

I. The Use of Myth in *Hayavadana*

Girish Karnard's *Hayavadana* is full of mythical characters as well as mythical plot. It is a two-fold story of mythical character Hayavadana, which is half-horse half-man and story of two friends, who are compared one time or another to the mythical characters as such, Ram, Laxman, Krishna and Balaram and so on and so forth.

In the *Hayavadana* all the characters are half complete. They, all are searching for being complete or perfect. In the sub-plot the main character Hayavadana is body with man and head with horse, search for being a complete. In the main plot Padmini having intelligent husband, is not satisfied with him. She is always seeking for strong, masculine, mainly body and intelligent mind in a single person. This is rarely found in the world.

The play opens with Ganesh Puja with the offering of worship accompanied by singing to the God Ganesha. The use of elephant headed God is remarkable because Lord Ganesha with human body and animal head aptly expresses the central theme of incompleteness of being. Hayavadana is a man with the head of a horse: "Haya" means horse and "vadana" means face. Bhagavata is something of a chorus, commenting upon the theme of the play. He proceeds to tell us the story of the two youths, Devadatta and Kapila. Devadatta is the son of the Reverend Brahmin, Vidya Sagar. He represents the intellect. On the other hand, Kapila is the only son of an iron-smith. He is dark and plain in physical appearance, has no equal in strength. The story is interrupted by an Actor who comes terrified by horse speaking like a man. After Hayavadana has gone off the stage, the thread of the main plot is picked up. Kapila and Devedatta talk about wrestling but Devadatta is engaged in the thought of a girl

by whom he is fascinated. Kapila eventually succeeded in getting Padmini married to Devedatta. Padmini is the daughter of leading merchant in Dharmapura. Devadatta-Padmini-Kapila are the admiring citizens of Dharmapura like Rama-sita- Lakshmana. All three go on a trip while Padmini is pregnant so it is difficult for Devedatta to show his unwillingness for journey. But at the eleventh hour they all set out for Ujjain by a cart driven by Kapila. On the way Padmini is strongly fascinated by Kapila's skill in driving a cart his strong muscles and his ability. Padmini's attraction towards Kapila could not remain hidden from Devedatta when Padmini expresses her desire to go to the temple, but Devedatta refuses to accompany her due to disgust and asks Kapila to accompany her. He says "Good-bye Kapila, Good-bye padmini, may the Lord Rudra bless you. You are two pieces of my heart. Live happily together. I shall find happiness in that". This remark clearly indicates that Devadatta is deeply hurt by Padmini's attraction towards Kapila. But as Padmini and Kapila set out for the temple, he also goes to the temple of Kali to fulfill his promise, where he finds a sword and cuts off his head to offer it to Goddess Kali. Kapila goes in search of his friend but finds his dead body. So, Kapila also cuts off his head in repentance. After seeing it padmini also proposes to go their way but Kali forbids her to do so, and asks her, "Put these heads back properly. Attach them to their bodies and then press that sword on their necks. They will come up alive, is that enough?" However, Padmini keeps the heads on the two bodies, but in her excitement she puts Devadatta's head on Kapila's body and vice-versa. Then she presses the sword on their necks exactly according to the instruction of the Goddess when they become alive the two friends make claims and counter claims to the hand of Padmini. Finally Devadatta takes her away.

The second act of Hayavadana is largely Karnad's creation for he develops it from a question that he asks himself as he arrives at the end of a traditional story. His

development of the second act is based to a greater extent on the story of by Thomas Mann, but the conclusions offered are to be interpreted differently. The second act shows that the solution Vikrama gave to the problem is insufficient in the present situation. Padamini's act of going with Devedatta's head is based on the same solution. But if the head controls the body it logically follows that it will transform the body. That is what happens and so far as Padmini is concerned she again remains with Devedatta, her husband. Worse still, she is forced to watch the transformation taking place and thus loses Kapila bit by bit. Ultimately, she finds herself faced with the same problem which faced her in the first act. She misses Kapila's impulsiveness and his physicality consequently. Devadatta loses Padmini to Kapila once again. The two have to die and reduce their beloved Padmini to ashes. Devadatta makes it clear that there are "No grounds for friend ship now. No question of mercy. We must fight like lions and kill like cobras"(61).

The play ends with Devadatta and Kapila fighting with each other when both are dead, Padmini decides to perform Sati. Before sacrificing herself, Padmini makes it clear that she cannot hope to get perfection even in her next life. As she prays to "kali, mother of all nature", she says: "You must have your joke even now other women can die praying that they should get the same husband in all the lives to come. You have not left me even that little consolation" (63) while padmini has a child. The child connects the thematic strands of the main plot and sub-plot. He grows up as Kapila's child in the forest and at the age of five is given over to a traveler going to the city to be delivered into the hands of his grandparents. The child is hopelessly incomplete because he has lost the child's natural privilege to laugh and enjoy. The child becomes complete when he laughs in response to Hayavadana's laughter.

Myths and folktales always interpret human life, and in the contemporary context they interpret modern sensibility or the modern consciousness. In this way by exploiting myth and folktale in *Hayavadana*, Karnad presents various problems of contemporary society. In *Hayavadana*, Karnad mocks at the religious beliefs and practices. He boldly questions all the outdated practices and traditional mindset. This is best conveyed in Hayavadana's visits to different religious places to achieve perfection. As Hayavadana says "Banaras, Rameshwar, Gokarn, Haridwar – *Dargah* of Khwaja, Yusuf Baba, and the Grotto of our Virgin Mary – I've tried them all"(9).

Hayavadana is a play based on the Hindu myth. Sub-plot of the play is fully based upon the myth; where Hayavadana's father got curse from God and became a horse. Her mother chose the horse as a husband instead of handsome man/Prince from different parts of world. But we can get to many meaning from such mythical stories. Here, we have analyzed the text from that same mythical point of view and proved that such myth has meaning in human life in present day world too. In the words of Krishna Gandhi:

The theme of the play is an old one...man's yearning for completeness, for perfection. It is this yearning which makes people restless in their ordinary existence, and makes them reach out for extraordinary things....But the ideal of perfection itself is ambiguous. The character of Hayavadana is invented as an example of this ambiguity. (200)

In these above lines Krishna Gandhi said the theme of the play is an old one that is to gain perfection or completeness. It is that yearnings which makes man alive. Men think and do something which makes his life strong.

Girish Karnad has derived myths to look for the subject matter for his play. In the "Author's Introduction" Three Plays, Girish Karnad writes: The play is based on a

story from a collection of tales called the *Kathasaritsagara* and the further development of this story by Thomas Mann in 'The Transposed Heads' (1). In *Hayavadana*, Karnad deals with the question of Head and Body with a different purpose. Interestingly, the main and the sub-plot of *Hayavadana* deal with the moral and philosophical aspect of the problem raising more important issues relating to the human existence. Girish Karnad projects the female character in very different manner. His female character possesses qualities like attractive, clever, energetic, and more dominant than male character in the play. Through female character, Girish Karnad presents image of modern woman who is caught between two ideas, one is her quest for completeness and other is her search for individual rights in male-dominated society. Girish Karnad presents his female protagonist relevance to modern context to show weakness of male-dominated Indian social system. In this respect, observations on woman character in *Hayavadana* are discussed in detail. It is important to note the plot structure of *Hayavadana* to understand the central theme of the play. In this context, Pranav Joshipura by posing some philosophical questions categorically asserts:

But a couple of questions to a modern man with reference to *Hayavadana* may be asked: what is a complete human being? What constitutes a modern man? What does a man stand for? Is the head more powerful than the body? The answer may be yes, the head is more powerful than the body. If one has the head of a horse, one will end up as a horse. Instead of a constant tension between a man and a horse, it is better to be just a horse, perhaps. But at the same time it is also true that no one can be a perfect being. For a human being it is

better to live with a constant tension rather than try to resolve it
through some impossible desire for perfection. (201)

Here, he views that the question of completeness with reference to the Padmini's state of mind. He raises the question of what is and who is complete man. He views that head is more powerful and it determined the identity of the human. If anybody is with the head of horse he should end up with horse body. That is a just example of completeness, though no one in this world is perfect. The desire to be complete is a perpetual conflict and tension within human which cannot be fulfilled. The Karnad drama focuses on the complexity of human relationship and contains an indirect critique of modern Indian society. In each of his play, beneath a legendary/mythical or historical story, Dhanavel views “subtle and constant juxtaposition of the past and present which has been a common feature of Karnad’s dramatic art” (106). Karnad has juxtaposed present and past. Karnad has knowledge and skill to connect the history with the present. He has skill to borrow the subject matter from past and make it modernized.

Karnad uses myths in his plays to express meaning for the contemporary life. He believes that the significance of myth never dies. In an age of postmodernism and globalization, he observes people’s craze for materialism and their crude imitation of Western civilization. So as a conscious dramatist, he valorizes myths, parables, legends and folktales in his plays. He rewrites them in his plays as they provide immense scope for living. While he uses mythical episodes in his plays he significantly aims at using them for social, religious and philosophical purposes. He presents certain episodes of myths from the *Mahabharata* and contextualizes them in contemporary human situations. It is observed that his plays on myths are rooted in the ancient Indian dramatic tradition of *dharma*, *artha*, *karma* and *moksha*. In the

mythical imagination of his plays he revives the ancient dramatic tradition in the celebration of the human and humane. Presenting myths in human condition he links the present with the eternal and the contemporary with the archetypal. D. Maya rightly remarks:

Karnad links the past with the present, the archetype with the real. Issues of the present world find their parallels in the myths and fables of the past which lend new meanings and insights through analogy, reinforcing the theme. By transcending the limits of time and space, myths provide flashes of insight into life and its mystery. They form an integral part of the cultural consciousness of the land, with their associative layers of meaning, their timelessness and relevance to contemporary issues. (68)

Padmini's search for perfection in love and Hayavadana's search for completeness is a kind of myth and its main base is also myth. Karnad has very successfully employed the folk drama form in *Hayavadana* to present the problem of identity and search of completeness. This only can be interpreted mythically. Hayavadana's problem in the play is how to get rid of horse's head. On the advice of *Bhagavata* he goes to the Kali temple of *Mount Chitrakoot*. He threatens to Hayavadana to chop of his head. As in the transposed heads plot, Kali's ambiguous boon creates another problem while solving one. In response to Hayavadana's prayer, "make me complete" the goddess makes him complete horse, and not a complete man at the end of drama. And in addition to this, he retains his human voice. When the five year old son of Padmini of the transposed heads plot makes him to laugh again, the laughter turns into a proper neigh indicating the complete liberation of Hayavadana. The horse has at last become

normal. This sub-plot has been added to the main-plot by Karnad to re-affirm the theme of completeness.

Karnad reveals the religious sentiments prevalent in our society, psychology and culture by showing the presence of Goddess Kali. *Hayavadana* begins with an invocation of Lord Ganesha, who is generally worshipped first among the gods. In the beginning, Devadatta worships Kali in order to win Padmini's hand for marriage. Later in the course of time, he offers himself to the goddess by beheading himself and his friend Kapila follows suit. The Hindu rituals and Superstitions are very well portrayed by showing people offering themselves to Kali. This was a practice that was followed a few decades back. Now people offer goats and animals to Goddess Kali, who is also known as the goddess of destruction. The theme also visualizes the human body as a symbol of the organic relationship of the parts in Hindu society.

When *Hayavadana* flashes on the stage, it is started with the invocation to the God Ganesha, who is incomplete in his physical appearance but, considered to be supreme in our Hindu mythology, Ganesh is first worshipped while performing other worshipping. The elephant head is given to Ganesha by his father God Shiva. He is supposed to be the powerful among the Gods but incomplete, but the tradition is that he is worshipped to complete the incomplete work.

Karnad skillfully uses the principles and theme of Hindu mythology, folk tales and folk theatre- masks, curtains, dolls, the story-within-a-story—to create a strange world of incomplete individuals, indifferent gods, dolls that speak and children who cannot – world which appears to be indifferent to the desires and frustrations, joys and sorrows of human beings.

Hayavadana, if we see etymologically, *Haya*-which is Sanskrit words, stands for horse *Vandana* for face. Though the title of drama is *Hayabadana*, it is the sub plot of drama where Hayabadana revolves around a man with horse head and wants to shed horse's head and become complete human but contrary to this at the end of the play he becomes complete horse, where main plot of the play is about the problem of human identity in a world of tangled relationship.

Karnad, in almost all his plays, makes use of ancient myths, legends, stories, and traditions to interpret this age-old human situation with reference to contemporary experience. He leads the reader deep into traditional mythology to reveal the conflict that tears man's mind. Here, in *Hayavadana* he looks to toy with the theme of incompleteness and search for identity. To support this view the words of Ram Bahadur Chand are worth to mention here:

Karnad's plays pose different problems that of human identity in a world of tangled relationship. Such as in the play, *Hayavadana*, Devdatta and Kapila are the closest friend, "One mind one heart" (76). Where Devdatta is a man of intellect and kapila is a man of body" (70) *Hayavadana* subvert that world view and creates friendship between unequal men. Women throughout the [. . .] freedom of choice. She is not marginalized in *Hayavadana*, moreover, she has her own decision, which made her to suffer at the end. Dalits too are treated as objects and marginalized throughout the history but in *Hayavadana* by creating the friendship of Brahmin with Dalit Karnad subvert the ages old dogmas. (1)

In the above line He views that *Hayavadana* is a powerful and strong text to show a kinds of analysis of orthodox Hindu society. He dismantles the Hindu code of conduct which existed since times immemorial in Indian orthodox Brahmin society. It is highlights of friendship between Kapila and Devdatta.

Karnad's *Hayavadana* raises a few relevant questions such as what determines the identity of a person, is it head or the body? Is it facial beauty and intelligence or strength and physical prowess? The plot also revolves around the query of what appeals to a woman intellect or physical skill? Then the valid questions arise which might sound a bit philosophical but, yet to be addressed. What is your real self? What do you think you are? What do others think you are? *Hayavadana* tells a story embellished with the harsh truths of life and the incongruities of our existence capsule in fantasy. It's simultaneously a story of a woman. It's a comment on blind faith devoid of any reason. Karnad characteristically handles a riddle which has plagued mankind in wanting to break out of society, inflicted moral codes. Karnad's protagonist is Padmini, the woman and not Kapila or Devadutta, because social beliefs put such a price on her purity. Padmini epitomizes the eternal desiderative wish of a human being for the acquisition of a substantial idea. Padmini wants both brain and brawn as her companion in life. Karnad's own vision does not let her succeed. Mankind cannot live with perfection. Pallavi Gupta views:

Karnad in *Hayavadana* has focused on the pursuit of perfection, which is fleeting in nature through the characters of three different worlds: Divine, Human, Animal, and each world seemingly counter point the other. The divine is satisfied with its imperfection and is worshiped; Humans are essentially imperfect, psychological beings and suffer from the problems of dualism, disunity. The animal, unlike human,

unlike the god, cannot endure to remain imperfect and achieves wholeness by relinquishing its human characteristics, and turns completely into a horse, not into human, despite his secret craving, so, the human voice stills remains with him. It only achieves the pure animal from with a horse's voice, when it learnt to accept its deformity happily. (12)

In these above lines Pallavi Gupta views that Girish Karnard in his play Hayavadana tries to show every character long for completeness, even it is why not animal. She says human beings are always incomplete or imperfect but they always try to be complete. In the plot Padmini's and Hayavadana's search for completeness is an example.

This study makes significant use of the concepts myth and mythological interpretation, it does not offer a comprehensive analysis of myth. This project will be limited on the impact and meaning caused by myth especially to people who believe in mythical illusion in Hindu society like Padmini, Devdatta, Kapila and all other who are alike them. It will only proclaim some factors of identity, quest for perfection, isolation and alienation and spiritual crises caused by the beliefs in mythology. M.K. Naik makes a comment on Padmini's attempt to transpose the heads.

Padmini's plight suggests woman's vain attempt to unite man as intellect and as flesh in order to further her creative purpose. But these two aspects of the masculine personality are basically at war with each other and hence the attempt ends disastrously in destruction for woman and man integration cannot be achieved to trying to reconcile but by accepting cheerfully the fundamental

disharmony in human life.(6)

In these above lines M.K. Naik views that Padmini always search for strong head and strong body. Being Hindu cultured women she cannot confess what she likes but in her heart always she has a love for Kapila. She is in confusion but on the one hand she loves Devdatta's mind and on the other she always seeks for kapila's body.

Hayavadana is a mythological drama. The story of sub-plot has taken from Hindu myth. The story of sub-plot has a meaning in our life. It is a myth which has meaning in everybody's life. In this view Harold Coward said:

We mythologize our lives, making stories of them that fit our understanding our reality. Not only is that how our minds work, but also we are attracted to such stories that make sense to us, and so many of us take great pleasure in hearing various kinds of myth, too. Myth and story oriented Psychologist say that whether we make our own myths or we enjoy others, ancient or new, the important threads of our constructed selves of our life meanings are mythic. (11)

In these above lines Harold Coward says that myth has some meaning in a human life. Human beings are bounds by culture, customs and ended by traditions. Tradition is a full of myth, that myth has a meaning in human life, so that human beings are following the myth. While we interpret myth it takes some meaning in human life.

This work will try to show the different issues like search for completeness, identity crisis, quest for perfection, isolation and alienation of spiritual crisis caused by beliefs in Hindu mythology by the help of looking at the textual evidences. Padmini is a woman who never satisfies with things whatever is with her. She always tries to better and better. And Hayavadana ha a problem, for resolving that he tries

everything whatever is in his power but goes in vain. All this will get meaning by interpreting the myth reside in the text.

The research work will be limited in the view of Harold Coward, Barbara Lee and other writers like Abraham Maslow, Reinhold Niebuhr and Wilhelm Halbfash's ideas about myth. The research work will try to show the relationship of myth to human life and so many myths has a meaning in human life.

Chapter Division

The research work will be divided in to three chapters which are given below:

Chapter I: The Use of Myth in *Hayavadana*.

Chapter II: Search for Perfection: A Mythical Study of *Hayavadana*.

Chapter III: *Hayavadana*, A Mythical Study Of Human Life.

II. Search for Perfection: A Mythical Study of *Hayavadana* by Girish Karnad

In the beginning of the play, as Sutradhara narrates, Devadatta and Kapila are the closest of friends- 'One mind, one heart'. Devadatta is a man of intellect; Kapila is a man of body. Their relation gets complicated when Devadatta marries Padmini. Kapila falls in love with Padmini and she starts drifting towards him. The friends kill themselves and in a scene of dramatic implications Padmini transposes their heads, giving Devadatta Kapila's body and to Kapila Devadatta's. Resulting in a confusion of identities which reveals the ambiguous nature of human mind and personality. "The irony of the transposed heads on the bodies of two friends, who stand at opposite poles of personality, the intellectual versus the activist is employed here to raise the problem of identity" (Naik 275). Padmini lacks the psychological and philosophical ability in her quest for a complete man.

The subplot horse man deepens the significance of the main theme of incompleteness by treating it on a different plane. *Hayavadana* embodies the theme in his physical appearance of horse head and human body. The horseman's search for completeness ends comically with his becoming a complete horse. In fact, the question of identity crisis is at the core of the main plot and the subplot. Consequently it acts as a link between the two leading the play a compact unity. An attempt is made to have a look at the play and analyze how Karnad employs the theme of identity crisis in the play. The play presents several instances of fractured personality suffering from want of integration. The two threads of action woven together in *Hayavadana* united present a theme that can be comprised together as the totality of being to be achieved through the integration of the self and the wholeness of personality. After the transposition Devadatta and Kapila became fragmented creatures. Padmini also is torn between the two. Devadatta's son loses the child's

natural privilege to laugh and to wonder at things. The problem that is before us in the play is that of human identity in a world of tangled relationships.

The subplot, Hayavadana story, is an instance of deep identity crisis. “The sub-plot of Hayavadana, the horse-man, deepens the significance of the main theme of incompleteness by treating it on a different plane” (Vaja 120). Hayavadana, the man with the horse’s head somehow wants to regain his identity and asks Bhagavata: “All my life I’ve been trying to get rid of this head. I thought – you with all your goodness and punya if at least managed to pull it off...” (7). Hayavadana wanted to change into a complete man. He possessed a horse’s head but a man’s body and voice, but his luck, unfortunately is bad enough to change him into a complete horse for the Goddess of Mount Chitrakoot does not wait to listen to his full prayer for becoming a full man. Contrary to his longing the changes in the end to a full-fledged horse like his own mother. The conversion testifies to the supremacy of head over body. The main problem posed by Karnad through Hayavadana is not simply how the later could become a complete man or horse. It is more of a why: Why was he born like this? Who is responsible for his present condition?

Hayavadana is a play based on Hindu myth. To know the meaning of the story of *Hayavadana*, one must have to have knowledge of Hindu mythology. *Hayavadana* is full of various concept of myth. Such as story of God Ganesha, story of Hayavadana in the sub- plot, story of beheading and exchanging the heads of Kapila and Devdatta. The whole text revolves around the Hindu myth. The playwright Girish Karnad in the text has shown the mythical meaning of man’s hunger for perfection. To know the meaning and value of myth in human life the words of Harold Coward are meaningful:

Myths are the stories that inform and influence the way we feel and behave and the way we expect others to feel and believe. We all have these myths. This is one of the things that unite us in our common humanity. Our individual mythology is made up of the beliefs and convictions we have about ourselves, our relationships and our roles in life. Our myths are the stories we tell that give meaning and shape to our lives. We all have a main story that serves to connect us to the transcendent events in our lives that we can't control [. . .] these stories hold a lot of symbolism and they are critically important because they form the basis of all of our interactions and experiences with other people. (25-30)

In these above words by Coward we can understand the meaning of myth and their value in our life. Myths are indicators that inform, teach, guide and even influence our feelings and behaviors. Myths are common way of looking at particular thing. It is common thinking of community towards relationships and the roles of life. Coward is of the view that myths are unique and they work as symbols as well as very important to our lives. Myths are common experience of a particular community. To connect this idea of Coward with Hindu mythology we have common knowledge transferred to us from our ancestor through myths. For example we have common myth about God Ganesha. According to Hindu mythology, Ganesha was beheaded by his father, Shiva, who had failed to recognize his own son. The damage was repaired by substituting an elephant's head since original head could not be found. Ganesha's mask then says nothing about his nature. It is mask, pure and simple. The head is believed to be the part of intellect. But the elephant head questions the basic established assumptions.

In play *Hayavadana*, Karnad exposes the belief the Hindu have in the elephant-headed Gajavadhana, According to Vinod:

Ganapathi known as Lord of obstacles and Lord of Wisdom also has epithets like Adivinayaka, Siddhivinayaka, Vigneshwara, which mean, respectively, the ruler of the divine aspects of Shiva, the first God to be worshipped, the God who can assure achievement– the remover of obstacles. (80)

Ganesh is first worshipped while performing other worshipping. He is supposed to be the powerful among the Gods but incomplete, but the tradition is that he is worshipped to complete the incomplete work.

When *Hayavadana* begins with the myth of God Ganesha where a mask of Ganesha is brought on the stage and the Bhagavata sings verses in praise of “*Vakratunda- Mahakavya*” with the crooked face and distorted body, who is the Lord and Master of Success and Perfection. The play starts with the worship and then the description of Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed God, who symbolizes alienation since his head and his body are incompatible. The Bhagavata sings the hymn to Him and comments: “At the beginning of the performance, a mask of Ganesha is brought on stage and kept on the chair. Pooja is done. The Bhagavata sings verses in praise of Ganesh, accompanied by his musicians. Then mask is taken away” (1). In this connection, the view of Hindu mythology is worth mentioning. Here, the concept of Harold Coward is as follows:

In the Hinduism we saw that the Vedas view human nature as composed of an eternal self (*atman*) enclosed by various bodily layers (*kosas*), including the body, breath, mind and intellect. These layers are understood to be composed of karma created by one’s free choice in

this and previous lives. Perfecting oneself requires the purging of one's karma, for it is karma that causes one to be reborn[. . .]Then the beginning less cycle of birth-death-rebirth (*karma-samsara*) will be ended and perfection or release from rebirth realized. [. . .] Each path can enable one to perfect one's human nature and realize release (*moksa*) from rebirth. (190)

In these above lines Harold Coward shows that Hindu mythology revolves around birth and rebirth and also deals with the concept of self (atman) collides with numerous bodily things like body, breath, mind, and intellect which are product of one's karma of previous life. To assert his idea he cited many Hindu scriptures. This concept is very much applied by Girish Karnad while telling story of Hayavadana in the beginning of drama. This goes like this:

Bhagavata: What's your name?

Hayavadana: Hayavadana.

Bhagavata: How did you get this horse's head?

Hayavadana: I was born with it.

Hayavadana: All my life I've been trying to get rid of his head.

I thought-you with your goodness and *punyas*...if at least you managed to pull it off...

Bhagavata: Tell us what happened, don't feel ashamed.

Hayavadana: It's long story.

Bhagavata: carry on.

Hayavadana: My mother was the princess of Karnataka. She was a very beautiful girl... my mother took one look at the handsome prince sitting on his great white stallion-and she

fainted. . .she said she Would only marry that white horse! She lived with him and on the morning she wakes up- and no horse. (7-8)

The above dialogue between Hayavadana and Bhagavata clarifies the mythical study of the text. Hayavadana, who has a man's body and a horse- head because of curse which his father got from rishi in his previous birth. It is lively example of Hindu myth concept of birth and the rebirth. Hayavadana tells Bhagavata how he got incomplete life not because of his own wrongness rather it is because the myth of Hindu that not only make suffer to the person who has outdone his karma but also to the person who is born to him/her. Hayavadan even tries to say that he has tried and trying a lot to get rid of his head to become a complete being, but he is unsuccessful in doing so. Hayavadana is unhappy of being incomplete. He is in search of perfection which he says he will be happy either being full horse or being full man. Where he says, “All my life I have been trying to get rid of this head” (7) Again Hayavadana prayed to Bhagavata to show him the way to become a complete in these lines, “My personal life has naturally being blameless. So I took interest in social life of the nation [. . .]. I have tried everything. But where is my society? Where? You must help me to become a complete man” (9) Barbara Lee evasion the similar ideas:

Perfection is unachievable. Those who dedicate their lives to being perfect are merely chasing shadows. Perfection is not something you can turn on by flicking a switch or pushing a button. Perfection is an abstract idea, something we humans made up the concept of in an attempt to make us all better. No man can ever be perfect. (5)

The words of John M. Koller reflect the Hindu concept of supremacy of human over other animals. He says that:

The supremacy of humans over other animals is seen in the human intelligence and the ability to know the future, which leads to the desire for moksha or freedom from worldly limitations. In the Vedic view such freedom is achieved by ritual action informed by the knowledge of dharma or righteousness. (47)

The idea of Koller about Hindu mythology can be examined in the beginning of text; Karnad follows the Hindu myth where he presents the scene of worshipping the God Ganesha which is called *Mangalacharana*. It is the one of the great Hindu myths. Bhagavata says in the invocation of God Ganesha as follows:

Bhagavata: May *Vigneshwara*, the destroyer of obstacles, who removes all hurdles and crowns all endeavors with success, bless our performance now . . . an elephant head on a human body, a broken tusk and cracked belly- whichever you look at him he seems the embodiment of imperfection, of incompleteness. . . *Vakratunda-Mahakavya*. (73)

Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana* attempts to question this outright precept that head is the master of the human body conveyed in the folktale. However, the play does not challenge the folktale; it rather challenges the conventional habit of people to accept the absolute norms passed through the means of such old stories. This is implied as the play begins with *Gajavadana* or invocation of lord Ganesha not simply to execute a convention but to ask the significance of the precept that head governs the body. Bhagavata or sutradhara (an integral character of traditional Indian theatre who regulates any performance) asks the reason for the exaltation of Ganesha as the lord and master of perfection in spite of his animal head and human body:

O Elephant-headed Herambha Whose flag is victory / And who shines like a thousand suns, O husband of Riddhi and Siddhi / Seated on a mouse and decorated with a snake. / O single-tusked destroyer of incompleteness. / We pay homage to you and start our play. / How indeed can one hope to describe his glory in our poor, disabled words? / An elephant's head on a 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 this very *Vakratunda-Mahakaya*, with his crooked face and his distorted body, is the Lord and Master of Success and Perfection? / Could it be that this image of Purity and Holiness, this *Mangalamoorty*, intends to signify by his very appearance that / completeness of God is something no poor mortal can comprehend. (1)

Bhagavata's query on Ganesha certainly undermines the straightforward acceptance of the norm that head rules the body. Moreover, it also challenges the conventional belief that a human head on human body signifies symmetry which is essential for considering a personality complete or perfect. Nonetheless, Bhagavata also recognizes the fact that Ganesha being god is immune to survey or interrogation: "It is not for us to understand this Mystery or try to unravel it. Nor is it within our powers to do so. Our duty is merely to pay homage to the Elephant-headed god and get on with our play" (ibid, 2006).

Bhagavata's words are an indication of the involvement of some other character in the play in order to question the meaning of completeness. The play involves another creature from the mortal world with the horse's head and a human body. As Dodiya says:

...it is unfair to challenge the thesis of the riddle by using a god. God after all is beyond all human logic, indeed beyond all human comprehension itself... the dialectic had to grow out of grosser ground and I sensed a third being hovering in the spaces between the divine and the human- the horse head man. (Dodiya, 1999)

While Ganesha retains his image as god in Karnad's play, the horse-head creature highlights problems that arise in the human society for those who are different from the normal populace. His urge to become a complete human indicates that similarity in appearance is a requisite to gain acceptance in the midst of people. Oddity like that of god is not at all beneficial for the horse-head creature which implies that he belongs to minority sections of society who perpetually strive for recognition amidst the majority groups. Critic Erin Mee says the horse-head creature embodies the post-colonial subject struggling to attest his identity engulfed in the midst of cultural identity and colonial influence: "Hayavadana comes from two different worlds, but does not feel at home either. He represents the divided self of the post-colonial subject- a character attempting to decolonize his own mind" (Mee, 2008).

Like in the text the God Ganesha himself is incomplete in figure though he represents completeness. Nothing in this world is considered fully complete. Completeness is just a concept which cannot be measured but sensed. It is an immortal idea that is abstract. In this sense the words of Dorthy G. Williams:

These stories become our personal myths. Good personal myths help us deal positively with the potential for self-sabotage. But often they don't support us in that way. Often, they are contrary forces. Negative personal myths make us more vulnerable to self-defeat and can become strong enough to entirely block our path and derail our journey. If you

stay for Talk Back, you'll get a handout to help you identify your own personal myths. When we can identify and name our personal myths, we can consciously reconstruct the destructive stories that influence our lives. (46-47)

In these above lines Dorthy argue that impacts of myths are positive and negative in human life. If we take myths positively the impact of them is positive and if we take negatively the impact of them is also negative. Negative myths always make us destroyed, vulnerable and self- defeated. They block our progress and derail our journey to success. So, we recollect the idea that myths are wholly influential to human life. In the text *Hayavadana* both positive and the negative myths are conducted. In terms of positive myth we have an example of God Ganesha. God Ganesha is incomplete in his physicality but considered as a complete and destroyer of incompleteness. The God Ganesha is also considered in Hindu mythology a destroyer of all the problem of human life and provider of happiness to all human. In terms of negative myth Hayavadana and Padmini are worth mentioning. Hayavadana and Padmini always seek to be perfect but they could not achieve it because perfection is considered a state of mind. If one satisfies with what he/she has then he/she may be happy and considered they perfect if not then it is be the sorrow of being incomplete. In the words of Barbara Lee:

The myth of perfection permeates our society and raises our expectations of others and of ourselves to unreasonable heights. Whether they are touting beer, toothpaste, cars, or prescription medication we are constantly under a barrage of messages that there is something about us that needs to be better, something we can buy or acquire that will make us a little more perfect. (27)

Here in the above lines Barbara is in a view that the myths of perfection are just our expectation of comparing ourselves to the other though there is no reason of comparison. We are competing daily by doing many things to be better like touting beer, buying cars and prescribing medical treatment. Human beings always do mysterious things to be little more perfect. In the text even after getting perfect man Devdatta, combination of supreme mind of Devdatta himself and strong body of Kapila; Padmini is still unsatisfactory, “Why do you – have to apply that sandal oil on your body [. . .] you had that strong, male smell before [. . .] but – when we came back from the temple of kali- you used to smell so manly [. . .] You mean that unwashed, sweaty smell Kapila had?”(43-44). in these words from the text Padimini is still unsatisfactory even after getting strong body and the intelligent mind in a single person Devdatta. She needs that manly smell of Kapila’s body so that she wants Devdatta not to use sandal oil that kills manly smell.

Having fully conceived the idea of myth of perfection human being could not be live happily. Man and the women always seek completeness which is never achievable. Human being always try to reach at the feet of the completeness but it is impossible as a being intangible thing to reach that feet. Human beings become unsatisfactory, unhappy and their life is full of sorrow. So, to get happiness and sense of completeness human being has to live the same idea of being perfect. In the words of Abraham Maslow:

Abandoning the Myth of Perfection means that we begin to live our lives realistically, knowing that our efforts are good enough, that our accomplishments are good enough, and that we are good enough.

Abandoning the Myth of Perfection means that we allow our lives to be permeated with forgiving acceptance of our limitations and our

flaws [. . .]. Abandoning the Myth of Perfection gives us the opportunity to live a life that is not driven by the fear of failure, the shame of disappointment, and the insecurity of not measuring up. Letting go of the Myth of Perfection allows us to open up to receive transcendent love. (74-76)

In these above lines Maslow views that if one has to happy and satisfies he/she has to abandon the very idea of myth of perfection. One has to start to live his/her life realistically. One has keep in mind that his/her efforts are good enough, his/her accomplishments good enough and they have good enough but healing the idea of being perfect shallows all our best efforts. While dealing with our lives we have to accept our limitations. This is the best way to satisfy. By abandoning the myth of perfection we get the opportunity to live a life that is not drive by the fear of failure, the shame of disappointment, and the insecurity of not valuing up. So that one should try to leave the idea of being perfect and be happy. As in the text we examined in the conversation between dolls.

Doll I: only those beastly men turned up their noses! 'Expensive! Too expensive!' [. . .]

Doll I: Is that little Satan asleep yet?

Doll II: Think so. God It's killing me. . .

Doll I: [. . .] crying, all day. . .

Doll II: [. . .] making a mess every fifteen minutes.

Doll I: What have we come to! One should never trust God . . .

Doll II: It's our fault. We should have been wary from the moment we saw that child in her dreams . . .

Doll I: we should have noticed she was bloating day by day

Doll II: we should have suspected foul play then.

Doll I: It wasn't our fault. How could we know she was hiding this thing inside her? (44-45)

In these above lines dolls dialogue shows the unsatisfactory nature of human beings. They always seek good to better, better to best, expensive to expensive and imperfect to perfect. Human beings are always hanging upon abstracts idea of being perfect. So they do many things to achieve satisfactory state of mind. In above these lines dolls complain about the same nature of human beings. One of doll questions the nature of human being of judging everything by saying "presuming to judge us! Who do they think they are!" It is human nature to be best one, to be better than others. They always seek first place among others which is considered must selfish nature of human being. In this connection we can relate the idea of Reinhold Niebuhr:

As humans, we are mechanically inclined to search for perfection. Everybody wants to be perfect, and when they become perfect, they want to be better. People strive for perfection in multiple ways. Some chase perfection spiritually; they cleanse their body and soul of sin and always follow the principle of see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. Some chase it in their profession; they want to be the best at their work and refuse to have any competition. And some chase it mentally; balancing the troubles of life and the counterweights that support them to a degree that satisfies him best. (225)

In these above lines Reinhold views that man works like a machine to search for perfection. Every human beings wants to be perfect, when he became perfect he wants to be better than perfect. This is no-stop cycle of reaching perfection. People strive for perfection in multiple ways. Some seek perfection spiritually, some seek

professionally and some seek mentally yet they are unsatisfied. In this connection we have words of Kapila from the text, “Mine? Not mine. I am Kapila, Padmini. I didn’t accept it that day. But I accept it now, I am Kapila.”(54) In these words of Kapila while replying the words of Padmini where she says her son is also the son of Kapila’s body. Kapila is satisfied here though he didn’t accept exchange body was his in the Kali temple.

In the sub-plot of the text we can relate the story of Hayavadana and his struggle to search for perfection. He visited the various places of pilgrimage but could not bring completeness. He tells Bhagavata that his entire journey is disdainful:

Hayavadana: Banaras, Rameshwor, Gokarn, Haridwar, Gaya, Baba, the Grotto of our virgin Mary- I’ve tried them all. Magicians, mendicants, maharishis, fakirs, saints and sadhus- sadhus with short hair, sadhus with beards- sadhus in saffron, sadhus in the altogether-hanging, singing, rotating, gyrating – on the spikes, in the air, under the water, under the ground . . . I’ve covered them all. And what did I get of all this? (9)

The visits to various places of pilgrimage could not bring completeness for the horse-head creature. He tells Bhagavata that all his journeys ended only in despair. This undermines the conventional norm that lays importance to the worship gods and goddess for fulfilling desires. However, Bhagavata suggests horse-head creature to go to temple of Kali to fulfill his yearning for completeness. This indicates that mortal beings are left with no choice but to approach divinity for finding solutions to irresolvable predicaments. As the creature proceeds on his journey, Bhagavata’s final words, ‘May you become successful in your search for completeness’ (11) implicate

that there is hope but no guarantee that his search would be successful. To connect this to the myth the words of Wilhelm Halbfass are valuable:

The biggest problem with the Myth of Perfection is that it's a completely externalized way of relating to the world that completely divorces us from ourselves. First it relies on a comparison between what and who we are and some imaginary "ideal" "out there" that doesn't even really exist. Next because that imaginary ideal is "out there" we are constantly looking out there to find affirmation for our efforts and validation for our own existence. Any time we rely on anything "out there" to determine the value of who we are? "in here" we are asking to live against a backdrop of fear, shame and insecurity.

(270)

In above these lines Wilhelm views that it is the biggest problem of myth of perfection to separate ourselves from external world, so, that human being cannot amalgamate their internal and the external world. These experiences make people to heal painful state. Neither people satisfy with their present condition nor do they leave their senseless effort to achieve perfection.

In the text the similar kinds of problem of Hayavadana arises through different conditions. The problem of *Hayavadana*, alienation, absurdity, incompleteness and search for identity are central of the plays of Karnad. Incompleteness is an inescapable and insurmountable reality. This concept helps to solve such riddles in Hayavadana as why Hayavadana's mother chooses for her husband a stallion rather than a man and why Goddess Kali makes Hayavadana a complete horse instead of a complete man. In the words of Aurobindo Ghose:

According to the Veda the highest potential of humans is not found in the exercise of their superior rational power to achieve dominion over the earth and its creatures. Indeed, in the Vedic view such dominion is undesirable. Rather, the goal of humans is to become liberated or released from this world, not to become master of it. The purpose of life is to use our human existence as a vehicle of transcendence to achieve the final goal of liberation or perfection. (24)

The words of Ghose are very much purposeful in the text *Hayavadana*. Where, the elephant-headed God Ganesha is considered as a perfect and supreme in Hindu mythology but why horse-headed Hayavadana be called incomplete? This is mythology. In this context, Pranav Joshipura by posing philosophical questions categorically asserts:

But a couple of questions to a modern man with reference to *Hayavadana* may be asked: What is a complete human being? What constitutes a modern man? What does a man stand for? Is the head more powerful than body? The answer may be yes, the head is more powerful than the body. If one has the head of a horse, one will end up as a horse. Instead of a constant tension between a man and a horse, it is better to be just a horse, perhaps. But at the same time it is also true that no one can be a perfect being. For a human being it is better to live with constant tension rather than try to resolve it through some impossible desire for perfection. (201)

Here, He views that the question of completeness with reference to the Hayavadana's state of mind, He raises the question of what is and who is a complete man. He views that the head is more powerful and it determines the identity of the human. If anybody is

with the head of horse he should end up with horse body. That is a just example of completeness. Though, no one in this earth is perfect. The desire to be complete is a perceptual conflict and tension within human which cannot be fulfilled.

The play *Hayavadana* reexamines the popular belief that head is the master of the body and enables a mortal being to attain completeness or perfection in the world. The play introduces an uncanny figure (hayavadana) with a horse head and a human body. He wants to get rid of his animal head to become complete or perfect in his appearance.

In Hindu society pooja is started with the invocation to the God Ganesha, who is incomplete in his physical appearance but, considered to be supreme in our Hindu mythology, which is commented by L. Gill as follows:

The focus on the body governs the characterization of the two male characters, since they have inanimate static face: body language becomes the significance of their individuality, And the main reason for the title *Hayavadana* is that Hayavadana only is more complete than other main characters, Devadatta, Kapila, Padmini. More significantly he is complete because towards the end he is only character who is satisfied. Being complete/incomplete is only matter of one's own perception, else how can the animal –headed Ganesha is regarded supreme and animal-headed Hayavadana be called incomplete? (7)

Hayavadana achieves completeness when finally he becomes a complete horse and loses the human voice through singing the Indian national anthem. But this is one-sided completeness. But for human being, who is a combination of flesh and spirit, body and mind, completeness requires a harmonica relationship between body and

mind but Cartesian division seems to be a perennial irresolvable problem for man. In this context Soren Kierkegaard says:

Every human being, no matter how slightly gifted he is, however subordinate his position in life may be, has a natural need to formulate a life-view, a conception of the meaning of life and of its purpose. The person who lives esthetically also does that, and the popular expression heard in all ages and from various stages is that: one must enjoy life. There are, of course, many variations of this, depending on differences in the conceptions of enjoyment, but all are agreed that we are to enjoy life. (179-180)

All mythologies probe the great themes of life: good and evil, the purpose of living, Death and what lies beyond, struggle and suffering, challenge and determination, hope and perseverance. Some themes address a time before human life began—cosmic time at the beginning, or what was before the beginning of time. Other themes probe an ambiguity in existence that stretches concepts of good and evil, making them relative to an absolute perspective—ethics viewed from a divine or cosmic viewpoint. The ancient myths were designed to harmonize the mind and the body. The mind can ramble off in strange ways and want things that the body does not want. The myths and rites were means of putting the mind in accord with the body and the way of life in accord with the way that nature dictates.

The myth of perfection tells us we have to be flawless in the way we look. The myth tells us we have to be inerrant in the things we do. The myth tells us we have to be totally free from personal hang ups. This means that being perfect ultimately requires us to be something other than human, to deny and repress our humanness itself.

The main plot of the play is the story of Padmini, the beautiful woman who longs for a complete man with a combination of brain and brawn. This story is based on the folktale of a woman named Madanasundari that occurs in the *Kathasaritasagara* (Collection of ancient Indian folktales compiled by Somadeva). According to the folktale, Madanasundari accidentally mismatches the heads of her husband and brother in the temple of goddess Durga. The argument regarding rightful husband of Madanasundari is resolved by adopting the conventional solution that head governs the human body. The folktale ends with Madanasundari's acceptance of the man with the husband's head on the brother's body. The question of incest does not arise in this tale recognized as a moralistic narrative aimed at preaching the importance of the human head.

Devadatta and Kapila are very close friends, former a handsome but physically weak, Brahmin poet and latter a dark, but solidly built Kshatriya athlete. Devadatta falls in love with Padmini and Kapila goes to ask her hand for his friend. After meeting Padmini, Kapila is convinced that he is a better match for her than Devadatta, and falls in love, but the love for his friend takes upper hand. And in that magical process we find ourselves overlooking our shortcomings and our flaws. We stop the negative self-talk and the endless stream of criticism. We see the world in brighter light and more vibrant color and find that we too are shining in that world. We look into our heart and like what we see, embrace what we see, love what we see. To look at the myth psychologically is a difficult task myth and Psychology are related to each other in many ways. To show this, the words of Calvin S. Hall are worth mentioning here:

One of the reasons we feel so wonderful is that in the process of falling in love with another, we also fall in love with ourselves. We fall in

love with ourselves because we begin to see ourselves through the other's eyes. Someone, who sees our beauty and our best intentions, Someone who is willing to overlook our shortcomings and flaws in order to focus on and celebrate all the best of who we are. (37)

These above lines are representation of human Psychology towards becoming perfect.

These words examine how human beings strive for the hunger of being perfect.

Human beings always compare and contrast themselves with other people to get a result whether they are perfect or not. In the text Devdatta compares Kapila whether he is fit or not for the asking of Padmini's hand. This is mentioned here:

Devdatta: kapil-Kapil. . . He's gone. How fortunate. I am to have a friend like him. Puregold.[Pause.] But should I have trusted this to him? He means well- and he is a wizard in his smithy, in his farm, in his field. But here? No. He is too rough, too indelicate. He was the wrong man to send, he's bound to ruin the whole thing. [Anguished] Lord Rudra, I meant what I said. If I get her my head will be a gift to you, Mother kali, I'll sacrifice my arms to you. I Swear [. . .]. (15-16)

In these above lines Devdatta compares Kapila's ability with what he is perfect such as in smithy, in farm and in field and with what he is poor as asking a hand of a beautiful girl like a Padmini. Devdatta doubts Kapila's ability in this field so he exclaimed, 'But here? No. he is too rough, too indelicate' (16) It shows that human beings compare themselves with others to get their way to perfection. In the words of Allport Gordon:

But while all of that is wonderful and exciting, it only works on the surface and not in the deep recesses of our own feelings and beliefs. When we use someone else's eyes to judge ourselves, whether that

judgment comes as praise or as criticism, we are still at the mercy of someone else in determining our self-worth. We forfeit our own power of self-affirmation. Over time, we become increasingly aware of the need to be what someone else wants us to be. We succumb to the Myth of Perfection. (76)

This diminishes the belief that completeness or perfection is an attainable aim in the mortal world which forms the main theme of the story of Padmini's search for complete man in her life narrated by Bhagavata. Padmini longs to have a complete man in her life with a combination of sound body and sound intellect. This implausible demand in the mortal world with fallible humans is exposed by the chorus in the play:

FEMALE CHORUS:

Why should love stick to a single sap of a single body? When the stem is drunk with the thick yearning of the many-petal led, 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... (11)

The chorus hints at Padmini's unconventional intention to obtain a complete man at the stake of having a relationship with two men instead of one. The two men that appear in Padmini's life are two fast friends Devadatta and Kapila. Caste divides both of them. Devadatta is a Brahmin and Kapila is the son of an ironsmith and thus belongs to a low caste. Their interests are also different. Devadatta is absorbed in his books and Kapila in his wrestling matches. However, both of them play stereotypical roles like Rama and Laxmana attributed to them by society. Bhagavata calls them two friends who are "one mind one heart" (ibid, 2006) Padmini on the other hand is the

woman who defies being classified into a specific category formed by the society. Her boldness is revealed as she outwits Kapila by proving that words of a language cannot have fixed meanings and thus the master of her house cannot necessarily be her father and vice versa:

PADMINI : Do you want my father or do you want the master of this house?

KAPILA : Aren't they the same?

PADMINI: Listen, my father could be a servant in this house. Or the master of this house could be my father's servant. My father could be the master's father , brother, father's servant. My father could be the master's father, brother, son-in-law, cousin grandfather or uncle. Do you agree? (18)

Padmini's clever reply to Kapila implies that she is not ready to fit into any fixed role-play as a docile or domestic housewife. Yet, she is married off to Brahmin Devadatta and is forced to act as an obedient and loving wife. Though, she executes the role, her dissatisfaction with Devadatta's fragile built and attraction towards Kapila's macho body gets revealed very soon in the Kali temple where she mismatches the heads of the two men. The play does not clarify whether; Padmini's act is deliberate or accidental. However, Kali's words that 'there should be a limit even to honesty' (33) do indicate Padmini's preference for a complete man based on the conservative norm that head is the master of the body. In her interaction with Kapila, Padmini defies the orthodox belief that woman has to be necessarily obedient in her demeanor towards a man. In fact, the female chorus exposes her anomalous nature right at the start of the play. Nevertheless, Padmini resorts to the conventional belief that head rules the body in order to fulfill her intention of having a complete man with the combination of the

brain and brawn. Thus, when the rebel complies with an orthodox norm simply to satisfy her selfish interest, the outcome is disastrous. Gradually, after the exchange of heads, Kapila's, macho body under Devadatta's head converts into original fragile built of Devadatta. Padmini is left with no resort but to run to Kapila in the forest with her child where she sees that Devadatta's fragile body is turned into a macho physique under Kapila's head. However, Kapila speaks of the memories in the body that cannot be controlled by the head:

KAPILA: One beats the body into shape, but one can't beat away the memories in it. Isn't that surprising? That the body should have its own ghosts- its own Memories? Memories of touch- memories of a touch- memories of a body swaying in these arms, of a warm skin against his palm- memories which one cannot recognize, cannot understand, cannot even name because this head wasn't there when they happened [...] (58)

Kapila's words disregard the conventional norm that actually the head is responsible for governing the functions of the body. Finally, Devadatta reaches there in search of Padmini and finds her with Kapila. Both the men die in a sword fight and Padmini becomes sati by immolating herself in the funeral pyre of the men. Her death can be read as submission to conservative norms that do not permit an anomalous woman to live in the world. However, before dying Padmini tells Bhagavata to raise her child as a Brahmin and also as a wrestler. This conveys her defiance of conventional precepts that deny a woman to accept two men in her life instead of one. Erin Mee notes:

Padmini's Sati marks her devotion not to one man but to two. Her sati is not an expression of loyal devotion to a husband, but to the fulfillment of her own desire and her disregard for societal convention.

She refuses to conform to the traditional image of an ideal woman.

(Mee, 2008)

Retaining dual implication in Padmini's death, Karnad distances himself from conveying any fixed message through his play. The playwright merely raises a question regarding the validity in accepting a conservative belief that head is the supreme entity of a human body. Thus, unlike the folktale that directly conveys a moralistic message that head on body signifies completeness. In the words of Kirtinath Kurthkoti about in Girish Karnad's retaining ambiguity in *Hayavadana* with respect to the question about completeness:

The playwright uses symbolism like *Ganesha*, horse-head creature and an incredible phenomenon like exchange of heads indicating the contemporary readers and audience to revise their belief that head rules the body and human head on human body denotes perfection.

Therefore, the horse-head creature does not attain completeness at human level. He becomes a horse instead of a complete man in the end. This indirectly serves to undermine the belief that completeness is guaranteed by a perfect combination of human head and human body.

(30)

Incompleteness is innate and the only perfection in human beings. Quest for identity among human is a natural phenomenon. We begin the search as early as our own birth and continue till we return to the grave. In the words of Robert Pasnau:

Man at every stage assumes a particular attribute of his character to be his identity and is eventually disappointed when he finally realizes that it's not this identity at all. Identity is relative and differs at every stage of one's life. Consequently human life ends without realizing so called

true identity. We chase our identity and in return our identity chases us
and as a result the illusion of complete identity is never realized. (262)

This also is incompleteness which is natural but man makes unsuccessful attempts to complete it. The perennial issue of search for identity forms the essence of the play, Hayavadana written by Girish Karnad. We have majority of the important characters who have confused identity and are devoid of completion in one or the other form. We have the protagonists of the play Devadatta, Kapila and Padimini all hunting for their true identities. Especially after the transposition of wrong heads the problem worsens. On the other hand we also have Hayavadana, another character who symbolizes incompleteness as he possesses the head of human and body of man. Padimini apparently seems to be the only character that is whole and has some identity but the critical analysis of her character reveals us that ironically she is the one who has no identity at all. She is so helpless that she cannot even decide whose wife she is, she says to Kapila, "Yes, you won, Kapila. Devadatta won too. But I- the better half of two bodies-I neither wins nor loses."(53)

To further complicate the problem and reinforce the proposition of the illusory idea of identity we have the son born from Padimini of Devadatta's head and Kapila's body. The child is the symbol of ultimate confusion of identity. In the words of V.V. Revathi Rangan:

The son does not know to whom he belongs. One of the major reasons for messed up identities or the impossibility of resolution of identity is because of numerous roles human beings are expected to play at different stages of their life. Now every human being in this world has numerous roles to play and all of us to the best of our capability try to play our role to perfection. We simultaneously are sons, daughters,

students, teachers, parents and the list goes on. We human beings who are naturally limited can play only one or two roles to some perfection. And the other thing to register in the mind is that at every stage of life the focus and importance of these roles changes accordingly. If we play all the roles assigned to us to perfection then we have no limitations, which is highly impossible for human beings. (30)

This is very much obvious when we notice people around. As a result if we look around we see there is no human person with all the bad qualities neither there is a person with all the so called good attributes. Human person is complete only when both good and bad are in him. So the important thing in life is to first search the role that we are called to play upon and act accordingly. The roles differ from stage and therefore our actions too need to respond to that change. This is because of the basic limitations that humans are made with. Therefore humans are perfect to play their role but they are also perfectly imperfect beings. The concept of Persona in Carl Jung's theory also further emphasis and explains the need and the cause which leads humans to play multiplicity of roles simultaneously. He says, "a compromise ... between the demands of the environment and the necessities of the individual's inner constitution" (85).

He is of the opinion that we wear masks to function adequately and change these masks according to the roles we are expected to play. Further he says persona is an archetype, inherited by human beings to deal appropriately in complex human situations. The Persona also has negative aspects as many of the times we tend to hide our true selves and at other times it may even lead to split persona. This aspect of Persona is conspicuous in Hayavadana as all the characters strictly adhere to their roles under the appropriate masks. The use of masks by Karnad is deliberate and is

totally justified as it facilitates in presenting the theme of incompleteness and search for real identity. In an extract from the author's introduction to his own English translation of the play, published in 1975 he goes onto speak of his intention of using masks. He says:

As I said, the story initially interested me for the scope it gave for the use of masks and music. Western theatre has developed a contrast between the face and the mask-the real inner person and the exterior one presents, or wishes to present, to the world outside. But in traditional Indian theatre, the mask is only the face 'writ large'; since a character represents not a complex psychological entity but an ethical archetype, the mask merely presents in enlarged details its moral nature... (4)

Karnad's characters themselves unveil the theme of search for identity and the idea of incompleteness. We have Devdatta portrayed as "comely in appearance, fair in color, unrivalled in intelligence". While Kapila on the other hand is projected as "dark and plain to look at, yet in deeds which require drive and daring, in dancing, in strength and in physical skills he has no equal". Here again we are presented with the idea of incompleteness or imperfection. Human beings are such that imperfection is the only perfection in them. Therefore a minute's reflection would surprise and enlighten us as we are exposed to the idea, there is no man who possesses everything on this earth nor there is a man who has absolutely nothing to his credit. Every human being is gifted as well as deprived of some or the other thing. Subsequently every human being is interdependent. Cracked identities form the essence of Hayavadana. We have majority of the important characters who have confused identity and are devoid

of completion in one or the other form. As Ram Bahadur chand mentioned in his M.A. research paper:

The invocation of god Ganesha in the beginning is highly symbolic as well as ironic as the god who ensures completion is himself incomplete. The other characters too are the archetype of incompleteness and messed up identities. The confusion in the identities of both Devadatta and Kapila is seen in the arguments that are followed after their resurrection or return to life with the transposed heads. Both want to grab the identity of Devadatta as they can have claim over Padimini. Finally the issue is resolved by a Rishi, as he adheres to the ancient philosophy of supremacy of head over body.

(26)

In the text after an incident which accrued in Kali temple where Padmini exchanged the heads of Kapila and Devdatta. Devdatta has become happiest creature in the world because he has got super mind and strongest body but kapila become painful creature because he got weakest body and poorest mind. With the passage of time Devdatta became man with weak body because his mind always indulges in the study and does not care about physical training. But on the other hand, Kapila has got himself adjusted with the body of Devadatta and seems to be complete as he says, "I am Kapila now. The rough and violent Kapila without a crack, between my head and my shoulders." (50) Padimini is the only character who seems to be apparently complete. But her incompleteness or crisis in her identity is exposed by the dolls, who actually act as the mouthpiece of Karnad. Padimini lives and is the legal wife of Devadatta but she dreams of Kapila. The dolls claim,

Doll I: Behind her eyelids. She is dreaming.

Doll II: I don't see anything. Doll I: It's still hazy –

hasn't started yet ... Do you see it now?

Doll II: [eagerly]. Yes, yes. [They stare at her]

Doll I: A man...

Doll II: But not her husband.

Doll I: No someone else.

Doll II: Is this the one who came last night?

Doll I: Yes-the same. But I couldn't see his face then.

Doll II: You can now. Not very nice - rough. Like a laborer's. But he's got nice Body-looks soft. (5)

Padimini is confused with every aspect of her life. Formerly she desired to have Devadatta and she takes him and now after a period of time she is no more wants to be with him. She starts dreaming about Kapila this is brought to our notice by the Dolls. The other significant character who symbolizes incompleteness is Hayavadana. He is presented to us in the beginning of the play with imperfection as he has the head of a horse and body of human. He is advised by Bhagavata to take a pilgrimage to the temple of Kali as he would attain completion there. Hayavadana attains completion but not the desired completion. Instead of becoming fully human he perfects himself with fully being horse with only human voice left with him, which gradually disappears. He says, "I have become a complete horse- but not a complete being! This human voice-it's still there! How can I call myself complete? If I only could. What should I do Bhagavata Sir? How can I get rid of this human voice? (6)

Hayavadana is therefore a mythological story told in the modern context where the author analyses the situation of the protagonists not leading to

catharsis but making the readers ponder about the real reasons of a happiness and contention diverting the tragic end with repose. As Dhanavel P. said :

As such, myths can be said to exercise a profound influence on our traditions and day-to-day activities by way of religion, philosophy, arts and literature. Myths have always been particularly significant in arts and literature. In India they have always wielded extraordinary power. Since, ours is the oldest surviving civilization in the world, Indian ethos is richly fed from countless sources, and Indian mythology and folklore are among those sources. Myths are preserved in the four Vedas, the Upanishads, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Puranas and their aesthetic and social appeal has survived through centuries and remains powerful even in contemporary times. (106)

In *Hayavadana*, the elements of the supernatural play a significant role. The dramatist employs the conventions of folktales and motifs of folk theatre - masks, curtains, mime, songs, the narrator, dolls, horseman, the story within a story, facilitating a mixture of the human and non-human to create a magical world. It is a realm of incomplete individuals, magnanimous gods, vocal dolls and mute children, a world apathetic to the longings and frustrations, ecstasies and miseries of human beings. In this matter Keith ward is worth mentioning:

For these traditions, human beings are parts of the material order, not separate from it. But what is important about them is that they are enlivened with the Spirit of God, given the possibility of relating in understanding, creativity and love to the Creator and to one another, and the responsibility of nurturing the material order of which they are a part. In this context, the material realm itself is seen, not as an inert,

purposeless realm of impersonal laws, but as a dynamic and developing expression of the divine glory, containing already in its primal origin and constitution the potential for self-understanding and creative self-realization in a holistic and conscious community of being[. . .]. (7)

Here, by borrowing words of Keith could be proved that in the drama even dolls, curtains, musk and other things are also creations of god. Grish Karnad applies similar kinds of mythology in his drama by employing non-living things like dolls, curtains, songs and living being like horseman, narrator etc to tell the world that everything has been created by the same omnipotent and omnipresent spirit. In these above words Keith also advocates similar kinds of concept by saying everything has been nurturing by god though it may be living animals or non-living thing.

The play depicts the realm of incomplete individuals, magnanimous gods, of vocal dolls and mute children, a world apathetic to the longings and frustrations, ecstasies and miseries of human beings. The play tries to create an illusion in us that the head determines the being of man. R.S. Sharma says:

That completeness is a humanly impossible ideal is suggested first in the story of *Hayavadana* and later in the transposition of heads. By showing the absurdity of the ideal of completeness the play finally achieves its aesthetic goal. It implicitly asserts the value and significance of human imperfection which makes any upward movement possible. (6)

Karnad, in almost all his plays, makes use of ancient myths, legends, stories, and traditions to interpret this age-old human situation with reference to contemporary experience. He leads the reader deep into traditional mythology to reveal the conflict

that tears man's mind. Here, in *Hayavadana* he seems to toy with the theme of incompleteness and search for identity. According to Krishna Gandhi, in *Hayavadana*,

The theme of the play is an old one . . . man's yearning for completeness, for perfection. It is this yearning which makes people restless in their ordinary existence, and makes them reach out for extraordinary things. . . . But the ideal of perfection itself is ambiguous. The character of Hayavadana is invented as an example of this ambiguity. (67)

Padmini wants both brain and brawn as her companion in life. Karnad's own vision does not let her succeed. Mankind cannot live with perfection. On the other hand, Karnad allows half man, half – horse Hayavadana to evolve into a full horse because he tries his sights lower down the ladder. Karnad's handling of the sources of his plot in the play makes it abundantly clear that this interpretation of the ancient Indian history not only differs substantially from the originals but also indicates a bold attempt at investing an old legend with a new meaning which has an urgent relevance to present day thinking about man and his world. As KirtinathKurtkoti, in his 'Introduction to Hayavadana', has accurately remarked: "Karnad's play poses a different problem, that of human identity in a world of tangled relationships. The result is a confusion of identities which reveals the ambiguous nature of human personality" (vi).

Karnad's characters however accept failure stoically and embrace their fate. When the impossible cannot reconciled, for Karnad's character the only alternative is death. For example, Padmini in Hayavadana walks boldly to her fate and emerges thus as a strong character. As read in the text, padmimi said:

They burned, lived, fought, embraced and died. I stood silent. If I had said, 'Yes, I 'will live with you both', perhaps they would have been alive yet. But I couldn't say it. I couldn't say, 'Yes'. No, Kapila, no, Devdatta-I know it in my blood you couldn't have lived together[. . .]. I had to drive you to death. You forgive each other, but again-left me out. . . Make me a large funeral pyre. We are three. (62-63)

Karnard's plays certain existential themes namely, the impossibility of possession in love, the illusion of friendship, the isolation and alienation of man, the difficulty of communication and the quest for identity and meaning in an uncertain and often incomprehensible world. Man's inevitable isolation and alienation get highlighted in *Hayavadana*. Enduring bonds and meaningful relationships are an illusion; such attempts are either predestined to end in failure or else to continue in a spirit of Lord Ganesh as a deity and the story of Hayavadana form a thematic significance of the play. Both of them symbolic alienation since their heads and bodies are incompatible. Devdatta, Padmini and Kapila also suffers self-alienation. Commenting on the theme of alienation, M. SaratBabu says:

In the primitive man, the body and the mind are in perfect harmony which Brown calls Dionysian ego. As man has been vainly striving to be above biological principles for ages, he has evolved Apollonian culture which causes alienation. Devdatta and Kapila, like the people of modern society, are victims of self-alienation while Hayavadana, his mother and Padmini's son attain Dionysian ago. (230)

The quest for completeness is the age- old theme being explored by several eminent writers in literature. While the emergence of existentialism, the quest for completeness has become a major concern in the post-modern literature. In the words

of Krishna Gandhi, “The theme of the play is an old man . . . man’s yearning for completeness, for perfection. It is this yearning which extraordinary things. . . But the ideal perfection itself is ambiguous. The character of Hayavadana is invented as an example of ambiguity”. (200) Karnad has referred to this problem in the play when the Bhagavata bless Hayavadana by saying “May you become successful in your search for completeness” (82).

We all have personal myths that inform and influence our life choices. Some of them are helpful, some just aren’t. The good news is we are not hostage to our myths and our stories. We are not powerless within them. Instead we play an active part in developing them. We interpret the events in our lives and we give them meaning and significance. So we can alter the stories and myths that inform our behavior. We can transform the beliefs and convictions we have about ourselves, our relationship with others and how we relate to the transcendent or the divine. We can create new stories. As Rajendra k. mentioned:

The nature of myths is to appear fixed and unchangeable. But in the actual process of editing our stories we find that what we once thought was permanent is not only changeable, it has been awaiting transformation. When we see ourselves through the lens of love, we are looking through the eyes of God – not a God who exists “out there” but the God that has been inside of us all along waiting for us to remove the dark sunglasses of self-doubt and insecurity. Then we know, as our Godself has known all along, that we are infinitely worthy, loveable, beautiful, and perfect – in all of our glorious imperfection. (73)

Head is superior than body. Head determines the identity of a person. In this drama Karnad shows the head's victory over body. Myth and folktale always interpret human life. Hayavadan wants to become perfect man but lastly he became a complete horse because head determines the identity not body. Padmini wants both brain and brawn as her companion in life. She desires to get perfect love through combination of character of two different men Devdatta and Kapila but after the exchange of heads of Kapil and Devdatta, Devdatta became a husband of Padmini this shows the victory of head over body. In Hindu mythology head determines the identity not body. All characters in this drama in search of completeness and in search of perfection but mythically they are not incomplete, all characters are perfectly complete that head determines their identity. Human beings are never perfect in their life so, in the drama Hayavadana, Girish Karnad shows that if not human being at least animal can be perfect because their world is small. In the last part of drama writer tries to show some sorts of happiness among some characters in the words of Bhagavata:

So at long last Hayavadana has become complete. . . Unfathomable indeed is the mercy of the Elephant-headed Ganesha. He fulfills the desires of all- a grandson to a grandfather, a smile to a child, a neigh to horse. How indeed can one describe his glory in our poor, disabled words? [. . .] all prayed and thanked the Lord for having ensured the completion of and success of our play. (71)

Here, in these above lines through the mouth of Bhagavata, Girish Karnad shows us that human beings try and try for the happiness through perfection. Perfection in its best form is though unachievable but if we be satisfactory with what we have that state is considered perfection. Bhagavata said that god has provided every remaining character some sorts of happiness by providing Padmini's son the love of grandfather

and smile to himself and horse sound and body to Hayavadana. Here we envisioned perfect form of Hayavadana and Perfect combination of love between grandfather and grandson. This drama ended with some positive notes for those who seek to be satisfied with what they have but not to those who seek full perfection in their life

III. *Hayavadana*, A Mythical Study of Human Life

Girish Karnard's *Hayavadana* is a full of mythical characters as well as mythical plot. It is a two-fold story of mythical character Hayavadana, which is half - horse half- man and story of two friends, who are compared one time or another to the mythical characters as such, Ram, Laxman, Krishna and Balaram and so on and so forth.

Hayavadana is a play based on the Hindu myth. Sub-plot of the play is fully based upon the myth; where Hayavadana's father got curse from God and became horse. Her mother chose the horse as a husband instead of handsome man/Prince from different parts of world. Is it possible to have found such stories in modern world? Answer will be no. But we can get to many meaning from such mythical stories. Here, we have analyzed the text from that same mythical point of view and proved that such myth has meaning in human life in present day world too.

Again, looking at the main plot of the story, where many characters and events have been molded as a myth. Characters such as the God Ganesha, Kali, Rudra, Dolls conversation are in a totally mythical sense. Transposing the head of Devdatta to kapila's body and kapila's head to Devdatta has a mythical meaning.

The story of the play is totally mythical; yet it has meaning in present day world. This mythical study solves many modern day questions of human life: such as alienation, domination, identity crisis and above the entire search for completeness. Every human being in the modern world is incomplete in one sense or the other. He/she tries to be complete for this he/she does anything that helps to make him/her complete. But anyone can be perfect or complete in the modern world? Answer will be obviously no; but being human everybody try this futile work.

To further complicate the problem and reinforce the proposition of the illusory idea of identity we have the son born from Padimini of Devadatta's head and Kapila's body. The child is the symbol of ultimate confusion of identity. The son does not know to whom he belongs. One of the major reasons for messed up identities or the impossibility of resolution of identity is because of numerous roles human beings are expected to play at different stages of their life. Now every human being in this world has numerous roles to play and all of us to the best of our capability try to play our role to perfection. We simultaneously are sons, daughters, students, teachers, parents and the list goes on.

The most profound human questions are the ones that give rise to creation myths: Who are we? Why are we here? What is the purpose of our lives and our deaths? How should we understand our place in the world, in time and space? These are central questions of value and meaning, and, while they are influenced by issues of fact, they are not in themselves factual questions; rather, they involve attitudes toward facts and reality. As such, the issues that they raise are addressed most directly by myths.

Myths and folktales always interpret human life, and in the contemporary context they interpret modern sensibility or the modern consciousness. Karnard tries to solve all there above mentioned modern day problem in *Hayavadana*. He has proved that myths have meanings in human life. Though day has been passed, time has changed a lot. Times immemorial myths are valuable to human life. Myths create meaning and that meaning helps us to understand human life better. Karnard in his phenomenal task in *Hayavadana* raised modern day problems and questions as are we all the same?

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