



## RE-WRITING THE MEANING AND RECLAIMING

### THE IDENTITY STATUS IN THE PLAY

#### HAYAVADANA BY GIRISH KARNAD

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*From mid-nineteenth century onwards, urban middle-class Indian intellectuals started to establish their own theaters, to make an interpretation of English plays into Indian dialects, and to compose their own plays in the style of the cutting edge English dramatization to which they had been uncovered. They organized these plays for bringing together a group of people of English-taught Indian vendors and professionals. The focal plot in Hayavadana depends on a story found in Kathasaritasagara, an accumulation of stories in Sanskrit. Its further movement of development has obviously concentrated on a plot and the plot has packed in Thomas Mann's German tale The Transposed Heads. The play has two noteworthy sequences: The principal plot and the minor or the sub-plot. These two plots are actualized or presented in folk forms. We notice that Girish Karnad, the playwright, consolidates the transposed heads' plot with the Hayavadana story which is completely his own creation or commitment. We likewise perused that Hayavadana, the man with the horse's head, go to recover his way of life as an entire man. At last, as opposed to his long desire, he is changed to an undeniable horse. His freedom is finished just when the five-year-old child of the lady in the transposed heads' story requests that he giggle and the chuckling before long transforms into an appropriate neigh. In Hayavadana, Karnad re-shapes an antiquated Indian legend from the vetalpanchavimsati to point to man's unceasing journey for culmination, or self-realization. We could see that with its exceptionally adapted spirited action and mimicry, particularly the scene at the sanctuary of Kali and the sword battle between Devadatta and Kapila in the second act, Karnad contributes the play with a significant narration which draws out the vacancy of the "fragmented" individual. This idea of the modern theatre was in direct contrast to indigenous popular entertainment, ritual performance, and plays with mythological characters. Hayavadana gave a model to an advanced Indian theatre without getting to be caught on false essentialism. Here in this article, I try to assimilate the narrative techniques used by the writer and to re-read the implied meanings of the text focusing upon the philosophical perspectives of the writer in this post-modern era. The formal pattern of the play, the stage plan, and the action in the play are assessed to pinpoint the thematic stream of the activity within the narrative framework of the play and the visualization of the writer. It is said that Girish Karnad uses traditional forms and structures in his writings. As he clarifies in a meeting on accepting the Jnanpith Award, "I cannot invent plots; therefore I use myths. I cannot invent stories and hence go to history" and he adds, "Drama can be the production of meaning also and the story has an autonomous existence too."*



**Key Words:** *Identity, Body and Head dichotomy, Mythology, Theatre form, Completeness*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dramatization is a composite craftsmanship in which the composed universe of the writer is concretized and imagined when it turns into an enactment on the stage. Indian plays written in English and interpreted in English by Indian playwrights have recorded an astounding development and advancement in later decades. Contemporary Indian dramatic performance in English translations has made striking developments, intense innovations, and beneficial experiments as far as thematic concerns, specialized revelations, and applications. It has been progressively associated with history, legend, fantasy, and fables and subsequently tapping their springs of imperativeness and vocal ropes of prevalence with amazing outcomes. In *Hayavadana*, Girish Karnad, the gifted Indian writer, manages the topic of Head and Body with an altogether different reason and motif. Strangely, the major and the minor plot of *Hayavadana* manage the moral and philosophical parts of the issue raising more essential problems identifying with the human presence. We see that Girish Karnad ventures the female character in an altogether different way. His female character has characteristics like appealing, astute, enthusiastic, and more overwhelming than other male characters in the play. Through the fundamental female character, Padmini, Girish Karnad presents a picture of a modern - lady who is gotten between two thoughts, one is her mission for fulfillment and other is her search for individual rights in a man-centric world. The Playwright was profoundly affected by the Indian fantasies, custom, history, and the *Natak* Company-plays in the place where he grew up. As an imaginative craftsman, Karnad focuses on Indian fantasies, history, conventions, and mythological stories. He was a keen observer and a talented writer in all respects. He centers on legends and theaters and dependably attempts to cut out another face of a modern man who is battling for another skyline with another personality. The meaninglessness of life and fragmented and disrupted ideologies of a modern-man symbolically reverberate through the play by the enactment of different characters. Girish Karnad, the creator of *Hayavadana*, infers the material for his plot from history and folklore for the most part, however, translates the past with regards to contemporary significance and circumstance. Besides, he displays his female hero, Padmini, applicable to current setting and circumstances to demonstrate the shortcoming and restrictions of the male-ruled Indian social framework and the unauthentic conventional practices of a society. In this respect, observations on woman character, especially the major character, Padmini, in *Hayavadana* are raised and questioned in detail. It is imperative to take note of the plot structure of *Hayavadana* to comprehend the focal topic of the play. Girish Karnad makes utilization of the customary legend and theater of India alongside the methods of present-day drama. The combination of the customary and present-day components bestows a special emotional impact in *Hayavadana*. It accomplishes solidarity of structure and a deliberate concealing of his significant topic creates an extremely durable, comprehensive and emotional impact showing the dominance of the sensational art of the dramatist.



## 2. PLOT CONSTRUCTION OF *HAYAVADANA*

Girish Karnad presents the primary plot and the sub-plot in the *Hayavadana* with an unequivocal reason. He gets the primary plot from the inventive source *Kathtasarithasagara*, and his sub-plot is the further improvement of the story, that depends on the German Novelist, Thomas Mann's content, *The Transposed Heads*. The fundamental plot delineates the account of Devadatta and Kapila, the two intimate friends like Lava-Kusha and Rama-Lakshmana, and their association with Padmini, wife of Devadatta. The sub-plot manages the tale of Hayavadana, the horse-headed man. Girish Karnad joins the topical substance of this sub-plot with the fundamental plot and in this manner toward the finish of the play exhibiting an association of the vitality of the horse in connection to the human world. This energy is not only a temporal motivation but also a vital fulfillment of his dreams and fascination. Clearly, the sub-plot exhibits the issue of Hayavadana's longing for fulfillment and perfection. It is a search for completeness and full-fledged identity too. In the fundamental plot, through the character Padmini, Karnad demonstrates the human's longing for fulfillment. Toward the finish of the play, the writer shows that human's craving for culmination can't be satisfied. Additionally, Goddess does not satisfy the desire of Hayavadana as he longed for. Hayavadana says:

**Hayavadana:** The goddess appeared. Very prompt. But looked rather put out. She said-rather peevishly, I thought-why don't you people go somewhere else if you want to chop off your stupid heads? Why do you have to come to me? I fell at her feet and said, 'Mother, make me complete'. She said 'so be it' and disappeared- even before one could say 'make me complete Man!' I become a horse. (II.68)

## 3. RE-WRITING MEANING AND REASSERTING IDENTITY

Girish Karnad presents the power of the head in the standard plot and additionally in the sub-plot. In the sub-plot, Hayavadana has an appearance with the face of a steed. In this way, Goddess changes him into an aggregate horse toward the completion of the play thoroughly breaking his life plan and ambition. In the primary plot, Padmini misplaces heads of Devadatta and Kapila to get a perfect companion for her. In a manner of speaking, she needs an aggregate man who has a head stacked with reason and intelligence like Devadatta and a strong solid collection of the body of Kapila. In any case, shockingly, Devadatta never again has the solid assortment of Kapila and he begins to lose the quality of the body. Thus, the account of the sub-plot reasserts and endorses the central thought of the essential plot. The primary and the sub-plot consolidate and envision an overwhelming topic toward the end. In *Hayavadana*, Padmini is one of the major characters. She is an amazing female figure. Obviously, *Hayavadana* is a multi-framed play demonstrating an affection- triangle including Devadatta, Kapila, and Padmini. Padmini is guiltless, delightful, discerning, smart, fiery, energetic and here and there delineated as a remorseless figure. Every one of these characteristics and mediocrities is imbued in her to present her a supreme identity and matchless personality. Consequently, Padmini, one of the major figures is brilliantly sensationalized in the plot. She is a delightful lady skilled with an enchanting female beauty. Devadatta says in *Hayavadana*:

**Devadatta:** How can I describe her, Kapila? Her forelocks rival the bees; her face is...



**Both:** a white lotus. Her beauty is as the magic lake. Her arms, the lotus creepers. Her breasts are golden urns and her waist. (I.13)

In connection with the family background of Padmini, she is the young daughter of the main merchant in Dharmapura. Padmini is exceptionally kind and generous, and being considered and brought up in a rich family, she seems to have been wanted to her express satisfaction, her each hankering or wants to be fulfilled by her father and mother. It will, in general, be seen when Kapila proposed to Padmini for his friend, Devadatta, she recognizes it rapidly with no hesitation and even before the family members' approval or consent. The marriage proposal from such an eminent family presents her cheery and happy.

The minor plot of *Hayavadana* where the horse-headed man takes a leading role develops the noteworthiness of the significant theme of the play. Actually, it is a longing for fulfillment and completeness by taking a gander at it from an alternate point of view. The horse man's search for identity and perfection ends sarcastically with his transformation into a perfect horse. The horse figure overpowers what is seen as the best in man, the Uttamaga, the human heads! Subsequently, the animal qualities overwhelm human characteristics and attributes. Presumably, this might be a motivation or inspiration for Karnad to name the play *Hayavadana*, a human's search for culmination and perfection. Karnad follows significant stage techniques that link the traditions and background of Kannada theatre, in general, like masks, curtains, dolls and the stories-within-story to create a strange, unusual or peculiar world. His plots concentrate on a world of imperfect individuals, indifferent gods, unidentified and unsystematic dolls that present a world which is unsympathetic and uncared to the feelings and emotions of normal human beings. What to a great degree articulated is only the gigantic and huge energy of the horse and its rider who appear in the stage showing the extraordinary, notwithstanding, dreary rhythm or beat of life and the idealistic thought of overwhelming the present by catching incredible desire and fulfilling his ambition.

#### 4. EVOLUTION OF IDENTITY AND MEANING IN THE PLAY

Karnad's work has the tempo and articulation of an extraordinary play. He has the exceptional capacity and the ability to change any circumstance into a beautiful shading of experience and involvement. His play *Hayavadana* has different social or cultural ramifications or implications, which are pertinent and exceptionally relevant even today. John Keats in his sonnet *The Fall of Hyperion* sees that the writer is the person who spills out balm upon the world. For him, a poet is healing the wounds with his divine words.

The Poet and the dreamer are distinct,  
Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes.  
The one pours out a balm upon the world,  
The other vexes it. (I: 199-202)

The artist or the poet accomplishes his mastery not due to any exceptional knowledge, but rather due to his endowment of verbal capacity to enlighten the world and his capacity to share the world's distresses, to partake inventively in all human presence and comfort or solace man in his anguish. He is a torchbearer and a



supporting figure. He refers to the role of a poet in his poem *The Fall of Hyperion-A Dream*:

Sure a poet is a sage:

A humanist, physician to all men (189 - 90)

For him, the extraordinary writers and the artists accomplished an ideal combination among moral and stylish components. It may seem a kind of union between moralistic and epistemological thought pattern. Girish Kamad, like other Indian dramatists in English, introduces a wonderful mix of the two above mentioned thoughts. In his play *Hayavadana*, he made utilization of the veils, mime, half and full curtains, dance, and music. These devices one way or the other represents existentialist perspective and the humanist narratives of episodes. They project the anguish of human life and the uncertainties of this natural world.

*Hayavadana* is visualized as a conventional Indian folk dramatization. The modernity of the topic is outstandingly coordinated by the vestige of its sensational model. The job of the Bhagavata in the story and the utilization of dolls, veils, songs and so forth leave the observer spell-bound and firmly engaged with the theme. The job of the Bhagavata gives significance and movement to the play and he attempts to destroy the separation between the on-screen character and the receptor and builds up a very close association. He plays out the job of the *Sutradhar* whose activity is to interface the scenes, present the characters, regulate the action and even act expeditiously. He is talented at appearing all through the distinctive scenes that work in the play. In Act II after the heads have been changed, Padmini has been living with her new spouse, she comes back to Kapila. Kapila inquires as to why she has come, yet she can't answer. Here the Bhagavata ventures into the scene and mediates in favour of her position. It is treated as a great entry for him.

The play is titled as *Hayavadana*, a character with a horse's head and a man's body who appears toward the beginning and the end of the play to strengthen the focal plot. *Hayavadana* communicates his problem regarding patriotism and Indianization. He did everything to recapture his character and lost figure. He made endeavors to reassert his unique persona and all around he was disturbed to run with it. In an attempt to unite body and head, he has tried everything. We read in *Hayavadana*:

I took (an) interest in the social life of the Nation-Civics, Politics, Patriotism, nationalism, Indianization, [and] the socialist Pattern of Society” he says to the Bhagavata or narrator. “But where’s my society? He says to the Bhagavata or narrator. “But where’s my society? Where? You must help me to become a complete man. (81)

As the offspring of a princess and a heavenly being as a horse, *Hayavadana* originates from two unique worlds yet does not feel comfortable in either. When he shows up in Act Two, he has a horse’s body, yet regardless he has a human voice which he is endeavoring to lose by singing devoted tunes of patriotic songs such as *Sara Jahan se Accha Hindustan Hamara* (May our flag fly high), *Jana Gana Mana* (the national anthem), *Vande Mataram* (Mother, I bow to thee, which some people would like to have as the national anthem) and *I Rise, Rise my Kannada Land*. Here we observe that *Hayavadana* is trying to decolonize his mind or head and to live in the world of liberty and justice. He actually wants to make use of his freedom of expression and the right to live in the world with peace of mind.

We see that Karnad's *Hayavadana* is a strong and effective analysis of the folk topic. In the expressions of a



popular critic M. K. Naik,

Karnad's handling of the sources of his plots makes it abundantly clear that his interpretation of the ancient Indian story not only differs substantially from his originals but also indicates a bold attempt at investigating an old legend with new meaning. (135)

## 5. CONCLUSION

Karnad appears to discuss the incorporated movement of the identity. Furthermore, in the incorporated development, the body is as essential as the brain. Along these lines, the call of the mind ought not to be overlooked. The facts confirm that mind step by step stifles or subdues. Be that as it may, this isn't a side effect or symptom of an entire identity. The playwright in *Hayavadana* strikes a tremendous and critical note by examining the dramatic capacity of the old Indian dreams, legends, and folk customs. As in the expressions of Tutun Mukherjee: "Karnad has made available the rich resources of the Great and the little tradition, the classical and the folk elements of Indian literature" (Mukherjee, *A Festschrift to Isaac Sequeira*, 134).

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