

I. Introduction

Thomas Mann and *The Transposed Heads*

Thomas Mann, a novelist, essayist and cultural critic, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929. He was one of the greatest German novelists of the 20th century and by the end of his life, his works had acquired the status of classics both within and outside Germany.

Mann was born in Lubeck. He was the son of a wealthy father, who had been elected twice as the burgomaster of Lubeck. His mother, Bruhn da Silva, came from a German –Portuguese-Creole family. Mann was educated at the Lubeck gymnasium and he also spent some time at the University of Munich. Mann, then, worked with the South German Fire Insurance Company. His career as a writer started in the magazine *Simplicissimus*. Mann's first book, *Der Kleine Herr Friedmann*, was published in 1908. During these years Mann became immersed in the writings of the philosophers Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche as well as in the music of composer Richard Wagner.

Mann was also firmly rooted in German culture and increasingly drawn into political conflicts. When the evidence of Nazism's atrocious regime mounted, he became one of Hitler's sharpest and most tireless critics throughout his exile, first in Switzerland and then in the United States. Mann underwent the deep conflicts, suffering and ambiguities as a spokesman for German politics during the 1930s and Second World War.

Thomas Mann's *The Transposed Heads* (1941) adopted an eleventh-century Indian parable by Somadeva in his *Kathasaritsagara* about a woman who switches the heads of her husband and her brother. In the novella, two young men, the Brahmin

Shridaman and his lower caste friend Nanda, see a young girl performing her ritual bathing, as they rest in the shade. Nanda, who has seen her at the village festival, recognizes her as Sita. Shridaman tells Nanda he is suffering from a mortal illness and asks him to help build his funeral pyre. Nanda is willing and even prepared to join his friend in death, but, in view of the seriousness of the undertaking, asks the nature of the illness. He is amused when he learns that Shridaman is sick for love of Sita, assuring him that she is not betrothed and that Shridaman is such a good catch that there is sure to be no difficulty getting her family's consent for a wedding. He offers to be the go – between.

Nanda has accompanied the newly married couple on a journey. In a clearing they come upon a ruined temple to the goddess Kali and Shridaman, going inside to pray, is overcome with religious awe and the desire for the annihilation of his personality, and beheads himself with his sword. Going to look for him, Nanda is overcome with guilt at the sight of the body, feeling sure that Shridaman has killed himself because he has become aware that Nanda is in love with Sita, so he takes the sword and beheads himself. Sita, finding both bodies, thinks they have killed one another for her sake, though she is puzzled as to how they have managed with only one sword. Reluctantly, she decides that she, too, must die. She tries to hang herself with vines; but she is stopped by the voice of the goddess Kali, who orders her to stop and ridicules the suggestion that they have killed one another over Sita.

The goddess decides to restore the two to life and orders Sita to place the heads back on the bodies. What she does is to put the heads on the wrong bodies. Although each man professes himself honored at receiving the body of his friend, each claims Sita as his wife. To resolve the difficulty Nanda suggests that they consult the guru Kamadamana. The guru first decides in favor of the Nanda head/Shridaman

body combination on the grounds that the right hand is tended in marriage and must prevail; but immediately reverses this decision, saying that the head is the important thing. He awards Sita to the Shridaman head/Nanda body combination. Nanda decides to become a hermit. Sita comes to Nanda's hermitage, looking for the combination she doesn't have. Shridaman follows her. All agree that they cannot continue as they are and decide to die and join their essences to the universal all. Nanda builds a funeral pyre; but as Shridaman points out that Sita cannot ascend it until she is a widow, the two men kill one another with their swords and fall in the pyre together. Sita joins them and all are consumed.

Girish Karnad and *Hayavadana*

Girish Karnad was born in 1938 in Matheran, in the southwestern India. After completing his B. A. from Karnataka College in 1958, he went to Oxford for graduate studies. He is one of India's leading contemporary playwrights and has held important positions in many of India's national theatre and film institutes. He is also a well-known actor and has directed plays and films in several Indian languages.

He writes his plays in Kannada, the language of the state of Karnataka where he lives, and has translated them into English. He was Fulbright playwright-in-Residence and Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago between 1987 and 88. He was made Doctor of Letters by Karnataka University in 1994. He was the president of the Karnataka National Academy (1976-78) and Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Academy and the National Academy of the Performing Arts (1988-93).

Often accused by his detractors of making the use of myths and folklore in his plays and about lack originality, the playwright himself subscribes to the view that there is nothing called originality. He believes that it is nothing but a western concept,

which came to us as a result of colonization. One of few existing and flourishing playwrights of modern India, Karnad believes that we have lost the tradition of writing plays. After Sanskrit drama died out, the entire tradition of writing plays also died out. He rues the fact that in India we have lost the art of improvisation. It is perhaps this search for a dramatic tradition of acting, which has led Karnataka folklore. As he himself admits, Karnad's plays are drawn from, and based upon Indian mythology, epics, history, and folklore.

Karnad's themes always contain an unmistakable thread—a comment of contemporary ideas allegorized in whatever form he thinks best. The most telling example is that of *Tughlaq*, where he depicts the mood swings of the controversial Muhammad bin Tughlaq, but the understanding comment was always on the Nehruvian era.

Among his plays the most popular and distinguished plays are *Naga-Mandala*, *Tughlaq* and *Hayavadana*. *Tughlaq*, Karnad's second play, written in 1964, is perhaps his best known. *Tughlaq* shows the transformation of the character of the medieval ruler Mohammad bin Tughlaq. From a sensitive and intelligent ruler who sets out to do the best for his people, Tughlaq, misunderstood and maligned, suffers an increasing sense of alienation and is forced to abandon his earlier idealism and end up as a tyrant.

Karnad's another famous play is *Naga-Mandala* which tells the story of a cobra's irresistible love for a childless woman and the woman's unconscious entry into a twilight world of Para physical experiences. Western playwrights like Bertolt Brecht and Jean Anouilh inspired Karnad's retelling of this folktale.

Karnad's most famous play, *Hayavadana*, begins with Kapila, who finds his best friend Devadatta despondently dreaming about Padmini. Kapila goes to arrange Devadatta's marriage to her. Although Kapila is attracted to her, he nonetheless finalizes the match, and Devadatta and Padmini are married. Padmini is herself attracted to the strong-bodied Kapila and Devadatta is consumed by jealousy.

A few months into the marriage, the three travel to Ujjain to a fair. On the way, the two men behead themselves in the Kali temple. The pregnant Padmini, afraid that she might be blamed for their deaths, then, decides to kill herself. However, Kali stops her and offers to bring the men back to life. Padmini rearranges the heads so that Devadatta's head is on Kapila's body and vice versa, and asks the goddess to do her magic. Kali brings the two men back to life. An ascetic who mediates the conflicting claims from both men to be her husband grants her wish. The ascetic's decision is the same as that given by the king Vikranaditya in the *Kathasaritsagar* and by Kamadamana in *The Transposed Heads*. The dolls reveal that Padmini has given birth to a disfigured son and that she has now begun dreaming about Kapila again.

Back in the forest, Padmini finds the rough and muscular Kapila again. He is surprised to see Padmini, and she reveals her desire for his well-muscled body. Devadatta, armed with a sword and two new dolls, finds the lovers, and the two men decide to kill each other since their love for Padmini cannot be reconciled. Padmini then decides to commit sati. She entrusts the boy to Bhagavata and leaves instructions for him to be raised both as Kapila's son and as Devadatta's son.

Along with the main story, the story of Hayavadana is also an important part of the drama *Hayavadana* is a man with a horse's head. Hayavadana is desperately seeking to get rid of this strange head about to be performed. The Bhagavata of the

play then guides him to the same temple of Kali where the characters in the play will get their heads transposed.

Kali has answered his praying by eliminating his human physical characteristics altogether. Hayavadana and the boy in the last scene, in effect complete each other, the one as a human child returned to the fold of society and the other, as fully animal.

II. Myth Criticism

Myth

Myth is the underlying universal pattern of man's understanding of life. Man's right understanding of life and the world within the broader parameter of universe is his understanding of myth. There are countless gods, heroes and demons who represent men, and are the manifestations of man's quest to the unknown, sacrifice of the hero, transformation of energy liberation of self, and so on. Myth of one culture at one time is myth of all cultures of all the times. It is not merely of the past. Nor is it of only of future, but the past and non-past together and thus eternal.

Myths are traditional stories, prevailing beliefs and conceptions in the society and its authors are unknown. By nature these stories differ from one place to another but usually they describe the actions of Gods. Gagley says regarding myth:

Myths are stories of anonymous origin, prevalent among primitive people and by them accepted as true, concerning supernatural beings and events, or natural beings and events influenced by supernatural agencies. Myths are born not made. They are born infancy historical individual but to the imaginative efforts of generations of storytellers.

(1)

The definition of Gagley about myth suggests that myths are primarily certain types of story. Myths are stories in which some of the chief characters are gods and other supernatural beings. They are larger in power than humanity because very seldom, myths describe the historical events too. The action takes place in a world above or prior to ordinary time. Hence, like the folktales, myth has an abstract story pattern. It also presents the writers with a readymade framework that allows them to

devote all their energies to elaborate its design. Myth also helps the writers to express their feelings and attitudes towards life.

Myths are universal. They are found in every part of the world. Despite their bewildering variety they share certain common characteristics. For instance, they create gods in the form of man. These similarities arise because man everywhere faces the same basic problems and asks the same questions. He wants to know, why the human beings are? What they are? Why nature behaves to them as it does and how cause and effect are linked? It is human nature to seek meanings as well as causes for everything that arises in consciousness.

Although science has, now, answered many of the 'how' questions, the reasons 'why' man's relation to the cosmos and the nature of life force within him remains basically unanswered and unanswerable. The telling of myths becomes a vital necessity not simply to appropriate the super-human powers, but to stimulate the creative and spiritual gifts. Image making is one of the most important characteristics of myth. Peter A. Angeles, in this connection, states:

Myth presents a nonscientific history of the thought of people explaining in an anthropomorphic, animistic form such things as the certain of the universe, the structure of the universe, and the source and nature of human and natural phenomena; expresses the socially significant events of people as well as their social consciousness; and expresses and reinforces, by ritual and other means, the social bonds, customs, and cultural ties of a people. (198)

Similarly, myth also explains the phenomena of nature by drawing the parallels between the simple things. For instance, fire has something in common with

sun, the source of heat and energy. Gold is shiny and resembles with the sun in color. But it does not rust with weather and it also indicates immortality. So, out of common physical characteristics, symbolic equations are also made and one thing takes the quality of another.

Every culture in the world, past or present, has a mythology. Myth projects the sense of a culture's holy past and the deeper powers of the surroundings. So, it is the soul of every culture. Myth, in its complexity, is inseparable from an individual. As myths are communal and collective they bind a nation or tribe together in common spiritual activities and psychological beliefs. It's a clue to what may be permanent or universal in human nature. It aims at the transformation of individual from his local historical conditions to a universal experience.

Likewise, myths not only arouse highest intellectual interest but address the feelings as well. Myths now are the sources for art, culture history, poetry, etc. Every ideal dwells in them. Linking myth with culture, Irmtrand Stellrectht says:

In myth, the main characters are superhuman figures. Gods or cultural heroes appear who turn into protagonists of culture; or, there are extraordinary persons who lived at the time of the creation of man and culture. Myths are bound to persons and localities, yet they are connected to a timeless past . . . they may change over periods of time in form, function, and meaning. The myth told by one group as a message of a serious nature, may be told by a neighboring group in the slightly changed form of a profane and entertaining tale. The cause of such a change in meaning is to be seen also in the change of faith: an original epoch of faith is followed by later times, in which myths serve different purposes and hold different meanings. (84-85)

In this way, the mythical conceptions are the universal beliefs. Myths from different cultures tell the same story of creation, quest, descent and resurrection. Some myths are global in nature and tell the stories of origin of earth or of humankind and destruction. Some myths tell the personal journeys of life and miseries. As a whole, myths are concerned with describing the stories of humankind concentrating on the idea of birth and death. Plato was the first who discussed about myth, saying it fictional stories. After few decades a Sicilian philosopher named Euthemerus called myths the fictionalized accounts of historical events.

Myth shouldn't be understood as something false. It is not the concept obviously contrasted from reality. Myths are the narratives that give meaning of human life, men's behaviours and relation with others. For example, invulnerable Achilles, meditative Amitabh, beautiful Helen, passionate Paris, hunting Diana, beautiful Venus, strong Apollo, frenzied Dionysus and others are the heroes and heroines of the occidental myth. Likewise, the powerful female Durga, the Invincible Indra, genius Krishna, enlightened Siddhartha Gautam Buddha, wise Yudhithira, intelligent Arjuna and others are the heroes and heroines of the oriental myth. They are men, gods, demigods and god's men who bring together humanity and divinity. The themes of quest, creation, love, death, regeneration, heroism, transformation, adventure, etc, essentially retain the universal pattern in the form of myth. Understanding myth is the right process of understanding life in the universe.

Critics on Myth

Myth criticism is an interpretive approach to literature that analyzes mythic structure and themes as they are recurrently manifested in literary genres and individual works. Myth critics argue that certain basic mythic figures and situations both permeate and transcend individual cultures; they find such universal patterns in

works from cultures throughout the world. Northrop Frye is perhaps the best known myth critic.

Because many writers use the old stories or myths in their works, criticism shows the identification of recurrent phenomena and the explication of the ways in which they function in literary works. Myth happens to be a powerful story as ornamental overtones and as narrative structure of the literary work. Myth provides writers with a world of total metaphor in which everything can be identified with everything else.

There are many writers who relate their writing with the mythical ideas. In their works, we can trace clearly the structural principles of myth. They always present the mythical beliefs. Literature helps to describe the mythical beliefs in a lively way. Their works give us the sense that many literary works are derived directly from specific myths. But, the study of myth and literature is not confined to such one to one relationship. At first myth being a structure describes a society's religious beliefs, historical traditions and cosmological speculations. In short, the whole range of its verbal expressiveness is the matrix of literature and major works return to it.

At first, to describe the relationship between myth and literature, it is necessary to mention a name associated with the study of myth in this century that is Sir James Frazer. He describes the conception of myth in his famous book, *The Golden Bough*, "Myth is the principal habit of mind that person conceives from the preexisting ideas, it is an addition to magic" (120). Malinowski the follower of Frazer is not so much disposed to insist on the distinction between pre-existing and current ideas. He assumes that myth-making function is universal. He describes, "Myth making function is neither quasi-scientific nor quasi-historical, rather mythical stories

serve as a practical cultural force, completely shaping and motivating the moral and social life of a group" (618).

Similarly, the psychological critics describe the mythical approach as the symbolic meaning of characters and actions in order to understand the unconscious dimensions of an author's mind, a character's motivations or a reader's response. Freud often touches on this affinity between myth and the unconscious notably on his account of Oedipus complex. It is the classical example of suppressed, forbidden desires, here, the sexual desire of the son for his mother. Behind these forbidden desires stand the experiences of early mankind. At that time, certain activities, like kindling fire or ploughing, held sexual connotations. Therefore, dream and myth express the regression to the early development of mankind. According to Stellrecht, "Interpretation of dreams is thus a decoding, just like the interpretation of myths. Additionally, Freud placed myths in another context: Certain symptoms of his patients he discerned to be motifs in myths" (94). Thus he links myth with the unconscious.

One of the remarkable modes is archetypal which has been prominent aspect of interpreting myths. Some anthropologists such as J.G. Frazer, Carl G. Jung, Northrop Frye and Joseph Campbell have contributed a lot to the development of this sort of perceptive. Despite the fact that they slightly differ from each other, they share certain commonalities that are archetypes. The term archetype denotes recurrent narrative designs, patterns of action, character types, or images which are said to be identifiable in a wide variety of works of literature, as well as in myths, dream and even ritualized modes of social behaviour.

C.G. Jung, the disciple of Freud, has approached myth with a modified attitude towards the unconscious. Apart from the individual unconscious in which suppressions accumulate, there is for him also a collective unconscious which holds

the experience of the species *homo sapiens*. It has been carried along from the depths of ancient times. It is the structure of the unconscious that Jung calls an archetype. This structure of the psyche is to be found universally as an inheritance of evolution. Like Freud, he does not view literature as a disguised form of libidinal wish fulfillment that parallels the fantasies of whose patterns recur in diverse culture, an expression of the archetypes and describes the four stages of human life: birth, maturity, death and rebirth and argues that these lie in the collective form of human unconscious. He describes in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, "Archetypes are instinctual and primordial. They are the radical elements of all myth and for all the fantasies and dreams of men" (78). Therefore, myths are a mirror of the diverse development experiences of the peoples.

In other words, myths are the means by which archetypes, essentially unconscious forms, become manifest and articulate to the conscious mind. Jung indicated further that archetypes reveal themselves in the dreams of individuals, so that we might say that dreams are "personalized myths" and myths are "depersonalized dreams."

Northrop Frye is perhaps the best-known critic who puts the typical form of myth on the conventions and genres of literature. Frye writes about myth, in his book *Anatomy of Criticism*:

As a type of story myth is the form of verbal art, and belongs to the world of art. Like art and unlike the science, it deals not with the world that man contemplates, but with the world that he creates. The total form of art, so to speak is a world whose content is nature but whose form is human, hence when it imitates nature, it assimilates nature to human forms. (659)

In terms of narrative, Frye states, "Myth is the imitation of actions near or at the conceivable limits of desires, these desires may or may not be attainable" (136). These are sometimes fulfilled and sometimes not, and, thus, our area of activity is very much related with the mythical world. We try to interpret it sometimes from the allegorical point of view. In allegorical view, myth is an expression of the realities of relationship among man, nature and universe. Mythical stories move from fantasy to life-likeness. The problem is that the structural principal of literature in myth is isolated. According to Frye, there is a solution for making the myth plausible. He says, "the device to solve these problems is Displacement" (136).

With the device of displacement we make the myth acceptable, for instance, the story about Persephone says that once Pluto was inspecting his dark realm and was seen by Venus and Cupid. The mother asked her son to dart with his arrow. Cupid included Pluto in his dominion. He was shot right into the heart. Consequently, Pluto carried Persephone away. Demeter, mother of Persephone, cursed the soil when she saw the fallen flowers dropped by her daughter on the way. Thus the fertility was lost in the land because Persephone had taken nothing with her but pomegranate. In this context, Bullfinch says:

This story of Persephone and Demeter is now an allegory. The mythical story is displaced that Persephone signified the seed corn. She is carried off by the god of the underworld, it re-appears, that is, Persephone is restored to her mother. Spring leads her back to its light of day. The allegory is that of death and revival. (85)

Moreover, Frye identifies myth with literature, asserting that myth is a "structural organizing principle of literary form" (341) and that an archetype is "essentially an element of one's literary experience" (365). He further claims, "Mythology as a

whole provides a kind of diagram or blueprint of what literature as a whole is all about an imaginative survey of the human situation from the beginning to the end, from height to the depth, of what is imaginatively conceivable" (102).

Frye postulates the whole realm of literature as an almost self-contained universe, a unique and massive product of the imaginative world. He identifies the human with the non-human world and its most typical result is a story about the God. To understand this, it is necessary to describe two terms: analogy and identity, which Frye has described to this effect. The first term, analogy establishes the parallels between human life and natural phenomena of the world. And, the second term, identity describes the action of individuals with the common experiences of humankind. In his view, the narrative aspect of literature is a recurrent act of ritual. In this connection he delineates in his essay, "Ethical Criticism: Theory of Symbols":

Narrative is studied by the archetypal critic as ritual or imitation of human action as a whole and not simply as a mimesis praxeos or imitation of an action. Similarly, in archetypal criticism, the significant content is the conflict of desire and reality, which has for its basis the work of the dream. Ritual and the dream, therefore myths are the narrative and significant content respectively of literature in its archetypal aspects. (1062)

In the same manner, the occurrence of mythical patterns is emphasized in literature rather than the artful manifestations of sophisticated writers. The commonly employed archetypal themes, images and characters in literature are death, rebirth, the heroic journey, the heavenly ascent, the search for the father, the scapegoat, the earth goddess, and the fatal woman and so on. For instance, the death-rebirth theme is often said to be the archetype of archetypes. It has been claimed that this archetype occurs

in primitive rituals of the king who is annually sacrificed. In the book *The Hero with A Thousand Faces* (1988), Joseph Campbell has developed the archetypal approach in terms of journey covered by the mythical hero. Stated broadly, he has developed hero archetypes. In this regard, he remarks, "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man" (30).

Campbell has projected the standard path of the mythical adventure of the hero's structural representation: separation initiation-return. Speaking clearly, the term separation refers to the departure of hero from the common world, and the initiation to the penetration to some source of power, and a life enhancing return. Significantly, the hero gives up completely all the attachment to his personal limitations, idiosyncrasies, hopes, and fears. He no longer resists self-annihilation that is prerequisite to rebirth in the realization of truth. His personal ambitions being totally dissolved, he no longer attempts to live but willingly relaxes to whatever may come to pass in him. He becomes anonymity. Henceforth, his self completely remains free from bodily bondage. The hero, being master of the two worlds, gets back to society and restores the world with the help of the boon, achieved in his journey.

Next prominent aspect of mythical exploitation is in distorted form. Myths are deformed and lose their original sense. In this regard, Campbell points out, "When civilization has passed from a mythological to a secular point of view, the older images are no longer felt or quite approved" (248). To prove the above stated statement, better illustration would be from Greco-Roman culture, which states that the ancient gods were reduced to mere civic patrons, household pets, and literacy favourites. When myth is misinterpreted, its life goes out of it. For instance, temples

become museums, and real sense of myth is dissolved. Ultimately, mythical distortion leads to the cultural loss of any society.

III. Recycling of Myth in *The Transposed Heads*

Thomas Mann has adopted an eleventh-century Indian parable of Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara* about a woman who switches the heads of her husband and her brother in his novel, *The Transposed Heads*. By manipulating the traditional meaning of the parable, he has removed the parts of the Hindu culture from the context that defines them. He has recycled the Hindu myth portrayed in *Kathasaritsagara* for his own purpose. He wants to strengthen the case against the Hindu claim that they and their culture are pure, original and superior, dealing with the real Aryan invaders and their interactions with the indigenous people of India. Similarly, Mann has empowered the feminine in the Hindu divine circle through the characters of Kali and Sita. Again, he slightly reverses the Brahmanical claim that the mind is superior to body.

Before analyzing the novel, it would be better to state what is in the original story. It describes how a washer man, Dhavala, falls in love with Madansundari, the beautiful daughter of another washer man, and marries her. While he is enjoying the fruits of a happy marriage, Madansundari's brother visits them and requests that all three make a trip to the festival of Goddess Paravati. Dhavala enters the great temple of Pravati empty-handed and in a feat of religious excess beheads himself with the sacrificial sword as an offering to the goddess. Madansundari's brother discovers the beheaded corpse and in his grief beheads himself with the same sword. Madansundari becomes anxious when both men fail to return and enters the temple. Confronted by the horrific sight before her, she, too, decides to end her life and fashions a noose from vines in order to hang herself. However, the Goddess, pleased with their devotion, stops Madansundari from committing suicide and allows her to bring the two men back to life by reattaching their heads to their bodies. Unfortunately, in her

haste and excitement, Madansundari puts her brother's head on the husband's body and vice-versa. The story ends with a riddle the king must answer correctly: Which of these two mixed up people is now her husband? The king replies that the one with the husband's head is her husband because the head rules the limbs and personal identity depends on the head, thus, affirming the superiority of intellect over emotion and spirit over body.

Mann drops the entire frame story of king Vikramaditya and treats the mythical tale as a narrative. In his story, Shridaman, the frail Brahmin, falls in love with Sita, the lovely daughter of Sumantra. Nanda, a cowherd and close friend to Shridaman, arranges his marriage to Sita. Distinct caste and racial differences, thus, appear for the first time. Following their marriage, the couple and Nanda travel to Sita's village and enroute, come across an abandoned Kali temple. Here, as in the Indian version, the two men behead themselves and Sita prepares to hang herself. The divine voice of the Goddess Kali interrogates Sita and we learn that Sita, although married to Shridaman, is attracted to the strong-bodied Nanda. Apparently, Shridaman's suspicions regarding her illicit desire caused him to commit suicide. Following this confession, the Goddess allow Sita to bring both men to life and then, in her excitement, Sita transposes the heads.

Unlike all the previous versions, Mann does not stop immediately after the transposition of the heads. Sita, Shridaman and Nanda ask the ascetic Kamadama to mediate and describe who will take Sita home as his wife. The ascetic, after some doubt, decides as King Vikramaditya decided in the earlier versions, and Sita begins her life anew with the Shridaman head on the physically attractive Nanda-body. However, under the influence of the Brahmin head, the well-forged cowherd body slowly withers into the frail Shridaman body over time. Sita, now the mother of a

near-sighted son, Samadhi runs away from Shridaman back to Nanda. Shridaman confronts the two lovers and the three decide that the only solution to their troubles lies in death. Shridaman and Nanda strike each other dead and Sita immolates herself on their burning pyre leaving Samadhi as the only remnant of the triangle of lovers.

To illustrate the interwoven strands of Aryan and Dravidian in the story, Mann depicts the discussion between Shridaman and Nanda about a previous incident at the village in which the worship of Indra, King of Aryan gods, was displaced by a pre-Aryan worship of the lands and Mountain, Bright Peak overlooking the village. In the novel, it is not Nanda who proposes the worship of Bright Peak. It is, in fact, the Brahmin Shridamann who advocates the worship of the mountain and pastures, while the simple minded Nanda, fearful of Indra, votes against the abandonment of the Aryan rituals. In course of their conversation, we see Nanda claiming the fact that Indra, god of the Aryans, comes with the nuisance and his thanksgiving service is no longer the right thing. Nanda further says, "As for us, we will sacrifice to the cows and mountains and forest meadows because they are our true and proper deities. And it seems to us that is what we had done before Indra came who proceeded the coming one, and burst the strongholds of the aborigines" (17).

Nanda says that they "will pay homage to [their] Bright Peak and his pasters, in [their] own countryside with pious rites" and "To Bright Peak we will sacrifice the perfect to the herd, to him bring offerings of sour milk, flowers, fruit, and uncooked rice" (17) By blurring the Hindu view that Indra gives the rain to the people, Nanda gives the fact that "afterwards the herd of cows, wearing garlands of autumn flowers, shall rove over the mountain turning to him their right flanks, and the streets shall below to him with the thunder voice of clouds have with rain" (17). The very vision of Nanda shows that the concept of rain giving by God Indra in Hindu myth was already

there in the culture of the Dravidians before the coming of the Aryans in Indian sub-continent. This conversation, thus, makes it clear that the two cultures are so intertwined that the Aryan recognizes its Dravidian elements to be just as sacred as their own elements.

The novella opens in a post-Vedic age in a small village called Walfare of Cows on the Indo-Gangetic plain. It is a time when "the integration of the Aryan and indigenous Dravidian tribes causes confusion within the social structures" and in this post-consolidation phase of the Aryan conquest, "the Dravidians and their deities have been incorporated into Aryan society both physically and spiritually" (Mahadevan, 27-28). Mann gives us a temporal anchor for this story in his introductory paragraph:

At the time when memory mounted in the mind of man, as the vessel of sacrifice slowly fills up from the bottom with drink or with blood; when the womb of stern patriarchal piety opened to the seed of the primeval past, nostalgia for the Mother reinvested with new shudderings the ancient images and swelled the number of pilgrims thronging in the spring to the shrines of the great world-Nurse; at such a time it was that two youghs, little different in age and caste, but very unlike in body were vowed to friendship. (1)

As Mann wants to point out that the Dravidians and their deities have been incorporated into Aryan society both physically and spiritually, "Proto-Aryan Male deities such as the dark-skinned Krishna and Shiva undergo this process of adaptation. Krishna, the seductive cowherd youth and stealer of butter, who frolics with wives and maidens, becomes a statesman and the giver of Bhagavad Gita "(Haberman 5). He becomes one of the ten incarnations of Vishnu and, thus, enters the mainstream Hindu pantheon. Mann describes Nanda as the physically attractive cowherd, who is "a

Krishna manifestation, dark of skin and hair" with the " lucky- calf lock on his breast" (5). The obvious reference to the dark-skinned sexy cowherd god whose playful antics drive women crazy with desire also serves to remind us that, like Nanda, Krishna, a god of the Dravidian people, is incorporated into the latter Hindu pantheon. The name Nanda itself is a symbol that Mann uses to strengthen this connection. In Hindu literature, as expressed by Anand Mahadevan, " Nanda is the cowherd Yadava, chief and surrogate father of Krishna. Thus, Nanda in Mann's *The Transposed Heads* functions as the Aryanized divine seducer Krishna's mortal counterpart" (28). Likewise, Shridaman is described as a son of Brahmin or an Aryan.

Mann describes their friendship that "the fine-lipped, soft bearded Shridaman found pleasure in the rude primeval Krishna-nature of the thick-lipped Nanda" While Nanda "felt impressed by Shridaman's light complexion, his noble headpiece and correct diction" (6). Thus, by bringing the two characters one from Aryan and another from Dravidian and showing their fast friendship, Mann uncovers the reality of interaction between them. After describing the physical and spiritual inclinations of the two friends, Mann comments on the closeness of their friendship, "All in all the two were like Shiva in his double manifestation, lying sometimes as deed, a bearded ascetic, at the feet of the goddess, but sometimes erect, a figure in the bloom of youth stretching his young limbs as he turns towards her"(6).

Mann, thus, remarks that the two are so close that they could be considered two forms of the same being. Shridaman, here, represents the symbol of the corpse-like body (Shava) lying prostrate under the feet of the goddess Kali. Nanda, on the other hand, symbolizes "the erotic aspect of the god Shiva seducing the goddess Kali" (Mahadevan 30).

In the novel, Mann has shown so many instances to prove his thesis that the Hinduism in the Indian sub-continent is regressing away from its Aryan source and becoming heavily influenced by the pre-Aryan indigenous cultures that it supposedly replaced. Even the Brahmans gave up their rites and laws of life. For Shridaman and even his father Bhavabhuti "the Brahman way of life was only a memory, for Bhavabhuti's father had deliberately abandoned it at the stage of householder, which follows that of student and never gone on to be either forest hermit or ascetic to the end of his days" (5). Perhaps, they had not been content with the life on gifts from pious knowledge of the Vedas. So, they "had opened up a good business in mull, silk and calico, camphor and sandalwood" (5). Instead of following the service of the gods, they became the merchant in the village of Welfare of Cows.

Furthermore, Mann uses exaggeration, irony and humor to remove the parts of Hindu culture from the context that defines them. His use of subtle irony lies in the role of Kamadamana. He sets the role of Kamadamana in such a way that we can guess about the hollowness and futility of a Hindu's pride. Actually, Kamadamana is recognized as the vanquisher of desire but Mann sketches his character as the most desired one. When the characters reach Kamadamana, they find him completely absorbed in his austerities who bears the deep cynicism about the ascetic way of life. Kamadamana's behavior is erratic and ambiguous at best and perverted at worst.

When he sees the beautiful Sita, he can't control his self and utters that she "is a woman grown, whom the senses find glorious; slender as a vine, with soft things and full breasts, . . . Her navel is beauteous, her face lovely with partridge eyes and her breasts, I repeat, are full and upstanding" (81). Mann obviously makes no effort to conceal the excitement that Sita's presence arouses in the ascetic. Kamadamana has fallen prey to the beauty of the full-breasted Sita by exposing his lack of sexual

control. Mann undermines his asceticism and his ability to solve the moral dilemma that Schridaman narrates to him on behalf of the group. Kamadamana, being a spokesperson of Mann, speaks, "asceticism is a bottomless vat, because the temptations of the spirit are mingled therein with the temptations of the flesh, until the whole thing is like the snake that grows two heads as soon as you cut off one"(83). In this way, Mann proposes to withdraw the unnecessary and contradictory parts from the Hindu culture.

Mann points out another crucial issue in which the feminine in the Hindu divine circle is empowered. According to Anand Mahadevan:

Mann clearly realized that the Dravidian gods and goddesses in fact subverted the Hindu pantheon and changed the substance of the Aryan religion through their very presence in it. This is mirrored in the changes he made to the social structures represented in the story. Mann's heroine is endowed with a sexual energy that is bound unwillingly to a frail husband. This energy finally breaks loose and assumes its free feminine form, destroying her husband. (27)

Mann's presentation of these events recalls Kali who in the Parvati figure terrorizes the gods and the entire cosmos when her son Ganesha is killed. This highly sexual mother and fertility figure may have been domesticated. By linking his Sita with this pre-Aryan goddess, Mann suggests, "Kali's very presence in the Vedic Pantheon ironically subverts the Brahmanical religion" (27).

Mann's empowerment of Sita and Kali in the novel subverts the authority of the patriarchy in Hindu society and recalls the matriarchal indigenous culture in the pre-Aryan society. As Kali was the Mother Goddess of the Dravidians, her presence

in the Hindu pantheon shows the power and glorification of her even in the Hindu society. Mann exploits Kali's power to depict not only her destructive side but her power of regenerating life. Regarding Her grandeur image and power David Kinsley writes:

. . . it is Kali who seems to dominate Tantric iconography, texts, and rituals, especially in left-handed Tantra. In many places, Kali is praised as the greatest of all deities or the highest reality The Yogini-Tantra, the Kamakhya-tantra, and the Niruttara-tantra all proclaim Kali the greatest of the Vidgas or divinity itself; indeed they declare her to be the essence or one form of Mahadevi. The Kamadatantra states unequivocally that she is attributeless, neither male nor female, sinless, the imperishable saccidannanda (being, consciousness, and bliss), Brahman itself. (121, 133)

Goddess Kali is she through whom the hero achieves success, she who grants the boon of salvation, and she who frees the devotee from fear itself. She is, thus, not only the symbol of death but also the symbol of triumph over death. By connecting these views Kinsley again views that "the figure of Kali conveys death, destruction, fear, terror, the all consuming aspect of reality. As such she is also a forbidden thing, or the forbidden par excellence, for she is death itself" (124).

Similarly, W.T. Elmore says, "the horrific, bloodthirsty, and highly sexual goddess of thieves is relegated to one of the many aspects of Parvati, the gentle daughter of the Mountain king Himalaya, who marries Shiva and is an ideal wife" (5). Mann also uses her power of both life and death in the novel, *The Transposed Heads*. By showing her such power and dominance in Hind divine circle, Mann precedes his endeavor to reveal the fact that the pre-Aryan culture and deities have a great

participation in the present Hindu culture. So, it is his serious blow to the so-called supremacy of Hinduism.

Another character powerfully depicted in the novel is Sita who is fully enjoying her femininity only by breaking her filth to her husband. Mann paints a picture of the sexual dissatisfaction that Sita feels with the corpse-like intellectual Shridaman and her longing for the fine-limbed, physically arousing Nanda. Sita explains all this in a conversation with the Goddess Kali. Mann clearly puts the Goddess's response as:

I, the Mother, find fleshly lust pathetic on the whole, and am of opinion that people are inclined to make too much of it. Anyhow, order there must be! . . . I, indeed, am Disorder; but precisely therefore I insist on order, and I must definitely protest that the institution of marriage be kept inviolate. Everything would get into a muddle if I gave rein to my good nature. (64)

Generally, in the Hindu tradition a woman is taught to understand herself primarily in relation to others. She is taught to develop her character in accordance with others' expectations. It is the society that puts demands on her and that does not allow developing a unique, independent destiny. A central demand placed in women is that they subordinate their welfare of others. Hindu women are taught to cultivate an attitude that identifies their own welfare with the welfare of others, especially that of their husbands and children. Unlike such women, Sita, the heroine of Mann, is bold and chooses the life what she wants ignoring the norms and values of the society. The sexual dissatisfaction that women hide generally within, is disclosed by Sita in front of the Goddess as well as in her activities, too. She easily expresses her sexual appetite to the goddess that her unhappiness began when her most liked Nanda wooed

her for his friend Shridaman who is unable to please her. She shows her grief that when she sleeps, Nanda comes to her dreams and she desires "his act of love" and "godlike embrace" and she "had to see him by day, and dream about him by night, instead of Shridaman" (61), she would look at "his breast with the lucky-calf lock, his narrow hips and very small hind quarters" (61). She again imagines that Nanda for her, "was like the prince Gandharva Citraratha in his unearthly charm, like the love-god in his sweetest guise, full of beauty and youth, ravishing to the sense, adorned with heavenly ornament, with necklaces of flowers, sweet odors, and all loveliness-Vishnu, come down to earth in Krishna's form" (62).

When Goddess Kali listens to the pathetic voice about unsatisfied sexual life of Sita, she grants the lives of husband and his friend with the command of transposing their heads. After transposing the heads, though it is the mistransposition, she benefits fully because she with the extreme joy, says, "I count myself the happiest of men. I have always wished I could have a bodily form like this . . . I am seized with unrestrained delight" (71). In this way, Sita gets a life of happiness and pleasure unlike the pathetic character Sita in *Mahavarata*. She is revered as the model Hindu wife, who always remains loyal and steadfast to her husband. She is the ideal *pativrata*, the wife devoted entirely to her husband. In her selfless devotion and sexual fidelity, the *pativrata* nourishes an inner heart that both purifies her and provides her with a destructive weapon that can be used against those who might threaten her purity. But Mann discards such type of modality that cannot be found in any society. He, thus, stresses the necessity of the sexuality for human as important as the spirit.

In Hindu scriptures, Sita's self-effacing nature, her steadfast loyalty to her husband, and her chastity are highlighted. They have no value and position in the present society. Unlike her, Mann's Sita is shown in terms of her revolt regarding

sexual dissatisfaction and of her infidelity towards her husband, which is the reality that modern Hindu women are facing according to Thomas Mann. Gatwood says, "the divine Sita is the epitome of a spousified goddess. She is entirely defined by her husband and becomes the symbol promoting dharma in a monogamous marital relationship" (54). After all, "Sita in the *Ramayana* refuses to be seduced by the dark but incredibly handsome demon King, Ravana, who kidnaps her from the Dandaka forest" (Buck, 162). However, Mann uses his Sita to parody this ideal of marital fidelity. Thus, Sita travels to that same Dankaka forest to ask the ascetic Kamadaman to judge whom of the two men is Sita's true husband.

Furthermore, Kamadamana's later judgment is stated on the side of Sita. She has now gained for herself a husband with a fiery intellect and a physically attractive body to match. In this new husband "the seductive celestial Citraratha and the respected intellectual Jamadagni come together to create an almost divine human being, just as in Gothe's *Paria*" (Mahadevan 32). Mann's Sita, thus, freely and potently effects a transposition that she herself desires. Mann reveals that an immense sexuality allows Sita to gain power and standing in Hindu society. By repressing female sexual expression in *dharmic* structures, the patriarchy limits female participation at socio-political and cultural levels. This deep perpetuation of Aryan male structures is revealed by Sita's subversion of the husband figure.

Thus, Mann wants to reverse the original philosophical message of Hinduism that the head wins over the body. Here, through many instances, he shows the Hindu myth, which always posits the intellect, or head as powerful, is prone to fail in practicality. He is of the opinion that this myth is reversed in the present time as he views that since myths perpetuate certain ways of thinking, evolving social and cultural contexts demand that myth evolves with time. In the novel, head-governed

laws and thoughts are shown as failure. Ascetic Kamadamana's views on desire, Sita's grief-stricken life with sexual dissatisfaction, Goddess Kali's support of Sita, Andhaka's birth and his physical status are some examples.

After the second judgement of Kamadamana, Sita gets the husband as she desires and they spend "their days and nights in full enjoyment of the pleasures of sense" (90). She, with full gratitude, finds herself as "the most highly favoured woman in all the world, for she possessed a husband who, so to speak, consisted of nothing but principal features" (91). Not only Sita, but also the transformed husband, Shridaman also becomes "proud and glad" (91). But after sometime, the gradual change in his body to the original shape, their misfortune begins. They find no pleasure and satisfaction from his former thin body. So, Mann is of the opinion that the personality with perfection is "born, of course, of spirit and sense combined" and out of this perfection "it is idle to imagine the bliss of paradise- in other words, life in the pleasure grove called Joy" (93). So, sense is there with the ideas of brilliance and beauty in the phenomenon in his view.

Mann comments on the philosophical message of Vedas that bliss experienced in all the universe is of two kinds only: the joys received through the body and those through the redeeming peace of the spirit. It follows directly from the doctrine that the things of the spirit and mind are not synonymous with the ugly, nor need they be, for they take on beauty through knowledge of the beautiful and love of it, and express that love as spiritual beauty. So, Mann proposes his own doctrine, on this thing:

So, their love is by no means an irrelevant and hopeless thing; for by the law of attraction of opposites the beautiful yearns in its turn towards the spiritual, admires it and welcomes its wooing. This world is not so made that spirit is fated to love only spirit, and beauty only

beauty, . . . the world's goal is union between spirit and beauty, a bliss no longer divided but whole and consummate. (98)

In this way, from the above instances, Mann can be understood that spirit or head cannot exist alone, beauty or body is equally supportive to it. Knowledge alone cannot bring the happiness and pleasure in man's life. What is necessary for it is the bodily fulfillment, too. So, Mann, here, reverses the Hindu idea that mind is superior to body.

As a whole, as myths serve different functions in different social and temporal contexts, Mann understands myth as a social statement rooted in an ancient cultural period that must be adapted if it is to be used in modern contexts. Myths evolve with time. His work, thus, both modernizes myths and reflects on this process of evolution. In doing so, he reveals the power of myths in the hands of a revolutionary artist.

IV. Recycling of Myth in *Hayavadana*

Though Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana* deals with the same story from the *Kathasaritsagara* that Thomas Mann treats so richly in *The Transposed Heads*, it is not based simply on the eleventh-century Indian text. It reworks Mann's version of the story as well. Karnad himself writes in his book's introductory note, "The central episode in the play the story of Devadatta and Kapila, is based on a tale from the *Vetalpanchavimshika*, but I have drawn heavily on Thomas Mann's reworking of the tale in *The Transposed Heads* and grateful to Mrs. Mann for permission to do so" (vii).

The main plot of the play begins with Kapila, who finds his best friend Devadatta despondently dreaming about Padmini. Kapila goes to arrange Devadatta's marriage to her. Although Kapila is attracted to her, he, nonetheless, finalizes the match, and Devadatta and Padmini are married. The marriage is unhappy from the beginning. Padmini is herself attracted to the strong-bodied Kapila and Devadatta is consumed by jealousy.

A few months into the marriage, the three travel to Ujjain to a fair. On the way, they rest between two temples, one devoted to Rudra and the other to Kali. As on the other versions, the two men behead themselves in the Kali temple. The pregnant Padmini, afraid that she might be blamed for their deaths, then decides to kill herself. However, Kali stops her and offers to bring the men back to life. Padmini rearranges the heads so that Devadatta's head is on Kapila's body and vice versa and asks the goddess to do her magic. Kali brings the two men back to life.

In the confusion that ensues after the transposition of heads, Padmini makes it clear that she wants to be with the Devadatta-head and Kapila-body. An ascetic who

mediates the conflicting claims from both men to be her husband grants her wish. The ascetic's decision is the same as that given by the king Vikranaditya in the *Kathasaritsagar* and by Kamadamana in *The Transposed Heads*.

With his new body, Devadatta returns to the city with Padmini and they begin a blissful marital life. At this point, Karnad introduces two dolls that Devadatta presents to Padmini as gifts for the expected child. Through their own dialogues, the dolls describe the dynamic changes occurring in the family. They document the change of Devadatta's body from its rough muscular Kapila-nature to a soft pot-bellied Brahmin body. They reveal that Padmini has given birth to a disfigured son and that she has now begun dreaming about Kapila again. The dolls also "become the theatrical device through which Padmini sends Devadatta to Ujjain, so she can use his absence to sneak away with the child to the forest where Kapila resides" (Dodiya 183).

Back in the forest, Padmini finds the rough and muscular Kapila again. He is surprised to see Padmini, and she reveals her desire for his well-muscled body. Devadatta, armed with a sword and two new dolls, finds the lovers, and the two men decide to kill each other since their love for Padmini cannot be reconciled. Padmini, then, decides to commit sati. She entrusts the boy to Bhagavata and leaves instructions for him to be raised both as Kapila's son and as Devadatta's son.

Along with the main story, the story of Hayavadana is also an important part of the drama. Hayavadana is a man with a horse's head. Hayavadana is desperately seeking to get rid of this strange head when he stumbles on to the stage where the play about the transposed heads is about to be performed. The Bhagavata of the play, then, guides him to the same temple of Kali where the characters in the play will get their heads transposed.

Hayavadana returns to the stage, now with the body, as well as the head of a horse. Kali has answered his praying by eliminating his human physical characteristics altogether. Nevertheless, he still has a human voice and is singing patriotic songs. Hayavadana begins laughing when he sees the actors and Bhagavata. His laughter and human voice infect the mute child with laughter, and the child begins to speak and laugh normally. In a cyclic transformation, the child's laughter causes Hayavadana to lose the last shreds of his human nature and he begins to neigh like a horse. Hayavadana and the boy in effect complete each other, the one as a human child returned to the fold of society and the other, as fully animal.

Karnad begins his play by drawing the attention of the audience to the stark inconsistency in the figure of the elephant-headed god. If indeed the head rules the body, why is Ganesha not like an elephant in nature? How does this god made of the dirt of Parvati's body and with a head replaced by Shiva signify the idea of harmony and perfection?

Usually, the Hindus at the outset of any business invoke Ganesha. Before moneylenders start on a new journey, they supplicate his welfare, and invoke his aid. In this context, Om Lata Bahadur remarks on Ganesha:

He is the God of progress and enlightenment. He removes all obstacles and, therefore, any and all auspicious occasions like a marriage, childbirth, buying a house or building or even starting on a journey, the name of Ganesha is invoked first, only then the rituals or work are started. He is a very benevolent God. He is very wise. . . (63)

The elephant-headed God has been presented at the very outset of the play to question the basic assumption behind the original riddle that the head represents the

thinking part of the person, intellect. The Bhagavata voices Karnad's forthright question:

An elephant-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 distorted body, is the Lord and Master of Success and Perfection? Could it be that Mangalamoorty, intends to signify by his very appearance that the completeness of God is something no poor mortal can comprehend?

(14)

The play, *Hayavadana*, meaning the one with a horse's head, is named after this character. It is the story of this horse-headed man, who wants to shed the horse's head and become human, within which the tale of the two friends is framed.

Hayavadana, too, goes to the same Goddess Kali, and wins a boon from her that he should become complete. Karnad remarks, "Logic takes over. The head is the person. Hayavadana becomes a complete horse. The central logic of the tale remains intact, while its basic premise is denied"(14).

Ironizing the elephant-headed Ganesha, Bhagavata points out that he fulfills other's demand but remains unfulfilled and incomplete, "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?" (Karnad 71)

Likewise, Karnad has created two strong characters: one represents physicality and the other intellectuality to show the equal and significant combination of both the

body and the mind. His intention is to subvert the hierarchy of the mind and the heart in Hindu culture where mind is set to be center. In this connection, Karnad has blurred this hierarchy and shows that both are equally important in human life.

The culture that posits the mind in high degree and the heart in low degree is subverted through the beautiful depiction of fast friendship between Kapila and Devadatta. Though they are one mind, and one heart in their friendship, we can see the good combination of physicality and intellectuality to build a perfect human being. Devadatta finds himself fortunate to have a friend like Kapila. And kapila says to Devadatta, "You call yourself my friend. But you haven't understood me at all... Don't you know I would do anything for you? Jump into a well-or walk into fire. Even my parents are not as close to me as you are. I would leave them this minute if you asked me" (12).

Kapila is so attached to his friend Devadatta that he cannot live a single minute without him. He feels lonely in his absence. He admires his friend more than his own family. When he finds Devadatta dead in the temple of Kali, he laments, "If you had asked me to jump into fire, I would have done it. If you had asked me to go and drown in a river, I would have gladly done it . . . I can't live without you. I can't breathe without you Devadatta, my brother, my father, my friend . . ." (30).

Lamenting his death, Kapila sacrifices himself by cutting off his head by the same sword that Devadatta had used to die. He shows his deep friendship with Devadatta how he is attached to him.

The two friends Kapila and Devadatta kill themselves and Padmini laments over their death because she has the fear in the society that she will be accused of the murder. So, she puts her grief to Kali who gives the life of both again seeing the

innocence of Padmini. They are restored to life with the exchanged heads. When their heads are transposed, they scream with the sense of joy. They find more pleasure and fantastic moment in their new form. According to them, they “were only friends” and now they “are blood relations, body relations” (35). And they along with Padmini sing with joy and pleasure:

What a good mix!

No more tricks!

Is this one that

or that one this?

Ho! Ho! (56)

The cause of their joy is not only the mixing of their heads but also the fact that they become one with head and body. Each has got perfection, the perfection of physicality and intellectuality. Before the transformation, they were incomplete because each one had only one quality either physicality or intellectuality. But now, after the transformation, they get what they want, the good combination of both. It is the vision Karnad wants to apply in the drama that he finds incomplete and inadequate in Hindu culture.

Bhagavata remarks that Padmini "is the daughter of the leading merchant in dharmapura" and in her house "the very floor is swept by the goddess of Wealth"(19). Likewise, in Devadatta's house, they have the Goddess of Learning. Bhagavata further says that after their marriage, "Padmini became the better half of Devadatta and settled in his house"(19). Their marriage shows the blending of materiality and intellectuality. Not only this, Padmini has such a sexual appetite that she runs towards her husband's friend to quench her sexual thirst after her husband couldnot give the

satisfaction. In this sense, their marriage is also the blending of body and mind.

Devadatta, a man of head or intellectuality, wants such sexual figure to give the shape of perfection in his life. It is also an instance of blurring the supremacy of the head.

So, Karnad's views are clear that both the mind and the body are necessary sides of human life.

After the transposition of heads, Devadatta's head gets the body of his friend Kapila and Devadatta screams with joy because he finds the well-limbed strong body which he always felt lack in his life. He becomes the good combination of intellectuality and physicality i. e. body and heart. When Padmini finds this form of her husband, her happiness has no limit. She gives thanks to God and calls Devadatta as "my celestial-bodied Gandharva...My sun faced Indra. . ." (41). Both are happy finding the amazing combination of the head and the body.

As the king Vikramaditya told in the old versions, Bhagavata has given the solution to the problem of choosing the right husband after the transposition of the heads. After the confusion, he declares, "As the heavenly Kalpa Vriksha is supreme among trees, so is the head among human limbs. Therefore, the man with Devadatt's head is indeed Devadatta and he is the rightful husband of Padmini" (40).

Though Bhagavata declares that head determines the human life and the recognition of life, only the rule or supremacy of head cannot give the satisfaction and stability in human life according to Karnad. Before the transposition of heads, intellectual head of Devadatta could not satisfy Padmini. As a result, she turns towards Kapila who has well-built strong body that is supposed by Padmini to fulfill her bodily needs.

What Bhagavata declares that the head is man's identity is quite ironical in the context of the drama. The head, which is declared to the husband of Padmini, has the body of Kapila too. She is happy because her most desired well-fined body of Kapila is combined with the new husband. What she desires is achieved and she becomes happy. So, it is the deliberate purpose of Karnad to view that the head and the heart (body) go hand by hand. According to him, they both have the equal position in human life.

Karnad reinforces the vision of incompleteness if there is only one element either the head or the body. His characters feel this kind of incompleteness. Padmini suffers from sexual dissatisfaction because of the incompleteness of her husband. Her husband has only the head and lacks the well-fined body, so her infidelity is born out of this incompleteness. Likewise, Devadatta also feels the lack of being incomplete. Again Kapila realizes that the cause of his suffering and worry is his incompleteness. It can be seen from the conversation given below:

Kapila: Why shouldn't one? Why should one tolerate this mad dance of incompleteness?

Padmini: Whose incompleteness? Yours?

Kapila: Yes, mine. One beats the body into shape, but one can't beat away the memories in it. Isn't surprising? That the body should have its own ghosts-It's own memories? Memories of touch-memories of a touch-memories of a body swaying in these arms, of a warm skin against this palm-memories which one can't recognize, can't understand, can't even name because this head was not there when they happened . . . (57-58)

The purpose of completeness of Girish Karnad is seen at the last of the play. Incomplete Hayavadana becomes complete horse by the grace of Kali. Likewise, the child of Padmini can talk and is assimilated in the society. Karnad's characters finally "seek happiness at whatever level of completeness they are able to achieve rather than continue to seek one unified identity for themselves..."(Mahadevan 38).

In spite of the strong and deep-rooted norms and values in Hindu society, Padmini proves herself to be a strong and bold female character. Karnad also sets her boldness and empowerment amongst the male centered norms. She is presented as the King of her own desires in life. She is not under the feet of male or her husband but her insistence and desire make the male characters the dust of her feet. What she wants or desires is shown being fulfilled. She is proved as strong and bold as the Goddess Kali in the Hindu divine circle. It is Karnad's deliberate purpose to empower the feminine in Hindu conservative and male dominated society.

In course of conversation, about going to Ujjain fair, Devadatta is not willing to bring Padmini along with Kapila because he is jealous of the intimacy between them. The reason is that Padmini is attracted towards well-built strong-bodied Kapila for her sexual satisfaction. But Devadatta cannot resist in front of Padmini's insistence. He becomes lame in front of the will and pressure put by Padmini. He proves to be weak.

Padmini dares to put her expression freely whether it is about her sexual implication or about her will in any thing. She praises the qualities of Kapila even in front of her husband. She describes his amazing figure and expression. These features of a housewife in Hindu society are not supposed to come out.

In the Hindu society, a good wife is supposed to be the *pativrata*, the wife devoted entirely to her husband. It is believed that in her selfless devotion and sexual fidelity “the *pativrata* nourishes an inner heart that both purifies her and provides her with a destructive weapon that can be used against those who might threaten her purity” (Kinsley 71). The concept about women in Hindu culture always raises the issue of Sita in *Ramayana*. She is portrayed as the ideal Hindu wife, whose every thought revolves around her husband. For Sita, Rama is the center of her life. She is always steadfast in her loyalty to him. This myth has made the woman docile in the society.

But Karnad is aware of this biased aspect of our culture. He is of the opinion that woman should have the equal status with men and she also has her desires, wishes and activities. By delivering this view, Karnad empowers Padmini and makes her the master of her desires. She cannot hide her sexual appetite that is essential. She praises the things, which she likes, and she passes her time with him whom she loves.

Padmini is helped by the Goddess Kali to receive the life of her husband and his friend. She has sympathy to Padmini seeing her innocence and suffering in life. She easily understands the agony undergone by Padmini from her weak husband. So, Kali deliberately lets her transpose the heads of both so that she will get a perfect husband with intellectuality and physicality (head and body). This is a golden opportunity for her to be happy and to live a complete life. She is unsatisfied with her husband’s body but after the transposition, she finds her most favored body of Kapila in the form of her husband.

In Hindu society women are not allowed to make the choices of their desires. If they put their choices or they move in accordance with their choices, they are taken as immoral or spoiled women. But Karnad lets Padmini choose the life of her own.

She decides to die when she could not be happy with her husband. Even after the transposition of the heads, they both return to their original shape and unhappiness of Padmini begins again. After Kapila and Devadatta decide to kill themselves at last, she is also ready to die because she does not want to live being a widow. Seeing the possible tortures from the society in her widowhood, she easily chooses death.

After Padmini decides to die, she, without lamentation, requests Bhagavata to take care for her son and his well upbringing. After doing *namaskara* to Kali, Mother of all nature, she sets herself in the funeral pyre beside her husband and his friend. She boldly accepts the death for her own sake. So, Kanrad has given such lent of empowerment to Padmini. Glorifying the fearless and bold activity of Padmini when she easily caresses the death, Bhagavata remarks:

Indra is known for its *pativratas*, wives who dedicated their whole existence to the service of their husbands-but it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that no *pativrata* went in the way Padmini did. And no one knows the poet where she went sati. If you ask the hunting tribes who dwell in this forest, they point to a full-blossomed tree of the fortunate lady. They say that even now on full moon and on new moon nights a song rises from the roots of the tree and fills the whole forest like a fragrance. (63)

Raykar points out that the play presents the conflict between Apollonian and Dionysian polarities both at a socio-cultural and metaphysical level and suggests, “completeness or perfection is not possible if it is defined as a fusion of these two extreme polarities”(Dodiya 177). Padmini's actions underlie the subversion of the Apollonian principle as enunciated by Raykar. It is her Dionysian attributes that drive the plot of the play until the final death of the two men.

Padmini is consciously aware of her own desire for Devadatta and Kapila. And it is this desire and self-awareness that makes her completely different from Somadeva's Madansundari. The eleventh-century Madansundri has no personality and consciousness. She is little more than a literary device, used to make an interesting philosophical point. However, in the work of Karnad, it is the act of transposition that becomes the focus of the story. These changes of focus from abstract masculine thought to concrete feminine action is responsible for the supervision of the traditional meaning of the parable in the work.

V. Comparison and Contrast between *The Transposed Heads* and *Hayavadana*

Both the works, *The Transposed Heads* (1940) and *Hayavadana* (1972) are the documentations how an eleventh-century Hindu parable about a woman who switches the heads of her husband and his friend that was adapted by Thomas Mann, a German novelist and Girish Karnad, an Indian dramatist in their works. There are many similarities between the two works. However, some differences in purpose of the writers can be found out.

Comparison

Both Mann and Karnad understand myth as a social statement rooted in an ancient cultural period that must be adapted if it is to be used in modern contexts. Both agree with the statement that the myth evolves with time. Their works, thus, both modernize myths and reflect on this process of evolution. In doing so, they reveal the power of myth in the hands of a revolutionary artist.

Both the writers adopt the eleventh-century Hindu parable for the common purpose. Their purpose is to empower the feminine in the Hindu society, to subvert the supremacy of the head over the body and doing so, to show the double-edged characteristics of the prevalent Hindu assumptions. To strengthen their statement, they add their story in the original mythical tale. The original story ends with the transposition of the heads along with the king's reply about the rightful husband of the female character. But both the writers have woven another story after the previous one to empower their claim. The story of murdering of male characters by each other, of birth of a deformed child, of committing sati by female characters at the last, etc. is their own invention. Hence, their manipulation of the story serves to redefine completely the morals originally conveyed by the myth.

Mann and Karnad subvert the hierarchy between male and female and empower female character in the context of Hindu culture. Mann's heroine Sita, quite opposite to that of *Ramayana*, represents infidelity, loyalty and sexuality. She is made so bold and powerful because sexual satisfaction for the feminine does not exist within the paradigm of the docile Aryan wife in Mann's understanding. The feminine possesses a power that is fettered by Aryan social structures, collectively called dharma, and in Mann's work Sita can fully enjoy her femininity only by breaking her fealty to her husband. She does so by showing the sexual dissatisfaction that she feels with the corpse-like intellectual Schridaman and her longing for the fine-limbed, physically arousing Nanda. Sita boldly explains all this in a conversation with the Goddess Kali who is the image of unfettered female sexuality.

Like Mann's Sita, Padmini in *Hayavadana* is also portrayed as bold, and free female character that is considerably opposite to general Hindu assumption. It is her wifely role, which has come to serve not as a paradigm in Hindu mythology, legend, and folktale, which has defined Padmini and made her bold, free and independent amongst others. Padmini is the perfect model of independent female character.

Every thought of Padmini revolves around her own desires and benefits. For her, her husband is not the center of her life. She is not also the *pativrata*, the wife devoted entirely to her husband. In her selfish devotion and sexual infidelity, Padmini finds pleasure and nourishes her inner heart. Padmini's such characteristics show her boldness and freedom from the bondage of patriarchal norms and values.

In this way both Mann and Karnad are conscious about the role of feminine in Hindu culture and especially about Madansundari in the original story of Somadeva. She was presented as a suppressed, frail and docile female character in the original

tale. Quite opposite to this both the writers make their female characters bold, free and independent, and give challenge to the message of the original tale.

To present Goddess Kali as all-powerful and capable to give blessings to her devotees what they want is also the common motif of both writers. In *The Transposed Heads*, Sita gets her desired husband by the grace of Goddess Kali. She fulfills what she wants. Likewise, in *Hayavadana*, Padmini is benefited by her most sought after husband who has fine-limbed body and intellectuality. The horse gets perfection. All these are the result of the grace of the same Goddess Kali. So, the both writers know the importance and power of Kali in Hindu divine circle and aptly presents her characteristics in their works.

Another similarity that Mann and Karnad adapt is the subversion of the hierarchy of the head and the heart. In the original tale of Somadeva, the head remains in the supreme place that, according to the king's reply, the one with the husband's head is her husband because the head rules the limbs and personal identity depends on the head. So, they subvert this claim of superiority of head over the body. Though Kamadamana and Bhagavata respond for the supremacy of the head like the king's reply in the original tale, it is only the irony to subvert that claim.

To subvert the claim, Mann and Karnad suggest that completeness or perfection is not possible without the fusion of the head and the body. The actions of Sita and Padmini underlie the subversion of the Apollonian principle. It is their Dionysian attributes that drive the plot of the play until the final death of the male characters. Both female characters are consciously aware of their own bodily desires to fulfill their sexual appetite.

Contrast

Despite the similarities, there are some slight differences in the works of Thomas Mann and Girish Karnad. While the central episode of the play is borrowed substantially from Mann, Karnad “exaggerates the themes and motifs found in Mann’s *The Transposed Heads* maintaining for example, many of the caste and individual distinctions in Mann’s novella, but reinforcing them so that the characters become even more symbolic and less individualistic” (Mahadevan 35). Nanda, the cowherd and blacksmith, becomes Kapila, a wrestler and smith. Shridaman becomes Devadatta, a learned Brahmin and poet, whose head is always in the clouds. Sita is transformed into Padmini, the daughter of a rich merchant whose beauty exceeds even her sauciness.

Karnad also invents a frame story to exaggerate the literary themes and meanings in the central episode, and it is this frame that gives the play its name. Hayavadana, as the name suggests, is a man with a horse’s head. He is desperately seeking to get rid of this strange head, when he stumbles on to the stage where the play about the transposed heads is about to be performed. Bhagavata of the play then guides him to the same temple of Kali where the characters in the play will get their heads transposed. This incident forms the introduction for the tale of transposed heads.

Karnad is well aware of the ability of folk theater to subvert the traditional ideas:

The energy of folk theater comes from the facts that although it seems to uphold traditional values, it also has the means of questioning these values, of making them literally stand on their head. The various

conventions –the chorus, the masks, the seemingly unrelated comic episodes, the mixing of human and nonhuman worlds- permit the simultaneous presentation of alternative points of view, of alternative attitudes to the central problem. (14)

Karnad's use of masks led him to question the theme itself in greater depth. All theatrical performances in India begin with worship of Ganesha, the god who ensures successful completion of any endeavor. A young boy wearing the elephant mask, who then is worshipped, as the incarnation of the god himself, Ganesha's mask then says nothing about his nature, often represents Ganesha onstage. It is a mask, pure and simple. The elephant head also questions the basic assumption behind the original riddle: that the head represents the thinking part of the person, the intellect.

Furthermore, Karnad introduces two dolls that Devadatta presents to Padmani as gifts for the expected child. Through their own dialogues, the dolls describe the dynamic changes occurring in the family. The dolls also become the theatrical device through which Padmini sends Devadatta to Ujjain, so she can use his absence to sneak away with the child to the forest where Kapila resides.

The Transposed Heads, unlike *Hayavadana*, deals with the real Aryan invaders and their interactions with the indigenous peoples of Indian sub-continent. Mann's use of the cult of the mother-goddess predates the Aryan invasion of India. The evidences point that the Dravidians worshipped the female figures as productive and fertility icons. In contrast, the Aryans were a strictly patriarchal society, and their invasions of the Indian sub-continent displaced the matriarchal indigenous tribes. These subjugated tribes became the lower ranks of Aryan society and served as farmers, traders, menials, etc.

The opening setting of the novella, *Welfare of Cows*, on the Indo-Gangetic plain, shows the post-Vedic age when the interaction of the Aryan and indigenous Dravidian tribes had taken place. Mann wants to show that the Dravidians and their deities have been incorporated into Aryan society both physically and spiritually. His version of the story ironically shows that the Brahmins, tired of sacrificing Indra-destroyer of the indigenous people- want to return to the pre-Aryan practice of nature worship. So, Mann's intention is to show that the two cultures are so intertwined that the Aryans recognize its Dravidian elements to be just as sacred as their own elements. The fast friendship of Nanda and Shridaman, and the empowerment of Sita are also the elements that Mann strongly puts, to remove the over-arching ambiguity in Hindu society.

Though there seem slight differences in characterization, tools and medium, there is a common objective of both writers to show the modern and relevant definition of the original philosophical message of Somadeva's tale in *Kathasaritsagara*. To remove the ambiguity of Hinduism depicted in that tale, Mann and Karnad have woven the story in their own way and have established the concept against the claim that the head wins over the body, and against the female domination in patriarchal society. In doing so, they recycle the traditional norms of the tale.

VI. Conclusion

Somadeva's eleventh century tale of Madansundari is transformed into *The Transposed Heads*, a German novella, and *Hayavadana*, an Indian drama. Mann and Karnad are aware of the various functions that myth serves, and they carefully manipulated the parable of the transposed heads to serve their own purpose. As myths serve different functions in different social and temporal contexts, both the writers transform the Hindu myth portrayed in the parable.

Thomas Mann discloses the fact that the present Hinduism is the result of the collaboration or interaction between the Aryans and the Dravidians, the indigenous people of India. The claim of being pure, civilized and superior of Aryans is subverted in Mann's treatment. This is proved by the discussion, reconciliation and friendship of Nanda and Shridaman who are supposedly presented as Dravidian and an Aryan simultaneously. So, Mann presents a picture of the development of the Hinduism in a way. Not only this, Mann is aware of the role of the feminine in the Hindu culture and he skillfully uses this knowledge to empower Sita in *The Transposed Heads* quite opposite to Madansundari in the parable. Madansundari represents the true Hindu norms and values that she is presented as weak, suppressive and docile Hindu wife. So, Mann reverses the original philosophical myth about woman and doing so, exposes the nature of myth itself.

Likewise, Karnad is also conscious and interested to use the myth in his purpose. He supports the subversive tendencies of Mann. Karnad has also empowered the female character in his drama reversing the original status of Madansundari. Karnad's Padmini like Mann's Sita is bold, strong and free female character that always lives her life in accordance with her desires and wishes. She does not bow her

head into the feet of her husband. She rather becomes a challenge in the male dominated society.

Again, Girish Karnad, like Mann, reverses the Brahminical claim that the head wins over the body. He uses humor, irony and satire to prove his statement. He presents his characters and their actions to establish the statement that nobody can violate the nature and the head and the body go together equally. In doing so, he finds out some faults in Hindu culture. Shridaman's desire for sexually attractive Padmini despite his Brahminical upbringing, Sita's infidelity to her husband and her attraction to her husband's friend are some examples that prove the claim of Karnad.

Furthermore, both Mann and Karnad present the goddess as an unfettered female character in the patriarchal Hindu divine circle. Everyone is subversive to her. By presenting such character, they want to establish female as superior and capable.

Both Mann and Karnad, in this way, understand myth as a social statement rooted in an ancient cultural period that must be adapted if it is to be used in modern contexts. Myth evolves with time, so myths perpetuate certain ways of thinking, evolving social and cultural context. Their works, thus, both modernize myths and reflect on this process of evolution. Hence, they recycle the myth presented in an ancient parable.

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