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Abnormalities in Girish Karnad's Hayavadana**T. Mahendran***A.V.V.M.Sri Pushpam College, (Autonomous) Poondi, Thanjavaur, (T.N.) India***Abstract**

Girish Karnad's work *Hayavadana* contains some abnormalities. Abnormality is entirely related to psychology. Through psychoanalysis, abnormality is possibly brought out from literary text. Psychoanalysis is method for the investigation of mental process, inaccessible by other means. At the same time psychoanalysis is also a therapeutic method for neurotic disorders. The psychoanalysis has been gradually built on clinical observation and research accompanied by reflection and theoretical ideas concerning the structure of the psychic apparatus, the dynamic of mental processes, repression, resistance, transference, etc.

Key Words: Psychoanalysis, human behaviour, Child psychology, Adolescent psychology, Individual psychology, Educational psychology, Abnormal psychology

Introduction: Girish Karnad is a one of the foremost dramatists in India. He was born on May 19, 1938 in Matheran, Maharashtra. A multi-faceted personality, Karnad has earned international praise as a playwright, poet, actor, director, critic and translator. A number of the Indian habits and beliefs are reflected in Karnad's plays. This paper tries to unearth the causes and effects of mental disorders through abnormalities in Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana*. It illustrates how abnormalities are caused in human life which suffers from the problem of 'desire and lack' and also analyses various disorders hidden in the human psyche. The abnormalities present in the human unconsciousness can be corrected with a conscious effort.

Abnormalities: Girish Karnad's work *Hayavadana* contains some

abnormalities. Abnormality is entirely related to psychology. Through psychoanalysis, abnormality is possibly brought out from literary text. Psychoanalysis is method for the investigation of mental process, inaccessible by other means. At the same time psychoanalysis is also a therapeutic method for neurotic disorders. The psychoanalysis has been gradually built on clinical observation and research accompanied by reflection and theoretical ideas concerning the structure of the psychic apparatus, the dynamic of mental processes, repression, resistance, transference, etc. Psychoanalysis includes knowledge acquired from psychic unconscious research and analysis. Such knowledge has gradually made up a new body of science called psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis is also applied to the study of social, cultural, and religious phenomena. In this later aspect, demanding for a re-evaluation of the mechanisms and meanings of culture, psychoanalysis has penetrated the consciousness of the wider public beyond its therapeutic limits. It is form of therapy, which aims to investigate less people's phenomena. But psychoanalysis can be applied to the study of social, cultural, and religious phenomena. Literature is about society, culture and religion. So psychoanalysis can be used to interpret literature. As Peter Barry says, "Psychoanalytic criticism is a form of literary criticism which uses some of the techniques of psychoanalysis in the interpretation of literature". (*Abnormal Psychology p.120*)

Man has always strived to know himself and his environment. Subjects such as philosophy, psychology, and other basic and applied sciences have been instrumental in this task. Psychology, especially, has helped in the study of human behavior in relation to the environment resulting in a better adjustment and adequate development of the individual for happy and contented life. The task is gigantic. Psychology for its wider application and usefulness has, therefore, been divided into different branches covering specific areas and fields of human behavior and activities. For example, child psychology, adolescent psychology, individual psychology, educational psychology, abnormal psychology etc.

Abnormal psychology has been various defined. According to Page, abnormal psychology is a sub-division of the subject psychology, which is limited to the study of the mental processes and behavior of abnormal people. Mahoney defines abnormal psychology as the study of deviation or variance from a so-called normal pattern. The above definitions have a common understanding and realization that abnormal psychology is a specialized branch or field of a discipline which deals with the behavior and experience of the abnormal people. Abnormal psychology helps in protecting themselves from situations or conditions that leads to maladjustment and behavioral disorders.

"Lord Ganesha is brought out:

Elephant – headed Herambha
Whose flag is victory,
And who shines like thousand
suns.
Husband of Riddhi and Siddhi,
Seated on mouse and decorated
with a snake,
Single-tusked destroyer of
incompleteness,
We pay homage to you and start
our play. (*Hayavadana*, p.1)

The definition of what constitutes 'abnormal' has varied across time and across cultures, and varies among individuals within cultures. Today, persistent abnormal functioning is often associated with a mental disorder. Of course, literature cannot provide either the theoretical or practical basis for

understanding and treating specific cases of abnormal behavior, but it does complement psychology in giving a different kind of understanding of such behavior. Literature yields valuable information, for example, about personality dynamics, about mental disorders prevalent during a particular historical period, and about the inner experiences of those who have undergone such disorders.

Abnormalities in Hayavadana:

Of all the plays of Karnad, however, it is Hayavadana that represents and symbolizes the playwright's discerning analysis of human problems, encompassing both the pre-and post-marital stages, from choosing a husband or a wife, through giving birth to children, and giving up one's ghost. The portrayal of Padmini is astoundingly humanistic in itself, though the hybrid 'child' Hayavadana carries the weightage. His pathetic story is no doubt enchanting but his questions are more enlightening. His end is ridiculous enough but he leaves the stage with rich thoughts for a more enduring positive attitude to life. It is he who asks more questions and represents everyman's predicament of the search for unattainable perfection more dramatically and authentically. The fact that his is a story invented by Karnad himself for the purpose of double perspective is indicative of the playwright's profound concern for the imperfect moral called man.

"The main plot begins with a meeting between two friends, Devadatta and Kapila. At this meeting, Kapila finds that Devadatta is disturbed.

Devadatta reveals that he has seen a beautiful girl with extreme beauty:

"Don't! Please. I know this girl is beyond my wildest dreams. But still I can't help wanting her – I can't help it. I swear, Kapila, with you as my witness I swear, if I ever get her as my wife . I'll sacrifice my two arms to the goddess Kali, I'll sacrifice my head to lord Rudra...." (*Hayavadana*, p.14)

Hayavadana has a personal strain. He has said that he was acquainted with the family of one woman and two men, one husband and another friend. The women loved both of them and used to confuse their names, which dramatized in the episode of the transposition of heads. Given the nature of Karnad's plays and his background, it is possible that the other plays too have such personal meaning for Karnad. However, the significant fact is that all his plays have a direct contemporary social relevance.

Hayavadana occupies a unique status in the humanistic vision of Karnad. First, it encompasses three worlds of experience: the divine, the human and the animal. Within the human, the play includes the experiences of men, women, children as well as of the city and the wilderness. Second, the play presents the archetypal mother earth, teeming with desires for life and flowering the lotus of love for perfection and completeness. Third, Karnad's pro-vision of the child in the

modern world is commendable. Despite his Brechtian alienation effects, sympathy is generated for Hayavadana who becomes a horse, and the child that learns to laugh. The tragedy of the adults is left behind and the comedy of the children is looked forward to. Though the irony is felt, the iron will of Karnad asserts itself giving colour of hope to Karnad's humanistic vision.

Of all the women characters in Karnad, Padmini in Hayavadana is the most enchanting woman who wages a war against the patriarchal order of command and contentment. By her pungent honesty, she is able to achieve the impossible dreams of a perfect man, though for a brief period. She walks out of her house with her son to the forest to seek Kapila, her dream rider. Though she falls a prey the patriarchal society, she proves her worth and viewpoint before she enters the fire.

The ironic presentation of the most powerful Indian Goddess is the most deflating aspect of the play. Initially the Goddess is found sleeping, when both Devadatta and Kapila cut off their heads. She wakes up from her sleep when Padmini's turn for suicide comes. The Goddess puts all three unfortunate beings through a series of cruel difficulties and then finally drives them to their death. This ironic presentation of the divine intervention negates the need for gods and goddesses. Thus, Karnad seeds to suggest that it is better for human beings not to seek divine guidance because both the mediators and the divinities are sadistic and

exploitative. Thus, Hayavadana, debunk the false structure of certain dominant beliefs and practices but affirm the reality of human life in its real motives.

Strikingly, the 'Yakshagana' techniques have beautifully blended with the themes of Hayavadana. For example, the worship of Lord Ganesha, the incomplete and imperfect god, a mere technical requirement of 'Yakshagana' becomes very significant thematically. Similarly, the Bhagavata, the traditional stage manager and narrator of 'Yakshagana' plays multiple roles, including that of a listener to Hayavadana, who interrupts the main play. Of course, the Bhagavata performs his traditional functions of introducing the characters, filling the gaps by his narration, singing songs at appropriate situations, along with the Female Chorus, and helping the characters when necessary. He is also an important complement of the play, when he comments on the inner thoughts of the protagonists. His role of singing is shared by the Female Chorus, which is a notable innovation in Indian drama.

“On seeing the mental agony of Kapila, however, she changes her mind suddenly: “What's wrong with me? I'm perfect. I had a headache this morning. But layer of ginger-paste took care that. Why should we cancel our trip for a little thing like that?”
(*Hayavadana*, P. 24)

Another aspect of the convergence of technique and theme is the use of masks in case of Hayavadana and the two friends, Devadatta and Kapila. Mask is

a technical device that can be used for certain characters and their characteristics. Hayavadana, for instance, has the mask of a horse head. The Bhagavata mistakes it for a mask and is annoyed with Hayavadana for disrupting the play with such foolery. When the Bhagavata and is unable to pull out the mask, however, he realizes that the equine mask is Hayavadana's real head. This incident underscores Karnad's theme that "mask is face", (*Indian Imagination of Girish Karnad p.47*) that is, the mask one wears is no different from what one is.

In Hayavadana, Girish Karnad presents some characters in ambiguous nature of human personalities. Therefore, a psychoanalytical study of the play will be of help in understanding some of the critical problems like abnormalities found in the play. Through Hayavadana, one can understand that Karnad is attracted to the myths, histories and folk stories for personal reason. He is excited by "the universal characteristic of certain recurrent archetypes – problems, characters, situations, themes and so on, which make his play remarkable" (*The Beginning Theory p.54*). The problems, which Hayavadana, Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini have, make the author more admirable. The excited characters, which make the play more interesting among the readers, are like Hayavadana, the dolls, etc. The excited situations are like Kapila's first encounter with Padmini, the situations of transposition etc keep the readers away from boredom.

In this play, the characters Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini are as normal as they seem to be. Devadatta and Kapila are skilled and very popular in the city. Padmini, she is capable of establishing satisfying relationships with others and her emotional and social reactions are adequate. But still, there are some abnormalities among them. If one who keenly observes, he could find that, everyone in this world is abnormal. Everyone has some kinds of abnormality in him. In particular situation, their abnormality is visible. But very few are able to recognize that in what way he is abnormal. It is possible, to some extent, to identify abnormality in others. But very few are able to identify abnormality in themselves. The necessity for the people to identify abnormality in them is to protect from situations or conditions that lead to maladjustment and behavioral disorder. Here Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini if they had found their abnormalities early, they would have saved themselves.

Conclusion

Abnormality is present everywhere. Everyone in this world is abnormal in certain situation. The frequency and the effects determine and measure the abnormality. A person, who is able to establish satisfying relationships with other people and whose emotional and social reactions are essentially adequate and appropriate is able to maintain a harmonious friendship and the society also accepts him. He is also a law abiding citizen. He respects and adheres to the rules and conventions of his

culture. Regarding personality, he is able to control his emotion. Although he has frustration, conflict, and hardship in his life, he is not greatly disturbed by his misfortunes. So, in everything, he is alright and he can be certified as normal. Though he is considered as normal, he may be abnormal too. He may be considered as normal by his people, friends, colleagues etc. But his wife knows about his abnormality.

Karnad suggests that the supernatural beings can not help human beings unless the people help themselves by accepting the psychological limitations imposed by

nature. He adds more that reconciliation with one's self and one's environment is the best course of action for the incomplete and insatiable human beings. For the attempts of persons to achieve completeness and perfection usually end tragically.

Abnormality doesn't allow reconcile with one's self and one's environment. This leads to distress and destruction of one's life. Man does not learn from history but some individual men and women do. Those who understand their psychological limitations are normal and others make a mess of their life.

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