CHAPTER – III

KARNAD’S EMANCIPATED WOMAN

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A man is said to be liberated or freed when he is free from rigid social conventions or when he has the right to do as he pleases. In other words, he should not be bounded by society at any cost. On the other hand, it is clear that only man-made laws control his fellowmen. He wants to suppress or oppress others because of his selfishness. Everybody knows that a child is born-free in a society. Therefore, what matters here is whether an Indian woman enjoys liberty amidst her social compulsions. Usually in myths and legends, women are portrayed as submissive, pious, all enduring whereas men as chauvinists and totalitarians. In contrast to the traditional way of portrayal, Karnad poses women as bold and courageous in order to deconstruct the false image of women being projected. This chapter searches for a possible perspective of women’s emancipation with special reference to the feminine characters presented in Hayavadana and Bali: The Sacrifice.

Hayavadana is based on Thomas Mann’s Die Vertauchten Kopfe (Transposed Heads) which in turn based on the Vetala Panchavimshika included in Somadeva’s Kathasapritasagara, or otherwise called as Brihatkatha Saritsagar, an ancient collection of Sanskrit stories.

Usually, the Vetala story is meant for posing riddles at its end, in order to test the intelligence and wisdom of King Vikrama. The story
in the myth is as follows: Dhavala, a washerman, marries a beautiful girl, Madanasundari. One day, they go to attend a festival in a city with Sundari’s brother. On the way, Dhavala excuses himself and goes to the temple of Goddess Durga (Kali). There he cuts off his head out of piety. On seeing this horrible sight, Sundari’s brother also kills himself. Consequently, with a sense of foreseeing, Madasundari is also about to kill herself. At this critical moment, Goddess Kali rescues her by directing her to replace the heads. In a state of excitement, Sundari exchanges the heads and trunks resulting in confusion of identity. There arises the question of her rightful husband that is to be answered by King Vikrama. “The answer given in the Kathasaritsagara is: since the head represents the man, [so] the person with husband’s head is the husband.”

Heinrich Zimmer’s version Vetalapanchavimsati entitled The King and the Corpse is a tale of a girl and two childhood friends. The maid married one of the two (friends). But the marriage was not happy. This tale was taken up as the source by Thomas Mann and was further developed in his The Transposed Heads. It is necessary to know the story of him as Karnad has taken his source from it. A brief summary of Transposed Heads is as follows: Shridaman, a Brahmin by birth but Vaniya by profession and Nanda, a man from cowherd are very close friends. Shridaman falls in love with Sita whom he happens to see when the two friends travel together. Nanda agrees to act as a messenger for his friend. Sita accepts the proposal and marries Shridaman. Some months later while Shridaman, Nanda and Sita are travelling together in a cart to the
house of Sita’s parents, they lose track, come across a temple of Kali and halt. Shridaman visits the temple alone and induced by an incredible urge, he offers himself to the Goddess. Nanda goes in search of his friend. He gets horrified on seeing Shridaman’s corpse out of fear of blame, he kills himself. Sita realizes and prepares to hang herself. At that moment, Goddess Durga appears and chides her for her act and then grants life to the two dead bodies. Sita, in her excitement mismatches the heads. Naturally the basic question arises: Who is her rightful husband? Mann brings his relentless logic through the hermit to bear upon this solution. “If the head is the determining limit, then the body should change to fit the head.” Nanda therefore decides to go away from Sita. On the other hand, Shridaman’s head begins to control Nanda’s body gradually, and the body of Nanda looses its toughness. Thereafter, Sita begins to pine for Nanda, to such an extent, she sets out to meet him carrying her son Andhak. After a long and strenuous journey she finds him at a sylvan surrounding in the forest. They spend the day and the night in heavenly bliss. Next morning, Shridaman meets Nanda and Sita in the forest. He suggests that they three should perform Sati. Sita thinks that if she lives the life of a widow, Andhak’s future will be spoiled. Instead if she performs Sati, he would become a Sati’s son and his social image would be elevated. So, she gives her consent to perform Sati and burns herself on the funeral pyre of her two husbands. “At the end of Mann’s version, the bodies have changed again and adjusted themselves to the heads so perfectly that the men are physically exactly as they were at the beginning....” This again leads to the unsolved problem of incompleteness.
Karnad has taken the story, as it gave scope for the use of masks and music. He wants to highlight the real inner person to the world outside. Of these three versions, Karnad’s intention of choosing Mann’s version particularly and specifically is to give prominence to Indian woman. Besides, Thomas Mann’s story is a well-developed and well-knitted plot. Another reason is that in Somadeva’s version, ‘incest’ is obvious which is considered to be an expression of obsession globally. Karnad himself has hinted on the prohibited incest in his *Introduction to Three Plays* while he speaks about a play by Arthur Miller in which incest is present. “[... ] Most of the audience entirely missed the element of incest [...]” In addition to that, Claude Levi-Strauss has discussed prevalence of incest even among the Red Indian tribals. It is undeniable that the incest prevails all over the world. But it is considered as a taboo in the minds of people. Karnad’s choice of his myths has a dual purpose. One is to establish that the basic human qualities in human have not changed in spite of civilization that man claims to have achieved. The other is the restoration of the lost myths from Puranas, Vedas and Literatures that reflects the minds of the Indians. The recasting of Mann’s tale and the reinterpretation of the Vetala’s myth to suit the present situation is the playwright’s exclusive endeavour. It is essential to remind that he has chosen the horse-mask for his story, as horse is a symbol of fertility, which was popularly known as a *Horse Pooja* to enhance fertility in the Vedic period.
In Shakespeare's plays one can see his subtle way of handling the main and sub-plots together to bring out the theme of the plays emphatically. Likewise, Karnad has also presented 'play within a play' to emphasise the theme. In other words, he has specifically used myths and legends as a medium to express his views. For instance, in Tughlaq, the story of Aziz and Azam goes parallel to the story of Tughlaq. In Fire and the Rain, the story of Paravasu and Aravasu runs parallel to the myth of Indra and Vritra. In the present play, Hayavadana story goes parallel to that of Devadatta and Padmini. One must note here that the play derives its title from the sub plot of Hayavadana. The story is about a man with a horse head (Haya=horse; Vadana=face).

When Bhagavata, the narrator of the play, interrogates Hayavadana for his unusual sub-human birth, the latter narrates the story. Hayavadana is the son of Princess of Karnataka and the White stallion. The Stallion was formerly a celestial being. Due to some act of misbehaviour he was cursed to become a horse. The stallion carried the Princess of Arab to the Swayamvara (selection of groom), which was conducted by the Princess' father. Suitors from all countries such as China, Persia, Africa and Arabia participated in the auspicious occasion. The Princess saw all the suitors but nobody impressed her. To the dismay of her father, she fainted on seeing a White stallion. Consequently, she expresses her insatiable desire to marry the stallion. The marriage resulted in the birth of Hayavadana. After fifteen years of married life, the cursed stallion turned into a Gandharva who expresses his wish to take his wife
with him to the heavenly abode. To his horror, the princess was not happy over his transformation to human being and expressed her strong urge to live only with the Stallion. On hearing this, Gandharva became very angry and cursed her to become a horse, which ran away happily into the forest. Thereafter, the Gandharva left for his heavenly abode, leaving behind Hayavadana to his destiny.

Kamad in his play points out the relevance of Bhagavata and also instructs the present day audience and readers regarding the relevance of the spirit of Bhagavata which itself has mythical values. Karnad's Bhagavata or narrator is an important character in the play. His role is multifarious and vital in the play without which the performance would be deficient. His roles are varied, at times he acts as the conductor of the play, at some other times he interacts with the actors and directs them rightly to find solution to their problems. He is the leader and he introduces every character when a character is alone on the stage and seeks to express its feelings. It is he who listens to the problems or crisis of the characters, and who is a spokesman of the dramatist. Through him he offers relevant comments and fills up the communication gap between the dramatist, characters and the audience. Though the narrator Bhagavata resembles the role of Sutradhara in Sanskrit drama, there is a vast difference between these two. The narrator enjoys more freedom when compared to Sutradhara who appears only in the beginning of the play; he invokes God for the successful completion of the play whereas Bhagavata remains on the stage throughout the
play. "Sutradhara is typically "flat" character, fully knowledgeable but uninvolved. His wisdom distances him from the rest of the dramatist personae." It is noteworthy that Bhagavata acts as a promoter of the play. His comment facilitates the progress of the play.

In Hindu mythology, it is very common to come across half-animal, half-human characters. Many of the sub-human characters are only incarnation of God. God in the form of Lord Vishnu, one among the Hindu trinity popularly is known as the 'preserver' who takes innumerable births to save his devotees from the strong hold of demons. In all such births he assumes the shape of Pig, Fish, Lion and so on. These were called after the animal-heads as Varaha-Avatar, Macha-Avatar, and Narashima-Avatar respectively. Moreover, the two famous epics of the sub-continent namely The Ramayana and The Mahabharatha portray several such characters with animal head and human body. In The Ramayana, the monkey character named "Hanuman" helps Lord Rama. Hanuman is the disciple of Lord Rama and also a good friend of him. Hanuman is known for his unmatched strength, courage and intelligence and also for unparalleled intimacy towards God Rama (incarnation of Lord Vishnu). Among the mythological characters, Hanuman is a famous deity who even to this day is worshiped with love and reverence across the country. Other sub-human characters portrayed in the epic are Jambhavan (bearheaded), Jadayu (bird-headed) and other demonic characters. Hence, it is not unusual for inhabitants of India to be familiar with such characters in literatures. Myths and legends
reflect the culture and tradition of the native people. The prevalence of half-human and half-animal deities is common in India, because neither man nor animal is complete, only God is complete. Reason for the portrayal of God’s incarnation as half-animal and half-man is to emphasize man as a reflection of God. All the above mentioned animal-headed beings and bird-headed beings prove that the myths and legends of India portray such sub-human characters very commonly. Hindu Gods took their incarnations mostly in shape of sub-human characters, which would enhance Gods to fight on equal platforms with asuras or demons. It is said that the half-human and half-animal characters are universal. For example, Centaur is half-human and half-horse whereas Minotaur is of half-man and half-bull. Sphinx is a woman’s head on lion’s body. Hence Gods used these sub-human beings as an instrument to make attitudinal changes in the life of asuras or demons through their realization. In the same way, Karnad uses the invocation of Lord Ganesha, as an instrument to make a change in the attitude of the people who make all kinds of attempts to achieve completeness.

The invocation of God in the beginning of drama is a traditional and conventional start in a folk play. Usually, the folk drama commences with a traditional offering to Nandhi or Lord Ganesha. Karnad has deliberately chosen Lord Ganesha for the ritual worship in the opening scene of Hayavadana, as ‘He’ is the representative of three worlds: the divine, the human and the animal world. His combination with human body and animal head is an embodiment of incompleteness. The central theme of the play ‘the
search for completeness’ is symbolically represented through the figure of the Lord Ganesha. The traditional pooja of Ganesha is only a reflection of the main play, which gains a complementary meaning and significance. Lord Ganesha is worshipped due to the uniqueness found in the mammoth figure representing the combination of the ‘microcosm’, with the ‘macrocosm’ (i.e.) the man with the Universe. The elephant headed God, the cosmic person, expresses the unity of man; the ‘Microcosm’ with the ‘Macrocosm’ is pictured as elephant. Ganesha who has the head of an elephant on human trunk represents the essence of man who is more of an animal like in all his essential behaviour. The controversy is that

...[the] incomplete Lord Ganesha, who is the destroyer of incompleteness, is neither mentioned by Hayavadana in his list of Gods that he had consulted nor is referred by the Bhagavata who has fund of knowledge about gods and goddesses.9

The invocation of Lord Ganesha in the beginning of the play and the introduction of Hayavadana in the sub-plot and the transposed heads in the main plot all fall in line in one aspect (i.e.) incompleteness which is prevailing in the world of God, human and animal. Karnad emphasizes the theme of incompleteness through three different angles. Ironical representation of Lord Ganesha in the beginning gives the audience a hint that God who is incomplete in physique blesses his devotees with completion, which is emphasized in the words of Bhagavata in the play.
Could it be that this Image of purity and Holiness, this Mangalamoorthy intends to signify by his very appearance that the completeness of God is something no poor mortal can comprehend? Be that as it may. It is not for us to understand this Mystery or try to unravel it. (p.1)

The mystery that shrouds the figure of Ganesha is beyond human perception. Karnad’s Hayavadana reiterates the theme of incompleteness and the search for completeness by presenting the myth of Lord Ganesha. The same theme is reflected in the main plot through the character Kapila and Devadatta. The quest for a complete being is expressed through human beings and animal. Hayavadana, Devadatta and Kapila search for their completeness. Animal’s quest for completion is only physical and so it is attempted and achieved. Human’s quest for completion is both physical and psychological which is always yearned for and not attained. It is symbolically represented through Lord Ganesha the combination of animal, human and god.

The protagonist of the play is Padmini. At first, the playwright introduces her as an embodiment of beauty through Devadatta, even before she appears on the stage: “…born of Kalidasa’s magic description - as Vatsyayana has dreamt her. Kapila, in one appearance, she became my guru in the poetry of love.” (p.14) On seeing Padmini, face-to-face, Kapila acknowledges Devadatta’s.
I hadn’t thought anyone could be more beautiful than the wench Ragini who acts Rambha in our village troupe. But this one! You are right – She is Yakshini, Shakunthala, Urvashi, Indumati – all rolled into one. (p.16)

Kapila admires not only at her feminine charm but also at her logical arguments. He who is known for his physical prowess admits openly his verbal defeat and totally surrenders to the argumentative talent of Padmini and calls her as 'Mother'.

Kapila : *(Desperate.)* Please, please – call your father or the master or both, or if they are same, anyone…please call someone!

Padmini: No. No. That won’t do.

Kapila : *(Looking around; aside.)* No one here. Still I have to find out her name. Devadatta must be in pain and … He will never forgive me if I go back now. *(Aloud.)* Madam, please. I have some very important work. I’ll touch your feet …. My mother, can I atleast talk to your servant? (p. 89)

In order to bring out the power of speech that which is also the prime quality of an emancipated woman, Karnad deliberately portrays the characteristics of Padmini through her conversation with Kapila. Many critics like Ananda Murthy, accuse Padmini for her urge for physical pleasure. The question arises in the mind of readers, “Does she crave only for physicality or intellectuality?”
The strong and apparent reply is ‘No’ because “selfishness and sexuality find expression in her insatiable desire for both brain and brawn.” In the play, it is revealed when she speaks with Kapila.

Padmini: Be quite, stupid. Your body bathed in a river, swam and danced in it. Shouldn’t your head know what river it was, what swim? Your head too must submerge in that river – the flow must rumple your hair, run in tongue in your ears and press your head to its bosom. Until that’s done, you’ll to be incomplete. (p.127)

Every woman in society expects the completeness. It is the unexpressed thought that runs as an undercurrent in Padmini’s subconscious level. It is stressed once again that Karnad has presented the heroine not as a coward but as ‘the female principle, more bold, more frank, in demanding what will fulfill her...’ In the very beginning itself, Kapila grasps the essence of her character (i.e.) what she needs is a man of steel. Devadatta, who spends most of his time in reading books and performing the due rituals of his community, cares little for her worldly pleasure. For instance, during the proposal to visit the Ujjain fair, Devadatta tries to cancel the trip, as Kapila is about to join. But Devadatta hypocritically poses himself that he has more concern for Padmini’s health. “...I don’t like the idea of this trip. You should rest – not face such
hazards. The cart will probably shake like an earthquake. It’s
dangerous in your condition.” (p.22)

On the contrary, Kapila waits as a dog at her door to carry out
the orders from Padmini. In Devadatta’s words, “... he only has to
see her and he begins to wag his tail. Sits up on his hind legs as
though he were afraid to let her words fall to the ground.” (p.22)
Soon after knowing Padmini’s illness, Kapila rushes to return the
cart. At this juncture, Padmini comes out of the house and pretends
as if nothing had happened and casually calls Devadatta to get ready
for the trip in a voice of an authority. “Why are you sitting here?
When are we going to start? We are already late...” (p.24) On
hearing this, Devadatta gets totally baffled. This sudden act of
Padmini reveals her stubborn and dominating nature. At the same
time, this proves that Padmini’s love turns towards Kapila not only
because of his physicality but also for his concern towards her. The
male-dominated society fails to realize that woman is not a
disposable object and ignores the heartfelt and respectable feelings
of woman beyond her sexual pleasure. It is the main idea that
Karnad likes to emphasise through Padmini’s portrayal. “[Her]
predicament is the predicament of modern, emancipated woman in
our society who is torn between two polarities....”13 The polarity
referred to the society which enslaves her through the system of
marriage – one is to one – and her desire – a fusion of brain and
brawn. Devadatta and Kapila represent the polarity here. She
struggles in her lifetime as if she were born to suffer. But as an
emancipated woman of Karnad she could go along with the society.

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At the same time she could fulfill her innate desire. The fear of facing the reality present in the society leads Devadatta and Kapila to sacrifice their heads before Kali. On seeing this life-crisis, Padmini gets startled. Kali grants life for both men as an answer to Padmini’s prayer out of fear. She transposes the heads to the bodies in her excitement. One may argue that the ‘enactment of Transposition of Heads’ of Padmini is her wish fulfillment. It is surely ‘incidental complication’ and “the real crux of the problem is that the society in its present form would not accept a woman living with two men.”

As viewed by Suman Bala this extraordinary situation gives a narrow escape to Padmini from the clutches of society. She fulfils her yearning through creating her ideal man with brain and brawn. Her longings are quenched for a short span pseudo-period and then ‘head wins over the body’ and Devadatta’s original physique comes into being through gradual transformation. Bhagavata says, “He changed day by day. Inch by Inch. Hair by hair. Like the trickling sand. Like the water filling the pot.... That’s what Padmini must tell Kapila.” (p.56) Mostly, a woman cannot live with two men at a time due to her societal compulsion. Padmini’s suppression leads her to seek her fulfilment in a stealthy way of fooling the people around her. Karnad, here through this incident, brings the hidden psyche of women to limelight. The two men, who were friends for years together, are unable to accept a woman in common. The cowards die fighting a duel, but courageous Padmini performs Sati as she is the embodiment of life force. Although she knows apparently that she
will not get perfection in her next world she follows the socio-
culture ritual. Even before performing Sati in the last minute of her
life, she makes it clear to the society that a human should have an
integrated personality of both ‘intellect’ and ‘muscle’. Only then it
will make him attain unification and perfection all through his
lifetime. Thus with this idea she entrusts her son to Bhagavata and
directs him to the forest and then to the town. Devadatta tries to
subdue his wife in the name of traditional lifestyle, which in turn has
adverse effect on him. For instance, when Devadatta advises his
wife to take rest as she is conceived and to avoid the proposed cart-
ride to Ujjain, Padmini pungently retaliates, “No one taught this
bride to blush. But now I’m learning from that yokel.” (p.92) The
character of Padmini is such that she is not satisfied with the status
quo and goes in search of an ideal husband who would combine in
himself the best brain and physique. Human beings aspire for
fulfilment in all aspects through a harmonious blend of body and
mind. This particular aspect is taken as a focus in the plays of
Karnad. In Fire and the Rain, Vishaka yearns to share her feelings
with her husband Paravasu who totally ignores her. This makes her
lean towards Yavakiri. In Nagamandala, Rani depends on Naga for
her wish-fulfilment, as her husband Appanna is inert towards her
feelings. In Bali: the Sacrifice, the queen yields to Mahout due to her
insatiable desire for his voice and rugged body. In Hayavadana,
Padmini’s longing for the combination of ‘brain’ and ‘brawn’ leads
her to Kapila. Psychologically, women are attracted to muscular and
tough ones as men are carried away by feminine beauty and charm.
So, Padmini is not an exception to this attitude. Therefore, through
Padmini, the playwright depicts the hidden psyche of Indian women whose inner longings are not revealed as society is not in favour of polyandry. This is obvious in almost all communities except in one or two who have mingled it with religion in some part of India and Nepal. Further, Padmini’s portrayal clearly shows that Karnad has demystified the mythical women characters by portraying Padmini as a liberated woman who breaks the fetters of the society.

The act of questioning one’s husband once considered taboo but now discussed deliberately by the dramatist through his female character. Normally, people forbid comment either on any religious beliefs or on the physical appearance of any God. As discussed earlier, Lord Ganesha is the combination of human body and animal head. Yet, he is believed to be the master of success and perfection. In other words, a God of imperfection blesses the people to become perfect. This idea emerges from Bhagavata. Secondly, Karnad views at another religious belief as sacrifice. People consider sacrifice as a sign of gratitude, vow, purgation of guilt and punishment in the name of God. In other words, they satisfy themselves through these religious rites. In the Vedic period, people practised formal animal sacrifice, which in due course, was replaced by human sacrifices, as they strongly believed that the departed soul reached the heaven directly. Sacrifices also include execution of criminals and Sati, a form of human sacrifice. In this play, Karnad ridicules the sacrifices of Devadatta and Kapila in the Kali temple, which were once taboos. Kali mocks at this hypocritical sacrifice in the temple scene.
The rascals! They were lying to their last breaths. That fellow Devadatta – he had once promised his head to Rudra and his arms to me! Think of it – head to him and arms to me! Then because you insisted on going to the Rudra temple, he comes here and offers his head. Nobly too - wants to keep his word, he says - no other reason! (p.33)

According to A.L.Basham Sati is a human sacrifice performed by virtuous woman, especially by widows. It is a religious belief that woman who gets into the funeral pyre of her husband in this birth, gets reunited with him in the next birth whereas this concept of Sati is ridiculed by Karnad through Padmini. She lived with ‘four men in one life-time.’(p.56) She says, “It’s almost my autobiography now, Kapila! Devadatta! Kapila with Devadatta’s body! Devadatta with Kapila’s body!” (p.56) It is very critical and crucial because “while Mahabharatha glorifies polyandry, [this play] acknowledges the psychological reality of polyandry and its social rejection.” The woman of Karnad, therefore, who indulges in polyandry, performs Sati which is satirical. She even self-pities about her predicament. Other women can die praying that they should get the same husband in all the lives to come. You haven’t left me even that little consolation. (p.63) While performing Sati, she is obsessed with desire to have the best of both worlds ‘the physique’ and ‘the intellect’ at least in the next life.
Another kind of religious belief is visiting and performing religious rites in various shrines. It is an act of religious performance to overcome one’s ailments and incompleteness and is also a sort of wish-fulfilment. Girish Karnad lampoons the blind faith of devotees in the conversation between Bhagavata and Hayavadana in the opening scene. Hayavadana, who visits all religious shrines and performs all recommended religious rites to attain completeness, avoids visiting Tirupati as he has love for his ‘long mane’. The irony is that his visits to all the shrines aim at getting rid of his horse-head. He says, “You know, I hate this head – but I just can’t help being fond of this lovely, long mane. (Pause.) So – I had to give the miss to Tirupati.” (p.10) People strongly believe that Gods always have an eye on their virtues and vices and the people are punished or rewarded according to their earlier actions. On the other hand, Karnad tactfully brings Indian ethos through human, supernatural and inanimate objects on the same plane. For example, human characters, Goddess Kali and inanimate dolls are portrayed with equal importance. The dramatist’s atheistic view of religion is revealed especially through Kali. She is presented as a ‘sleepy, bored, cynical curmudgeon....”18 When Padmini enters Kali temple, she is shocked on seeing the ghastly sight of the dead bodies of Devadatta and Kapila. Being afraid of the probable scandal, she is about to sacrifice herself. But, at this critical juncture, Kali appears and orders her to put down the sword. When she blames Goddess Kali for not averting such predicament to her, Kali retaliates, “Actually if it hadn’t been that I was so sleepy, I would have thrown them out of the scruff of their necks...” (p.33)
It is humorous to see the omnipotent Goddess is unable to control her sleep as a human. In another point of view, the complex prevails not only among human beings but also even among Gods and Goddesses. She is jealous over Devadatta’s vow to Rudra, and gets angry over his biased nature. It is obvious that the dramatist depicts supernatural beings and inanimate creatures with human faults and foibles. Kali says vehemently, “Think of it – head to him and arms to me!” (p.33) Next to Devadatta, there comes Kapila showing irreverence to Kali by not even mentioning the name of Her while he cuts off his head. Kali is unable to digest the indifferent attitude of Kapila. She utters, “Died right in front of me – but ‘for his friend’. Mind you! Didn’t even have the courtesy to refer to me.” (p.33) Goddess Kali is irritated by the act of her devotees and monotony of their ‘self sacrifice’. They chop off their ‘stupid heads’ in front of her. She retaliates angrily as follows: “Why don’t you people go somewhere else if you want to chop off your stupid heads?” (p.68) It is then obvious that in case of Hayavadana, Kali is very impatient and perturbed towards devotees to such an extent, she grants ‘ambiguous’ boon to Hayavadana, even before he finishes up his plead.

I fell at her feet and said, ‘Mother, make me complete.’ She said, ‘So be it’ and disappeared – even before I could say ‘Make me a complete man!’ I became a horse. (p.68)
The dramatist's handling of supernatural elements like Goddess Kali is to mildly ridicule the superstitious belief of people over the religious rites and rituals.

In Indian conventions, the conceiving of woman and its development is considered as holy, and people believe it as a God given boon. So speaking ill of conceiving and pregnancy is considered a taboo. Most women crave to become 'Mother' as they believe attaining the status of mother is the greatest fulfilment in their lives. On the contrary, Karnad takes up this subject and deals very practically without the base of religion through Padmini and animated dolls. Padmini, a woman away from all conventions, condemns the traditional way of treating a pregnant woman, especially, during her first pregnancy. In this play, when Devadatta cautions about cart-ride to Ujjain as harmful, Padmini retorts very pungently:

**Devadatta**: ...But this is your first baby...

**Padmini** : What do you mean first? How many babies can one have in six months? (p.22)

In another incident the criticizing of dolls on Padmini's pregnancy is made a taboo. The dolls envy upon the newly born 'Prince' and criticize the womb of Padmini.

**Doll II** : How she was swelling! Day by Day! Week by week!
As though some one were blowing air into her.
Doll I : How ugly she looked.

Doll II : ...not to her husband, though! (p.45)

The old people illustrate from myths and legends in order to moralize and mould the younger generations. Irrespective of the education, people take pride in their tradition, which implies that the basic nature of man has not yet changed during the contemporary life. Having experienced in myths and legends in childhood days, Karnad has creatively presented and infused them in his plays. He has the power of retelling the secular legends of India that suits the contemporary audience. People use myths and legends, to make their statements both meaningful and forceful. It is clearly seen in Hayavadana, as the traditionally ritualistic invocation of Lord Ganesha, the incomplete being is highlighted only in the opening and ending scenes. The dramatist depicts the incomplete God in order to attain completeness in the play. In the opening scene, “O single-tusked destroyer of incompleteness. We pay homage to you and start our play.” (p.1) At the ending scene, “Grant us, O Lord, good rains, good crop, Prosperity in poetry, science, industry and other affairs. Give the rulers of our country success in all endeavours, and along with it, a little bit of sense.” (p.71) There is a ‘similarity’ between the portraits of Lord Ganesha and Hayavadana, as far as myth is concerned. For instance, both of them are animal-headed. But there is a ‘difference’ between them i.e. Lord Ganesha endowed with the power of showering completeness and Hayavadana of seeking the same. Hayavadana wants to get rid of his horse head and yearns to become a complete man, with the blessing
of Goddess Kali but in contrary to his wishes, he becomes a horse. This Hayavadana tale is the dramatist’s own creation that which complements the theme of the main plot. In the present play also, the same situation arises. Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini set out to Ujjain fair. On the way, Devadatta goes to Kali temple and sacrifices his head as a vow. Kapila then follows the suit, as he is afraid of the society. When Padmini is about to kill herself, Goddess Kali stops her and blesses with the boon of restoring the life of two men. It leads to the confusion of identity. The next category of myth is ‘identity’.

...the problem of identity crisis is not a crisis but a characteristic of the human beings with which they can live happily or otherwise as per their own choice.¹⁹

In Hayavadana, most of the characters search for ‘identity’ physically. Hayavadana seeks to become a man but pathetically he becomes a horse, possessing human voice. This leads to the deprivation of identity either to the human or the animal world. On the other hand, the child is deprived of ‘laughter’ and ‘mirth’. Both the horse and the child get mutual complementary fulfilment. In other words, Hayavadana is bestowed with completion as his laughter fulfilment turns into a neigh and the child comes to reality and enjoys the childhood pleasures. In the main plot, the ‘identity’ crisis starts only after the ‘transposition’. Devadatta being a Brahmin has the custom of performing rituals and reading Vedas. But after the transposition, he has the habit of going to wrestling pits
and swimming pools to enjoy the physical victory whereas Kapila hates his useless Brahmin body with which he struggles to get fit for labour’s life. As far as Padmini is concerned, the problem of identity arises, when she gets into confusion over the question of her rightful husband. The rishi says, “Head wins over the body.” Thus Devadatta with Kapila’s body becomes her rightful husband. And even after this solution, Padmini’s dilemma prevails, till her realization puts an end to it just before her death – Sati. It is through these mythical references Karnad has attempted to moralize the modern man. Padmini’s episode is not to degrade women but to emancipate them.

The play presents as many as five personalities suffering from want of integration. ‘Integration’, in a sense, a man should survive only with integration of ‘intellect’ and ‘physique’. Karnad has portrayed the characters with disintegrated personalities. Hayavadana represents the multi-faceted personality as its behaviour reflects the best civilian in him. Through him, the dramatist advocates the audience to be civilized. Kapila is the representative of the physical world but at times, he behaves as a poet when he compares Padmini with that of the fortunate lady’s flower:

Because it has all the marks of marriage a woman puts on. The yellow on the petals – then that red round patch at the bottom of the petals – like on your foreheads – then – here – that thin saffron line – like in the parting of your hair. Then –
Padmini herself admires at him for his poetic imagination. This proves his subtler way of expressing his love than that of Devadatta. Though Kapila openly accepts Devadatta as his guru in the field of poetry, Kapila’s imagination at times overwhelms Devadatta. In addition to that, he knows the better way of maintaining the human relationship that which adds more glory to his character. Regarding Devadatta, his jealousy grows high, to such an extent, that he suspects his beloved wife. This might have been because of his self-possession over her, which leads him to deviate from his lifelong friend. In fact, for him, reading and writing become primary importance in his life which makes Padmini lean towards Kapila. Padmini craves for a complete man – a fusion of ‘brain’ and brawn. She is a modern woman who gives much importance to her tradition. How can a wo(man) be a tradition and modern simultaneously? This brings her to a flummoxed state. One cannot rely upon the brain and brawn simultaneously. She is prepared to live with both the men, at the same time but she does not because she is suppressed through her socio-cultural conditions initially. In other words, she makes the two men to be receptive to her feelings and thoughts. On the contrary, she fails to combine both the personalities as she aspires. Hence, she is unable to jettison the tradition from which she has emerged and enter as a whole into this modern era. This is the crisis of modern woman of Karnad. In case of Devadatta and
Kapila, they are incapable of accepting to share a woman and Padmini leaves them to find their own solution.

Of course, this world is inevitably cursed with ‘absurdity and irrationality.’ One cannot achieve integration by “trying to reconcile the irreconcilable”\(^2\) or luring “in a world of make-believe.”\(^2\) He should not strive for attaining the unattainable ideal of completeness and perfection what Padmini, Devadatta, Kapila, Hayavadana and child wanted to attain in their world – which is impossible to be achieved. But he should be contented for what he has possessed. In other words, integration can be achieved “by accepting cheerfully the fundamental disharmony in human life.”\(^2\) If the triangular lovable idiots had accepted this principle in their lifetime, they would not have met with tragedy at the end. There is a need of emphasising the Karnad’s adaptation of pragmatic approach to end the play with Mangalam. Karnad’s portrayal of women in his plays is to demythify the conventional and mythical women characters, which gives a picture of woman’s enslavement and being mishandled by the male-chauvinistic fellow characters in the name of conventional and traditional beliefs and rituals. The playwright stimulates the instinct of birth rites in women to overcome the societal fetters and to lead a life of emancipation through the portrayal of Padmini who could express her innate longings amidst her traditional opposition and oppression.

In this play, Karnad daringly ventures to experiment with Yakshagana, a traditional art form at a crucial juncture in the history
of drama, to re-establish the variety and the truth of this art form to an audience who are already familiar with it. Kamad was aware that the Yakshagana was becoming a lost art even amidst its own native people. This awareness forces him to popularize and make it effective as a true art form that can stand the test of time.

To strike a balance among the divergently pulling factors is the sole task of any serious dramatist. Girish Karnad has succeeded, to an amazing degree, in blending tradition with modernity, mythological elements with psychological truths, fantasy with profound realism, thought with action, and a comic melodrama with a tragic awareness that is found only in epics and classical dramas.23

Karnad uses the technique of Yakshagana to enhance his expression. This technique is best suited for the play, as it needs only minimum requirements for the stage. For instance, those two stagehands hold the screen of Goddess Kali instead of showing a temple. The most attractive part of Yakshagana performances consists of the costumes, which are beautiful, bizarre and sometimes frightening. The unique feature of Yakshagana is that there is no premeditated dialogue but is improvised on the spot by the actors based on the musical stanza sung by Bhagavata.

Karnad's use of chorus and dolls in this play is to sustain the interest and tempo of the play and also to highlight the theme further. Karnad has effectively exploited some of the important
theatrical devices namely narrator, pause, silence, dolls, aside, song, mime and chorus. Chorus generally reveals the inner feelings of the characters, the development of the plots and also gives clue to the future action of the characters. The dramatist has used female chorus only twice in the play. At first, Chorus is used when Devedatta, Kapila and Padmini are introduced. “A head for each breast. A pupil for each eye. A side for each arm. I have neither regret nor shame.” (pp.82 & 132) Later, it is used when Padmini becomes Sati. In both these cases, the Female Chorus vividly brings out the erotic pleasure of Padmini. To say particularly, Chorus expresses the inner feelings of the heroine.

Next to Chorus, the animated dolls are used to convey the concealed feelings of the characters in the play to the audience. In other words, Karnad has intentionally and daringly handles the inanimated dolls as animated to speak out the taboos which cannot be uttered by characters and through which he satirizes the society. The dolls appear on the stage only in Act II after the transformation of heads and trunks of Devadatta and Kapila. The dolls make the audience realize how Devadatta with Kapila’s body behaves.

**Doll II** : …With his rough labourer’s hands.

**Doll I** : Palms like wood…

**Doll II** : A grip like a vice…

**Doll I** : My arms are still aching…

**Doll II** : He doesn’t deserve us, the peasant.
The dolls abuse Devadatta for his barbaric handling when he tosses them into the air.

Doll I: *(In agony)* Brute! An absolute brute!
Doll II: *(In agony)* Beast! A complete beast!

Further, the dolls awkwardly comment at Padmini’s foetus.

Doll I: ... this lump of flesh...
Doll II: He doesn’t even have proper eyes or ears.

They envy upon the conceived baby badly as the inmates of the house least bother them. Later, the dolls bring to light the change in Devadatta with Kapila’s body, when he picks up the doll I. They converse as follows:

Doll II: Why? What happened?
Doll I: He touched me, and ...
Doll II: Yes?
Doll I: His palms! They were so rough, when he first brought us her. Like a labourer’s. But now they are soft – sickly soft - like a young girl’s.
Doll II: I know. I’ve noticed something too.
Doll I: What?
Doll II: His stomach. It was so tight and muscular. Now.
Doll I: It’s loose...
Doll II: Do you think it’ll swell up too? *(They laugh).* (p.116)
Thus, the dolls also play a vital role in the progression of the play. The technique of ‘mime’ takes its place when Padmini, Devadatta and Kapila are going to Ujjain fair by cart – the riding is in the form of mime only; Kapila also mimes bringing a load of flowers to Padmini and another time, cutting of heads by all the three are done in this manner. The use of masks plays a vital role in the drama. It is undeniable that the playwright has not comparatively used this technique effectively in any other play as this. Lord Ganesha is brought into the stage as a mask and not man wearing it. The character, Hayavadana with a horse head appears wearing a horse-mask. The mask is also used in the transposition of heads. The technique of ‘aside’ is very often used in order to express the inner feeling of the characters.

As usual, Karnad has written the play Bali: The Sacrifice, having “a specific modern source – the 13th century Kannada epic, Yashodhara Charite, which can in turn be traced back to two 11th and 9th century Sanskrit epics”. What the speciality in him is that he relays upon the printed and retold stories or tales from myths and legends as sources of his plays. Although his prime aim is to free the enslaved women, especially the married, from the fetters of the male-chauvinistic society, he kindles the minds of the audiences with his thought-provoking perspectives by altering the sources. For instance, in Hayavadana, the playwright stuns the audiences with the plot of transposed heads, which puts forth an ice-breaking of the traditional verdict – ‘Head wins over the body’. In Bali: The Sacrifice, he brings out a new dimension of ‘non-violence’, the concept of
Jainism as well as Gandhism in the play. In the *Introduction* to this play, Karnad insists that the intended violence is more vigorous than the actual violence. He puts forth this argument by portraying two different characters that belong to two different religions basically and substantiates his intention by breathing life to a dough cock.

Karnad transforms the story of the dough figurine that comes alive at the moment of sacrifice into a mature philosophical exploration of love, jealousy, desire, betrayal and violence between men and women who are bound by the ties of blood and marriage or encounter each other in the perfect freedom of anonymity.

The protagonist of the play is the Queen, a Jain and the King, a *Kshathriya* by birth. The people of Jainism are very staunch in following the doctrines of their religion. The prime among the doctrines is 'non-violence'. They do not allow sacrificing any human or non-human things as it is considered to be a sin. On the other hand, the *Kshathriyas* sacrifice animals as a ritual that would cleanse one's sin. This major conflict is neatly knitted in the play as a main plot.

As in every play, in *Bali: The Sacrifice* also, Karnad has presented a triangular love between the Queen, the King and a low-caste Mahout. She enters the dilapidated temple on hearing a voice of Mahout. Admired and attracted by the voice of the man, she hides herself conveniently in order not to be noted by him and maintains
her dignity as a queen. Here there is a question arises in every mind of the readers: Does she really like his song? Or is she deprived of her marital rights? Or does she go for the greater happiness like Padmini? Apparently it is for greater fulfilment of happiness. The queen does not see the face of the Mahout as he has been already in darkness. She could have screamed at least after a few seconds if she is really in subconscious level or at least after seeing his ‘ugly’ face. But she enjoys the embrace of the man and she dares to speak and indulge in open-argument with her husband, which shows her boldness. And further she co-operates with Mahout in deceiving her husband, when he knocks the closed door of inner sanctum. She might have led a meaningless married life with the King or she might have dissatisfied with the marital life. It is obvious through the King’s song in the opening scene of the play that they have not led a happy life. It is all because a man or a woman gets satisfied with his or her married life when he or she experiences the mutual lovemaking, which paves way to beget a child as a sign of their happy marriage elevates the woman to the status of motherhood.

The two male characters in the play, in contrast, are arranged in relations of perfect antithesis and hierarchical reversal: the cultivated, sensitive and valiant but impotent king versus the crude, amoral and cowardly but potent Mahout with his irresistible song.  

This also correlates with the abuses of the King’s mother: “What kind of man are you? You have lost your manhood. You, you
impotent....” (p.108) Thus for this reason, she might have gone to Mahout in spite of his ugliness. Further, when the King knocks on the door, Mahout compels her to demonstrate panting as if they indulged in sexual pleasure. Here Karnad deliberately ridicules the attitude of human beings irrespective of the environment. And also the playwright again proves himself as an iconoclast by portraying a dilapidated temple as in the most of his plays and further ridiculing it by presenting man and woman in such a mean situation inside it.

The Dough Cock [Bali: The Sacrifice] takes place in a Jain Mandir. The background does not play a vital part in the play. The plays can as well be done without what the author describes.

When Mahout sees the King, he begs his pardon. He gets startled on knowing the woman bedded with him is Queen and tries to hide the happenings. As far as the King is concerned, he dares not face the consequences of the Queen’s affairs. It might be because of his soft-nature and of the societal compulsion. He respects her religion and even he yearns for it. He does not punish Mahout for having committed sin as he follows the doctrine of ‘non-violence’, which becomes an advantage for Mahout. He says,

[....] You are a Jain. You can’t indulge in violence. You aren’t permitted to shed blood. Ooh! I forgot that –

(He giggles in sheer relief. Giggling and talking to himself he retires to his corner.) (p.88)
He further mocks at the King’s act of drawing his sword.

[...]Now pick up that toy of yours and get out of here. [...] Stop reaching out for that sword...as though you are suffering from the itch. [...] (p.121)

This part of the play also shows how all the low-caste people are wrongly estimated for their weakness for money. When the queen is in a crucial situation, she wants to bribe him with her necklace as compensation to escape from his blackmailing. He says seriously that he is not like a low-caste man to be estimated as the upper class people use to do. Further, he adds that he is “an elephant keeper, [...] not a fence, selling stolen jewellery”. (p.84) Furthermore, the words of Mahout show the nature of men in the society. People use to poke into other’s personal affairs as they are ‘nosey’. He utters to the queen when she is crying as they are going to be caught red-handed:

For goodness sake, don’t start crying now. If they hear you, they’ll decide you’re in trouble and come to the rescue. People are so bloody nosey these days. Be quiet now and listen! (p.84)

These incidents portray Mahout as a ruffian, blackmailer, male-chauvinistic, amoral and time-server. Then the King and the Queen are taken to their past memories which depict the Queen’s soft-nature, mannerism and as a staunch follower of ‘non-violence’ as
well as the King’s true love towards her. In his romantic mood, the King knocks down a bird with a stone. On seeing the bird is dead, she feels bad and refuses to marry him as his life is full of bloodshed whereas he promises her that he would soon turn to be a Jain and learn to respect her religion. She teaches him mannerism as Hayavadana does to the public. This part also explicates the superstitious beliefs prevailing in the minds of ancient people. The Queen says, “My maid says that if a boy pees on a bush and then if a girl smells the flowers from that bush, that’s how babies are made.” (p.91) Mostly, women think that their husbands would leave them and marry another woman in case of false pregnancy, miscarriage or of no childbirth. The Queen also is not at all an exemption to this. While conversing, she says, “All these years, she had some hope of getting you another queen. Now….” (p.95) The King retaliates very pungently and humorously the practical life.

She’ll have a grandchild instead. Look, we can’t change her. I can’t bring myself another mother. She can’t get herself another son. And (laughing) I won’t look for another wife. So that seems to be a fairly unalterable situation. (p.95)

Karnad through the conversation between the Queen and the King brings out the conventional and traditional rituals that present in the world which is almost ridiculing.
Queen: The animals are graded according to the occasion. Poultry is offered at daily rites. Sheep, goats for the most important rituals. Then buffalo.

King: You know that's been the family tradition.

Queen: Weren't human beings also offered in sacrifice to the goddess once?

King: Yes. But was generations ago.

Queen: So you see, tradition can be given up. Or at least changed. (p.96)

Finally, both of them decide firmly not to sacrifice or offer anything in the name of their childbirth. But still the King is torn to pieces between his wife and his mother. The Queen Mother (the King's mother) is very stubborn and staunch in her policy of sacrificing animals as a token of love to God whereas the Queen is in her belief vice-versa. There is a long argument between the mother and his son. She blames him for denying her the right of worship and for not bringing his wife to his faiths. She insists him that he is not a Jain by birth. She feels herself like outcaste and refuses to stay in the palace. She suspects at the Queen's pregnancy and enquires him whether he has conformed it. She ridicules the Queen status by saying,

Soon after it came to light that it was a false pregnancy, I overheard two palace maids, giggling. 'A hen doesn't need a cock to lay eggs,' one of them was saying. 'She can do it on her own!' I could have died in shame. (p.100)
Whatever the reason may be, the Queen Mother is ready to sacrifice in the name of her traditional belief. For example, she sees the King in a wearied mood and enquires him. He deliberately hides and paints the incident as a dream. Immediately, she demands him for sacrificing animal by saying, “Dreams speak to us. They come to warn us”. (p.104) Karnad as 20th Century playwright tries to give awareness to his contemporaries that everything is humbug. As the King has no other way to go, he wants to tell the truth. But the Mother guesses the incident and rebukes the Queen like anything furiously.

.... She is with someone. A lover! Oh my God –

(The King turns away.)

When? Tonight?.... It has to be. You were happy enough with her last evening.... Is she in the palace?

(No answer)

No. You mean she is lying between someone’s thighs this moment?

.................................................................

Oh horrible! Horrible! Where? Where is she? Tell me – In some hole? A god-forsaken garret? Where? Where did you see them?

.................................................................

Has she fallen so low? The whore – And you. How can you stand here like this? I should cut her to pieces...feed her to wolves and vultures. Do it, son, now!
The ferocious Queen Mother almost condemns the Jain doctrine.

Throw her bones to the dogs. She has betrayed you. You are not bound by your vows now. All this nonsense about non-violence.... Kill the harlot and her lover. If you won’t do it, I’ll do it. Let me fetch my sacrificial knife from the temple. I’ll – (p.107)

On seeing her son’s long silence over his wife’s adultery, she spits on his face scolding him as a man who lost his manhood and became impotent. (p.108) Karnad also depicts the ancient women’s staunch belief of the concept of chastity. Consequently, she recovers herself from wrath and consoles him saying there is a need of sacrifice on behalf of the family and cleansing the Queen’s sin. She assures him that this time her desire will not be any bloody sacrifice. As far as the Queen is concerned, as said earlier, she is very firm in her Jain doctrine. She on her part scolds the King and never regrets and feels guilty of her infidelity. According to her, it is not an incident but an accident and she expresses boldly her feelings. The following lines of hers prove this one. “I want to come back to you. I feel fuller. Richer. Warmer. But not ashamed. Because I didn’t plan it. It happened. And it was beautiful.” (p.119) The comment acknowledges the same:

She refuses to profess her guilt or accept the ‘propitiatory ritual’.... She is a ‘transgressive presence’... ‘self-possessed
and cerebral enough not to surrender to the pressures of conformity.  

She has more concern for the elephant keeper, Mahout. She often assures him, “Don’t be alarmed. I’ll see nothing happens to you.” (p. 105) She caresses his hair as if she were a mother. This kind of behaviour before a husband will definitely upset and irritate him. As a woman of seeking rights, she is bold enough to voice her rights amidst the societal compulsion and conventional people like the Queen mother. The King could not either punish her or accept her view. It is seen although he is a King, his reaction towards the Queen is almost like that of Devadatta towards Padmini. Mahout, on other hand, shares with the King his experience of making love. Both of them indulge in experimental discussion even in presence of the Queen as if they were Paravasu in The Fire and the Rain. Mahout explains where he can find the physical pleasure in the body of the Queen and the King also does not hesitate to notice the same. Here the awkward male-chauvinistic attitude is found in them. Furthermore, the King compels her to indulge with him in sensual pleasure in the sacred place itself that too in the presence of Mahout.

**King:** Don’t be afraid. Let him wake up. Let him see. What does it matter? Let the whole world see. We are coupled in the eyes of God. We need not ashamed of anything. We must strip ourselves any sense of shame. Become naked like our Saviours. (p. 120)
It is evident from coming across such a sadistic attitude of the King to claim his right over his wife. His disgusting attitude creates animosity for the first time in her. Although a man marries a woman, he does not have right to touch her against her willing. There is no need to satisfy one’s husband through physical pleasure that too in public. If it is done there will not be any distinction between human being and animals. The King fails to think this concept regarding his wife. He might have been a good husband as he respects her religion and even he might adapt her principles. Or he might be a good husband by not punishing her for her infidelity and by forgiving her. But he becomes like a ravening beast in compelling her to satisfy him. He shows his wrath towards the Mahout this time simply because of the Queen’s refusal in making love with him. He condemns the Mahout as ‘a savage ape’ and ‘ugly beast’ whereas she reiterates her assurance for the security of the Mahout wholly. Mahout, at the verge of vexation, shouts at him to get out of the sanctum. It is necessary to note how every character in the play gets changed in due course. Mahout who was very adamant in the beginning in discovering her name, and speaking ill of her, later speaks for her and takes leave of them. The Queen Mother accepts his son’s unwillingness to give a blood sacrifice and brings a dough cock as an alternative arrangement. The Queen who always denies performing any kind of sacrifice for the welfare of the family and who considers even the thought of sacrifice a sin accepts at last to perform a symbolic sacrifice without any bloodshed. The King, who is portrayed as both soft and harsh, at last wins by persuading the Queen to accept the symbolic ritual through the dough cock. To their
dismay, when the King is about to sacrifice the cock, the cock begins to crow.

In [The Bali: The Sacrifice], even a Jain King is motivated to misuse the sacred ritual to cover up his wife’s adultery by committing cruelty in thought and in symbol. The sacrificial cock made of flour begins to crow just as it is going to be killed ritualistically.³¹

The King’s persistent persuasion makes her yield to his request at last but to their shock, the dough cock starts crowing when they are about to sacrifice it. The brutal King smashes the dough cock to prove his statement that it is only a mass of flour and not a real one. On seeing this cruel act, she picks up the sword and is about to stab him out of hatred. At this moment, she realizes that she has sword in her hand and becomes petrified and dumbfounded. Subsequently, she pierces her womb and collapses into his husband’s arms. The King is unable to comprehend the situation while the announcer of the morning crows outside as it dawns. The play restarts with the song of the Queen who is lit by a beam of light making the audience think in astonishment whether the Queen is dead or alive. Therefore, the true originality of the play is that

[…] It assimilates the sexual issues to a historically nuanced meditation on the nature and psychology of violence…. The central problem in the play is thus not the queen’s adultery but the deep spiritual rift between her Jainism – which aligns
itself with compassion, mercy and non-violence – and the traditional *Kshatriya* ethos of her husband’s family.\(^{32}\)

The Queen even after adultery does not feel guilty. She even promises to live with the King loyally. Here, Karnad makes the Jain Queen follow suit to the prevailing violence of the society spontaneously as she is pitted in such a situation. In the position of the Queen, anybody would be compelled to do the same. It is not the fault of the religion but it is the environment that shapes the human being. The Queen is indeed a good example of Karnad’s emancipated woman.

In this play, Karnad uses theatrical devices such as ‘light’, ‘mime’, ‘music’ and ‘pause’ to enable the audience to grasp the incidents on the stage in an effective way. The technique of lighting is used to brighten parts of stage by using ‘dimmers’. In some places, the King is shown brighter and some in other, the Queen is the central focus of the stage according to the situation. The play has the technique of mime only when Mahout mimes singing. While the Mahout mimes so, a musician comes on the stage playing his instrument. Regarding ‘pause’, it is often used to give the desired effect.
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