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Comparative Study of Girish Karnad's Hayavadana and Satish Vyas' Pashupati



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Abstract:

Art, of whatever kind it is, is not meant to give preaching on moral lessons or philosophy. It is believed that art is not a handmaid of philosophy –Art is for Art's sake. But if we look at this problem closely, we shall observe that every artist has his philosophy of life which s/he cannot hold from expressing through their art. Girish Karnad and Satish Vyas both have also expressed their views on different aspects of life through his plays. Karnad's Hayavadana and Vyas' Pashupati touches some higher problems of life. Girish Karnad a versatile artist in Indian English literature. His noteworthy contribution in Indian English Drama unfolds many social and psychological issues of human world. While Satish Vyas nifty skills gave him remarkable place in Gujarati literature. His plays are novel in the history of Gujarati theatre. Both the playwright represent the image of modern woman who is caged between two ideas, one is her quest for completeness and other is her search for individual identity in this male-dominated world. Karnad and Vyas stages his female protagonist called Padmini in Hayavadana and Mallika in Pashupati in relevance to modern context to reveal the weakness of male-dominant Indian society. This paper examines search of both the protagonist Padmini and Mallika through their journey to attain completion.

Key words: completeness, Fate, Karnad, Vyas,

Introduction:

The search of completion is universal and enduring in each and every human beings. The same urge of completeness is embedded in the heart of Padmini and Mallika. It will be also a stimulating study to explore the two contemporary playwrights who writes in their regional language first.

Hayavadana and Pashupati unfold the psychological and social issues present era by projecting one of the myths of eleventh century masterpiece Katha Saritsagar, a collection of stories in Sanskrit by Somdev. Apart from that both the playwrights Girish Karnad and Satish Vyas draw upon further development of the



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story from Thomas Mann's 'The Transposed Heads'. Both the playwrights borrow the sources as well as both the playwright recreate the story by adding extraordinary imagination. In Hayavadana, the episode of Hayavadana where a man who wants to get rid of horse's head to attain 'completeness'. On the other hand, in 'Pashupati' Satish Vyas mingles past with present. The uses myth with modern time zone. Theme sets on myth but the plot and characters are his own creation.

As Vyas himself reveals in introduction of the play 'Pashupati',

"The myth of changing form and sex have been popular in Indian literature since centuries. We can get enough references of the transformation of sex in Indian Mythology...in Kathasatitsagar we can get the references of transformation of forms like man into a bird, bird into a man or vice-versa...I thought that from these myths we can create a powerful plot, symbols, images and various dramatic situations..." (Vyas 4-5)

Both the playwrights focuses on the complexity of human relationship. Rather than it a bold experiment with mythological theme. Both of them seem skillful enough to use myth along with tradition. In Hayavadana, distinctively play opens with the technique of invocation of God and Muses before the beginning of any holy occasion. Karnad opens his play as per the hindu tradition where Lord Ganesha is always worshiped before the beginning of any auspicious occasion. Here Bhagvata evokes Lord Ganesha as a destroyer of adherences along with to take his blessings. An atmosphere of absurdity and contradiction start with very beginning of the play where Bhagavata worshipping starts with lines like,

An elephant headed,

"An elephant's head on human body, a broken tusk and a cracked belly whichever way you look at him, he seems the embodiment of imperfection of incompleteness. How indeed can one fathom the mystery that is very ' *Vakratunda Mahakaya* with his crooked face and



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distorted body, is the Lord and Master of Success and Perfection. Could it be that this image of Purity and Holiness, this *Mangalmoorty*, intends to signify by his very appearance that the completeness of God is something no poor mortal can comprehend?" (Karnad 1).

The beginning of *Pashupati*, takes us to the traditional marriage ceremony. The play starts with the marriage songs followed by coin finding game played by bride and groom.

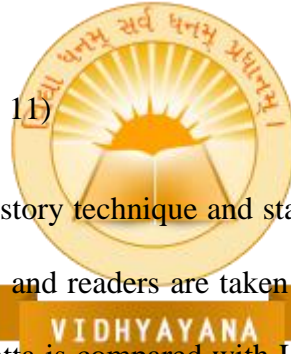
Who sits on the bull,

Mighty is the bull.

Goes to dung-hill, the bull,

Strong is the bull,

Powerfull is the bull. (Vyas 11)



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In *Hayavadana*, Karnad uses story within story technique and starts his play. *Bhagavata* begins to introduce the situation, place, characters, action etc. and readers are taken to Dharmapura ruled by King Dharmasheela where the friendship of Kapila and Devdatta is compared with Lava-Kasha, Ram-Laxman, Krishna-Balram etc. like one mind, one heart who complement each other. One Devdatta is learned and wish Brahmin while another Kapila is ultimate in physical power. Then comes *Hayavadana*, an incomplete man having a horse head searches for completeness. This creates doubts in the mind of reader. Same way in *Pashupati*, after the traditional beginning with marriage songs, the play starts with after wedding rituals at Rushabh's home. After coin finding ritual by Mallika, a bride and Rushabh, a bridegroom, bride and groom were taken near to the wall to imprint the vermilion mark of their palms. One of the neighbours finds the palm marks of Rushabh as inhumane. This generates the suspect and tension in the play. Neighbour: Oh! See this marks of Rushabhbhai's palms! It looks unusual and inhuman isn't it? (Vyas 13).



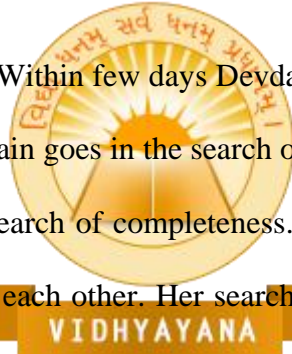
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In Hayavadana and Pashupati, the role of woman character is extraordinarily created by both the playwrights. Karnad's Padmini is a daughter of a leading merchant in Dharmapura. As it is mentioned, 'in her house, the very floor swept by the Goddess of wealth'. She got married to Devadatta in whose house, 'They have the Goddess of learning for a maid. The marriage is a very rare amalgamation of beauty and wealth. But Padmini is not happy with comely, fair and unrivalled intelligent appearance of Devadatta. She feels incompleteness with the body of Devdatta. She dreams of a man muscles. She got attracted with the dark and plain look along with strength and physical skills of Kapila who is the best friend of Devdatta i.e. one heart, one mind. She urges for brain with power. When she transformed the head of Devdatta with Kapila and vice-versa, she thinks she achieved her dream of completeness, "Fabulous body-fabulous brain-fabulous Devadatta" (Karnad 28).



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But this remains like mirage only. Within few days Devdatta starts to lose physical power. She again yearning for strong physical touch. She again goes in the search of completeness though now she is a mother of a child. She meets Kapila to end her search of completeness. But at the end the bizarre scene takes the lives of Kapila and Devdatta. Both killed each other. Her search of completeness ends with bloodshed and violence. Still she has a dream of completeness. She attains completeness through her child. She loved two men and that is why she died with both of them and became Sati. To get valour and strength, she left her child to be brought up by the hunting tribals in the jungle for the first five years of his life and to inherit the scholarship, she informed to send her child with her in laws home afterwards. Thus she hoped that her son would get both the physical and mental qualities.

Like Karnad's Padmini, Vyas' heroine Mallika is also bold and beautiful. Mallika's first encounter with the transformation of Rushabh into a bull at her first night shook her up. "He walks and jumps like a bull. Now he has horns and tail. Looking to this change Mallika shrieks. Rushabh jumps besides her like a bull..." (Vyas 16). She rejects her husband and starts to live in another room until things got easy. Her act



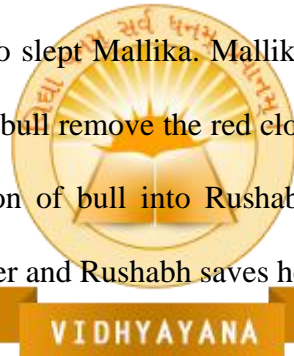
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of leaving her husband's room is considered as a characterless act by her in-laws. After so many encounter with Rushabh turned into Vrushabh means a bull, she becomes used to with it. Now she starts to like the rough and hard touch of Rushabh who turned into a bull at night. The reason behind Rushabh's transformation is Rushabh is a cursed Yaksha by a lotus Fairy to be animal while making love with his beloved on earth. After the Gotrat Vrata Rushabh Mallika feels softness in her husband's touch. She consider him as an another man when he does not transformed into bull. She got pregnant but in her pregnancy she is earning for hard and strong physiques of her husband. She searches for completeness in her husband who can fulfill her sexual desire. She yearns for hard and rough touch. She is not happy with her pregnancy because as per the curse Rushabh got rid from his transformed avatar of an animal. Because now Rushabh becomes soft and gentle. And that she does not wish. In her dream even she sees that she is surrounded by bulls. A bull comes near to slept Mallika. Mallika touches him and shows hers red cloth to attract him. The bull runs after her. When bull remove the red cloth of Mallika and tries to carry her through his horn, Mallika finds the transformation of bull into Rushabh. At the end, again Mallika tries to get satisfaction when Vaidya tries to molest her and Rushabh saves her by taking the form of a bull.



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The drama ends with different perspective. Here it is victory of animal in a form of a man over a man who becomes animal. Vaidya is a man but his deeds are like an animal. While Rushabh is an animal but he has human values.

Both the plays end with the evolution of both the female characters. Padmini whose search of completeness ends with her son. Though she couldn't achieved completeness of brain and strength but she plans her son's future in such a way that he can get both the things and become a complete man. Her planning of raising her son among hunters to attain strong physique till the age of five and afterwards her planning to raise her child at Brahmin in-laws home to attain scholarship and intelligence shows the largest plan of nature to produce a better genre of man, it will appear as a step towards culmination of nature's plan.



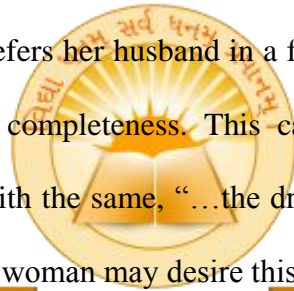
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The dream for which Padmini sacrifices her life is going to be realized. The letting her child under the care of Bhagavata with raising instruction shows that people start movements for the benefit of the prosperity, not for their personal benefits as ideals cannot be achieved in one's life time. Mallika who hates her husband at their first night when she finds her husband in a form of a bull, but now the same Mallika habituated of the touch of bull in such a way that now she got satisfied and complete when Rushabh attains her bull instinct back to pin down Vaidya who tries to molest Mallika. It also shows that all man has animal instinct and man has capability attain this instinct. Playwright also open multiple layer of the play when Pashupati i.e. Rushabh becomes a bull. This creates the possibility that may be this what woman wants. In the matter of physical need man could become a wild animal. This is not merely a reality for this play but it is also a symbolic for the whole human fraternity where sometimes this wildness are like by woman. Here Mallika can be one of the women who prefers her husband in a form of bull during sexual intercourse. And that is why she might be yearning for completeness. This can be another interpretation of Mallika's character. As Vijay Pandya also agrees with the same, "...the dramatist may want to convey the brutality of human nature. But another extreme is that woman may desire this form" (Vyas 76-77).



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Conclusion:

The journey of both the heroin ends with completeness. As Padmini hopes that her son would be a happy combination of her two lovers, and a complete man of her dream that she couldn't attain in her life. While Mallika gets satisfied in a form of her animal husband Rushabh who got back his animal instinct while fighting with a man who did animal deeds. Here both the playwrights are no a pessimist or a fatalist to accept the dictates of fate as inevitable and irrevocable. Both the heroine Padmini and Mallika optimistically struggling to achieve the ideal, no matter if her dream is not realized in this life. It is not in their nature to accept anything lying down. Both struggled hard to go as close to the ideal they can and at the end both evolved, no matter in what circumstances they were.



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