



# Transposition of the Body and the Mind in the Play Hayavadana by Girish Karnard

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**ABSTRACT:** Hayavadana was written in 1971 by the actor-turned-playwright Girish Karnard. Thomas Mann, a German author, based his work *The Transposed Heads* on a short tale by the Indian author Kathasaritsagara, composed in the 11th century by Somadeva. Similar themes can be found in the works of both Mann and Karnard, including sensuality, metaphysics, entangled identities, the problem of love and individuality, an existential humanistic perspective, a philosophical engagement with human conditions, relevance about human sufferings, desire and liberation, a sense of alienation, freedom of choice, sensuousness and sensibility, stark reality, absurdity, and metaphysical emptiness. The drama is performed in the time-honored Yakshagana style of traditional southern Kannada theatre. The main theme of Devadatta, Kapila, and Padmini is the struggle between the rational intellect and the physical body. And following Goddess Kali's translocation, the struggle reaches its apex. Separation of body and mind also affects a secondary storyline. The mind, which is represented by Devadatta, finally commands and governs the body when at rest in the head, despite the fact that the brain, represented by Kapila, first triumphs. Padmini sets herself on fire as a kind of self-liberation as she realises that she is a craver of libidinousness since she and Devadatta are unable to reconcile this difference. According to Jean Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, "the possibility of completion haunts humans," and this drives people to keep looking for it even when they know they'll never find it. Some there be that shadows kiss, such have but a shadow's happiness, as Shakespeare aptly put it in *The Merchant of Venice*.

**KEYWORDS:** Body and mind, transposition, reconcile, matchless, destroyer, combination, gandharva, swayamvara.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A man's never happy with what he has, always finding something to complain about; tunes he hears are pleasant, but he prefers those he doesn't. It is traditional to bring out a mask of Ganesha, the god of good fortune, worship it, and then remove it offstage before a play begins. The Bhagavata then proceeds to sing and call out Lord Ganesha, the remover of roadblocks, despite the fact that he is a "embodiment of imperfection and incompleteness" with an elephant's head on a human body, complete with a broken tusk and a shattered belly. Lord Ganesha, whose head and body are distinct, thereby introduces the conflict in the very first act. The Bhagavata sets the stage for the drama by explaining that in the city of Dharmapura, governed by Dharmasheela, there are two young men: the attractive, fair, and brilliant Devadatta. The reverend Brahmin Vidyasagara is his father. Logic discussions are a lost cause for him. This has made him the centre of attention in Dharmapura. Kapila, on the other hand, is the sole son of a blacksmith in this particular city; he has a dark complexion and a plain appearance, but his physical prowess and power are unparalleled. Furthermore, the city is in awe of the remarkable friendship between the two young men. Like Caesar and Brutus, they always seem to show up together. They are described as having "one mind and one body" in the Bhagavad gita. The blatant inconsistency, however, does not appear until much later. An actor named Nata hears a scream from backstage and runs to the Bhagavata in a condition of stress and nervousness, reporting that he has seen a horse-headed guy by the roadside who talks in a human voice. Hayavadana, the guy with the horse's head, appears on stage and takes a seat immediately. The Bhagavata is taken aback by the sight of the bizarre creature. Hayavadana's head is raised as tears stream down his cheeks. It's a strange mix, a horse's head and a human's heart. The Bhagavata thinks the guy is putting on a ruse by pretending to be a horse. He then orders the worker to remove it. As Hayavadana remains immobile, the Bhagavata and the actor Nata try to accomplish the impossible. The performer claims it to be a genuine head. The Bhagavata inquires whether he has done any fault that has resulted in his peculiar appearance. After some back-and-forth, the incident causes Hayavadana to vent his little annoyance and tell his sad tale. His mum is a Karnataka princess. To put it simply, she is stunning. Her dad has already decided to marry her off when she turns 18. But he wants to let her have some say in who her future husband will be. As word of the public assembly, swayamvara, spread, many princes from around the world were invited to attend. However, she dislikes them. The Arab prince has arrived at last. The sight of her son caused Hayavadana's mother to pass out. The king is certain that he is the one she has her heart set on. The wedding is all set up and ready to go. The mother of Hayavadana awakens from her coma and announces that she has fallen in love



with the Prince's steed, not the Prince himself. Her father is utterly awed by her. She's tied the knot with the equine since she's so stubborn. After a while, she gave birth to a kid who seemed like he was made out of horse. After 15 years, a lovely heavenly youth enters in the horse's place and reveals to her that he is really a gandharva who was cursed into taking on the appearance of a horse. He has been able to finally shed his human partner of fifteen years.

Then he invites his wife to go home with him, but she turns him down. The gandharva loses her temper, curses the mare to be such eternally, and then vanishes. She abandons her husband's son, Hayavadana, to his destiny when she transforms into a mare and flees off with other horses. He asks the Bhagavata for advice on how to deal with his unusual appearance, specifically how to remove the horse head and become a whole human being. Hayavadana elaborates that he has sought help from magicians, mendicants, maharshis, fakirs, saints, and sadhus, as well as a number of other spiritual leaders and holy sites, including Banaras, Rameswar, Gokram, Haridwar, Gaya, Kedarnath, the Dhargah of Khwaja Yusuf Baba, the Grotto of the Virgin Mary, and various churches. After some consideration, the Bhagavata suggests that Hayavadana pay a last respect to the Goddess Kali atop Mount Chitrakoot. The local Goddess has a stellar reputation for kindness and responsiveness to prayers from devoted worshippers. Hayavadana expresses his gratitude to the Bhagavata and, joined by the actor Nata, heads to the temple to seek finality of his quest. With this, the Bhagavata begins to sing of how between two friends, there can be only one mind and one heart. Kapila and Devadatta are two of the greatest companions in the world, but while Kapila represents physical might and Devadatta mental prowess. Both the body and the psyche are represented. Even though the mind and the body work together well, they are actually very different from one another. Both seem simple at first glance, but they differ in many subtle ways. A young lady with her own preferences and interests comes between Devadatta and Kapila, proving to the rest of Dharmapura that the two buddies are not like Lava and Kusa. A foreboding of doom for all three may be felt in the chorus's lines. Many theories are spawned by the female chorus. In reality, she is a portent of discord between the two pals. Devadatta walks onstage and takes a seat. His frame is frail and refined. Now Kapila has joined us on stage, and we can begin our discussion. Kapila continues to chat, first oblivious to his friend's reflective attitude, until realising, as has occurred so many times before, that Devadatta must be thinking about a female. A young woman with the face of a white lotus and the arms of a lotus creeper is the woman Devadatta describes to Kapila. If she agrees to be his wife, he says, he will be inspired to write even better than Kalidasa. He goes on to say that he would give his two hands to the Goddess Kali and his head to Lord Rudra if she agrees to be his wife. Kapila is aware of how serious things really are. He comforts Devadatta and agrees to act as a mediator between the two parties in their dispute over the attractive young woman who lives in the Pavana Street home with the 'two headed bird' engraved above the entrance. Padmini's dual personality represents her unstable thought processes throughout the play. Padmini comes out when there's a knock at the door, and Kapila has a lengthy conversation with her while thinking to himself that his buddy must have knocked on the wrong door. It would be an unhappy marriage between Devadatta and Padmini since they have quite different personalities. But there's no turning back now, so he contacts her family to discuss the situation. The Goddess of Knowledge resides in the home of Devadatta, while the Goddess of Wealth makes her home with Padmini. The marriage does not diminish the closeness of their previous relationship; on the contrary, it becomes stronger as a result. For the residents of Dharmapura, Devadatta, Padmini, and Kapila stand in for Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana. But with the passage of time comes something else.

Despite Kapila and Padmini's adoration for his body and manners, Devadatta nevertheless finds his companion to be a painful presence in their alone time. Padmini, on the other hand, is so comfortable with Kapila that she pays little attention to what her husband is thinking. Padmini conceives quickly. The three of them want to pay Ujjain a quick visit. Padmini bothers Devadatta by staring out the window on the day of the trip and asking where Kapila is. Whether Devadatta is envious of Kapila or Padmini is in love with him is unclear from their discourse, suggesting that they are both cautious about the other's sentiments. According to Devadatta, Kapila is more than just a buddy; he's more like a brother. To obtain a companion like Kapila, he says, you have to save up your merit for seven reincarnations. Once again, he stresses that he has moved over his jealousy of him. Padmini responds by telling her husband that she is superior than Kapila and is thus willing to have him left behind on the journey if necessary. Both the woman and the husband are using superficial deception to mask their true emotions.

Padmini speaks in a voice that is strong and sure. In the eyes of her friends and family, she is completely loyal to her spouse. Any husband would be overjoyed to hear those words from his wife. Devadatta's jealousy of Kapila has subsided thanks to your comments, and he now praises your friend's "golden heart." All that glitters is not gold, as Shakespeare famously said. Devadatta claims that Padmini's wellbeing is his first priority.

Padmini, in response, boasts that she is in tip-top shape and has a "womb of steel." Despite this, they choose to call off the trip. Just as they decided to call off the vacation, Kapila walked in and said he had already planned everything. When he hears that the trip has been cancelled, his stomach drops.



After the trip is cancelled, Kapila withdraws into himself and wonders why he feels like the world has ended; he decides to stay away for a week to protect his fragile emotional state. Meanwhile, Padmini is watching the entire event and suddenly declares that she is ready to go on the trip, much to the surprise of her two pals.

"Frailty, thy name is woman," a line from Shakespeare, is brought up once again. Later, she confides in Devadatta that she has blocked out Kapila's gloomy face because it's pointless. The trip sets out with Kapila at the helm of the cart. Padmini says that Kapila is a much better driver than her husband. Still thinking, "The head is bidding farewell to the heart," Devadatta chooses quiet. Padmini secretly admires Kapila's power as he climbs the Fortune Lady's tree to collect flowers.

## II. CONCLUSION

Finally, the woman who looks for perfect flawlessness but can never have it because perfectionism is both a part in completion and an incompleteness of completion dies, and the play ends via a prayer to Ganesha, or who has granted the wishes of all the characters and solved the mystery of the transposed heads. The story has a tragic finish since the two friends kill one other, the wife performs sati, and the kid is left without a parent. Although it must rely on the body, the mind still exercises dominion over the physical form. People everywhere need to master the art of contentment with little material belongings. The drama touches on many different themes, including psychology, physiology, society, mythology, desire, and liberation.

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