completeness and he becomes total horse as he had horse's head and man's body.

When interpreted in terms of the contemporaneity of the tale of the play, Padmini symbolizes a class of the modern Indian women who are looking for completion of their wish exterior the bond of wedding. The plot as well portrays figuratively the

identity crisis and search for completeness of the contemporary man.

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