

Hayavadana by Girish Karnad

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Abstract

Girish Raghunath Karnad is an Indian actor, film director, Kannada writer, playwright and a Rhodes Scholar, who predominantly works in South Indian cinema and Bollywood. *Hayavadana* was published in the year 1972. It is Karnad's one of the remarkable plays. *Hayavadana* has various cultural implications, which are relevant even today. The plot of *Hayavadana* comes from *Kathasaritsagara*, an ancient compilation of stories in Sanskrit. The central event in the play-the story of Devadatta and Kapila- is based on a tale from the *Vetalanchavimshika*, but he has borrowed it through Thomas Mann's retelling of the story in *The Transported heads*. During the *translation* process, people can find few particular *translation problems* such as *problems* of ambiguity and grammar.

Keywords: *Hayavadana*, Girish Karnad, remarkable play, Sanskrit, translation problems

Introduction

Girish Karnad is an Indian playwright, author, actor, and a film director. He explores the present by the way of the past. He is a Rhodes Scholar who predominantly works in South Indian cinema and Bollywood. His notable works are *Yayati*, *Nagamandala*, *Tughlaq*, *Hayavadana*. Our Indian Government awarded Karnad with the highest honour, the Padma Bhushan, in his contributions to the arts Award. His plays are steeped in Indian culture for the themes taken from myths, legends, folk tales and history. He combines classical, folk, and western theatrical traditions in his plays. His contribution to Indian- English drama is massive.

Morality and religion offer the relationship between religious views and morals. Many religions have valued framework regarding behaviour meant to guide adherents in determining between right and wrong. Religion and morality are not the same. The theme of incompleteness has been at three levels- Divine level includes Devadatta, his friend and his wife. And animal level includes *Hayavadana* and Devadatta's friend. they live in Darmaura.

Background of the Study

Hayavadana is one of Karnad's most remarkable works. *Hayavadana* comes from *Kathasaritsagara*, an ancient complication of stories in Sanskrit. The central event in the drama of Devadatta and Kaila is based on a tale from the *vetalanchavimshika*, but he has borrowed Thomas Mann's retelling of the story in the *Transported Heads*.

The result is a confusion of identities which reveals the ambiguous nature of human personality. Initially Devadatta's head on Kapila's body behaves differently from what he was before. But slowly he changes to his former self. So does Kaila faster than Devadatta. But there is a difference. Devadatta stops reading texts, does not write poetry while Kapila is haunted by the memories in Devadatta's body.

Padmini, after the exchange of heads, had felt that she had the best of both the men, gets slowly disappointed. Out of the three she only has the capacity for complete experience. She understands but cannot control the circumstances in which she is laced. Her situation is beautifully summed by the image rarer and scarecrow in the choric songs.

A swordfight that leaves both the friends dead brings the baffling story to end. The death of the three protagonists was not portrayed tragically; the deaths serve only to emphasize the logic behind the absurdity of the situation.

Karnad's work has the tone and expression of great drama. He has the outstanding ability and the power to transform any situation into an aesthetic experience.

Discussion

Girish Karnad is a well-known dramatist of contemporary Kannada stage. Karnad's Hayavadana is a memorable treatment for the theme of identity. Hayavadana is based on the story of transposed heads in the Sanskrit Vetala-chavimsati. The modern source is Thomas Mann's 'the transposed Heads' which the author called "Metaphysical Gust". Hayavadana as the name suggests, is a man with a horse's head (Haya= horse and vadana=face; Dodiya 191). (His mother, princess, had fallen in love with and been impregnated by the stallion.). Hayavadana is desperately seeking to get rid of the stage where the play about the transposed heads is about to be performed. Bhagavata guides him to the same temple of Kali where the characters in the play will get their heads transposed (23). This incident forms the introduction for the tale of transposed heads. Here the Bhagavata ends the story, and Karnad suggests in this stage directions that the audience should feel that the drama has ended (2.64).

Hayavadana returns to the stage, now with the body, as well as the head of a horse. Kali has answered his prayer, it seems, by eliminating his human physical characteristics altogether.

In Hayavadana many of the themes are used by Girish Karnad. There is still an intriguing religious theme successfully implemented by the author in his satire and parody through this drama against the spiritual state of modern Indian devotees of all faith. Karnad is successful in depicting that the imperfect only begets imperfection, supported by the story of Hayavadana's birth, perhaps to reveal confused inter-cultural and inter-racial espousals.

'[...]which way you look at him he seems the embodiment of imperfection, of

incompleteness. How indeed can one fathom the mystery ... with the crooked face and distorted body is the lord and the master of success and perfection? [...]' (1)

Girish Karnad created Hayavadana, a mythical figure in the likeness of Ganesha in the imperfection and person, creating with the head of a horse and the body of a man; in order to unravel the mysteries through his questions. Hayavadana is none other than Ganesha. Ganesha who took in social life of the nation – civic, politics, patriotism, nationalism, social patterns of the society; perhaps also to mean the places the lord and master of remover of hurdle and bestower of success is being employed for human vantage at every outset of their endeavour.

Goddess of Kali has the power to give anything anyone asked for, but devotees have abandoned her at the jungle perils to suffer ruins and destruction by time to become the abode of snakes and animals. This reason for suffering desertion is the mistake of fulfilling the desires of morals; once the desires are fulfilled, they forgot to return:

‘[...] the goddess there is famous for being ever-awake to the call of devotees. Thousands used to flock to her temple once. No one goes now, though... she used to give anything to anyone asked for. As the people became aware of this they stopped going.’

Whose child is the boy who has the mole as that oh Kapila? (55) Is the child is begotten of Kapila then she was not faithful to Devadatta defying the virtues of a chaste women in Indian society. If she has conceived from Kapila’s body after transposition, still she was not honest to Devadatta, because she seems to have been pregnant at their journey to Ujjain fair before the transposition (20). But the child with the mole on the shoulder advocates her adultery with Kapila after marriage. Not only Kapila’s body but the boy and his head, body and soul.

Marriage of Devadatta was only for social justification. The message of defiled social order, integrity, chaste and morality seems prominent

At last a pause in Hayavadana’s appearance at the stage, Hayavadana represents Indians spiritually, in moral principles and in ethics. They have returned to the true self with the blessings of Goddess Kali not as a human being depicted by the complete transformation of Hayavadana into horse (68) The final prayer is made to Ganesha, again who does not bear to potency to bliss except removing hurdles and granting success. Bagavatha as in the beginning prays:

‘[...] to fulfil the desires from generations from generations, giving a smile to a child and neigh to a horse and for ensuring success and them to grant good rain, crop, prosperity, industry and other affairs. To give rulers of India success in all endeavours and a little bit of sense’ (77)

Prayer to Goddess Kali fulfiller of the human desires is forgotten once again to leave her to continue in deep slumber in desertion, These are the evidence of moral, social and religious degeneration being suffered by the Indian modern society. Through symbols of Goddess Kali, the precocious child, the insatiable desire of the flesh for an ideal combination of brain and brawn Padmini and the worldly friendship of Kapila and Devadatta aspiring to an ideal relationship and the horse faced one's laughter turning into neigh a whole myth becomes a metaphor of the Kaleidoscopic nature of existence.

The sub-plot of Hayavadana, the horseman, deepens the signifies the main theme of incompleteness by treating it on a different plane. The animal body triumphs over what is considered the best in man, the uttamanga, the human head [...]

Summation

The theme of the lay is an old one. Man's earning for completeness and perfection. It is thirst which makes restless in their ordinary existence, and makes them reach out for extraordinary things. But the idea of perfection itself is ambiguous. Thus, the complexity of human relationship is delivered. It was a bold and successful experiment on the folk theme.

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