

TREATMENT OF REALITY IN HAYAVADANA AND NAGAMANDALA

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ABSTRACT: The evil in an individual destroys his happiness and that of others with whom he comes into contact; but the evil in the society causes a lot of havoc in the life of each and every individual. For Karnad, drama serves to instruct, entertain, enlighten, and give happiness, peace and moral upliftment. It teaches one's duty and relieves one from his sorrows. It is evident that his plays evince a profound concern for man, a sympathetic affirmation of the fleshly and worldly life and an incisively insightful contemporary social relevance. His plays serve as a vehicle for communicating man's aspiration, jealousies, madness, quest for perfection, completeness and eternal conflict of passions. Karnad pays attention and tries to project the crisis of values in India. Man in the mundane world leads a kind of monotonous, mechanical life. Due to his materialistic aspirations, man tends to lose his moral values but an understanding of the realities of life ultimately anchors him to those values. He has succumbed to the humdrums of life. Girish Karnad successfully presents the full concentration of truth through his imagination.

KEY WORDS: *Reality, moral, adultery, infidelity, forbidden pleasure*

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature is highly moralistic in nature and it shows what is right and wrong, good and bad, high and low. The moral goodness possessed by an individual elevates him to the level of a noble human being and the evil in him drags him to the level of a beast. The evil in an individual destroys his happiness and that of others with whom he comes into contact; but the evil in the society causes a lot of havoc in the life of each and every individual. Hence, each and every individual must understand the evil within him and in the society and must guard against its corrupting influence; otherwise, the evil will gain complete mastery over him.

II. ADULTERY

In Hayavadana and Naga-Mandala evil is manifested through adultery. Padmini in Hayavadana commits adultery knowingly and Satish Kumar comments that "Padmini lives for herself; for the satiation of her sensuality" (30) is true. Rani in Naga-Mandala cuckolds her husband by having sex with Naga. Sometimes it seems that she is innocent of what she has been doing. But there are indications in the play which uncover the fact that she makes love with Naga deliberately. The love of Padmini and Rani is not a spiritual one, but mere passion for physical pleasure.

III. INFIDELITY OF PADMINI IN HAYAVADANA

In Hayavadana, there are occasional references to Padmini's infidelity in the play. Kapila sparks off a raging conflict in Padmini's mind. Devadatta tries to cancel the Ujjain trip with Kapila because he doesn't want Padmini to be drooling over Kapila the whole day, "twittering, Kapila! Kapila!, every minute" (1.91). Kapila feels crestfallen "as though the whole world has been wiped out for a whole week" (1.94). Their journey to Ujjain is a vital scene in the play. On their way to Ujjain, Kapila drives the cart smoothly on the uneven road and so Padmini appreciates him by saying, "How beautifully you drive the cart Kapila" (1.95). On the way she happens to see a glorious tree covered with flowers called Fortunate Lady's Flower. When Padmini enquires more about it, Kapila immediately runs to fetch a bunch of flowers. As Kapila climbs the tree like an ape to procure the flower, she admires his ethereal shape and says, How he climbs- like an ape. Before I could even say 'Yes', he had taken off his shirt, pulled his dhoti up and swung up the branch. And what an ethereal shape! Such a broad back- like an ocean with muscles rippling across -it and then that small, feminine waist which looks so helpless. (1.96)

Padmini's aside continues: "He is like a Celestial Being reborn as a hunter... How his body sways, his limbs curve – it's dance almost" (1.96). A little later she remarks that no woman could resist him. Kapila's masculinity hypnotizes Padmini whose sensuality remains unsatiated. She embodies sensuality and selfishness. She is drawn towards Kapila and before parting from him in the forest, she cheers him up by telling: "It's my duty to go with Devadatta. But remember that I'm going with your body" (2.111). Since Kapila is Devadatta's friend, she should consider him as her brother. But she keeps an incestuous relationship with him. She hurts Devadatta's fragile ego again and again by her outspokenness and obvious admiration for Kapila's physical fitness. Devadatta notices her gestures and facial expressions, which directly or indirectly hint at Padmini's inclination towards Kapila.

She waters her mouth looking at the charm of Kapila's body. This is not proper and acceptable for an ideal wife. Since she is the wife of Devadatta, it is utterly wrong on the part of Padmini to pine for Kapila. The scope and meaning of the Indian ethos which attribute a high value to the concept of 'Pathiviratha' is rendered a mockery. Pathiviratha is the ideal of an Indian wife being singleminded in her devotion to her husband and always worshipping for his wellbeing. The following song of the female in

Hayavadana,

Why should love stick to the sap of single body? When the stem is drunk with the thick yearning of the many-petalled, many flowered lantana, why should it be tied down to the relation of a single flower? A head for each breast. A pupil for each eye. A side for each arm. I have neither regret nor shame (2.132),

mocks at the very concept.

The Goddess Kali also plays a foul game. Kali orders Padmini to put the heads of the two friends back properly and press a sword on their necks so that they will come back alive. Unlike an archetypal Indian woman, Padmini does not suppress her desire for Kapila and wants both of them alive, although she is fully aware that her living with two men would be socially unacceptable. Padmini having a desire for Devadatta's clever head and Kapila's strong body and exploiting the situation mixes the heads of Devadatta and Kapila in order to have a better husband – head of Devadatta and body of Kapila. The happy life is short lived. The friends are restored to their original selves, for their heads control their bodies, and shape them to their own likings.

When Devadatta goes to purchase dolls for his son, she undertakes a hazardous journey to meet Kapila who has been in a state of amnesia. This incident indicates that she enjoys phallic pleasures from both the men. She herself admits that her child has two fathers. When Devadatta and Kapila die, she asks Bhagvata to make a large funeral pyre for them and she jumps into it. Centuries before, in India, among the Hindus, there was a custom that a widow should jump into the funeral pyre of her husband. As Padmini jumps into the common funeral pyre of both the men, it becomes evident that she has had illegal relationship with Kapila. Padmini is guilty of infidelity, Kapila proves to be a traitor and finally the two friends, Devadatta and Kapila, kill each other. All these incidents substantiate that the play Hayavadana is impregnated with evil.

IV. RANI'S ADULTERY IN NAGA-MANDALA

In Naga-Mandala, Rani commits adultery. Initially, Rani is frigid and shy and abhors sex. She yearns for love and affection, which Naga provides her. At night, Naga squeezes through the bathroom, takes the shape of Appanna, smells her beautiful long hair, coaxes and wheedles her to come and she sleeps like a child in his arms. Naga cures her of frigidity and consumes the long preserved virginity of Rani. When she realizes what he has done to her, she feels aghast. She at once moves away from him and weeps in a corner. She feels cheated into committing this horrible sin. He tempts her as

frogs croaking in pelting rain, tortoises singing soundlessly in the dark, foxes, crabs, ants, rattlers, sharks, swallows-even the geese! The female begins to smell like the wet earth. And stung by her smell, the King Cobra starts searching for his Queen. The tiger bellows for his mate ... It is there and there and there everywhere. (2.45)

She is thus coaxed into believing that there is nothing wrong in sex. The way in which the Naga delivers this sermon on sex mesmerizes her to such an extent that when the birds announce the arrival of dawn she cries, "Why don't those birds choke on their songs? Who has given them the right to mess about others creatures night" (2.45). So, she starts enjoying erotic pleasures and relishes every moment of Naga's stay with her. Her ecstatic heart feels that her house is filled with the smell of the blossoming night queen and she wonders, "How it fills the house before he comes! How it welcomes him! God, how it takes me, sets each fiber in me on fire!" (2.49)

In fact, every night, Rani anxiously waits for Naga to arrive and wishes the night to last forever. His intense and sincere love coaxes her, she gets absolute satisfaction and thus Naga cunningly spoils her. The cunningness of Naga reminds us of Satan's temptation of Eve in Paradise Lost. Like Satan who stealthily enters Paradise, so also Naga enters into the house of Rani and spoils the young maid.

V. ROLE OF NAGA IN HINDU MYTHOLOGY

In our Hindu mythology the Naga represents several images. In South India, many houses have their own shrine which is often a grave reserved for snakes surrounded by trees, festooned with creepers, and situated in a corner of the garden; often a stone with a snake depicted on it is set up and those desiring children visit it. The 'Shaiva Lingayats' worship snakes, which are often depicted with Shiva. On the Naga-Panchami day, wrestling matches are organized and women pour offerings of milk and cereals into snake-holes. So, Indians consider Cobras as divine and worship them. Such a divine being plays the part of evil.

Rani also has to be blamed for this. She has a good many reason to doubt that the Naga is not Appanna. Rani is sleeping in her bedroom; Naga moves near her and caresses her. Rani, not recognizing Naga disguised as Appanna, submits herself to Naga's advances. Rani's gesture is questionable because there are sufficient reasons to believe that Naga is not Appanna. On the night when the cobra enters the darkened front yard of Rani's house she hears the sound of the dogs growling and fighting mixed with the hiss of the snake which ends shortly after the dog gives a long painful howl. In the night when she moves into his arms, she notices blood on the Naga's cheeks and shoulders. She opens her mirror-box for the healing ointment. She screams in fright as she sees in the mirror a cobra in the place where Naga was sitting. The next morning when Appanna comes, Rani's confusion is worst confounded. She says: "But last night ... he had blood on his cheeks and shoulders. Now ..." (2.48)

Another episode is that of the cobra and the mongoose in which the cobra is badly bitten by the mongoose. Therefore, he could not visit Rani for fifteen days: "Rani spent her nights crying, wailing, pining for him" (2.49). When he comes again, his body is covered with wounds which have only partly healed. She applies ointment to the wounds and tends him. But she never questions him about them. She feels peaceful as he has returned. Needless to say, when her husband comes during day, there were no scars on him. These instances prove that the person who comes at night is different from the person who comes during the day.

The story of Rani and Naga stand testimony to the fact that physical satisfaction even in its vilest dimension assumes greater importance than spiritual satisfaction, which is nobler and higher. She does not want to lose the forbidden pleasure that she has been enjoying at night. So, she says, "No, I won't. The pig, the whale, the eagle – none of them asks why. So I won't either. But they ask for it again – so I can too, can't I." (2.45)

She is very stubborn that she will not trouble the Naga by asking questions as she wants only to fulfill her physical pleasures. She commits adultery with full knowledge about it. Once at night she sees the wound on Naga's body. But at noon, when her husband comes she is unable to see the scars, but deliberately she ignores it. When she combs her hair, a dead cobra falls out and she does not become startled. She just says calmly, "Oh Poor thing it is dead" (2.63). She never fails to remark that their son has been given the gift of life by the cobra, as by a father. The dead cobra gets a ceremonial burial, which befits her son's father.

In this play also, it is evil which triumphs. The watchdog and the mongoose are killed by Naga, the evil incarnation which succeeds in making love with Rani.

VI. CONCLUSION

Girish Karnad successfully presents the full concentration of truth through his imagination. He has successfully tested evil on the stage. Nothing is spared; he accommodates murder, bloodshed, adultery, treachery, and impersonation- all within his plots. He

presents an excess of evil on the stage not for theatrical effects but adhering to the Aristotelian dictum that an excess of the tragic elements lead to catharsis. His plays have universal appeal and they stand the test of time.

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