



Theme of Hayavadana – Myth as a play Deformity portrayed social, economic and political

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Article History

Received: 29 July 2023

Revised: 28 October 2023

Accepted: 06 November 2023

Introduction about Girish Karnad

Abstract:

If Indian English literature is the Cinderella of literature in English, Indian drama in English is the Cinderella of Indian English literature. "A recent bibliography of Indian writing in English lists as many as seven hundred and seventy seven separate titles under poetry, Sixty six under fiction and a paltry One hundred seventy three under drama."1 The bibliography of Indian drama in English appended to perspectives on Indian Drama in English advances the score only to about four hundred. Actually of these three forms, poetry and drama began their careers around the same time, with Henry Derozio's poems (1827) and Krishna Mohan Banerji's, "The Persecuted" (1831) respectively, while the first Indian English novel-Bankim Chandra Chatterji's "Raj Mohan's wife" appeared only in 1864. But since then, the pocket theatre has clearly left the theatre far being in the development of Indian writing in English. Fiction has already produced masterpieces like "Untouchable", "The Serpent and the Rope" and "The Guide". Why has Indian drama in English been unable to grow similarly and bear rich fruit?

1. A Bibliography of Indian English, (Hyderabad: CIEFL, 1972), p.12.

Girish Karnad was born in Matheran, Maharashtra, into a Konkani-

<p>CC License CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0</p>	<p>speaking family. His initial schooling was in Marathi. As a youngster, Karnad was an ardent admirer of Yakshagana and the theater in his village. He earned his Bachelors of Arts degree from Karnataka University, Dharwad, in 1958. Upon graduation Karnad went to England and studied at Lincoln and Magdalen colleges in Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, earning his Master of Arts degree in philosophy, political science and economics. Karnad was a Visiting Professor and Fulbright Scholar in Residence at the University of Chicago.</p> <p>Key words: Literature, Bibliography, Drama, Theatre, Masterpieces, Appended</p>
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Indian English drama up to the 1960s had had an apologetic existence. The rich heritage of Indian classical drama and the vibrant folk traditions of the country seldom attracted the Indian English dramatists of the time, their models were Shakespeare; Ibsen and Shaw. When experiments incorporating native traditions were first conducted, they were often debased to the level of clever and exotic tricks flaunted for the sake of gullible Western audience. In addition to an obvious nonchalance in exploiting the potentialities of traditional Indian dramatic modes, the Indian English dramatists failed miserably in drawing judiciously from the rich reservoir of native myth and complex historical heritage. Such a failure became lamentable because their Western models succeeded in brining new life into their works by going back to ancient Greek myths. In spite of all these, dramatists like Asif Currimbhoy (The Dumb Dancer, 1961), Pratap Sharma (The Professor has a War Cry, 1970) etc., showed rays of hope. Their effort at benthos is a passive flavoring of Western dramaturgy with Indian ingredients. Winds of change blew in the later part of 1970s with the bolder experiment initiated by Girish Karnad and the others.

Karnad's trend-settings play Hayavadana, 1 strikes a significant note by exploring the dramatic potential of the ancient Indian myths, legends and folk traditions. As Tutun Mukherjee points out, "in Hayavadana Karnad has made available the rich resource of both the Great and little tradition, the classical and the folk elements of Indian literature,"²

Of the twin plot, which constitute the fabric of Hayavadana, the main one ones from Thomas Mann's "The Transposed Heads" which is based on Katha Saritsagara, an ancient collection of Sanskrit stories. Devadatta and Kapila are bosom friends, one the rational and scholarly, while the other the sensual and literate. Devadatta falls in love and marries Padmini. Later Kapila too falls in love the same Padmini. The two friends become enemies on the score and kill themselves. Goddess kali restores them to life, but in her excitement Padmini transposes their heeds. Now Devadatta has the head of Kapila and Kapila the head of Devadatta. The confusion and identity crisis which ensues torments them until they sole the problem through a duel.

The sub-plot, despite its vague familiarity with several Indian legends, is mostly invented by Karnad himself. A beautiful Karnataka prince falls in love with a white stallion. She marries the

horse and lives with him for fifteen years. Later the horse turns into a Gandharva (Celestial Being) and when the prince refuses to accept his new form, so curses her to be a horse. She gallops away, ignoring her horse faced (Hayavadana) yet human-bodied child. The plots come together with Hayavadana, in his quest to become a complete being, meet the five-year old son of Padmini who is also in search of completeness.

Karnad begins his play with the Nandi (singing of benedictory verse) and concludes it with the Bharatakavya (valedictory prayer), recalling the tradition of ancient Sanskrit drama. But the ritualistic invocation of Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed God, in the Nandi and the Bharatakavya goes beyond the fulfillment of a traditional prescription and assumes symbolic significance. In the play, the image of Lord Ganesha “Suggests a major development in the action as well as the central theme of completeness of being.”³ The play revolves around the myth of Ganesha, which operates at several levels.

One of the major issues in the play is the conflict between two polarities which could be categorized as the satwa-guna and the Rajo-guna.⁴ Devadatta....logic and love... poetry and with: is portrayed as Satwic in nature. Kapila, the only son of an ironsmith “Is dark and deplane in appearance. But in deeds, which require drive and daring, in dancing, in strength and physical skills, Kapila has no equal”. Rajo-guna obviously dominates in Kapila. The play firmly establishes the opposition between reason and instinct; culture and primitive nature; brains and loins, mind and body; and spirit and flesh; through Devadatta and Kapila. The ritualistic invocation to Lord Ganesha does release certain resonances on such a polarization, which contribute to the thematic and structural unity of the play.

While elucidating the complex symbolic connotation of the elephant-headed Lord, whose divine form appears to be so ridiculous and absurd, Swami Chinmayananda comments on the issue of being dwandwatita⁵. The trunk of an elephant is a unique organ, which symbolizes great adaptability, sensitivity, and strength and discrimination power. The discrimination power functions only where there are two factors or opposites to discriminate between. The tusks and the trunk of an elephant signify this. The image of Lord Ganesha with one broken tusk suggests the relevance of going beyond the pairs-of-opposites or in other words, of becoming dwandwaita, the only condition which can make one complete.

In Hayavadana, both Devadatta and Kapila are deluded by Prakriti or Maya (illusion) and are trapped in their own respective gunas which in the context of the play-act as the opposites. The Satwic Devadatta does not seek higher knowledge, which gives true happiness or bliss. Under the intoxication of Maya he aspires only for the knowledge's of this world. He dreams of possessing Padmini so that he “could outshine Kapila”. Though it is underplayed, thirst for possession and threads of hope tie down Kapila. Paradoxically, Devadatta and Kapila who occupy extreme poles at the socio-cultural as well as metaphysical levels are also “one mind, one heart” The complementary nature of their relationship gets evoked when they are placed alongside “Lava and Kusha, Rama and Lakshmana, Krishna and Balarama”, the classical, quasi-divine pairs. The much yearned for a near impossible -

achievement of fusion between the polarities materializes in the play after the transposition. It is such a fusion between intellect and flesh which is also sought by Prakriti, seen manifested in the

woman (Padmini), in order to further the creative purpose. But the golden solution, which involves the reconciliation of the irreconcilable, instead of bringing integration and completeness, only intensifies the feeling of incompleteness. Though such a feeling of incompleteness arouses existential anger, in Hayavadana, it does not move towards existential despair, instead, the play goes towards the achievement of an integration, which becomes clear only in relation to the Ganesha myth.

In Ganapathi Atharva Sersha, which is an Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Mantra no.6 invokes Lord Ganapathi as one “beyond the three gunas”⁶. The three gunas (satwa, Rajas and Tamas), which literally mean the three threads that bind a jeeva (soul) to Maya; and therefore quest for completion involves the attainment of release for the soul from the three bonds, Lord Ganesha, being “Ganapathi” (the master of all the three gunas), represents the ultimate desired by all aspirants for completeness. Hence his intercession which is sought and gained in the context of the play by the Bhagavata, the typical Sanskrit narrator figure, on behalf of all those who suffer from fractured personality, becomes meaningful and makes the attainment of ‘totality of being’ through the integration of the self convincing.

The figure of Lord Ganesha which represents a perfect blend of three different worlds of experience – divine, the human and the animal – becomes central within central within the frame work of the sub-plot too, since it foreshadows the character of Hayavadana.

Hayavadana’s problem is one of alienation as well as incompleteness. The incompatibility of his head and body and his inability to find his society, haunt him. He cannot join the world of the Divine since he is rejected by his father; the animal world is denied to him because he has not his mother’s advantage of having a complete animal body; and the equine face makes him a stranger among men.

If the attainment of integration in the main plot is linked to the Ganesha virtue of being dwandwaita and gunateeta; the achievement of completeness in the subplot touches the issue of yet another Ganesha virtue, namely that being dehateeta (reaching beyond the three bodies). It is the attainment of the distinction of being dehateeta, which connects Hayavadana’s predicament to the Ganesha myth. Hayavadana from this standpoint represents a deluded jeeva who due to ignorance forgets its true nature, which is full and complete. With the desire to make up for his imaginary incompleteness, he tries to acquire things and beings of the world. Such desires in their subtle form are called vasanas. A jeeva is trapped in the wheel of birth and death till the vasanas are exhausted; and therefore only the dawn of knowledge or attainment of the ability to go beyond the vasanas, can bring Salvation. The jeeva then becomes dehateeta and achieves the goal of desirelessness. It is this unfathomed mystery of Lord Ganesha that is looked upon as Brahman who is always full and complete and devoid of any trace of vasanas which makes Him dehateeta. Hayavadana’s attainment of completeness comes from such an awareness of the mystery and hence the prayer of gratitude voiced by the Bhagavata at the end of the play, “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 a horse. How indeed can one describe his glory in our poor, disabled world?” This perfectly rounds off the play and elevates the Bharatavakya into something much more than a conventional stipulation.

Through the attribution of a pivotal role to the Ganesha myth in Hayavadana, Karnad achieves an admirable equation, which accommodates classical and folk conventions within the framework of contemporary theatre strategies. A play of such a unique nature remains opaque to an application of conceptual tools transplanted from the western dramaturgy. The lukewarm response towards Hayavadana⁷ from the Western critical world often stems from this. Indian socio-cultural ethos and tradition sustain Karnad's play, which remains mostly open to an essentially native explication based on indigenous critical apparatus.

There is a continuing text in Girish Karnad: the Search for a moral order. His plays locate this problem in a different context to generate discourse about Man as both subject and object. The engagement with this theme which began with Yayati (1961) continues into Tughlaq (1964), Hayavadana (1971), Naga-Mandala (1988) and Tale-danda (1989). Karnad meets the spectator as a romantic who is game for serious philosophical reflections. And the idea of morality outlined by a similar philosophical reflections. And the idea of morality outlined by a similar philosopher-romantic, D.H. Lawrence, may be remembered as the delicate equilibrium "Between man and his circumambient universe"⁸. The Karnad character seeks to achieve such a moral order. The drama explores the possibilities before the seeker using a very refreshing and inventive dramatic idiom. It invariably ends in "knowledge" and self-illumination. It is the point at which the seeker realizes the price exacted by life. Bruised and brutalized he learns the essential nature of "truth" – as being elusive though it appears to be within one's reach.

Karnad's source for Yayati is the Mahabharata. Yayati who borrows Puru's youthfulness is initiated into the morality of 'give' and 'take'. Confronted by Chitrlekha (Karnad's innovation to give the play its polemical twist), Yayati is forced to choose between Chitrlekha as daughter-in-law and Chitrlekha as wife. Mughal history is where Karnad goes to for the political allegory in Tughlaq. The emperor, Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, is checkmated every time he makes a move. The visionary king-emperor is upstaged by the pawn Aziz. Magnificent schemes for the welfare of the subjects end up in a shambles and the whole court resembles, at the end of the play, the chessboard, in the words of one of its characters, a veritable, "market of corpses"⁹. Karnad folk tales supply Naga-Mandala its story line. As a folk tale, it combines realistic elements with mythical or surreal elements to present the domestic drama featuring Appanna, Rani and the Naga. The roots given by Kurudavva are consumed by the snake that satisfies Rani's desires. What was expected of the husband is realized through a proxy. The snake, with all his mythical and surreal dimensions is instrumental in the deification of Rani who turns the wife beating husband into a serving devotee overnight. Karnad turns to the history of Karnataka, the twelfth century AD, for Tale-Danda he idealistic aspirations of Basavanna, of assembling in the city of Kalyan, a gallery of notables in the land; poets, philosophers, sages and social engineers, with a view to rooting out the ossified social evils, has an ironic conclusion in bloodshed and pandemonium, reminiscent of the way the French Revolution culminated in the Reign of Terror of Robespierre. Hence the title Tale-Danda meaning, "Death by Beheading".

Hayavadana is a link in this continuing thesis of Karnad – that life is a conundrum. The man who sets out to crack the puzzle is a seeker, with the attributes of the romantic and the adventurer.

The tendency to ask question does not yield answers (as is the grand illusion created by the positivists and rationalists who assume that answers are possible) instead, it leads on to more questions. The seeker who expects certitude is rudely shaken to accept the fundamental indeterminacy at the core of human existence.

Hayavadana is a 'play' in more than one sense of the word. "It communicates both as 'theater' and as 'theme'. The play as theatre chooses for its narrative the ambience of folk drama. As folk drama, which incorporates the elements of Yakshagana, makes a few large statements. These statements become clear when set against the backdrop of classical Sanskrit drama, which has a longer tradition in India"¹⁰. Karnad's choice of the folk form instead of the classical speaks about the deliberate choice with regard to the mindset that dominates the play. Classical Sanskrit drama has inflexibility about it; be it the script, or the enactment or the communication of the message and may be, even about the expected spectator response. One gets the standard idea of being a 'concrete' playhouse with fixed seats from which to watch a drama whose thesis is predetermined with a providential finality about cause and effect. One is tempted to look at the classical dramatist as better described in Lucien Goldman's phrases, Diem Cache, "a kind of "Hidden God", who remote controls the action on the stage"¹¹. The choice of the Bhagavata to speak to the spectator on the one hand and, to act with the actors on the other lends to the narrative and Hayavadana, an aspect of folk drama that opens it up for a free play of response¹².

It must, however, not be read as a free-for-all of responses. For Bhagavata only allows a long leash on the narrative while he never lets go off the leash completely. As very articulate theater, it must be said that the play does not insist on any given idea but multiplies them. After all, real life is not a series of well calculated and laid out moves but a series of stub lings upon one choice after another and the consequences set off by each one. As theatre then, the play is an invitation to look at the various options open before the individual before he can speak or think coherently. This is the 'mindset' of the play.

Hayavadana, as a theme, is a 'play' of ideas: it is 'absurd' in Beckettian sense and 'fractured' in a Freudian sense. It is laced with Cartesian elements, the conventional hierarchical idea of society, the mythical idea about gods and goddesses, besides, the folk legends. Just as the characters on the Beckett stage are maimed, the characters in Hayavadana appear as 'complete' halves seeking their 'others' Devadatta as 'mind' and Kapila as 'body' must realize their completeness. But every effort in this direction only takes them away from this end.

What is common to all these ideas is the theme of incompleteness. Some of the instances in the play are as follows: the stage props, the Rangadaivata, the spoken word, the vows made, the desire of Padmini and so on. One of the most important stage properties is the "half-curtain". It is effective in the presentation of Hayavadana. By gradually bringing down the curtain, he horse is exposed and concealed a few times. In the mean while, "The all-knowing" spectator has moved in and out of illusion and reality by virtue of the half-curtain. The fact that it can reveal and conceal even as the spectator is all eyes makes the half-curtain the most visible symbol of the play's theme. It effectively demonstrates the Maya, which teases him who thinks he sees the most.

The next instance of incompleteness is a meta-theatrical exploitation of the image of the Rangadaivata or the presiding deity. Here, Ganapathi, who also has epithets like adivinayaka, siddivinayaka, vigneshawara, which mean, respectively, the rule of the divine aspects of Shiva, the first God to be worshipped, the god who can assure achievement, the remover of obstacles. The Bhagavata uses rituals of Nandi or invocation to underscore the problem of the play by asking the spectator to look at the God of “The goal” (ga) and the God of the source (ja) – hence the Alpha and the Omega – as himself an embodiment of incompleteness¹³. Hence the irony in the name Gajananam. The ritual opening is thus turned into a real opening.

The elusiveness of meaning and the menace of language are explored. The child Hayavadana who wants to be made complete (implying a complete human being) is made a complete horse. The inexactitude of language is further evidenced in the reaction of an indignant Kali. Devadatta, who promises Rudra his head and right hand to Kali, ends up offering the latter his head. The incompleteness in the language of the body (action) to reflect the - head. The incompleteness in the language of the body (action) to reflect the language of the mind (thought) exposes the profanity of vows and promises and even prayers.

The incompleteness of human desire is symbolized by Padmini. As the ideal of all womanly attributes she is the lotus (padmam) itself. Rooted to the earth and with the flower turned skyward, she symbolizes the fundamental nature (prakriti) of the human body: it is torn between the downward (tamasic) earth and upward (sattvic) heavens, itself being impressionable (rajastic). Thanks to the incompleteness in nature, even when the eyes see, a lot of things cannot but be taken to trust:

Padmini : How about your eyes? Do they work properly?

Kapila : Yes.

Padmini : So there is nothing wrong with your eyes. As for the other thing, I'll have to take you on trust. (17)¹⁴.

The feminine principle, Padmini, ‘born of Kalidasa’s magic description – as Vatsyayana had dreamt her’, takes the other thing of Kapila on trust, Kapila who is acting as Devadatta’s messenger of love is himself in love with her. Padmini who answers Kapila’s call (knock on the door) humming the tune, “here comes the rider – from which land does he come?” Suggests the unconscious craving of the female for completeness. Her desire for the body of Kapila and the Mind of Devadatta comes to a head:

Padmini : (back at the window) where is Kapila?

Devdatta :and drool over Kapila all day.

The tension mounts in the dialogue between husband and wife.

Devadatta is against Padmini undertaking journey to the Ujjain Fair. Kapila who is expected to bring the cat is the cause of Devadatta’s sexual jealousy and anger. Padmini is unrelenting.

Devadatta (mind) finally surrenders to the pulls of Kapila (body). The journey to Ujjain, which is a journey to a sacred place, a heavenly abode in traditional thinking, becomes an allegory of

the sexual act. The cart (symbolic of the phallus) drive by the oxen makes Padmini comment on the performance of Kapila and Devadatta:

How beautifully you drive the cat, Kapila your hands don't even move, but the oxen seem to know exactly whereto go..What a terrible road. Nothing but stones and rocks but one didn't feel a thing in the cart! You drove it so gently – almost made it float. I remember when Devadatta took me in a cart that was soon after our marriage....The oxen took every thing except the road. He only had to pull to the right and off they would run to the left! I've never laughed so much in my life. But of course he got very angry, so we had to go home straight! On the way to Ujjain, passing through the forest, the two friends behead themselves before kali. "Padmini who moves he goddess to grant her wish, commits, what appears like Freudian slip"¹⁵, the transposition of heads.

For when Kapila insists on being accepted, Padmini asks Devdatta to, "Let him (Kapila) scream away. Don't pay him any attention. There is only a brief period of this wish fulfillment for Padmini as Devadatta soon wastes Kapila's body. She soliloquizes wistfully....Kapila? What could he be doing now? Where could he be? Could his body be fair still"

The dolls brought from Ujjain are brilliant expressionistic devise, which convey the mental process of Padmini. The rider who comes in her lullaby for the child and who keeps returning in her thoughts is identified by the dolls. So when Devadatta prepares to visit Ujjain a second time for new dolls, Doll II makes a comment exposing the disturbance in Padmini. In an aside it says, "Cover your wife" This marks the second wave of seeking in Padmini. She addresses the child: "How can I describe it to you? There is so much. Long before the sun rises, the shadows of the twigs draw alpanas on the floor...Then they day dawns and the fun being" On her second journey into the woods, Padmini takes on the guise of the archetypal seeker. "I asked the villagers...and the pilgrims, and the hunters, and tribesmen. When there wasn't anyone anymore, I asked myself. Everyone saw to it that I Didn't lose the wrong rod" The words reinforce the idea of the search for completeness as a series of stumbling. The individual is educated every time but is disillusioned the more for that reason. The answers to the "Why" – do not fetch answers.

Kapila : (Suddenly) why have you come away from him?

Padmini : What do you want me to stay?(They freeze)

Kapila : (to Padmini) why have you come here?

Padmini : I had to see you.

Kapila : Why?(not a reply)

They "Why" questions culminate in a crescendo of more questions than answers:

Padmini : Why should one buy anything?

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

Padmini : Whose incompleteness? Yours?

The questions fade into and lose themselves into the choric song of Bhagavata:

You can not engrave on water

Nor wound it with a knife,

Which is why?

The river
Has no fear
Of memories.

There is a pattern of thinking, which is exercised in the play. Generally the adult is expected to know the ‘answers’ while it is the lot of the child to be curious about the phenomena of the world. The child’s curiosity is expressed, generally, as questions to the adult. By that score, Hayavadana amplifies the perplexities of the ‘child’ who, startled by reality, relates with the world with an almost endless series of questions. The adults in the play, Kapila, Devadatta and Padmini, at some point of time identify each other as ‘children’ – suggestive of a lack of knowledge or the characteristic incomprehension of the child:

Devadatta: (to Padmini) you’ve no sense of what not to say. So long as you can chatter and run around like a child...

Padmini : (to Devadatta) But you are so fragile! I don’t know how you’re going to go through life wrapped in silk like this! You are still a baby....

Padmini : (to Devadatta about Kapila) Please don’t get angry. Poor boy, he looked so lost and disappointed, I could not bear to see it..

The significant unit of the play, in terms of which all the characters are delineated, is the ‘child’. Hence, Kapila, Devadatta, Padmini, ‘their’ son, Hayavadana, the Dolls from Ujjain, are alike, proper children.

The Bhagavata is the only prominent presence on the stage. He initiates the discussion of the drishya (the spectacle). He invites responses to the actions of the characters. He empathizes with Kapila when he is forsaken by Devadatta and Padmini after his transposition. It is to the Bhagavata’s charge that Padmini entrusts her baby before she performs sati. Besides, the Bhagavata takes charge of the play’s opening when the Nata, frightened by a ‘speaking’ Hayavadana creates a commotion on the stage. He also decides the time when the half-curtain must be brought in or withdrawn, symbolic of a God who decides the amount of illusion to be purveyed. The Bhagavata, who is a God – like omnipresence in the ‘Theatre’ of the play, is involved intimately with every character. He is the Tiresian – witness presiding over the every day reality that keeps turning into the “problem” of the play.

In the main plot, Devadatta, Kapila and Padmini seeking completeness come to the temple Kali. Devadatta’s vow to offer his right hand in the event of his marriage to Padmini is yet unrealized. The goddess appears bored and aloof as a language of human promises and prayers has become too mechanical ritualistic to be exact. She plays practical joke on Hayavadana by granting his wish. His wish to be made complete is realized when he becomes a complete horse. Kali, who is a Goddess, and omnipotent in the “Theme” of the play, handles the destinies of the character (every – one is her “child” as they address her as “mother”) to serve as “Eye – opening” problems for the spectator. The Bhagavata – Kali complex is factor that weaves together the main plot of the play – Padmini’s search for completeness – and its sub – plot – Hayavadana search for completeness into one seamless whole.

Gender and social deformities invade the human body too and cause physical deformity. Gender and social hierarchies are translated psychosomatically in individual human beings. People accept the cultural attributes determine their life styles to the extent that they are internalized. These life styles, like genes, shape their bodies and cause deformities within the biological boundaries. As Brahmins (intellectuals) are considered superior to Shudras (workers) in a society, the brain (head) is considered prior to the body in an individual. Therefore, “some people even feel that their bodies are a lesser part of them, even that they are cursed by having a body” as rightly observed by Steiner.

Brahmins are mentally brilliant but physically weak as they spend most of their time in reading and writing. Shudras are mentally dull but physically strong as they spend most their time in manual work. And women are physically weak and mentally dull, as they, being confined to housework, are not allowed to exercise their mind and body very hard. Even among workers, those parts of their bodies that are used more in their occupation become stronger than other parts. For example, a cycle rickshaw driver gets strong legs while blacksmith gets strong arms. Adept, strong right hands and inept, weak left hand are a stinking evidence of physical deformity caused by cultural attributes all over the world.

Physical deformity reflects not only dander and social deformities but also political deformity. The head is more powerful than the body. So, within an individual is a man, a woman, an intellectual or a worker. It is the head that carries the cultural attributes and thus it is he head that determines the life styles of the individual. The head usually undetermined the wisdom of the body and thus causes joylessness, drug addicting and ill health.

Actually the body and the mind were once in an undifferentiated unity, which we have lost in course of civilization. Most of the people do not even know that they can be unified. Gaylor Hauser says: “You know that mind and body are one, that mind and body and emotion are one. You know that the body can affect the mind just as the mind can affect the body. You will not treat yourself as two different persons”¹⁶. This is what William Blake describes as “The undivided body-soul”¹⁷ according to Norman O. Brown¹⁸ a psychoanalyst, primitive human beings enjoyed perfect harmony between their mind and body; their mind felt their bodily experiences and their body rocked with the feelings of their mind. Brown calls this undifferentiated and unified body and mind the Dionysian ego. In the process of civilization, he argues, the mind and the body are divided, differentiated and alienated from each other. Because of the split and alienation between them, the experiences of the body don’t reach the mind and feelings of the mind do not spread through the body. Steiner attributes joylessness to this. Brown calls the differentiated and alienated mind and body the Apollonian ego. Hauser also perceives this evil effect of civilization: “That turn in civilization that has increased cerebral activity and decreased manual functions leaves the mind unhappy and the hand itching for something to do”. The disharmony of the mind and the body reflects that Brahmins and Shudras.

The alienating and antagonism between the mind and the body inevitably leads to physical deformity, joylessness and ill – health. People become addicted to alcohol, drugs and useless consumerism to escape from joylessness

and to feel elated. Alcohol and drugs offer only a fleeting experience of elation but spoil health severely and augment the alienation. Steiner explains how joylessness is exploited: “Joylessness is unfortunately exploited business interests. Drug use and consumerism are widely encouraged through the media and large number of people’s lives depend upon the expenditures of a joyless population on drugs and essentially useless consumer items”. Sometimes, the idealism, infused through education and mass media into the mind of the people, serves the purpose of drug addiction. It provides them illusory pleasure of realizing their ideal but finally leads to their disillusionment and disappointment. The alienating of the mind and body impairs our perception also. As Sterner observes, “Children’s elderly vision is turned into impoverished perception of grownups”. He argues that people go for violence, sexual excess and drug abuse as they ignore the wisdom of their mind. All these aspects of physical deformity and expression in Karnad’s Hayavadana, Tendulkar’s Sahara Binder and Sircar’s Evam Indrajit.

The theme of Hayavadana¹⁹ is the problem of physical deformity caused by the alienation of the mind (head) and the body. This is suggested by the reference to ‘Incompleteness’ and the ‘Completeness’. For instance, Kapila questions: “Why should one tolerate this mad dance of incompleteness?²⁰ and the Bhagavata blesses Hayavadana: “May you become successful in your search for

completeness. The play starts with the worship and then the description of Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed God, who symbolizes physical deformity. This hints at the theme. The Bhagavata’s says: “An elephant’s head on human body, a broken tusk and a cracked belly-which every way you look at him he seem 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 of Success and Perfection?” As the Bhagavata introduces the story and the characters of the main plot, Hayavadana, the eponymous character comes onto the stage. Like Ganesha, Hayavadana the horse-headed man, also has physical deformity. The Bhagavata mistakes his head, also suggests physical deformity. The Bhagavata mistakes his head for mask and tries to pull it off with the help of an actor but fails. Then he learns from Hayavadana that he is born with a horse as his mother married a stallion, a cursed Gandharva. Hayavadana has been striving to become complete through various religious penances and social service for several years. On the advice of the Bhagavata, he goes to Goddess Kali to seek her blessings.

The play proper begins now. Devadatta is a Brahmin. He reads and writes, He develops his mind and ignores his body. He writes excellent poetry and defeats several scholars in discussions. Kapila is a blacksmith. He plays game and participates in sports. He defeats many wrestlers in competitions. He has manual skills and is adept in making and mending carts and other things. He develops his body and neglects his mind. While describing their friendship, the Bhagavata says: “One mind, one heart”. Devadatta is ‘the mind’ and Kapila’s is ‘the heart’. Actually their friendship is based on the fact that they depend on each other for what each lacks. That is why,

Raykar points out: “They are thus complementary to each other”²¹. Since the mind is considered superior to the body in our society, the caste of Brahmins occupies the highest rank in the Hindu society, which is hierarchical caste-wise. That is why Devadatta sits on a chair while Kapila squats on the floor. Their friendship is only superficial, not real, as real love is not possible between unequal people.

Devadatta is “the mind” the Kapila, “the body”. And both suffer from the alienation of the mind and the body. Devadatta easily perceives his feelings of love as his mind is nimble but he lacks the initiative, as his body is passive. So, he falls in love fifteen times in a period of two years, yet he fails to marry any of the girls. Kapila cannot perceive the bodily sensations of love as his mind is not nimble but he has the initiative and arranges things easily as his body is agile. Devadatta knows this. So he seeks his help when even his sixteenth love affair seems to be a fiasco. He expresses his utter helplessness and hopelessness: “ I swear, Kapila, with you as my witness, if I ever get her as my wife, I will sacrifice my two arms to the goddess Kali, I’ll sacrifice my head to lord Rudra” Kapila easily arranges his marriage with Padmini. He takes Devadatta and his wife in a cart on a trip. Padmini appreciates his dexterity in driving the cart and later his strong handsome body. Devadatta feels agonized to see Padmini gaze at Kapila with love. So, he goes to the temple of Kali and beheads himself when Padmini and Kapila visit the temple of Rudra. Later, Kapila goes in search of Devadatta and finds him dead at the temple of Kali. He expresses his wish to follow his friend and beheads himself. Actually, he becomes aware of the vague sensation of his infatuation; an obscure fear of being blamed for the death of Devadatta and for the infatuation for Padmini seizes him. But he does not admit it. Kali uncovers the hypocrisy of the friends when she prevents Padmini from committing

hara-kiri. She says: “They were lying to their last breaths” She grants Padmini’s wish to revive them. In her haste, Padmini transposes their heads. Devadatta and Kapila are revived with their heads transposed.

The person with Devadatta’s head and Kapila’s body is now Devadatta and the person with Kapila’s head and Devadatta’s body is Kapila. Each claims Padmini as his wife.

Kapila : This is the hand that accepted her at the wedding. This is the body she has lived with all these months. And the child she’s carrying is the seed of this body.

Devadatta : Of the entire human limbs the topmost-in position as well as in importance – is the head. I have Devadatta’s head and it follows that I’m Devadatta.

In this argument Padmini favors and supports Devadatta. Kapila then discloses her intention: “I know what you want, Padmini. Devadatta’s clever head and Kapila’s strong body” Finally, they seek the advice of a rishi (saint). The rishi says that the person with Devadatta’s head is the rightful husband of Padmini since the head is the supreme of all the parts of the body. Kapila feels utterly disappointed and dejected. Devadatta and Padmini return to Dharmapura, their home town very happily and plunge into joys of married life. Padmini does not understand the power of the head. So, she also mistakes juxtaposition of the head and the body for their unification. So, she feels elated

to live with Devadatta's new body. She does not foresee that he joy is short lived. The Brahminical hypothesis that the head is the supreme organ in the body reflects the social hierarchy in which the case of Brahmins is supreme in the society.

Devadatta goes to the gymnasium and participates in sports. He even defeats a wrestler who challenges the people to fight with him. Padmini is happy about his physical powers but warns him not to out do lest his acquisition of Kapila's body should be discovered. The two dolls that he brought from Ujjain for his son talk about his vigour.

Doll II : With his rough labourers hands

Doll I : Palms like wood.....

Doll II : A grip like a vice.....

Devadatta resumes his Brahminical life style and gradually loses the physical vigor of Kapila's body. Padmini asks him why he does not go out. He replies that he has to observe his duty as a Brahmin and then he adds: "It was fun the first few days because it was new. All the muscle and strength. But how long can one go on like that? I have the family tradition to maintain – the daily reading, writing and studies? The Dolls also talk about this change of his body.

Doll I : His palms! They were so rough, when he first brought us here like a labourer's. But now they are soft – sickly soft –

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 : I know. It's loose.....

Doll II : Do you think it'll swell up too?

Similarly Kapila's head carries the attributes of a craftsman and athlete. He does hard work and regains his physical vigor. Thus he gradually loses the softness and weakens of Devadatta's body. Padmini loses interest in Devadatta on account of his weak soft body with a potbelly. Her unconscious mind

longs for Kapila. She sees Kapila vaguely in her dreams and the Dolls talk about it. She asks Devadatta to throw out the old dolls and bring new ones for their son from Ujjain. Doll II says, "Cover your wife before

you start worrying about our rags" When Devadatta leaves for Ujjain, Padmini takes her son and goes into the forest. She meets Kapila who realizes the power of the head. Unable to reconcile herself to this reality, she asks Kapila a tragic rhetorical question, "Must the head always win?" and he answers: "That's why I am Kapila now". She knows that Devadatta become completely Devadatta because of the head won. Actually, it is the victory of the cultural hegemony that has shaped the minds of Devadatta and Kapila. But Padmini still says: "Yes, you won Kapila. Devadatta won too. But I the better half of the two bodies – I neither win nor lose" In fact, the names and the personalities of Devadatta and Kapila are the products of the culture which is based on the deformities. It is their bodies, representing life or nature, which has lost the battle.

The conflict of the mind and the body is more acute in Kapila than in Devadatta. Devadatta, after discontinuing his physical exercise, often feels like going to the gymnasium. He gets bodily pains and decides not to do any physical exercise anymore. Thus, he overcomes the memories of Kapila's body. But Kapila really has a very hard task to overcome erotic memories of Devadatta's body though he succeeds in making the body strong through physical exercises. So he says: "One beats the body into shape, but one can't erase the memories in it. Isn't it surprising the body should have its own ghosts – its own memories? Memories of a touch – memories of a body swaying in these arms, of a warm skin against this palm – memories which one cannot recognize cannot understand, cannot even name because this head won't be there when they happened."

He asks Padmini why she has come and shy she has touched him. He then adds: "I have never touched you, but this body, this appendage laughed and flowered out in a festival of memories to which I am an out caste" Padmini intuitively feels that the conflict is due to alienation. She chides him for his stupidity and says: "Your body bather in a river, swam and danced in it. Shouldn't your head know what river it was, what swim? Your head too much submerge in that river – the flow must rumple your hair, run its tongue in your ears and press your head to its bosom. Until that's done, you'll continue to be incomplete". She means that the reunification of the mind and the body is the only solution of their physical deformity and its ill effects.

Kapila asks Padmini to go on Devadatta but she requests him to allow her to stay and look at him for a while. Later, Devadatta comes and asks Kapila whether he also loves Padmini. Kapila answers him affirmatively and suggests that they like the five Pandavas and Draupadi of the Mahabharata. As Padmini does not consent to this, they fight a duel and kill each other. Thus they end their mad dance of incompleteness. Padmini still wants to achieve the unification of the mind and the body through her son. So she wants to prove her son both physical and mental training. She therefore relates her will to Bhagavata: "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 trees. When he is five take him to the revered Brahmin Vigyasagara of Dharmapura. Tell him it's Devadatta's son. Then she commits sati and thus ends her failure in unifying the mind and the body."

Padmini's son grows among the hunters in the forest for five years according to her oral will and is then sent to the Bhagavata. The boy is as morose as Kapila in the forest. He does not play and does not laugh, as a child should do. They try to make him laugh but fail. Meanwhile Hayavadana comes and he is a complete horse now. He says that Goddess Kali has granted his wish to be complete. What

he regrets is the retention of human voice. He tries to break his human voice by singing various patriotic songs but in vain. Padmini's son sees Hayavadana, a horse, speak and laugh. He sheds his gloom and starts laughing and then clapping his hands and the dolls fall out of his hands. Then he accepts the request of Hayavadana to sing a song and Hayavadana gives him a ride while he sings a song. The boy then asks him to laugh. As Hayavadana tries to laugh, his laughter ends up as a proper neigh and thus he loses his human

voice. Hayavadana and Padmini's son become complete as if they were freed from the spell by each other. Both are very happy and the body enjoys riding the horse. Then the Bhagavata says: "So at last Hayavadana has become complete. (to the actors) you too go and tell the revered Brahmin Vidysagara that his grandson in returning home in triumph, riding a big, white charger". The boy riding the horse symbolizes the reunification of man and nature. Thus, Padmini succeeds in achieving her goal posthumously.

Most of the critics, including M.K. Naik and Shubhangi S. Rayakar, argue that it is humanly impossible to achieve perfection. Of course, it is impossible to achieve perfection as long a physical deformity is sustained by cultural hegemony. A Jaganmohnachary rightly points out that Devadatta loses his physical vigour only because he discontinues the physical exercise in order to pursue his Brahminical tradition. But Raykar in her brilliant paper on Hayavadana argues that the unification of Apollo and Dionysus symbolized by Devadatta and Kapila respectively is not at all possible. Brown uses the worlds, Apollo and Dionysus, to represent alienating and unification respectively. Following the model of Brown, it can be concluded that the play deals with the three phases of human history and Karnad is successful in this as he cleverly exploits Indian myth and folk theatre (Yakshagana Bayalae of Karnataka). Hayavadana and his mother who is cursed to become a mare by her husband stand for the first phase when primitive human beings like animals enjoyed Dionysian ego: the undifferentiated and unified body mind. Hayavadana's father, a handsome stallion, becomes a celestial Gandharva. This symbolizes the process of human civilization when man attains Apollonian ego by losing Dionysian ego gradually. So Devadatta and Kapila who represent the modern man suffer from the problems caused by their Apollonian egos. As they cannot get rid of their Apollonian egos, they end their lives. Veena Noble Dass observes: "In Devadatta, Karnad does not show the superiority of the mind, rather he shows its limitations"²³. These limitations are the result of the hegemony of Apollonian culture where the mind and the - body become differentiated, alienated and antagonistic. Kapila and Devadatta are both victims of this and their predicament is that of the modern man. The third phase of human history emerges when the mind and the body are reunified in an undifferentiated unity. Padmini's son will stand for the future man who will be able to achieve this. This concept of alienation and physical deformity easily answers the two riddles of the play" why does Hayavadana's mother feel happy when her husband curses her to become a mare and why does Goddess Kali make Hayavadana a complete horse instead of a complete man? This is because animals have no alienating and no deformity.

Sakharam Binder is probably Tendulkar's most intensely naturalistic play, as Arundhati Banerjee puts it in her introduction to Five plays of Tendulkar²⁴. The play ignores the cultural norms and boldly presents the crude perversions caused by physical deformity. The three major characters, Sakharam, Lakshmi and Champa, are all abnormal and each is unique in his or her abnormality. Sakharam speaks vulgar language, drinks liquor, smokes and indulges in mechanical sex, Lakshmi is obstinately conventional and her religiosity amounts to unrealistic and inhuman fundamentalism. And Champa is as rebellious as Sakharam and does almost all the things that he does. They do what ever they do, in order to overcome the alienation and the joylessness that they suffer. Paradoxically their actions affect the illusion of joy that sustains joylessness. And their discontent in life betrays this.

Sakharam is treated negatively by his own parents and the feelings of his tender heart are hurt deeply. He says to Lakshmi: “Born naked, I was. My mother used to say, the brat’s shameless. He’s Mahar born in a Brahmin home. And if I was, who’s to blame? It wasn’t may doing”²⁵. Then he tells her how his father made him run away from home.

Sakharam is treated negatively by his own parents and the feelings of his tender heart are hurt deeply. He says to Lakshmi

Born in a Brahmin family, but I’m a Maher, a dirty scavenger. I call that a bloody joke! I ran away from home when I was eleven. Go fed up with my father’s beatings. Nothing I did ever seemed right. You’d think I was his enemy or something. The way he’d thrash me!

The cruel, prejudiced treatment of Sakharam by his parents has caused him to behave rebelliously in order to overcome his powerlessness and joylessness. Though he hates his father, he follows him in many ways. He is as bad-tempered as he is. He lets himself Brahminized a little by Lakshmi. He worships God regularly. Though he denounces the conventional marriage, husbands and wives, he not only behaves like any husband but also sympathizes with him. At one time, he says to Lakshmi: “You get kicked by your husbands and you go and fall at their feet” and at another, he objects to Champa’s ill treatment of her morbid husband: “What kind of a woman are you? Look, what you’ve done to him! He’s your husband. Haven’t you a heart? He laughs at the loyalty of a woman. “If it’s a stranger, you will have to cover your head and answer him. If I’m not at home, don’t admit anyone” He strangles Champa when he learns that she is not loyal to him. He lives with only one woman at a time though on a contractual cohabitation. It is as good as a formal marriage. He is not less cruel than his father. Lakshmi says to him: “I have never heard a kind word here. Always barking order, Curses and Oaths. Threatening to throw me out. Kicks and blows....There I was in agony after I’d been belted, and all you wanted me to do was laugh. Laugh and laugh again. Here I am on the point of death and I’m supposed to laugh. Hell must be a better place than this. If I die I’ll be free of this once and for all. He is able to be so cruel only because of his self-alienation, the split between his mind and body, which must have been caused by the trashing of his father. He internally feels powerless and joyless.

He internally feels powerless and joyless. He uses rough language; he smoked tobacco and opium; he drinks liquor and enjoys mechanical sex in order to overcome this. He forces Lakshmi to laugh to stimulate him sexually though she suffers from a severe burn on her foot. When Lakshmi leaves, him, he brings Champa and forces her to give him sexual pleasures. He does not bother about the pain and the pleasure of his partner in this. All these activities provide him mythical joy and he feels complacent about himself and his life. Only Champa disturbs his complacency.

Lakshmi is deserted by her husband because she does not beget any children. She seeks shelter under the roof of Sakharam. She is not a Brahmin, yet she observed Brahminical culture. She tries to overcome her powerlessness and joylessness in doing so. She proves to be obedient and loyal to her man; yet she bravely objects to his unbrahminical ways. Sakharam slaps her hard for not allowing Dawood, his friend to join the prayer to Lord Ganapathi; yet she says: “What’s wrong with what I said? How can a Muslim join in a prayer to Ganapathi? Neither Sakharam nor Lakshmi

compromises on this. And it results in her leaving him. This shows her fundamentalism. Sakharam proves to be more humane in this than Lakshmi. She talks to an ant, laughs and plays with it. But she fails to communicate with human beings properly. Sakharam demands her to laugh with him as spontaneously as she does with the ant. After leaving Sakharam, she goes to her nephew for shelter. He and his wife accuse her of stealing to get rid of her. As she has no alternative, she returns to Sakharam. But Sakharam beats her and orders her to get out. However, Champa becomes to her rescue and she is allowed to live with them. So Lakshmi does the housework and worships her gods. She nurses Champa's husband and denounces her for ill-treating him. She disgusted to learn that Champa flirts with Dawood. She tells

Sakharam about Champa's disloyalty. He strangles Champa to death and feels aghast at his own action. She advises him to bury her secretly in the house itself.

Anyway she was a sinner. She'll go to hell. Not you, I've been a virtuous woman. My virtuous deeds will see both of us through. I'll stay with you I'll do what you say. And I'll die with my head on your lap. Yes. Now don't be afraid. We'll – we'll bury her. Where do you think? No out there-no. Some where here. Inside. And we'll say that she went away. No one will suspect. I'll swear by God. He knows everything. He knows I am virtuous. He'll stand by me. He won't judge you. I'll tell him to count my good deeds as your. I'll do everything for you.

Thus, she goes to any extent even inhumanity to effect what she believes to be right. She prefers tradition to human beings. So, she accepts a husband however cruel he may be and she detests Champa for her disloyalty though he later rescues her from Sakharam. She also envies Champa for her sway over Sakharam. Above all, she believes that the patriarchal tradition, which has been in vogue for ages, is right and sacred though it has caused immense suffering to all the women since its emergence. Because of the alienating of the mind and the body, she does not understand the inhuman and harmful nature of the tradition. As she observes it, she finds in it some power and joy, which are merely mythical, and her powerlessness and joylessness continue. Her unsympathetic persecution of Champa is, in a way, due to her self alienation.

Champa is his antithesis of Lakshmi. She never bothers about the tradition. She is confident and courageous. Her mother sells liquor and tobacco. Fouzadar Shinde comes to the shop on a raid and sees Champa. He takes her away from her mother even before she becomes a woman. He tortures her by branding her: sticking needles into her and making her do awful things. So, she is terribly frightened and runs away. He brings her back and puts chilly powder in her genitals. All this causes self-alienation in her too and makes her frigid. So, she detests sex. As she grows bold, she leaves Shinde and joins Sakharam. She first resists his attempts to have sex with her. But later, she yields to him as she sees no better alternative: "Face half a dozen animals every day! Easier to put up with this one" But she drinks liquor before she goes to bed with him. Champa: You'll have your fun....Wait, I'll give it to you (keeps on drinking and making him drink, laughs uncontrollably). Fun for anyone who comes along. A dog. A corpse even.

The compulsive sex of Sakharam exhausts her completely and she complains: “My head and body-just a bundle of pains and aches”. Later, she says to Lakshmi: “ But your Sakharam, he really takes his money’s worth out of a woman”. She has little faith in religion and tells Lakshmi the reality of life: “They don’t come and live your hell for you-those gods and Brahmins” Her language is as vulgar as that of Sakharam who says: “ In this house, the woman must always speak with restraint. I won’t put up with bad language”. Somehow Sakharam grows impotent after the arrival of Lakshmi. Now, Champa objects to Sakharam’s approach to her: I didn’t mind it as long as you were a man. I won’t take you now? She likes Dawood, Sakharam’s friend, when he arrives. She expresses this repeatedly: “ He is nice” and evokes envy in Sakharam who says: “But in this house, I won’t allow too much talking to strangers” She appreciates the tea made by Dawood and the nice pan with tobacco brought by him.

Finally, she enjoys sex with Dawood when Sakharam becomes impotent. She finds human love more in Dawood than in Sakharam. She is honest in what she does. Unlike Lakshmi, she prefers human goodness to inhuman tradition. Unlike Sakharam, she breaks the tradition in order to be human and humane. But she cannot forgive her husband because he has torn her heart. Shinde and Sakharam have tormented her. Thus,

she also suffers from self alienation the alienating of the mind and the body. However, she does not suffer from powerlessness as Sakharam and Lakshmi do.

Veena Noble Dass applies the concepts of psychoanalysis to analyze Sakharam Binder. She observes: “it was in essence a protest against exorbitant demands of society, especially in the sexual sphere, on the life of the individual”²⁵. But it is to be understood that he like any other character is a product of our dehumanizing culture” Tendulkar says: “Even in plays like Sakharam Binder and The Vultures, the theme is not violence. Violence comes as a way of life-a natural way of life if you consider the background of the characters. It is there as part of the functioning of a character”²⁶. The inhuman violence of the human characters in these plays is only the result of the physical deformity. Ramakanth, Umakanth and Manik drink liquor and resort to violence, in Tendulkar’s Vultures, so overcome their deep-rooted joylessness. Alienation corrupts and perverts all human values as Matrix puts it.

Evam Indrajit by Badal Sircar deals with a new aspect of physical deformity through the eponymous character. Amal, Vimal and Kamal form the background for this. They take the routine life for granted and try to overcome their joylessness by being busy doing the things that their civilized life demands. But, Indrajit, like the mythical character, he son of Ravana who defeats Indra the Hindu Zeus, is a rebel. He is conscious of and bored with routine, mundane life. He therefore, cannot find any joy in it and wants to be different in order to overcome his joylessness. In his endeavor to be different, he goes round and finally reaches the point where he starts. So, he realizes that he cannot escape from the routine. He admits that he is Nirmal, one of them, but not Indrajit. At last he thinks, “Dying! That is the greatest happiness”²⁷

As the play starts, the writer searches for a theme to write a play but finds more. Manasi advises him to write about the middle-class people who come late. So he invites them stage. He asks for their names. They are Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Indrajit. Writer then describes them.

According to the census of 1961, the population of Calcutta is 2,92,12,891. One of them about two and half percent are graduate. They are known by different names. They are the middle income group, although within that group there is enough disparity of income. They are the intellectuals.

Although they really relied on their intellect, they would die of starvation. They are the educated minority, if a degree is indeed a mark of education. They are the elite, because they are well aware that they are different from the rest. They are Amal, Vimal, Kamal...and Indrajit.

Auntie then asks him to have his meal. Manasi asks him whether he has written anything. He answers in the negative. Then, he regrets his ignorance of the toil and suffering of peasants and workers. It is, thus, shown that writer is also one of them, the elite and the middle income group.

The three acts of the play portray the three major phases of the lives of Amal, Vimal and Kamal. The first act dramatizes their studies, examinations, hobbies, pastimes and things that characterize their college life. They got jobs and marry in the second act. They have various ambitions in their life and achieve them in the third: Amal gets a promotion as a manager in ABC Company; Vimal buys a plot and builds a house there and Kamal starts business to earn more money. Indrajit loves Manasi, his first cousin on his mother's side and wants to marry her which is a taboo. And he wants to visit London and

this visit, he believes, will liberate him from the banality of life. His awareness of the ennui of life, which Amal, Vimal and Kamal lack makes him rebellious and restless. He says, in a proud manner, to Manasi: "If I hadn't tasted the fruit of knowledge I could have gone on living this paradise in your blessed society of rules. Now I can only batter my head against the wall. He changes his job from Calcutta to Bhopal. Then he gets a transferable job and goes to Bombay, Jalandhar, Meerut and Udaypur. Manasi does not agree to marry him

against the taboos and becomes a school teacher in Calcutta. She and he write letters but this does not change his life in any way. Then, he marries another Manasi and leads a marital life. He tells Manasi about his family: "My wife looks after the house. I work in the office; my wife goes to a film. I go with her. My wife goes to her parent's house. He eats in a restaurant. She comes back. I go marketing". Thus, he falls into the whirlpool of banal life that he has striven hard to shun. He realizes at last that he is not different from others. He talks about his disillusionment:

Indrajit : So long as I couldn't accept my ordinariness I dreamt.

 Now I accept it.

Manasi : Indrajit....

Indrajit : No, Manasi, don't call me Indrajit, please don't. I am Nirmal, Amal, Vimal and Kamal.

When he sees no sense in living, Writer enlightens him on existential philosophy: Walk! Be on the road! For us there is only the road. We shall walk. I know nothing to write about-still I shall

have to write. You have nothing to say-still you will have to talk. Manasi has nothing to if for-she will have to live. For us there is only the road-so walk on. We are the cursed spirits of Sisyphus. We have to push the rock to the top-even if it just rolls down. It is the theme. The playwright thus conveys the philosophy of existentialist to the elite of the middle income group who feel too frustrated with banal life to live on.

K. Venkata Reddy, Veena Noble Dass and Ekamabaram agree that Evam Indrajit is an absurd play. Ekamabaram calls it “an Indian version of Waiting for Godot”. He strongly feels that ‘the play is not relevant to Indian context’. He believe Indians do not suffer from alienating because, “We may be poor and downtrodden, but the qualities of patience, endurance, hope and peace which Hinduism and other religious embody enable us to survive”²⁸. But alienating is an indispensable part and process of civilization may be. And in India, the higher castes of the Hinduism practice of inhuman convention of untouchables as alienating dehumanizes people. They physical deformity that people acquire though being civilize alienates them from the very course of life and they fee life to meaningless. Indajit’s predicament arises out of his awareness, which is alienated, from his bodily wisdom. The writer also faces the same plight. Veena Noble Dass observes: “His agony is the agony of the artist who is deeply aware of the sterility and horror that is life”. Satyadev Dubey, commenting on the elite of India in general of Bengal in particular points out: The intellectually alive urban middle class regards itself as the backbone of the country. Their so called middle class values have been glorified and yet their genuine and deeper values have always been attached by fashionable Marxist dogmas. The middle classes have been made to feel guilty for opting for stability, aspiring for culture and believing in a national identity. In Bengal, the contradiction was resolved at a certain level with the middle classes aligning themselves with the left forces.

Sircar’s *There’s No End* is like his *Evam Indrajit*. The protagonist of the play, Sumantas, a Bengali young intellectual like Indrajit, faced the same problem. Sumanta is more progressive than Indrajit. He loves Manika when he is a student but he does not marry her. Then, he discontinues his

studies and plunges but he does not marry her. Then, he discontinues his studies and plunges into the struggle organized by Communist party. The railway strike of 1949 fails and he becomes disillusioned and leaves Communist Party. Then, he resumes his studies and completes M.Sc. Instead of doing research in Chemistry, he joins as a Research Assistant in S.K. Industries and becomes a junior Executive on promotion. He dislike the duties of the pos and loses the job by deliberately coming a mistake. He and Sumathi become friends. Presently he is a writer of good reputation. One day, he is arrested and taken to court. His mother, his lover, his leader of the party, his professor and his employer accuse him of betraying them. Four more

witnesses find fault with his not writing about the poor people, workers and the victims of communal riots and world wars. Sumanta’s disillusionment with the Communist movement reflects that of Sircar himself though he favours the leftist. “The discovery that some respected leaders were liars and cheats who dumped their followers led to disillusionment.”²⁹ The trial finally proves that every human being is a culprit. All human beings have brought this crisis and all of them suffer in one way or another. Therefore they all can resolve it collectively.

Sumanta: There is no accused. I am the accused. You..yoou..all of you are accused. W are all the accused.

The Man : We are all the accused.

They Jury: (together) we are all the accused³⁰

They play thus shows that we can overcome alienation only through unification only through unification characters by collative awareness and endeavor.

Mohan Rakesh's short play, perhaps, illustrative how, physical deformity can lead to mental deformity. It is a dialogue between a man and his wife about the problems of their life. Like Indrajit, they also feel bored with the banality of their life. Like Indrajit, they also feel bored with the banality of their routine life. The repetition deprives them of their joy. They feel dejected.

Man : Don't you feel that the things we used to enjoy at one time...no longer bring us happiness?

Woman : I've decided.

Man : what?

Woman : Those things will always remain the same and we'll have to go on life this for years (sobs)

Man : Everything repeat itself. When we have already lived we shall have to life again...³¹

They face the same predicament as Indrajit does. The man summaries their problems, "One can do what one likes but the emptiness within one still remains" The mind has nothing meaningful once it is alienated from the body. It feels empty and it may go mad. The man admits: "I don't get upset. I'm mad to get upset."

Division and hierarchization invade the human body. The mind and the body are divided and the mind is considered superior to the body. The mind carries the cultural deformity in itself and governs the body. It suppresses the spontaneity of the body and causes physical deformity. This finds a comprehensive elucidation in Karnad's Hayavadana. Devdatta, as a Brahmin, has a brilliant mind and a weak body whereas Kapila, as a Sudra, has a strong body and a dull mind. Padmini, Devadatta's wife, juxtaposes their heads at the temple of Goddess Kali. So, Devadatta gets Kapila's strong body while Kapila gets Devadatta's weak body. But finally the head wins-Devadatta discontinues physical exercises and gets back his weak body while Kapila toils in the forest and become strong again.

The eponymous character becomes a complete horse instead of a complete man as Goddess Kali grants his wish to be complete. Hayavadana's mother runs away happily when his father curses her to become a mare. This shows that animals unlike human beings are free from physical deformity caused by culture. The alienation between the mind and the body, the major cause of physical deformity, makes people joyless and their life meaningless as the bodily sensations are suppressed and prevented from reaching the mind. So people seek to get pleasure by consuming alcohol and drugs and by indulging in mechanical sex and violence. In Tendulkar's Sakharam Binder, the protagonist and Champa drink liquor and enjoy loveless sex whereas Lakshmi tries to drown her joylessness in religious rituals. In Sircar's Evam Indrajit, the eponymous character

vainly strives to make his life meaningful and joyful by being different from common folk. In his play, There's no End, the central character goes on changing his courses of life for the same purpose.

Conclusion

Indian dramatic writing in English has given a lean harvest owing to the fundamental constraints it faced. Drama, as against other literary forms, bears a close affinity to the theatre. The aspects of a living theatre and a live audience are therefore essential, for only then the written word of a play achieves artistic realization on the stage: "This lack of opportunity to subject his plays to the acidic test of a living theater in his own country...has done harm to the art of the Indian dramatist in English."¹ However, none can deny the tradition and individual talent of the Indian dramatists in English and before and after independence.

In the Pre-independent era Tagore, Sri Auribindo and T.P. Kailasam wrote plays which are highly lyrical, allegorical, and symbolic. They treated their plays as mere vehicles of thought rather than expressions of action. In addition to that, one has to acknowledge that the classical Sanskrit drama and the western drama made a great influence on many dramatists in English at that time. Meanwhile, the economic depression in the 1930's and the struggle for independence gave the Indian drama in English a new mission and a vision to fulfill.

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