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Prof. Virag S. Gawande

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Dr. Sanjay j. Kothari
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THE FUSION OF INDIVIDUAL WITH THE PRIMAL BEING WITH REFERENCE TO KARNAD'S BALI: THE SACRIFICE

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Abstract:

Indian society believes in orthodox, ill-beliefs and traditions. Indian people are bound to old orthodox beliefs. They discard even their precious lives to preserve these beliefs. Girish Karnad, an Indian English foremost dramatist put the socio-cultural traditional beliefs of Indian people through his literary works. His Bali: The Sacrifice deals with such beliefs in orthodox that results in violence.

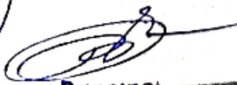
Key Words: Orthodox, violence, bloodshed, cruelty, hatred.

Theatre is originated in religious rituals. Many events in life are represented in the form of drama or theatre. The events are always related to the various peoples and cultures. As Richard Schechner remarks,

... dancing, singing, wearing masks and/or costumes, impersonating other humans, animals or supernatural, acting out stories, presenting 1 at time 2, isolating or preparing special places and/or times for these presentations, and individual or group preparations or rehearsals are coexistent with the human condition (Schechner 66).

The theatre and human communal life are co-existed. It has proved through the ancient archeological findings and excavation. The function of performances is either to idealize or to criticize human life and society. Girish Karnad, a voicing dramatist, lives and writes in the lack of a theatre.





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The present paper shows the fusion of individual with the primal being with a special focus on Karnad's play *Bali: The Sacrifice*. Karnad makes the society aware of violence and orthodox. He has chained past, present and forthcoming future as a result of past and present. 'Bali' is an act of violence done by human beings. The question is whether Bali is a sin or a sacrifice. In the opening of the play, the Queen is singing:

As the world is divided Into two orbs:

One lit up by the sun. The other hid in the shade,

So also the human soul. The habitation of gods

Is spilt into two realms... (BS73).

The two souls are dramatized through the song: one is violent soul and another is free from violent. The play advocates the idea of violence. It is based on a thirteen century Kannada epic, Yashodhara Charite. The play explicates that the violence is hidden in our everyday behaviors and the violence is masked with our conscious efforts. The play deals with the ideal of Jainism in which the act of violence is condemned. The thought of bloodshed and cruelty purges hatred. There are only four characters in the play: The King and The Queen, The Queen- Mother and the Mahout. The queen is follower of Jainism who believes that the compassionate life and non-violence can bring salvation. The Queen Mother's belief is that the goddess needs blood to be satisfied. The king, who loves the queen, approves the faith of his wife, in a state of confusion. .Ashtavakra is the palace Mahout. The Queen is enchanted by the music of the Mahout and approaches to him in a deserted temple. The song of the Mahout is so enchanting that it makes up the mind of the Queen to visit him in the temple. The song establishes a physical relationship between the Queen and the Mahout. The Queen says,

I was sleeping by your side. His singing woke me up. The song was so- don't know how to describe it. But suddenly the notes caressed me, enveloped me. They carried me away. For a brief moment, nothing mattered. --- I felt like a flame burning bright.

Pure. When I came to my senses, I was here. By his side (BS 119).

The Mahout is an ugly looking man. The Queen neither cares it nor tells him about herself. The Mahout asks her various questions and comes to know that she belongs to the upper class society. He explains her that the cause of his ugliness is his unlucky birth during eclipse. However, his voice is melodious. God has offered him an opportunity to be beautiful in exchange of his voice but he does not accept the opportunity and denies the offer. The Queen, while listening to the Mahout, is unaware of the presence of her husband, the King there. The King sits on the steps of the temple in a shocking manner. However, the Queen and the Mahout sense movement of somebody. The Mahout makes the sounds of lovemaking. The King is unable to bear this act and rushes in the garden where he meets his mother. His mother has come to worship the goddess. The King tells her, "... I had a dream. It woke me up. ... in the dream... (Pause) I saw that the royal swan in our garden had got caught in mud and was flapping its wings..." (BS 103). The mother asks him questions repeatedly and the King is compelled to tell her the truth about the queen. The Queen Mother is shocked by hearing the truth. In a horrible state, she predicts to sacrifice a hundred sheep to solace goddess because in the view of the Queen Mother the Queen has committed the act of sin and the king and the kingdom is to be affected by the sin of the Queen. But the King, who is under the influence of Jainism and in love of the Queen, tries to persuade her in order to avoid the act of violence. At last, the Queen Mother suggests sacrificing a non-living object in order to save her son and kingdom from portent of the Queen's sin.

Karnad has centralized the events of the refusal of the King to sacrifice hundred sheep and the Mother Queen's reaction on the sin committed by the Queen. However, the plays goes back to the childhood of the King and the Queen. Karnad tries to explore the sin from different views by applying the flash back technique and reviewing the childhood incidents.

The King is a Kshatriya and the Queen is a Jain by births. They have met in their childhood. Both of them differ in their religions and faiths in gods. The goddess in the King's religion who is thirsty of blood and meat whereas the Queen's Jainism

believes in non-violence. The religious difference is a striking difference in a striking contrast in the play. The King and the Queen marry but they are unable to give birth to a child. Both are always under the psychological pressure that they are unable to provide heir to the kingdom. However, they heartily love each other. Their married life is blissful. But there is a growth of barrier in the belief and love between them.

The Queen has committed the sin of adultery. The question is whether the adultery is committed by bodies or minds. Karnad has focused the issue of sacrificing living creatures whether it is adequate for a sin. The practice of sacrificing creatures has been followed in Hinduism and the Jains and the Buddhists objects such sacrifice. As the King is under the impact of love of the Queen who belongs to the Jainism, objects the offer of the Queen Mother to sacrifice a hundred sheep. The Queen Mother at last agrees to sacrifice a cock of dough because of the objection of her son. Karnad purposefully aims to illustrate the struggle between the two ideologies. The struggle resembles primeval conflict between the Apollonian and the Dionysian forces. Apollonian and Dionysian is a philosophical and literary concept or dichotomy based on certain features of Ancient Greek mythology.

Apollo and Dionysus are the sons of Zeus in Greek mythology. Apollo is considered as a god of reason and rational and Dionysus is that of irrational, chaos and destruction. The base of Apollonian is reason and logical thinking whereas the base of Dionysian is destruction and irrational. The terms are related to Nietzsche's 'The Birth of Tragedy' published in 1872. The dramatic art is formed by the fusion of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. According to Nietzsche, there is interplay between Apollonian and Dionysian and the hero suffers and dies at the end. Such drama produces "Primordial Unity" among the audience. The battle between Apollonian and Dionysus is a struggle between the higher cortex and the older limbic and reptilian brain.

In Karnad's *Bali: the Sacrifice*, the Apollonian principle has been defeated by the Dionysian principle. It is a fight between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. It also seems the fight between conventional and unconventional beliefs. The fight seems to be a fight between two forces of the two polar since the existence of the civilization. In this context, Stanford M. Lyman and Marvin B. Scott cite:

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The Apollonian principle is characterized by the tendency to impose form and order upon the word. This order and form is affected by the device of individuation, that is, the rational and calculable separation of the elements into units and categories and the ordering of them in some and consistent relationship to one another. In its most general and ultimate sense, Apollinarism is realized in... the social forms in which restless life is encompassed. ... The Dionysian principle is that of life unfettered by forms or boundaries. In its most unlimited expression it bursts out from and beyond the limits of the senses to experience sense and sensuality themselves. Dionysian expresses the life force independent of the form of life (Lyman and Marvin 55).

Karnad has pictured these two principles through the characters of the King and the Queen; one belongs to the Hinduism and another to the Jainism. The blood thirsty goddess symbolizes the act of violence. In the play, one is dominated by the other. *Bali: the Sacrifice* is rich with symbols. The Mother Queen and the Mahout are the symbols of the Apollonian and the Dionysian beliefs. The play is a war between these two beliefs. The war causes the conflicts of psychological states in the society. The King and the Queen are personified as two forces which are affected by the conflicts of the war. The war commences with the cause of adultery and childless married life of the King and the Queen. The marriage exposes the conflicts between two principles as it is a union of two dissimilar souls who have grown up in two different religions, cultures, beliefs and faiths. The Queen disapproves the act of violence of the Kshatriyas. The King approves Jainism only out of his love for the Queen. But both of them are living a life full of agony because their hopes are not fulfilled. The Queen Mother angrily asks the King questioning his manhood, "What kind of a man are you? You have lost your manhood. You, you impotent ..." (BS 108). The desires and hopes of the King are not fulfilled and the psychological imbalance of the King is revealed. The Condition of the Queen is like that of a creature in a cage. She desires freedom and rushes to Mahout. She enjoys the song and surrenders herself. She enjoys the song of liberty. The act of the Queen is a symbol of Dionysian principles. The act can

be proved as description of Nietzsche," the shattering of the individual and his fusion with primal being" (Chandran 299).

The King is caught in dilemma. He loves two women, his mother and his wife. He is under the pressure of the power of both the women. He is in a confused state of mind. He is unable to support his mother because she demands sacrifice of living animals and he cannot turn away himself from his wife. She believes in Jainism provoking non-violence. As the Queen is childless, she is helpless to accept the Queen Mother's demand. But when she is pregnant, her pregnancy proves to be a weapon against the demand of her mother-in-law. The King tries to justify perceptiveness of his mother to the Queen. However, no mother prefers to celebrate the birth of her son with any sacrifice and the Queen is not an exception to this. She urges, "Our son will be a Jain. He will have to uphold the principle of compassion for all living beings, of non-violence. Should we allow a blood rite to mark his arrival? It would be wrong. Terribly wrong! (BS 97). The hold of the Queen upon the King is in such an extent that the King declares that it is not possible to celebrate the arrival of new child by any violent. The King consoles his mother, "I want you promise me that there will be no blood sacrifices in honor of our child" (BS 97). On this the mother reacts, "You are denying me the right to my worship... My gods have already been expelled from this house and live, shunned and starved, like outcasts" (BS 98). The King being powerless under the clutch of two women helplessly tries to evoke consciousness of his mother. He says, "Try and be sensible, Mother. No one is stopping you from worshipping your goddess or from your own form of worship" (BS 98). The Queen Mother is so adamant that she wants to live in a separate cottage out of palace. The Queen is so adamant that she does not prepare herself to perform the ritual ceremony of sacrifice. The Queen Mother changes her attitude. She says, "Don't agree to the sacrifice. Don't yield to his entreaties. The more you refuse, the more my son suffer" (BS 115). The purpose of the Queen Mother is the revenge against her own son who has forgotten his own religion. The character of the Queen Mother plays a role of a sadist as she seeks pleasure from the psychological state of the King and the Queen. The King knows the motif of her. On the other hand, the Queen does not consider adultery a sin so she is against atonement. She says to the King, "I want to come back to you, I feel fuller. Richer. Warmer. But not ashamed. Because I did not plan it. It

happened and it was beautiful" (BS 119). However, the King wants to accept her at the same place where she has committed the act of adultery that is in the temple. But she denies. The King shouts, "Yes go back to that savage ape- the ugly beast" (BS 121). But the Mahout insists that the King and the Queen not to sacrifice the cock of dough. He urges,

Listen, you two. Stop playing with these things, these forces. Look at those bats- hanging on the roof. Silent. Still. Watching. Waiting for some signal. Go now. Fetch a witch-doctor. Let him deal it with. Take my advice. These things can eat into you. Go back to the palace. As for me, I am leaving town (BS 122).

The Queen makes her mind ready for the symbolical sacrifice of the cock of the dough. But the cock crows and they think that the cock of dough is crowing. The Queen seems the cock as a living baby. The King picks up the cock and squashes it. The Queen, in anger, rushes to the King with sword in her hands but she thinks what a hell she is doing and she stops abruptly. The King is startled when he listens the sound of cock crowing. All of a sudden, the Queen presses the point of the sword on her womb and collapses in the arms of the King. But just at the next moment, the Queen stands up as a light, light of life. The play ends with a note of hope. The Apollonian forces are defeated by the Dionysian forces.

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