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Hayavadana: A Postcolonial Study

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Abstract:

Postcolonialism defines the freedom and political emancipation of the colonized people from colonizers, who imposed imperial power on the colonized to overpower their head and mind. Postcolonialism is a continuous process of resistance and deconstruction and it is existed in the issues of power, subordination, race, gender, equality and class welfare. In Hayavadana, all characters suffer from identity crisis. Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini all are in quest for identity, completeness and craving for fulfilment. Girish Karnad presents 'identity crisis' in three levels – divine level, human level and animal level. Lord Ganesha is presented 'incomplete' as he has elephant's head and human body. Hayavadana, a son of the Princess of Karnataka, who was married to a white stallion and he was born with a horse head and human body and suffers from identity crisis. In the temple of Kali, Padmini mixes up heads of Devadatta and Kapila i.e. Devadatta's head with Kapila's body and vice versa. After mixing up heads these two men suffer from identity crisis and they become like the natives of the colonized country with western knowledge, who are neither natives nor colonizers but in between. Hybridity is a disputed and widely employed word of Postcolonialism, commonly refers to any mixing of East- West and the creation of new transcultural forms. And Hybridity is existed in every character in Hayavadana.

Keywords: *Emancipation, colonized, colonizer, deconstruction, imperial power, identity crisis, incomplete, Stallion, natives, Hybrid.*

The term 'Postcolonialism' refers to the effects of colonialism on cultures, society of the colonised people. Postcolonialism defines freedom and political emancipation of the colonized people from colonizers, who imposed imperial power on the colonized to overpower their body and mind. Postcolonialism is inextricably related to the Imperialism and exploitation of the marginalised people. Colonialism makes the natives 'others' were exploited economically, politically, and culturally by the colonizers and even lost their mind to satisfy the colonizers. Postcolonialism has been defined as *"a body of writing that attempts to shift the dominant ways in which the relations between Western and Non-western people and theirs worlds are viewed."* Postcolonialism is a continuous process of resistance and deconstruction and it is existed in the issues of power, subordination, race, gender, inequality and class welfare. Most prominent authors and theorists of Postcolonialism are Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, who all tried to expose and deconstruct the racist and imperialist nature of European.

Postcolonialism deals with the dilemma, sufferings and pain of the colonised people and the craving for fulfilment and completeness. In Hayavadana, Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini all are in conflict and are in quest of fulfilment and completeness. Life after Postcolonialism, especially after WWII, becomes incomplete and the people were in conflict and illusion. People were craving for identity, fulfilment, moral values etc. They alienated themselves from both, East and West identity. People suffered from identity crisis, fulfilment, alienation, feelings of incompleteness. They seemed like they were in nowhere neither natives nor Westerns. The East-West encounter brings enormous changes in the lives of Postcolonial people. In Hayavadana, Girish Karnad presents 'incompleteness' in three levels – divine level, human level and animal level. From the very beginning of the play, we become familiar with the word 'incompleteness'. Lord Ganesha is presented as incomplete because he has elephant head and human body .Bhagavata gives an introduction of Lord Ganesha as 'incomplete'- *"An elephant's head on a human body, a broken tusk and a cracked belly-whichever way you look at him he seems the embodiment of imperfection, of incompleteness."*

Hayavadana, a son of the Princess of Karnataka, who was married to a white Stallion and he was born with a horse head and human body. Hayavadana suffers from identity crisis and craving for completeness. He regrets for his incompleteness to Bhagavata –

But what a forehead! What a forehead! If it was a forehead like yours, I would have accepted anything. But this! . . . I have tried to accept my fate. My personal life has naturally been blameless. So I took interest in the social life of the Nation – Civics, Politics, Patriotism, Nationalism, Indianization, the the Socialist Pattern of Society. . . I have tried to everything. But where's my society? Where? You must help me to become a complete man, Bhagavata sir. But how? What can I do?

(Lines 302-309)

Bhagavata suggests Hayavadana to go to the Kali of Mount Chitrakoor. He goes to the Kali and begs for completeness in front of the Kali. But instead of a complete human being, he becomes a complete horse, but he still remains human voice. Padmini's son lacks childish behaviour i.e. joy, laughter, communication etc. He remains silence all the time, but he breaks his silence after seeing the laughing horse, Hayavadana. The tragic song of the boy does a miracle and Hayavadana attains completeness by getting the horse voice i.e. – 'neighing'.

The three main characters Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini all are presented as incomplete in some ways. Kapila who has a strong Physique lacks intellectuality. Devadatta who is a poet; comely in appearance, fear in colour; an intellect lacks physical strength. Padmini who is married to Devadatta wants the best of them and suffers of unfulfilled. She wants Devadatta's head and Kapila's body and alienated himself from both of them. In the temple of Kali, Padmini mixes up the heads of Devadatta and Kapila i.e. Devadatta's head with Kapila's body and vice versa. After mixing up the heads Kapila and Devadatta suffer from identity crisis. They become like the natives of colonized country with western knowledge who are neither natives nor colonizers but in between. Although Padmini becomes satisfied for getting Devadatta's head and Kapila's body, but she is disillusioned after sometimes. As time goes by, Devadatta's body starts distorting and he loses his strong body which was borrowed and returns to his original forms. On the other hand, Kapila tortures his body to shape in earlier form to alive in the jungle and never accepts Devadatta's body. Padmini loses her interest in Devadatta and again starts thinking of Kapila. This time Padmini's lust leads them to a dual and they chop off one another's head. Padmini's son also suffers from identity crisis, in the words of Padmini – *"My son is sleeping in the hut. Take him under your care. Give him to the hunters who live in the forest and tell them it's Kapila's son. They loved Kapila and will bring the child up. Let the child grow up in the forest with the rivers and the trees. When he's five take him to the Revered Brahmin Vidyasagara of Dharmapura. Tell him it's Devadatta's son."* (Lines – 2225-2232)

Hybridity is a disputed and widely employed word of Postcolonialism, commonly refers to any mixing of East and West and the creation of new transcultural forms. In Hayavadana, Hybridity is presented in all the characters. Hayavadana, the main character in the subplot, longs for completeness as he got a human body with horse head. He goes to the temple of Kali to become a complete human being. But Kali makes him a complete horse instead a complete human being and he is disappointed when he finds that the human voice still remains. In the main plot, mixing up of heads, Devadatta's head with Kapila's body and vice versa, make them hybrid. This Hybridity makes Padmini fulfilled just for a while as she starts thinking that she gets the best of two men, Devadatta's head with Kapila's body. Day by day Devadatta loses his hybrid body and distorted to earlier form as he is subordinated to his mental activities. Kapila, on the other hand, to survive in the jungle whips his body to be shaped like earlier. Like the colonized people who borrowed western intellect to become superior and lose their native identity and become hybrid instead of western.

Kapila and Devadatta becomes hybrid after mixing up their heads. They do not have their original identity, this is well explicit in the following dialogues of these two hybrid men, -

Kapila – Do you remember how I once used to envy your poetry, your ability to imagine things? For me the sky was the sky, and the tree only a tree. Your body gives me new feelings, new words – I felt awake as I'd never been before – even started writing poems. Very bad ones, I'm afraid. (They laugh)

There were times when I hated it for what it gave me.

Devadatta – I wanted your power but not your wildness. You lived in hate – I in fear.

Kapila – No, I was the one who was afraid.

Devadatta – what a good mix – no more trick. (They Laugh)

(Lines – 700-711)

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